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M,DCC,XCII.



LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS,

OR THE

EXPULSION

OF THE

T A R Q U I N S.

A

T R A G E D Y.

THE SECOND EDITION. .

— *Manus hæc inimica Tyrannis.*

P R E F A C E.

TO those who judge of dramatic merit from the Greek models, the rules of French critics, or the examples of modern writers, a justification of the following piece would be attempted in vain. They would call it a motley performance, deficient in almost every article, which constitutes a true and proper tragedy. If the author were to alledge, that he never meant to compose a tragedy, according to their acceptation of the word, but that his intention was to fill up a picture of real life, in a certain given time, the outlines of which were taken from historical facts, his reason would be deemed unsatisfactory.

Regardless of the end proposed, they would continue to exclaim, that the unities were neglected, that the grave was intermingled with the ludicrous, that the business of the drama frequently stood still; that the dialogue was too familiar, and the metre little better than measured prose.

How

How far some of these objections may be valid, and how many more might, perhaps, with reason be urged against particular passages, the author will not determine. The force of others of them he would endeavour to diminish, by answering, that they militate equally against human life itself; and that while he should be sorry to have this denominated an artificial poem, he would flatter himself, it cannot be justly thought an unnatural one.

Dr. Johnson indeed, in the preface to his edition of Shakespeare, seems to have sufficiently vindicated this particular species of writing, to which, those who please, may (instead of tragedy) give the more simple name of history. Neither are there wanting many good judges of composition, who wish that the less studied diction, and more plain and level metre of the school of that immortal poet (which seems to have ended with Southern), had been continued to the present time. Even this performance, with all its imputed irregularities and deficiencies, will, perhaps, be preferred by them, to those translated tragedies or imitations, which of late years have, through novelty, lived their nine nights on the stage, and been damned for ever after in the closet: tho' they had been corrected and metamorphosed by managers, calculated to afford to favourite actors or actresses opportunities of shining, and curtailed by lord chamberlains.

A di-

A diversification of characters hath been attempted in this piece; and to give to every character the mode of sentiment and expression peculiarly suited to it. It is not at all difficult for a man a very middling genius, to contrive a regular plot, to pen down a certain number of sounding lines; and tho his dramatis personæ are distinguished by particular names, to put his own sentiments in their mouths throughout five acts. Had the author been solicitous of adapting his plan to the stage, or wished to conciliate the favour of the indiscriminating multitude, he might probably have followed the same method.

However it may appear to us, when we are reading, no small attention is requisite in written dialogue of any kind, for an author entirely to cast off self. This was the characteristic of Shakespeare; and perhaps after all, the author of this play hath deceived himself, and it may with reason be applied to him.

— *Sudet multum frustra; laboret
Ausus idem.*

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

TARQUIN,
TITUS,
ARUNS,
SEXTUS,
L. J. BRUTUS,
COLLATINUS,
LUCRETIVS,
VALERIUS,
HORATIUS,
HERMINIUS,
CLAUDIUS,
MESSENGERS, GUARDS, &c.

W O M E N.

LUCRETIA,
LAVINIA,
CLELIA, } LUCRETIA'S MAIDS.
CAMILLA, AND OTHERS, }

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

A C T I.

S C E N E I. *Rome.*

VALERIUS, LUCRETIVS.

Val. **W**E can but weep the ruin of our country,
With all good men ; and find no remedy ;
The evil is too rank, Lucretius,
To admit a cure. Oppression spreads its bane,
And taints the general air, scarce are our souls
Our own, much less our words. The secret curse
Is frequent, offer'd up to all the gods
The midnight silent deprecation calls
For vengeance on the proud, the impious Tarquin.
But in the day each wears the face of loyalty,
Nor dares, so jealous are these groveling times,
E'en in his brother's bosom pour that anguish
Which ulcerating preys upon his heart.

B

How

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

How we have dared communicate our thoughts,
To me is cause of wonder.

Luc.

Had I not

Long marked thee, O Valerius, noblest Roman,
Amid these worst of times immoveable
In honour's steady course, invariably
Upright and just, in thy domestic life
Untainted too, I would not thus have open'd
My inmost breast, or given the passing wind
An opportunity to bear my words
On its licentious wing to the tyrant's ear.

Val.

A mutual confidence henceforth be ours.
Scarcely can I express with what abhorrence
I look upon this monster of a man.
Scan the whole catalogue of horrid crimes,
And if you find one he hath not committed,
I will retract my words, and call him virtuous.
To gain his wife his brother first he poison'd ;
To gain the crown most ruffian-like assaulted
With sacrilegious hand the good old king,
By marriage bonds his father : I beheld him
Thrown from the senate-house, his aged limbs
Bruised by the flinty pavement, his white locks,
Which from the lawless robber would have gain'd
Respect and veneration, wildly scatter'd
Over his face, defiled with clotted gore ;
Raised from the ground with utmost difficulty,
And tottering toward his home, he met his death.
Still did insatiate cruelty pursue

His

His breathless corse, denied the common rites
 Of burial ; all men struck with horror, shunn'd
 The accursed spot : yet then his savage wife
 Drunk with hot draughts of empire, or possess'd
 By the infernal furies, every tie
 Of human nature cast aside, drove on
 High in her stately chariot, and impell'd
 The affrighted horses o'er him where he lay,
 O'er the dead body of her murder'd parent.

Luc. Had rumour brought the fact, as perpetrated
 In any foreign country, my belief
 Would have rebell'd. I marvel that the sun
 Turn'd not his course, as at the inhuman feast
 Of Grecian Atreus : ever to reflection
 As the deed rises in its native hue,
 My blood runs cold. No wonder if his throne
 Founded by means like these, should be supported
 By the same means. Hence in what copious
 streams
 Hath flow'd the blood of princely senators !
 Their crime was worth or riches ; hath he spared
 One, but whom absolute necessity
 Compell'd, or mean opinion, of his faculties
 Suffer'd to live ?

Val. To this, his cruel policy
 He adds superior talents ; with a soul
 That penetrates mankind, he bears conjoin'd
 The fiery spirit of the warrior God.
 Talents by virtue guided, which might place him
 B 2 Among

Among the first of kings, but now serve only
 To make him bold and resolute in vice,
 And what is worse, create an awe, a dread,
 On which, as on a base not to be shaken,
 Stands fix'd high-towering tyranny.

Luc.

Yet we

Need not complain : us he hath spared ; and me
 While 'gainst the Ardeats he wages war,
 In trust exalted to be governor
 Of this fair city ; of imperial Rome.

Val.

Indeed, were life alone to be esteem'd,
 We should not murmur ; but to breathe the air,
 To walk about at large, eat when we please,
 Sleep at our will ; this is not life—the beast
 Upon the mountain leads a life like this.
 When I'm so selfish as to center all
 My sense of pleasure here, when I cast off
 Tender humanity, which feels, as relative
 To all the members of society,
 Joy or affliction, may I then be curst
 With such a life as this,

Luc.

Didst thou remember

Among the senators by Tarquin slain,
 The name of Marcus Junius ?

Val.

Well I knew him ;

But what of him ?

Luc.

Oh ! He was placed above
 The strain of men ; his many virtues made him
 Respected as a god by the sons of Rome ;

His

His ancestors came hither with Æneas
 From flaming Troy, the valour of his race,
 The heroic ardor which inflames the breast
 Of conscious greatness, and uplifts mankind
 To something of divinity, dwelt in him.
 He was a man, that had he 'scaped the wreck
 Of those tempestuous days, would ne'er have
 suffer'd

Gigantic tyranny to take such strides.
 At least some check he would have been, some
 curb

Upon the mouth of headstrong appetite,
 And wild ambition. This our Tarquin knew :
 And at the same time looking with an eye
 Of greediness upon his large possessions, sent
 And slew him and his elder son, a youth
 Of gracious hopes ; the younger being absent
 Escaped the ruin.

Val. And now dwells with Tarquin,
 Lucius, the fool, the laughing-stock of the court :
 Whom the young princes always carry with them
 To aid their sport and jocund merriment ;
 The butt, at which they shoot their shafts of wit ;
 Whose paucity of sense, and mode uncouth,
 Aukward and blundering, hath deservedly
 Got him the name of Brutus——But why waste
 Our talk on this same idiot ?

Luc. Solve the question :
 I did but hint him, speaking of his father.

Val.

Val. Indeed, why talk at all, when all must end,
 As bootless as begun?—There is a bound
 Which checks, they say, all evils in their course,
 And good ensues.—Our evils know no change;
 Nor have they this extremest limit reach'd.
 Tho' to be still in movement of progression,
 Is past belief.—Yet there's no chance in nature,
 No possibility of alteration,
 No man alive to aim at alteration:
 And his three sons, Titus, and Aruns, Sextus,
 All equal to their father in ability,
 Beyond, if possible, in the black deeds
 Of villainy, of lust, and treachery,
 Are three firm pillars added to the pile
 Which threats to stand for ages. Oh! these thoughts
 Are capable to banish moderation
 From the prepared breast, and make the wife
 Turn fools and madmen.

Luc. Let us drop the subject.
 Who knows the secrets of avenging Jove?
 Perhaps though we, short-sighted as we are,
 Think liberty bound in eternal thralldom,
 His counsels otherwise decree: e'en now
 Haply the dread events are bursting forth,
 Like lightning from the gloomy firmament,
 To sweep this race of hell-hounds from the earth.

Val. What may be, I'll not say; but hope long since
 Hath ceased with me to wear her sanguine hue.
 Why should free agents e'en on Jove depend,

To

To sway the will he gave?—Man rules himself—
 His own fate's arbiter.—Though o'er these times
 Broods desperation, shall we not beneath
 Her wings immew'd, this galling, tempting theme
 Again revive?—Words cannot pluck the thorn,
 But soothe the smart.—Farewell—I'll to my house;
 Whither if in the evening thou wilt come,
 Still on a genuine Roman citizen
 My Lares smile.

Luc. I would attend unbidden.
 But thy inviting voice should charm me thither,
 Spite of disease or pain. At evening close
 I come; then farewell. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *The Camp before Ardea.*

TITUS, ARUNS.

Tit. Is Aruns sad? wears he a gloomy brow?
Ar. He doth, and stranger, cannot guess the cause,
 Unless 'tis living in inaction thus.
 These Ardeats sit behind their walls, or fight
 At intervals, when the mad fit invades them.
 How can our father bear their petty sallies?
 Why doth he not attack the nest at once
 With fire and sword, and rouse up all the swarm?
 Not thus he triumph'd o'er the warlike Sabines,
 Not thus he wrested from the Volsci's hands
 Sueffa Pometia, with whose glorious spoils

The

The temple rose to Capitolian Jove.
 Though had he ask'd of me, the glittering ore
 Had been applied to build a different fane.

Tit. Most firmly I believe thee, well I know
 To what divinity thou would'st have rear'd
 Thy golden altars.

Ar. Aye, and wisely too.
 Pleasure's my deity, my Jupiter,
 My Juno, and Minerva. Titus too,
 If I mistake not, is no Atheist there,
 But worships with as warm enthusiasm
 As any votary of them all; 'tis true
 He wears a graver brow, and commits sin
 With a more serious philosophic face,
 There's all the difference between me and thee,
 A touch of feature only, in our hearts
 We are most cordially alike.

Tit. Alike!
 Why now indeed thy airy spirits dance,
 Sparkling in either eye; but when I met thee,
 What wert thou then? Inwrapp'd in discontent.
 What wilt thou be anon? Chiding at straws
 For lying in thy path; then quick, by the sparks
 Of angry passion, kindled into flame;
 Still varying like the wind.—Thy heart like mine!
 When didst thou find my skittish temper start,
 And fly like thine from one to the other side?

Ar. Well, be it so, heaven speed us both! But Sextus!
 I envy that same Sextus; for his genius

Soars

Soars o'er us both, and robs us of our birthright.
 Not that I think, we halt behind him much
 In our intentions; but at least good luck
 Befriends him farther, one would swear he kept
 Fortune in pay, and that the blind-eyed goddess
 Accepted bribes from him. There's not a woman
 He looks on with desire but he possesses;
 He says but to an enemy, Fall down,
 And down he falls. Hah! sayst thou, is he not
 A son of Tarquin, and a glorious villain?

Tit. Glorious I grant, but not a villain, Aruns.
 That name may suit indeed a vulgar mouth,
 A tradesman talking of his brother knave;
 But rank and station sanctify men's deeds;
 A king successful cannot be a tyrant,
 Nor a king's son deserve a title less
 Than that of prince.

Ar. Thou reason'st well, by Mars!
 When I want oracles to be delivered,
 I need not go to Delphos.—Out! Alas!
 My blood's again obstructed, and I feel
 A pain here in my head, or in my heart,
 A sort of creeping kind of lethargy.—
 Are you e'er seiz'd thus? Hah! here comes my
 antidote.

Tit. Brutus! true; he's a doctor for the spleen.
 You mention'd Delphos; when we two went thither
 Through the unknown seas of Greece, sent by our
 father

To enquire the meaning of the prodigy,
 The snake portentous, which with dreadful crest
 Appearing in his palace hiss'd aloud
 A direful omen ! Brutus then went with us.
 Oh ! I remember well the precious scenes
 Of folly which he acted. When we gave
 Rich presents to the God ; he offer'd him
 A walking stick ; as if the god would walk,
 And take the air, but that the god was lame.
 Coming from out the temple, gazing back,
 As loath to leave a place so fine, he fell
 Over the threshold, and plough'd up the ground,
 Fixing his face in the earth.

Ar.

You may remember
 The oracle too said, that he should bear
 Chief sway in Rome, who first should kiss his
 mother.

When we came home, both at one time we kiss'd
 her.

In that I think we are at least before
 Our brother Sextus, jointly we reign
 After our father.

Enter BRUTUS.

Tit.

Brutus, where so fast ?

Br.

Pray, my Lords, stop me not ; I'm sent to you
 On special ordinance from the king ; farewell,
 I must return again.

Ar.

But wert thou sent

Only

Only to see us? Tell the king our father
 We're in good health; we thank him for the message
 Which thou hast well remember'd to deliver.

Br. Oh! my good Lord, I had forgot indeed.
 But in the multitude of public cares
 And daily business—if my memory fails
 A little—'tis no wonder.

Ar. True—but say
 What wilt thou give me for a receipt
 To sharpen memory? From the Sibyl's books
 Have I transcribed it; 'tis infallible.

Br. What will I give!—Ten acres of my land.

Ar. Thy land! where lies it?

Br. Ask the king, my cousin;
 He knows full well: I thank him, he's my steward,
 And takes the trouble off my hands.

Tit. Who told thee so?

Br. The king himself.—Now twenty years are past,
 And more, when he sent for me from the farm
 Where I had lived some time studying philosophy,
 And such like serious matters.

Tit. Noble sophist,
 I bend with the profoundest admiration
 Of thy rare, hidden knowledge.

Br. Yes, yes, all men
 Must grant that I have no small smattering.
 But where was I? Oh—Kinsman, says the king,
 Says he, and smiled most graciously upon me,
 For deeds of blackest and most treasonous nature,

Thy father and thy brother were accused of,
 They've paid the forfeit with their lives : for thee,
 Who knew'st not of their crimes, as I love mercy,
 Nor take delight in wanton deeds of cruelty,
 Live and be happy ; the ingenuous heart,
 And simple manners speaking in thy face——

Ar. Aye, 'tis a simple manners-speaking face.

Br. Nay, is it right to interrupt me thus ?

Ar. Pardon, most noble Brutus.

Br. These thy qualities,
 Promise, says he, thou ne'er wilt form a plot
 Of damn'd conspiracy against thy sovereign——

Tit. Indeed for that, I'll be thy bondsman, Brutus.

Br. Live in my house, companion of my children.
 As for thy land, to ease thee of all care,
 I'll take it for thy use ; all that I ask
 Of thee, is gratitude.

Tit. And art thou not
 Grateful for goodness so unmerited ?

Br. Am I not ? Never, by the holy gods,
 Will I forget it ! 'tis my constant prayer
 To heaven, that I may one day have the power
 To pay the debt I owe him.—But the recipe
 You told me of, my Lord.

Ar. Oh—take it gratis—
 First then ; attend with caution—But the message
 You brought from Tarquin.—

Br. Father Romulus,
 That I should loiter thus ! Why would you keep me
 Engaged

Engaged in talk ? The king your father calls
 A council, to consider of the siege
 Of Ardea, and the future operations
 Against the stubborn Rutili : your presence
 Is ask'd immediately ; shall I before
 And say you're coming ?

Ar. No ; behind us stay.
 There call thy thoughts to council, and invent
 A scheme replete with courage and with wisdom ;
 Nor doubt but Tarquin will with joy embrace it.

[*Exeunt Aruns and Titus.*]

BRUTUS *alone.*

Yet, 'tis not this which ruffles me—the gibes
 And scornful mockeries of ill-govern'd youth—
 Or flouts of painted sycophants and jesters,
 Reptiles, who lay their bellies on the dust,
 Before the frown of Majesty. All this
 I but expect, nor grudge to bear ; the face
 I carry too demands it.—But what then ?
 Is my mind fashion'd to the livery
 Of blunt stupidity, which I have worn
 These many a day ? bent to the ground, and warp'd
 From its true native dignity ? Else why,
 How is't that vengeance now hath slept so long ?
 O prudence ! ill delayer of great deeds,
 And noble enterprizes !—Yet—not so.
 Chance may, and accidental circumstance
 Crown bold and lucky rashness with success—

But

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

But oftner not. There is perhaps a time,
 A certain point, which waited for with patience,
 Seiz'd on, and urged with vigour, will go near
 To banish chance, and introduce assurance
 And fixedness in human actions.—

To avenge my father's and my brother's murder!
 (And sweet I must confess would be the draught)
 Had this been all, oft hath the murderer's life
 Been in my hands; a thousand opportunities
 I've had to strike the blow—and my own life
 I had not valued as a rush.—But still—

There's something further to be done—my soul!
 Enjoy the strong conception; oh! 'tis glorious
 To free a groaning country from oppression;
 To vindicate man's common rites, and crush
 The neck of arrogance.—To see Revenge
 Spring like a lion from his den, and tear
 These hunters of mankind!—Give but the time,
 Give but the moment, gods! If I am wanting,
 May I drag out this idiot-feigned life
 To late old age; and may posterity
 Ne'er know me by another name, but that
 Of Brutus, and the Tarquin's household fool.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

HORATIUS, HERMINIUS.

Hor. Whither away, Herminius? to the council?

Her. I go to the assembly call'd by the king;

I know,

I know not if you justly can term that
A council, where there is no consultation.

Hor. We need not now be nice in the definition
Of words, Horatius, which become a soldier
But ill at any time, at no time more
Perhaps than now. If we are not consulted
We shall be told what Tarquin and his sons
Have pre-determined: no small share of confidence.
As in the city they're the only source
Of government and law, so in the camp
They form each enterprize, direct each motion.
And, by the gods! were government and law
Temper'd with equity, or war with justice,
I would not wish for abler lawgivers,
Or leaders.

Her. Hold—No more, Horatius—
What! know you not that tents have often ears
Hearing distinctly? If the times are bad,
Heav'n in its mercy mend them! Pray however
But softly, lest the statues of the gods
Should turn informers too. Who passes there,
Crossing our way?

Hor. 'Tis Collatinus, surely,
Young in the field of war, who lately married
Lucretius's daughter?

Her. Trust me, she's reported
The fairest, and the worthiest of her sex.

Hor. Fairer than ever was a form created
By youthful fancy, when the blood strays wild,
And

And never-resting thought is all on fire.
 The worthiest of the worthy ; not the nymph
 Who met old Numa in his hallow'd walks,
 And whisper'd in his ear her strains divine,
 Can I conceive beyond her ; the young choir
 Of vestal virgins bend to her. 'Tis wonderful
 Amid the darnel, hemlock, and base weeds
 Which now spring rife from the luxurious compost
 Spread o'er the realm, how this sweet lily rose,
 How from the shade of these ill-neighbouring
 plants,
 Her father shelter'd her, that not a leaf
 Is blighted, but array'd in purest grace
 She blooms unfullied verdure. Such her beauties,
 As might call back the torpid breast of age
 To long-forgotten rapture ; such her mind,
 As might abash the boldest libertine,
 And turn desire to reverential love,
 And holiest affection.

Her.

From a praise

So warm, a stranger might form some conclusions.

Hor.

I speak as an acquaintance, as a friend,
 But yet impartially, not sway'd by passion,
 But as I really think ; had life's gay prime
 Presented such an object to my view,
 You would have thought me mad in my applause ;
 I should have flown above the shining spheres
 Of the azure vault for new comparisons,
 Yet then not thought them hyperbolical.

I loved

I loved my wife ; I praised her ; but the height
 Assign'd to her, reached not to this Lucretia ;
 Though since I've thought it much surpass'd the
 truth.

Here transport would have urged me far beyond
 All sober bounds, and yet close by my side
 Reason would have stood, smiling to see herself
 So justly superseded.

Her. Such a prodigy
 Should have a husband of no vulgar mould ;
 But Collatinus, every where I see him,
 The princes intimate, at their carousals,
 The first in noise, and mirth, and jollity,
 Of the unruly crew.

Hor. You are deceiv'd,
 He's young, perhaps unsteady, flexible,
 And yielding to example : though indeed
 As a relation, and being near to th' king,
 I don't see how, if 'twere his inclination,
 He could do otherwise : but he possesses
 Many good qualities, is gentle, kind,
 And generous, wants not courage, and I know
 Doats with the most impassion'd tenderness
 Upon Lucretia. Haply 'tis in hopes
 To ease his mind from the sharp grief of absence,
 That thus he mingles with the festive train,
 And joins the roar of idle rioting
 And dissipation ; though I ne'er observ'd
 He join'd it heartily. I've seen him oft

D

Loft

Loft in reflection then, and oft alone
 Musing in melancholy, as juft now
 Thou faw'ft him when he pafs'd us, meditating
 With his eyes caft on the ground. But let us hafte
 To the king's tent.

Her. Before—I'll follow you [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E IV. *Collatia.*

LUCRETIA, LAVINIA.

Lav. Not on all points I find can I agree
 E'en with my honour'd Miftrefs, with Lucretia.

Lucr. What is the difference, fay? In thy opinion
 How long is it, Lavinia, fince my lord
 Hath changed his peaceful manfion, for the camp
 And reftlefs fcenes of war?

Lav. In my more fimple eftimation,
 'Tis fome ten days; for time, or I'm deceived,
 Runs as it fhould with me, in yours it may be
 Perhaps ten years.

Lucr. And what fhould make thee think fo?

Lav. Nay, I have heard, and fix'd it in my memory—
 'Twas from a female fage—I think my grandam—
 That ſhe, when ſhe was young, in days of yore,
 And parted from her newly-married husband,
 Found the whole method of time's progrefs chang'd.
 Inſtead of wings behind, poſting in hafte,
 And flitting by fo quick, you could not feize him

By

By his lank lock, a gouty, hobbling wretch,
 That noting of the pain he took in walking,
 Gave sympathetic pangs.—She was a shrewd one,
 And had, if I'd believe her, in her spring
 Felt all the power of love. Oh, she could talk
 E'en then of purling streams, and cooing doves,
 And of the arms clasp'd thus, and brow bent thus,
 Of aking hearts, and such a deal of stuff,
 That had I not e'en from my tender years
 Been guarded well by the superior powers,
 I should have sought me out a swain and married,
 And now perhaps been moaning for the absence
 Of my true turtle

Lucr. So thy heart ne'er knew
 What 'twas to love?

Lav. No, I thank holy Vesta,
 Never; I've cast indeed sometimes the eyes
 Of approbation on a proper man,
 But never sent deep glances; off they darted
 From him upon another; O my heart!
 What 'twas to love! Why men are all alike,
 All mothers' sons.

Lucr. Thou hast a gadding tongue,
 But still thy mind is right; thou hast no meaning
 Affix'd to what thou utter'st.

Lav. None to speak of.—
 All that I mean, is, that if I were married,
 And that my husband were call'd forth to the wars,
 I should not stray through the grove next my house,

Invoke the pensive solitude, and wooe
 The dull and silent melancholy, brood
 O'er my own thoughts alone, or keep myself
 Within my house mew'd up a prisoner.
 I should pursue the example of my sex,
 To crowds and mirth repair; philosophers
 May love retirement; women were not form'd
 To stand like speechless statues in a niche,
 Or feed on their own secret contemplations.

Lucr. Go so; thou know'st not what thou say'st, Lavinia,
 'Tis for the light of heart, to range abroad,
 To brave the general, the licentious eye,
 And mingle with the fickle, trifling crew
 Of merriment, who laugh aloud, if Folly
 Shake but the cap upon her head, or lift
 Her finger up before their face. The praise
 Of woman is to play the housewife well;
 Ambitious in her husband's sight to appear
 Grateful and amiable, not indeed careless
 Of others, but preferring him to all,
 And his society; not cloying either,
 But manifested in a way known only
 To nice affection, and distinguished by it:
 'Tis her's with care to oversee his family,
 And govern with sure reins of government,
 No easy task.

Lav. Jove bless us! what is this?
 If a superior place in life give not
 The power of tasting greater liberty,

Of

Of dancing to the honey'd notes of gladness,
 And walking hand in hand with dainty pleasure,
 If dames of highest rank must act the house-cat,
 Sit at the hole and watch, or idly purr,
 Singing themselves asleep ; the peasant's wife,
 Or dull mechanick's, is as happy, nay
 And happier, as by necessity
 Tied ever down, she knows she must comply,
 And feels she can't attain what most she wishes.

Lucr. And why should I believe she wishes more
 Than she possesses ? Why not think there is
 A jewel call'd content ? Why circumscribe
 The habitation of true happiness
 Within the narrow, gawdy, idle circle
 Of swelling wealth, and air-blown, empty pomp ?
 Why think she cannot dwell with humble duty
 Beneath the hut of uncemented stones
 Covered with flags, well pleased to tend her children,
 Healthy and smiling babes, and when her husband
 Comes from the field, and pacing by his side
 Her elder sturdy boy, spring toward the door,
 And give them that sincerity of welcome
 Which greatness never saw ? with busy care
 And sedulous prepare their evening viands ;
 List to the scant adventures of the day,
 What passing stranger roused their faithful dog,
 What tree secured them from the scatter'd shower,
 What distant undistinguish'd noise they heard,
 And having drawn in their brief chronicle,

And

And thereto added her own little journal,
 With mutual interchanged looks of love,
 Retire to rest unbroken? No, Lavinia,
 The true delight, I'm well convinc'd, dwells there
 With nature and her offspring; and if those
 To whom 'tis given beneath the cedar roof
 High over-arch'd to sit, would relish life,
 They must as far as possible pursue
 Her paths unhackney'd, and must imitate
 Her unaffected simpleness.

Lav.

Ah, me!

I much suspect there are two natures then;
 For ever since I was a tiny thing,
 Not higher than this, I warrant, I have thought
 Of nothing all the live-long day, but shew,
 And glitter, and rich toys, and ornaments;
 And I have gone to bed, and in my sleep
 Have dream'd I had them; then with the great
 pleasure

Have waked, and wept full bitterly to find
 That I was disappointed. I must own
 I have no notion of that other nature.

Give me things quite the contrary, give me
 To enjoy life, like I know who; some ladies
 And those of the best quality in Rome
 Possess a pretty comfortable share
 Of that same nature I esteem the best.

Jucr. Let others act as they think fit, nor let it
 Be call'd in them a fault to please themselves,

12

In me a virtue.—But I thank the gods
 Who made me what I am ; who gave to me
 A father whose indulgent tendernefs
 More than fupplied a mother's lofs, who died
 E'er memory fet her ftamp on my heart's tablet ;
 Who taught me wealth was dross, and that the
 mind

Poffefs'd of confcious virtue, is more rich
 Than all the funlefs hoards which Plutus boasts.
 Oft would he fay, O, my beloved daughter,
 I've tried (nor yet in vain) to fet thee right ;
 To ope thine eyes againft the Siren charms
 Of vanity, deluding womankind ;
 Act to approve thyfelf to thine own heart ;
 Defpife the idiot custom, which breaks down
 The fence which ever fould remain ftrong built
 Between the fexes : woman's chiefeft glory
 Is in retirement, and her higheft pleasure
 Results from tranquil and domestic joys.
 Hear me, Lucretia ! fo fhalt thou obtain
 The crown of woman, a deferving husband ;
 Who not a prifoner to the eye alone,
 A fair complexion, or melodious voice,
 Shall read thee deeper, nor fhall time which palls
 The rage of paffion fhake his firmer love
 Increasing by poffeffion.—This (again I thank
 The gracious gods) this husband too is mine.

Lav. I fhould be glad to fee this husband now :
 Thefe eyes are not the fharpeft in the world :

Is

Is not that he, gay as the morning lark,
 And laughing with the sons of Tarquin there?
 His heart is bent on mirth: he thinks not, he,
 (Like other absent men) of his Lucretia:
 He did not hear a syllable of the praise
 Her tongue just now bestow'd.

Lucr. No more, no more—
 Lest I be angry with thee for a fault
 Thou can't not help, letting thy tongue run idly.—
 Yet say e'en what thou wilt, I'm not offended.

Lav. Then I will say, I don't believe that lady
 Hath truer lord, more fix'd in loyalty,
 And how can he be otherwise? Were I
 In his condition, fickle as I am,
 And wavering in affection, a true woman,
 Unschool'd, untaught by father or by mother,
 I should cast anchor, and forbid my bark
 Ever to leave the port.—What shall I say?
 Unless I say, that now I speak the truth
 E'en from my heart.

Lucr. I doubt not of thy honesty.
 Come, let us in, and we will talk together
 Of the stern dangers which attend on war,
 And rouse the passion fear. I know not how,
 But there is something grateful to the soul
 Even in terror; tho' we dread the event,
 It gives a kind of pleasure while imagined.
 That my fears ever may be realized
 In thee, O Collatinus, Heaven forbid! [*Exeunt.*

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE I. *The King's tent.*

TARQUIN, TITUS, ARUNS, SEXTUS.

Tar. My glory, and my pride! my three bold sons!
 Whom I rejoice in more, than in the increase
 Of empire and dominion! Where's the king
 Can say with me, his children are his senators,
 His judges and his generals? while you
 The first supply, I find they were as I
 Esteem'd them justly, mere superfluous branches
 To the common weal, which I with prudent hand
 Have lopp'd. For government can't be too simple,
 Torn by variety of ranks and orders,
 Action is lost in fruitless canvassing,
 Empty harangues, and vain deliberation:
 While vigorous enterprize, amid the jar
 Of bickering parties dares not shew his face.
 No secrecy observed, the enemy
 Knows well the bent of every expedition
 As soon as plann'd, and as the event's foreseen,
 Prepares against it warily, and strongly.
 Is this to be a king? Oh, only name

E

Of

Of royalty! in fact a vassal slave
 Tied down and manacled, condemn'd to act
 Not from himself, but as by others tutor'd.
 While some bold party swallowing up the rest,
 Seizes the reins of empire, and bestows
 All offices of trust. He, flimsy shadow,
 Titular monarch, cannot help himself:
 But like a wretched fisher in a boat,
 From which the sails are rent by the rude winds,
 The rudder clove asunder, and oars lost,
 Still rides indeed upon the billows' backs
 Born by the flux and reflux of the tides
 At random, till despair and famine end
 His miserable life, or the crazed hulk
 Admit the briny wave, then both together
 Sink in the deep, and ne'er are heard of more:
 Who'd be a king like this?

Sex. Who would, my father!

Rather would I betake me to the plough,
 And till with utmost toil a land ungrateful,
 A barren desert, where but here and there
 A blade of corn would rise, and my whole harvest
 Scarce serve to keep body and soul together,
 Till the next year's return. Such servitude
 Were not to be sustain'd, 'twere worse than death.

Tar. Still keep these sentiments, my son; they shew
 The man, not the poor-spirited mean creature
 That generally is call'd so, but the man

Born

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

27

Born to command, to lord it o'er these earth-
worms,

To sit in the exalted seat of empire,
And wield the sceptre ; to be placed a god
Above the rest, as o'er him reign the gods.
Had I been guided by the moderate maxims
Of doating politicians, had I not
Acted on principles which my soul started,
And hands dared execute, I should have lived
Coop'd up within the walls of Rome, and call'd
Only that petty city, those few acres,
My sum of territory : have pursued
The canting superstitions of old Numa ;
Or thought with Ancus, that to build a bridge
Over the Tiber was a wondrous work ;
Or, like old purblind Servius, have recorded
Offices, ages, deaths, births, marriages,
And kept the public register of the state.
But I resolv'd to rise above controulment,
To seize the glorious substance of true majesty,
To be a king indeed ; and men are not
The restive beings some have but supposed :
They on timidity encroach, but dare not
Look settled resolution in the face.

Habit makes even slavery easy. Hence
I turn'd my conquering arms against the states
Around, and made Hetruria pale with fear :
Now may the proudest nation yield to Rome,
And own her its superior ; hence I'm honour'd,

E 2

Dreaded

Dreaded abroad, and courted ; hence at home
 Absolute lord ; and hence shall leave my children
 A stable throne, which shall continue firm
 To latest ages, if not wantonly,
 Or foolishly, they deviate from my steps.

Tit. May Titus perish, if he deviate wantonly !

Ar. And Aruns, if he deviate foolishly !

Sex. And Sextus, if he deviate either way !

Tar. I know you better each, than to suspect you ;
 Nor think that my example, or my precepts,
 Have been so little view'd or weigh'd so lightly.
 Keep but you three together, in the band
 Of mutual fixedness, and you may defy
 Time, and the adversity of accident,
 Or force of malice.—But, my sons, the reason
 Of this our meeting ; this strong city Ardea,
 Like to a mighty mound, dams up the current
 Of our progression ; were but this our own,
 The whole Rutilian state of course would follow.
 The question is, how to attain this end ?
 Assault we've tried, and wept our hardy veterans
 Slain in the unequal task ; their walls are high,
 And in few places only they're assailable ;
 The inhabitants are numerous, and resolv'd
 To sell their freedom dear ; plenty as yet
 Makes them high-mettled, and they laugh to scorn
 Us and our strength. Speak each what you advise,
 Whether again to advance our scaling-ladders,
 And strive with fire and sword to gain admission ;
 Or

Or whether change our siege into blockade,
And starve them to surrender. Titus, speak,

Tit. I see no reason here for much debate,
Or many words to fix determination.
Our soldiers with their late successful toil
Dispirited and faint; their's with the contrary
Valiant and bold: again, the uncertainty
Of being more successful than before,
The probability that we shall not;
The ill consequences if we make the assault
In vain; all tempt me to dissuade from action;
To gird the city well, harrasses the country,
Debar them from supplies, sap their high walls,
Wait till we gain a lucky time for onset,
Or deep-laid stratagem; this gives a conquest
Certain, tho slow; and this do I advise.

Ar. Think not I speak through contradiction, Titus;
But I can bring as many arguments,
As cogent too, and couch them full as briefly,
Why we should not delay; in every fall
Made since that trial, they've been beat to the gates;
This hath restored the courage of our soldiers;
And shame now adds a double sting to bravery.
Delay breeds relaxation in our duty.
The Rutili and their allies may join,
Hem us between them and the walls of Ardea,
Or march to Rome itself. Delay breeds danger.
I do not like delay; it is a word
I hate; 'tis ominous as the raven's croak;

It

It bears with it a cold and death-like sound.
 Might I but lead the army once again
 To the attack, I'd be myself the first
 To mount the wall, and answer for the event :
 If not, let the events speak for themselves,
 Or speak you for them who determine otherwise.

Sex. Could I by fly imposture hope to win
 This Ardea, as I did the town of Gabii,
 I would again submit my back to the scourge,
 And from my father's cruelty, a suppliant,
 Intreat the gull'd inhabitants ; nor wait
 His hint, by cutting down the tallest poppies
 In the presence of the messenger I sent him,
 To slay their leaders. If this could be done,
 Or any thing like this, I'd not advise
 Speedy assault, or to protract the siege,
 In both of which I can espy no small
 Degree of danger. Titus well advises,
 And so doth Aruns. A small grain would turn
 The scale in either's favour. If our father
 Determine for the assault, about it speedily,
 I'll climb to the top of the wall as soon as Aruns.
 If Titus shall be thought to have better counsell'd,
 I'll watch the turn of every circumstance ;
 And hard it shall be, if some dexterous craft
 Suit not with the opportunity which must
 In the course of things present itself.

Tar.

I wish
 That circumstance may offer : if it doth,

I doubt

I doubt not of thy ready apprehension.
 Aruns must be o'er-ruled ; he knows my temper
 As little brooks delay as his, but ardour
 Must yield to the necessity of the times.

Ar. Aruns is pleased, if every one is pleased,
 He yields contentedly, is quite resign'd.

Enter BRUTUS.

Tar. Say, what would'st thou ?

Br. Horatius and Herminius
 And others the centurions of the army,
 Came with me to the door of the tent ; they ask
 If 'tis your pleasure they should be admitted ?

Tar. Horatius and Herminius may approach,
 Do thou dismiss the rest, these two shall bear
 Our orders.

Enter HORATIUS and HERMINIUS.

Say, Horatius and Herminius,
 Whether you either can advance a reason
 Of any force, why we should not block up
 This town of Ardea, and by protracting
 The time, render ourselves more sure of conquest ?
 With freedom speak.

Hor. I have but only one.
 Kept from their homes so long, the populace
 Already thither cast a longing eye ;
 They had been taught to expect an easy prey,
 With speed to be obtain'd ; I fear their murmurs—

Tar.

Tar. Say'st thou, the murmurs of the populace !
 Shall I be moved by the many-headed beast ?
 No : if thou dost not know these truths already,
 Learn them of me. The grosser herd of men
 Nature hath mark'd for servitude, to bear
 The yoke with passive neck, and walk in trammels.
 Woe to the king, who gives a tittle up
 To the unfoul'd brutal rabble ! He shall find,
 When 'tis too late, and sorely rue his folly.
 Stop a wild horse when he hath slipp'd his bit,
 Stick close your knees, and make him slack his pace
 At your command ; guide him with gentle words,
 And tell him that he should not throw his rider.
 Who talks of liberty, he means licentiousness ;
 Let the fat soil put forth that dangerous weed
 But one poor inch, and you shall see it rise
 With growth gigantic, till it reach to heaven
 And blur the golden firmament. He knows
 But little of mankind, who thinks by mild
 And gentle usage to exact obedience.
 What follows ? Mean opinion of his talents,
 Contempt, then Discontent is quickly seen
 To ope her muttering mouth, close on whose heels
 Tread bold Conspiracy and rank Rebellion.
 I know them well ; fond of variety,
 And novel change ; bold where they see no sign
 Of opposition, like the high-swoln tide,
 Through every open gap they rush amain.
 I know them well, the slavish animals,

Let

Ar. There's one, ere Tarquin tells his resolution,
Whose sage opinion hath not yet been ask'd.

Tar. I beg his pardon, and will ask it strait.
Well, kinsman Lucius, what is thy advice?
Shall we with speedy onset, or delay,
Subdue these Ardeats?

Br. Humph! humph!—No, no—
That scheme won't do—I have it here, but cannot
Express myself in presence quite so full
As I could wish: but e'er long time is pass'd,
I hope to acquaint you with a plan of mine,
By which the greatest enemies of Rome
Shall sink before her; but as yet excuse,
If I conceal the principles I go on.

Tar. We do, and render thanks for thy good-will:
And, Lucius, when thy plot is ripe, acquaint us.
Full many a year have we experience had
Of thy sagacity in admonition,
And quick dispatch in business.—'Tis determined
To slack the arm of war, and give it rest.
The sword be still; but let pale meagre hunger
Scowl in their streets, and let the torrid thirst
Parch them without remorse; extremity
Must conquer, and to that these haughty Ardeats
Must yield perforce. Be it your's, Horatius,
And your's, Herminius, to acquaint the people
With our resolves; tell them, that tho' 'tis slow,
Yet the possession of the town is sure.
Enlarge upon the riches of the place,

Which.

Which must be their's, if patience be but their's.
 Quiet their murmurs, if they will be quieted ;
 If not, our will is fix'd, and dread example
 Shall punish the seditious,

Hor. We shall do
 As we're commanded. [*Exit Tarquin.*]

Sex. Who this evening
 Knows aught of Collatinus ?

Hor. We beheld him
 In the camp's farthest limits, where the grove
 Of pines deep-shading skirts its southern side.

Sex. He should be with us at our feast to-night.

Ar. I know his haunts ; his melancholy thoughts ;
 And why he roams alone. He shall appear
 At the appointed hour. [*Exit Aruns.*]

Sex. You'll sup with us.

Hor. Her. We shall my Lord.

Sex. And thou without all doubt,

Br. I pray excuse me. May I be excused
 This once ?

Sex. Excuse thee ! No ; impossible.
 Thou art the life, the soul of company ;
 Such wit, such humour, and facetiousness,
 As thou possessest, more especially
 When the brisk flagon hath been circling round,
 And the young god, with laughter in his eye,
 Expands the liberal soul ; why I would rather
 Not feast for half an age, than want thy company.
 Without thy flighty bursts of merriment,

Wine would be quite infipid, and the hours
 Drag fluggifhly their heavy heels along.

Br. Say you fo? There's my hand, if I don't meet you,
 And be as merry as the beft of you,
 And rally with as good an air and fmart,
 And cut my joke, and laugh at it myfelf
 As loud as you, and fhew the wit in my teeth,
 Call me an afs; the ftupid animal
 I moft abhor.

Tit. Strange that he fhould abhor
 His neareft of kin.

Sex. Come, let us hence; this night our brows fhall fhine
 With the gay glories of the god of wine;
 We'll feize the leifure which this calm fhall yield,
 And for the foaming bowl, lay by the fpear and
 fhield:

If ne'er relax'd war's finews would be faint,
 The bow is ufelefs which is always bent.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE II. *Another Part of the Camp.*

ARUNS, CLAUDIUS.

Ar. Where was he when thou faw'ft him, Claudius?

Claud. My lord, between the camp, and where our troops
 Poffefs the neighbouring heights, where thrown
 acrofs

The hafty brook, a rafter bridge is feen

O'erlain

O'erlain with sod which totters as you pass ;
 There, where beyond, a path winds up the bank
 Trod only by the cottager, who lived
 Hard by, at morn, and eve, while fortune smiled,
 Now exiled by our arms ; beneath an oak
 Whose bare top, of its leaves bereaved, and trunk
 Dented with thunder, like a veteran looks,
 Who many a hard campaign hath weather'd out,
 Cover'd with scars, yet tho with sinews shrunk
 And pithless limbs now bending o'er his staff,
 Still claiming reverence : there lay Collatinus
 In musing wise, a knotted root of the tree
 Upheld him half-reclined, his eyes were fix'd,
 Nor did he see me as I quick brush'd by ;
 When I had pass'd the bridge, I turn'd me round,
 And saw him suddenly spring from the earth,
 And dart into the grove, where 'mid the boughs
 And thickening under-wood I lost him soon.

Ar. And where hast thou been school'd ? Where hast
 thou got

This tedious dull prolixity ? this quaint
 Descriptive fribbling coxcomb-like minuteness ?
 This web spun from the vacant brain ? O Jove !
 Lash me, and lash me well these trite describers !
 These murderers of clear language and intelligence ?
 I ask'd thee where thou mett'st with Collatinus ?
 Had'st thou but told me in the neighbouring wood
 South of the camp, say should I not have found him
 As easily as now ? Besides the trouble

Of

Of seeing in my mind a clumsy painting
 Drawn by a bungling artist? Pr'ythee learn,
 At least when I ask a plain question of thee,
 To give as plain an answer. Gracious powers!
 And is the gift of speech of so small value
 That we must lavish it away thus prodigally
 As 'twere a trifling knick-knack? Oh, reform,
 Reform—No words; reform, and hold thy tongue.

Claud. My lord, to pleasure you in every thing
 Shall still be my endeavour.

Ar. No, it will not.
 I bade thee but this moment lock thy lips;
 Why, but because I liked thy silence best?
 But hence; thou know'st the horse we saw to-day;
 Dost thou not recollect it? Find me out
 Its owner; understand'st thou? 'Tis the horse
 Which I so much admired; dost thou remember?
 The chestnut with the hyacinthin mane:
 Enquire me out its owner; let him know
 I would possess that horse,

Claud. My lord, I will. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A Grove near the Camp.*

COLLATINUS *alone.*

Whence are thy charms, ambition? I have look'd
 With piercing eyes but none can I perceive.
 Why art thou so pursued by human kind?

Is

Oh, hear me, heaven, drive to her native hell
 This harpy pest, and chain her firmly there,
 That she may ne'er embroil the world again,
 But harmony may reign, and peace, and love,
 And friendship's bright, unfulled, maiden fire,
 And every grace and virtue.

Enter ARUNS.

Whom have we here?
 Say, man of melancholy mood, what dost thou
 Moping alone? Beneath the umbrageous boughs
 Of this deep wood, what secret wizard spells
 Exert'st thou to enslave the struggling moon?
 To make the wolves howl, and the shepherd-dogs
 Start from their unsound sleep? To make the trees
 Set free their earth-clench'd roots, the rivers turn
 Back to the source, and the old bed-rid earth
 Tremble for fear? Nay, do not think I view thee
 With dreadful apprehension. Did thy eyes
 Glance fire, as sure I think their rays are dim;
 Thy mouth spit flames, as sure it never will;
 Didst thou lead growling in thy right hand chain'd
 The infernal triple-headed dog, as now
 I think I only spy a pine-branch there,
 I'd tell thee with unterrified aspect
 Thou art my prisoner. Come along with me.
 Whate'er thy occupation, I am bound
 For thy appearance at the feast to night
 Which Sextus gives.

Col.

Col. Were I inclined to go,
 Illness my lord must be my plea of absence.

Ar. Illness! and what physician's wife advice
 Exposed thee thus to the damp evening air?
 Hangs not the dew upon the dropping leaves?
 And doth not Philomela, at the pause
 Of every pensive strain, turn back her head
 And wipe the trickling moisture from her wing?
 Thou hast no illness but crude fancy's thoughts,
 No symptom of disease.

Col. I feel the contrary.

Ar. Thy hand—thy hand: I feel a lover's pulse.
 Were I to beat the bushes well around
 'Tis ten to one but up the game would start.
 There are three kinds of men, whom I have found
 Most notable that way.—First your shy fellows,
 Who hang the head, and if you speak to them,
 Are blushing ripe immediately. Next those
 Who shun society, and swear that man
 Is a curst creature whom they cannot live with.
 Thirdly and lastly, all religious,
 Of all denominations. These three kinds
 Of men, have all hot amorous blood, which tingles
 Through every vein, and will not give them rest.
 Among the second thou comest in point blank,
 A mixture hast thou of the first and third;
 Tho' were the gods to shake thee, thy religion
 Might fall from thee for aught I know, as fast
 As leaves blown from a sapless tree in Autumn.

G

Col.

Col. Dost thou then think it hangs so loosely round me?
 Were it indeed bound with firm bands of brass,
 And knit with pins of hardest adamant,
 Whatever of religion I might have,
 Were Aruns but permitted, soon he'd strip me,
 And leave me cold and naked as himself.

Ar. I own, I have no notion of these tricks,
 These ceremonial farces, sacrifices,
 Prophetic entrails, truth-foreseeing birds,
 Chicken who teach by hieroglyphic pease,
 And all the holy jugglings, which our priests
 Would fain persuade us owe their origin
 To the essences divine.—Wilt thou deny
 That Numa's nymph Egeria, was a strumpet,
 Who met him often in a wood like this?

Col. What profits my denying or affirming?
 But say, is Aruns likewise ignorant
 Of that pure incense which the breast unspotted
 Offers to heaven; that fine ethereal fire
 Which by the gods created first, and placed
 In the human bosom, fed by the fair deeds
 Of moral goodness, rectitude, and truth,
 Flies upward to its native origin?
 Hath he no notion of that holy instinct
 Which bids us look with awe, toward the great
 Ruler
 Of heaven and Earth? and of that conscious pleasure
 Arising in the soul, when bending low,
 In humble reverence, we pay homage due

To

To the prime power of all? Who call'd us forth
 From the abyſs of nothing into being?
 Placed us above the unthinking grazing herd?
 Gave to us reaſon, by whoſe power we ſtand,
 Foremoſt of all his works, lords of this world?
 Who fram'd the univerſe for us alone;
 And, for our pleaſure? hung the flaming ſky
 With all its glowing orbs? Adorn'd the earth
 With fruits, with flowers, and herbs of various
 ſorts?

Fill'd earth, and air, and ocean's womb immense
 With ſubject creatures, who might yield him
 homage,

Or be to him for food? Haſt thou no notion?—

Ar. Plague on my notions! Plague upon thy queſtions!
 Think'ſt thou the gods high-throned (if ſuch
 there be)

E'er heed ſuch ſneaking abject two-legg'd animals
 As thou and I are? From our praife what glory
 Can they obtain? Or from our firſt exiſtence
 What ſatiſfaction? Speculative dreamers
 May fancy things like theſe; but chief your buſy
 Crafty pretenders, who well know to ſothe
 The ear of ignorance, tell theſe curious tales.
 They hope to profit by them. Each fond fool
 Swallows their canting potion glibly down,
 And looks on them as heaven's own oracles.
 'Tis all a jeſt, a may-game, or what's worſe;
 Whatever knaves may teach, or aſſes credit,

Eafe is the pleasure of th' immortal gods,
And interest is the god of mortal men.

Col. Eafy it were to prove, how ill they merit
The name of deities, who fit inactive
In slothful state, while chance, that is, while nothing
Governs the world, and turns heaven's hinges round.
To prove, that man is from contemptible
Far, far removed ; that there are some of real
And undissembled piety, who feel
What they profess, and from these feelings teach ;
Who in the exercife of their devotion,
Taste greater joy than kings have power to give:
Nor would for the unlock'd wealth of the wide
earth,

Offend 'gainst that fixt monitor within.

Eafy it were these things to prove to ears
Of sober sense, and ferious meditation.

Ar. Oh, mock me not ! I am as ferious
As father Winter, when the cold north-east
Blowing between his shoulders through a chink,
Brooding he fits, and rakes the embers up,
In his ill-furnished hearth.—To prove it, hence !
Take it, ye winds ! 'Tis my religion—hence !
Lighten'd of this, now my good friend and I
May talk together without quarrelling.
I know not its advantage, but to make
Men four, and splenetic : I'll ne'er speak more
Against, or for it. Pr'ythee, Collatinus,
Forgive me, if in too impertinent

And

And bold a strain I spake in its defence :
 'Twas irony, my friend, sheer irony,
 I thank thee that thou didst retaliate ;
 I see the absurdity, and bid a long
 Adieu to it for ever.—Hold thy tongue.—
 'Tis gone, 'tis hence, 'tis no where, 'tis a theme
 For priests, for ideots : thou hast cured me quite ;
 I have no qualms, not one, away ! away !
 Adieu !—'tis well.—And now, my Collatinus,
 I pr'ythee tell me, nay without a jest,
 In earnest feriousness, what dost thou here ?
 And what employ'd thy meditations
 When first I saw thee ?

Col. Wilt thou tell me, Aruns,
 How I shall answer thee ? for never yet
 That I remember did I give to thee
 An answer thou wert pleased withal ; if grave,
 'Twas mighty dull, if gay, 'twas vastly silly ;
 E'en answer for me, Aruns, here I am :
 Look round ; what say the objects which thou see'st ?
 What say the objects which thou left'st behind ?
Ar. The objects which I left behind, are good ;
 The objects which I see are good ; all's good ;—
 I should not speak at all.—A camp, a grove,
 A grove, a camp.—Why I may beat my brains
 For ever, e'er rouse up one new idea.—
 Thou art indeed a moralizer, thou
 Canst pick a sentence out of every stone,
 And make the springy grass on which thou tread'st
 Thy

Thy monitor. I'm stupid; fancy with me
 Is long since dead; to each external thing
 I'm as indifferent as if they never
 Fill'd up their corner of existence. Blessing
 Upon the Powers above! who steel'd my nerves,
 And blunted every sentient faculty,
 So that in vain, they'd dart before my sight
 Their flaming thunderbolt.—But what of me?
 I from this time appoint thee my preceptor.
 I have improved already, I'll improve
 Still more, tell me thy meditations.

Col. I will, nor do I think, what I'd not utter
 To all mankind. I wish with equal truth
 All the whole world could say so.—I will own
 I came not to the camp with my good will:
 I have no quarrel 'gainst the Ardeats,
 They never injured me, nor do I know
 A Roman whom they did; but 'twas my duty,
 I was commanded, and obeyed; where danger
 Raged in the fight, I was not backward: thou
 Canst witness for me, mid the foremost bands
 I braved the ruffian Death.—My mind's my own;
 My service is my king's. I own I pitied
 Those against whom I fought; nor wish'd to
 conquer
 The brave, the injured. Mid the roar of war
 I long'd for peace, and when the fight was over,
 I would have found it in my tent; but there
 It was denied; if I gave up one moment

To

To short reflection, strait intruded on me
 Shoals of your new-created officers :
 Pert coxcombs, who in words flame in the van,
 And stare each terror of the field in the face ;
 Tho' when in arms, half-dead, they only know
 Each motion by report : these brother soldiers
 (For such they scruple not to call themselves)
 Worried my ears to death : I left the camp.

Ar. No wonder : such as these disgrace the name
 Of manhood ; oft I've seen them pale and wan
 Not dare to lift an arm against the foe,
 Yet talk at such a swelling boisterous rate,
 As they would equal our good ancestor,
 And slay whole hosts alone.

Col. Quite discontented with myself and them,
 I hither came.—I cast my eyes around,
 I saw the labours of the husbandman
 Destroy'd ; I saw the smoking villages ;
 A thousand horrid thoughts of misery
 Struck on my mind : I heard a thousand groans
 Of fathers, mothers, children.—I could not
 Refrain from tears, I could not as I live,
 To think that industry, and innocence,
 And sweet content, and genial home-bred joy,
 Should from their native mansions be expell'd,
 And their possessors slain perhaps by the hands
 Of brutal violence ; or doom'd to lead
 A life not worth the name, the prey of want,
 Of woe, of anguish ; 'twas indeed with tears
 I thought

I thought upon it, and each human glory
Faded before me.

Ar. 'Twas most lamentable ;
I could methinks weep, weep my sad eyes dry
At the relation, had I not sworn solemnly,
When some years since lost in the melting mood
I play'd the fool egregiously, ne'er more
To weep at any rate.—These are sweet feelings ;
I lose a deal of joy, I know full well,
By not indulging them : sweet dainty feelings.
What a fine tale hast thou been telling me,
Of troublesome companions, dismal fights,
And soft compassion melting into tears !
Think'st thou I can't see through all these
pretences ?

Once, but not lately, once, when yet a boy,
I felt I know not what of odd emotions ;
The peevish, amorous, whining, doating god
Had with his arrow pierced my liver through.
When absent from my love ; but not my wife ;
I sigh'd, and groan'd, and shook my penfive head,
And fought out desert rocks, and nodding pines,
And murmuring streams to soothe my sickening
soul.

And if a friend by chance had found me out,
And ask'd what ail'd me, Ail me, gravely said I,
I'm pitying the vices of the world,
And thinking of its follies ; though myself
Was then a child of folly, and as true a one

As

As any she e'er bore ; a woman's fool.—
 But do not weep again : when these same wars,
 These curfed wars, are over, it shall see
 It's own true love again.

Col. Now may I die——

Ar. No false professions, good my friend ; die say'st thou !
 No, live ; live whilst thou may'st ;—we stand upon
 A hanging bank fast crumbling in the stream
 Of headlong time ; if swoll'n by rains, or vex'd
 By raging winds, perhaps an hour, a moment,
 Sweeps us away ; and shall we aid, ourselves,
 Each fatal accident ? Heap up a load
 Upon our shoulders, doubling our own weight,
 And plunging in the waves before our day ?—
 Likest thou the metaphor ? Come then with me ;
 And we'll to-night laugh off these clogging weights ;
 So that at least we will insure ourselves
 Some twelve hours longer ; hence with discontent ;
 Why should we purse our brows up, when the hand
 Of youth, would keep them smooth ? Come we're
 expected ;
 Sextus will be obeyed ; go thou my friend
 Without compulsion.

Col. I will follow strait,
 Go thou before.

Ar. No, thou shalt with me go.

If once the fowler cast aside his eyes,
 The stricken bird he thought a destined prize,
 Hides in the sedge ; he looks around in vain,
 The shy eluder ne'er shall he obtain. [*Exeunt.*

H

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE I. *The Tent of Sextus.*

SEXTUS, TITUS, ARUNS, BRUTUS, COLLATINUS,
 HORATIUS, HERMINIUS,
And others, as drinking after the Banquet.

BRUTUS, *pretending Drunkenness.*

I say it was not right, it was not right, [To Her.
 And had you been in Greece you'd have learn'd
 otherwise ;
 Contrary to all the rules of war ! Why, look ye,
 Sir ;—What's your name ?—You know no more
 of the matter
 Than a crack'd egg.—A general indeed !—
 What signify numbers ?—Superiority !
 I say superiority is a word
 I have no complaisance for ;—No, Sir, none ;—
 And I would beat the Rutili, though their armies
 Were full of superiorities.

Ar.

He would, indeed,
 You stand no chance, Herminius, if you talk
 With Brutus on the art of war.

Br.

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS,

Bacchus himself is but a fool to me :
 I will cry Iö longer than he shall.—
 I'll teach you how to drink, Come, never flinch it,
 Here's to the cultivation now of ethics,
 Ethos, our Mos, it is of Greek extraction.
 Aye, and I'd have you all to know it too,
 I am a scholar, that I am ; and learning,
 I suck'd it with my milk.

Col. O miserable, and degraded type [*Afide,*
 Of man! unhandy and half-finish'd work
 Of nature! Is this a thing to laugh at? No.
 I could not laugh, tho smiles were plenty with me
 As the hairs upon my head,

Sex. Come, my good Brute! why fit we still? Our lips
 Are thirsty, and with earnestness desire
 The beverage of the god; put round, put round.

Br. We will so, when we please. Brute say you! Brute!
 Are we not arbiter? Are we not royal?
 King of the feast—Brute! Brute, Sir, in your teeth,
 What! Brute indeed!

Ar. Most noble arbiter!

Tit. Most royal king of the feast! if it please your
 greatness,

The dignity, and height of your large excellency!

Sex. Most worthy and renowned! absolute Sir!

Br. We're mollified; and bear not callous ears.

Sex. Come then, here's to the fairest nymph in Italy;
 And she's in Rome.

Ar.

Ar. Here's to the fairest nymph in Italy ;
And she is not in Rome.

Sex. Where is she then ?

Ar. Ask Collatinus ; and he'll name Collatia,

Sex. His wife ?

Ar. E'en so.

Tit. Is it so, Collatinus ?

Well, 'tis praise-worthy in this vicious age
To see a young man true to his own spouse.—
Oh ! 'tis a vicious age.—When I behold
One who is bold enough to steer against
The wind and tide of custom, I behold him
With veneration ; 'tis a vicious age.

Her. to Hor. True things are said in jest ; I like not this.

Hor. Nor I.

Br. Our youths are waxing warm.—To my feign'd
part [*Afide,*

Pretended sleep shall give some little pause.

Cal. Princes, I ask you not to stay
Your mirth, though I'm the subject ; if to love
My wife's ridiculous, I'll join the laugh ;
Though haply I shall not laugh at myself.

Ar. The conscious wood was witness to his sighs,
The conscious Dryads wiped their watery eyes,
For they beheld the wight forlorn to-day,
And so did I ;—but I shall not betray.—
Here now he is however, thanks to me ;
That is, his semblance, for his soul dwells hence.—

How

How was it when you parted? She;—My love
 Fear not, good sooth I'll very constant prove.—
 He;—And so will I, for wheresoe'er I steer,
 'Tis but this mortal clay, my soul is here.

Sex. And pr'ythee, Collatinus, in what trim
 Did the god Hymen come to thee? How dress'd,
 And how equipp'd? I fear me much he left
 His torch behind, so that thou could'st not see
 A fault in thy beloved, but hast since
 Judg'd by the touch alone; or was the blaze
 So burning bright, that thy bedazzled eyes
 Have since refused their office?

Col. And doth Sextus
 Judge by his own experience then of others?
 To him, I make no doubt, hath Hymen's torch
 Discovered faults enow: what pity 'twas
 He had not likewise in his other hand
 A mirror brought, wherein to have read himself.

Sex. 'Tis well; I like thee now: and this I answer;
 Now thou art gay, I will be mighty grave,
 And much we shall not lose by the interchange.
 In sober sadness, this my own experience
 Hath taught me; this is my opinion,
 Of which I would not give a tittle up,
 Though strait-laced Pallas should appear in person.
 That women are most dear, delicious,
 Inconstant creatures, artful, amorous,
 Fruitful in schemes to please their changeful fancies,
 And fruitful in resources when discovered.

Before

Before assurance, and a tongue well-hinged,
 They fall by thousands ; a strait back, a leg
 Well-turn'd, and nimble, cutting quick vaults well,
 A lively eye, yet in their presence bending
 As if o'er-awed ; these, with the aforesaid graces,
 Will madden them by millions ; from the girl
 Who feeds on chalk, to the grave married matron
 Who is so chaste, forsooth, she wipes her mouth
 After her husband, lest the breath of man,
 If settling there too long, should taint her virtue,
 I use them as they are ; their native passion,
 I know, is love of novelty ; however,
 Others more subaltern, as love of riches,
 Grandeur, and shew, may seem to over-sway it ;
 Hence, tho' they swear they love me wonderful-
 well

After some little time, I know the gentle
 And pretty creatures heed not the strict truth ;
 I know it is not for myself they love me ;
 So delicacy bids me rove again ;

I please their darling passion, and am blest'd,
Col. This is the common cant ; the stale, gross, idle,
 Unmeaning jargon of all those who, conscious
 Of their own littleness of soul, avoid
 With timid eye the face of modest virtue,
 All those who to the name of womanhood
 Join dignity of soul, and innocence
 Unstain'd by inward base desire ; who flush'd
 With triumphs over those they dare attack,

The

The weak, or forward, those whose lines of feature
 Proclaim there's no resistance to be made,
 Or those who spring obtrusive forth, and meet
 Half-way the doughty champions; strait declare,
 (And fain would make their shallow notions
 current)

That woman-kind are all alike, all arrant
 And willing daughters of the game, and hoot
 At virtue, wheresoever she passes by them.
 I have seen sparks like these, and I have seen
 A little worthless village cur all night
 Bay with incessant noise the silver moon,
 While she serene, throned in her pearled car
 Sail'd in full state along.—But Sextus' judgment
 Owns not his words, and the resemblance glances
 On others, not on him.

Sex. Let it glance where and upon whom it will,
 Sextus is mighty careless of the matter.
 When to the moon we stray for similes,
 'Tis to be fear'd, our wit is lunatic.
 However, my intent went with my words.
 Now hear what I have seen: I've seen some fathers
 Who have with care kept up their daughters housed,
 For no deformity of mind or person;
 No, not in the least; tho' wherefore otherwise
 They chain them thus, heaven knows: I have
 seen men
 Who have these monsters married; pardon me,
 I meant these extraordinary beauties;

Young

- Young men indeed, and novices that way,
 And they at such a rate have doated on them—
- Col.* Sextus, no more, lest I forget myself,
 And thee. I tell thee, prince—
- Ar.* I tell you both—Great king of gods and men!
 Why must we tongue-tied sit, and mute, attending
 To brawls like these? Are these fit offerings
 For Bacchus' shrine? He, peaceful god, delights
 In other gifts; a plague upon you both!
 If ye must needs rail thus, stay till to-morrow,
 And to it fasting.—Collatinus, think not
 I discommend thy warmth, it is becoming.
- Tit.* Indeed I rate it high in estimation;
 Fidelity in love is a rare quality,
 And merits praise: but how much rarer is it,
 And more deserving praise in married life?
 Hold, Sextus, hold for shame.
- Sex.* Why, pray, good Sir, may I not praise the wife
 Of this same testy froward gentleman?
 Her shape slender and delicate? her face
 Breathing the air of beauty? her sweet eyes,
 Their fire mellowly temper'd? (though I never
 Beheld her in my life) yet why might not
 My tongue, prompted by pregnant fancy, form her
 A type of excellent perfection?
 And from her person turning, (as I should,
 Had I not been withheld by interruption)
 Have on her many virtues descanted,
 But on his cheek offence must quivering sit,

I

And

And dream'd-of insult, the abortive-child
Of misconstruction, whose near-sighted eye
Discerns not jest from real ?

Col.

And would Sextus

Perfuate me, that I am indeed so weak,
As that my brain confused, blends opposite
And sundry kinds of phantasies together,
Passing by all distinction ? that I read
The acts and words of others, always contrary
To their intent ? E'en think so, there's no harm
in it ;

I heed it not ; jest on ; I'll aid your humour
Let Aruns use me for his mirth and laughter,
And Titus deck me with ironic praise ;
With all my care I'll foster the mistake ;
Nor shall my self-importance undeceive you.
But when you touch a nearer, dearer subject,
Perish the man, nay, may he doubly perish,
Who can sit still, and hear with sneaking coolness,
The least abuse or shadow of a slight
Cast on the woman whom he loves ! though here
Your praise and blame are equally alike,
Nor really add the least, or take away
From her a hundredth minim of a grain
Of her true value, more than they would add
To the holy gods, or from their state diminish.

Ar.

If that a man might dare to ope his lips
When Collatinus frowns, he, I presume,
Without incurring censure of prophaneness,

Or

Or blasphemy gainst his domestic, private,
 Conjugal goddess; might enlarge upon
 The qualities belonging to his own.
 I grant you that Lucretia is divine,
 I don't deny her apotheosis :
 Yet will I say my wife is not amifs,
 That is, taken as a woman ; your divinities
 Need not regard the duties of the house,
 Their minds are too sublime : 'tis theirs to range
 In quest of pleasure : pleasure is divine,
 And mortals must not think to grasp at it :
 Yet as a woman, could my eyes but reach
 As far as Rome, I make no doubt they'd see
 My wife far otherwise employ'd, and better,
 Far better, as a woman, than the deity
 Residing at Collatia.

Tit. And mine beyond them both employ'd ; more
 careful,
 More house-wife like.

Sex. Well-timed ; I'll seize th' occasion :
 View this Lucretia e'er I sleep, and satisfy
 My senses whether bruiting Fame says true. [*Aside,*
 I'll stake my life, and let us mount our horses,
 And post away this instant toward Rome,
 That we shall find thy wife, and his, and his,
 Making the most of this their liberty.
 What ! 'tis the sex : enjoying to the full
 The swing of licence which their husbands' absence
 Affords. I'll stake my life that this is true,

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

And that my own (ill as I may deserve it)
 Knows her state best, keeps best within the bounds
 Her situation claims; that she is with her family,
 While your's are feasting at their neighbours'
 houses,

Or rioting at home.—Say, Collatinus?

Col. Had I two lives I'd stake them on the trial,
 Nor fear to live both out.

Sex. Let us away then.

Ar. With all my heart.

Tit. And mine.

Col. What would you pray?

You are not really mad!

Sex. He would retract

What he hath said; but we'll proceed to trial;
 Thou goest with us, by Jupiter.

Col. Is it right,

Think you, had we a cause more urgent, thus
 To leave the camp? Should Tarquin hear of it—

Sex. Oh, heed not Tarquin: peace—submission—peace.

We'll wing our horses; well we may get there,
 And back again, e'er the shrill-sounding bird
 Pipe to the morning star. Yet e'er we go,
 Once let the flagon circle to our wives:
 What says our arbiter?

Brutus, starting out of his feigned sleep.

Wives! aye, aye, yes, yes, wives! there's mine
 A paragon when time was; aye, and virtuous,

Chaste

Chaste as the lily, aye, and prudent too,
 And a good houswife ; four a little or so ;
 Tart, tart and humourfome. Sextus Tarquin,
 Sextus,

Thou old king's youngest fon, say, am I drunk ;
 I am not drunk, by Saturn : thou art Aruns ;
 No, thou art Sextus ; ah, I love thee, Sextus ;
 I will be heard : what doft thou laugh at, villain ?

[*To Claudius, who attends.*

I'm arbiter I fay ; I'm arbiter ;
 And to be laugh'd at ! Why Herminius,
 Laugh'd at ! why how, what, Oh—

[*Pretends to sleep again.*

Sex. What my unconquerable Brute, again
 Deceas'd !—Come, let us hafte to horfe :
 I long to fee this phœnix of her fex,
 This earthly deity, this divine mortal,
 Who hath alone poffeffion ta'en of heaven,
 And keeps out all the reft of women : a plague !
 'Tis rather hard on them : rather in her
 Shews not an over-burthen of good-nature,
 To hoard up all perfection in herfelf.
 Her qualities dealt forth among the reft,
 Would make them oreads, dryads, no contemptible
 Objects of worship—Collatinus—grave ?
 Nay, fmile ; thou'rt not the firft, that hath mistaken
 A cloud for a fubftance ; women have fine outfides,
 Fair blufhing cheeks, and modeft-looking eyes,
 And

And tongues more soft—aye, and hearts, feeling
hearts,

My Collatinus ; and in them—Come, come
Be gay.

Col. I am not sad.

Sex. But fearful for th' event.

Col. Not in the least.

Sex. A little.

Col. Not a whit,

You do not know Lucretia.

Sex. But we shall.

Come, without more delay. Do you along
Horatius and Herminius ?

Hor. In the camp
Order'd on duty by the King your father.
Our presence now is doubly needful.

Sex. Well,

E'en as you please.

Ar. But what of Brutus there ?

Shall we take him with us ?

Sex. Oh, by all means :

His shallow brain is soon o'erflowed with wine,
And soon the quick tide ebbs, and leaves him dry.

We'll to thy tent, Aruns ; let him remain :

We'll send for him before we mount our horses.

Tho he's so poor a brute, yet some how custom
Makes necessary vile society.

Come, will you hence ?

[*Exeunt.*

BRUTUS

BRUTUS *alone.*

Poor, poor indeed ; for no one is my friend,
 And I am friend to none : but I say false,
 For I'm a friend to all mankind but tyrants.
 Yet have I never known the dear affinity
 Which springs from mutual trust, when the full
 heart

Bounds to meet heart.; ne'er felt the double joy
 Caught from communication ; and fierce grief
 Hath in my breast emptied his store of arrows :
 Nor have I dared seek out one kind physician
 To pour his lenient balm. Pitied by some ;
 Laugh'd at by most ; by my own wife despised ;
 Who for convenience wedded, as did I
 For sake of offspring. Would to heaven I had not !
 For I have been no father to my sons ;
 I could be none ; their minds unschool'd, nay worfe,
 Corrupt ; which they, I fear, and I shall rue ;
 And let us rue it ; friendship I give up,
 And tear each private tie from my fix'd heart ;
 Happy beyond all possibility
 Of small contracted life, could I achieve
 That purpose.—Could achieve !—aye, that is it—
 Why can I not achieve it ? Oh, that gnaws !
 I feel it deeply here.—The tyrant lives,
 A politic tyrant ; curse on his policy !
 Forever hath he kept the state in motion,
 Nor given a resting-place on which to set

A foot

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

A foot against him. War eternally
 Abroad, or works of slavery at home,
 Busy the youth of Rome : these last, I know,
 Ill suit their free-born minds ; and discontent
 Sat lowering in their looks when they left Rome.
 The hopes of plunder only drew them thence,
 And that forced ardour cool'd by this delay,
 They murmur in their hearts, and curse the power
 And wild ambition which hath brought them
 hither.

Enter CLAUDIUS.

The horses are prepared, the princes wait,
 And bid thee haste.

Br. I shall attend them—go.

[*Exit* Claudius.]

Br. This bears a face. Hold!—Let me see.—To give
 These madmen now the slip : and when they're
 gone,

Rush in the midst of the camp, put on myself,
 And with the impetuous language of the soul
 Rouse up the enthusiast flame.—

The soldiers, without doubt, will see the change
 With wonder, and amaze : and to possess them,
 Some god had wrought the miracle, would be
 An holy lie, which they perhaps would swallow :
 And so their passions might be work'd to a pitch
 Even of desperation, which would prove
 Fatal to the arch-tyrant. But these passions

Will

Will soon subside: and, fond of novelty,
 They'll from the son expect a milder reign;
 And by fair words, and silver promises,
 Again be bubbled, and repent too late.
 And what becomes of me? I die, nought done;
 Or skulk away my life in banishment,
 For ever prey'd on by remorse, not cheer'd
 By one faint gleam of what hath long sustain'd me,
 Hope, and which still forsakes me not. Besides
 His sons may have possession of the city:
 And there are hostages, the wives, the children
 Of all the soldiery; sure, certain pledges
 Of their fidelity: Of this no more.—
 As I am known to none for what I am,
 To me all men are open, and discover
 Their inmost thoughts; tho' not in words express,
 Yet in the speaking motions of their eyes
 And lines of face, in which my mind, unseen
 As the airy ministers, reads those of others.
 Valerius is the soul of honesty,
 Brave, generous, hating arbitrary sway;
 So is Lucretius, so are the prime of the army:
 Horatius and Herminius; say to these
 I should unfold myself? I will. To night,
 When I reach Rome, I'll seek out the two first;
 And if I find, on trial, they are apt,
 Will lay some share of the load on them, which I
 Have borne so long alone; I think together,
 E'er leaden time shall creep on many a day,

K

We

We may contrive some glorious means to free
 Our bleeding country from the savage gripe
 Of lawless power, heal all her festering wounds,
 And once again attire her in the robes
 Of godlike freedom. [Exit.]

S C E N E II. *Rome.*

LUCRETIUS, *to a Servant.*

If any messenger come from the camp,
 Or with particular and urgent business,
 You'll find me with Valerius: otherwise,
 To whomsoever enquires, give for an answer
 That I am gone abroad you know not whither.

Serv. I shall, my lord.

Luc. This night, in undisturb'd society,
 I'll commune with Valerius. What a man!
 In whom I doubt which most to admire, the strict
 Severity of manners he possesses,
 And unaffected virtue, which might well
 Become the days of yore, e'er Saturn left
 These our Hesperian fields, and the just maid
 Sought the supernal mansions; or the unfeign'd
 And pious love he bears his bleeding country;
 Or the sincere, strong-beaming warmth of friendship.
 Friendship! Oh, truly glorious name! not that,
 Giddy and thoughtless, which instinctively
 Leads toward a fancied good, deluded youth,

By

By health begotten, and quick flow of spirits,
 Oft fading from the moment it is born:
 Not that which courtiers deal in, and the knave
 Professes to his mate, which lasts no longer
 Than shines the sun of fortune; but which, proved
 By true experiment, and frequent use,
 Is found a settled principle, a tie
 Strengthened by habit; what is fair and honest
 Link'd to what's fair and honest; sure the man
 Who knows not this is wretched; he who knows it,
 Can ne'er be totally unhappy. [Exit.

Enter BRUTUS, to the Servant,

Belong'st thou to Lucretius?

Serv. Yes.

Br. I pr'ythee

Tell him, unless business of consequence
 Employs his time, I fain would speak with him.

Serv. He that would speak with him at present, wants
 What he is not so likely to obtain.

Br. Why not? If he's at home——

Serv. Bringst thou a message?

Comest thou from Tarquin?

Br. No.

Serv. Then I know not

Where thou canst find him.

Br. But he must be found;

Matters of moment have I to impart,
 And what concern him nearly.

K 2

Serv.

Serv.

I believe it.

When he returns I'll——

Br.

Pr'ythee, honest friend—

Dost thou know me ?

*Serv.*Oh, mighty well ; good night. [*Exit.**BRUTUS alone.*

Thus 'tis we plan ; and thus our favourite schemes
 Are blasted in the bud ; we travel on
 The road of life ; we cast our sight far forward ;
 We think we spy the goal, our eyes are fix'd,
 And fancy gives us earnest of possession :
 Meanwhile ten thousand, thousand accidents,
 Each as minute, and imperceptible,
 As the fine floating threads of Midsummer,
 Obliquely cross us ; small, yet strong as fate.
 Our progress is denied ; the nerves of action
 Are firmly fetter'd ; as with idle toil
 We strive to extricate ourselves, dark night steals on,
 We fall, and haply never rise again,
 Ne'er see the ruddy face of morn : or lost
 In fogs and mists rove darkling, till arrived
 At where we first set out, we strive again,
 Again are baffled by the sturdy trifles,
 And sink at last fatigued, and quite o'ercome,
 Into the arms of death. Sorrowful thought !
 But yet in strictness true.—Come life, come death,
 He hath not lived in vain, who so hath lived
 To satisfy himself.—Poor argument !

In

In reason good, in practice weak.—For me,
I am not satisfied, nor will be satisfied,
Missing the mark.—Words — Words — Deeds
 speak the man.

And there I fail.—But cease ; can human power
Command occasion ? Wrest the scepter'd sway
Of mortal things from the strong rule of heaven ?
And to its will bend the reluctant step
Of coy contingency ? All-potent beings !
Into your hands do I resign myself.
If Rome must sink, if I must live in vain,
And die as I have lived, I will not murmur ;
I'm nothing ; you are wise, and just, and good.—
Yet why not seek Valerius ? Heaven, and earth !
It is too late ; here come the rioters ;
I can't escape them ; yet a time may be—
Yet, hence despair ; still thou and I are twain.

Enter SEXTUS, TITUS, COLLATINUS, ARUNS.

Ar. May they all sink, the victims of despair !
And may each plague of human life be mine,
When I again presume to promise aught
Upon a woman's head.

Tit. We're-trapp'd indeed,
And Collatinus bears away the bell.

Sex. I do not think so. If the women here
Love music, there is music at Collatia.
What, if they love feasting and revelry,
Are there not feasts and revels at Collatia ?

Ar.

Ar. But such a hubbub; such a monstrous din,
 So wild a roar, I never heard before.
 I could have sworn, the frantic bacchanals
 Were come from Thrace. The shrieks of the
 Sabine maids

When loudest, were not heard so far away
 As this shrill mirth. I fear'd to pass the threshold,
 And trembled for my head; yet it was well
 That they were all together; for it saved
 Our precious time. Yet triumph not, my friend;
 Or rather triumph now, for now thou may'st,
 Crest-fallen shalt thou be anon.

Col. For me

To triumph were absurd; more sober joy,
 Believe me, shall be mine. As for my crest,
 I trust, a single fibre of the plume
 Shall not be foil'd to-night.

Sex. We'll try that soon.

Whom have we here? Hah, 'tis our fugitive—
 What made thee leave us? What's thy business
 here?

Br. My business here! I have no business here.
 At yonder corner of the street I mis'd you,
 And thought you turn'd this way.

Sex. My witty Brute,

Give thee a possibility of wrong,
 And thou wilt ne'er go right.

Br. I could not help it, 'twas no fault of mine;
 I came this way, and deem'd that I was right,
Tho

Tho' baulk'd by fortune, I could not attain
The sought-for end. But will you turn again
Down to my house? Shall we not see my wife?

Sex. Thy wife! without a doubt we'll see thy wife:
But not at present; some weeks hence or months
Will serve the turn: and in the interim
Take heed thou givest her warning of our purpose,
That she may be at home.—Now to our horses.
Come, hurry, it grows late; I'm all impatience
To place his haughtiness on an equality
With those he seems to mock: a little hour
Will turn the laugh, when he may dear repent
This fancied mastery.

Col. Proceed, and try,
Speak after at your leisure.

Sex. So presuming!
So sanguine still! so full of hopes!

Col. So sure
In stable knowledge.

Sex. Vain self-flattery!
I'll hear no more; haste, haste! Brutus, before,
And lead the way!—The alertness of our chief,
Methinks, should animate us.

Tit. Certainly.

Ar. It doth; it gives us wings; we cleave the air.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

SCENE III. *Collatia.*

LUCRETIA, *at work with her maids.*

Lucr. I thank thee for thy tale, Lavinia,
 Though little heeded; it would raise my mirth
 Sometimes; tho now I could not but retreat,
 To that which Clelia had before related.
 And didst thou know the youth my Clelia?

Cle. Full well I knew him; 'twas my sister's son.
 Oft e'er he died, for he was long a dying,
 I went to see him; oftimes he ran o'er
 Each circumstance of his unhappy love,
 And the cold scorn which prey'd upon his heart.
 And when his cheeks were wan, and his fair eyes,
 Which once the liveliest that e'er glanced the flame
 Of ardent faithful passion, were grown dim,
 And scarce to be perceiv'd; when his strength fail'd,
 And in a low weak tone he call'd me to him,
 Entreated me, if ever I esteem'd him,
 To keep the secret from the cruel maid,
 Nor offer his departed soul a violence,
 By giving pain to her; then, with a feeble
 And trembling motion, press'd my hand to his
 bosom,
 Till I was almost dead as well as he.

Lucr. And what became of her? I think thou said'st,
 She with remorse was seiz'd; and at the hour

Of

Of midnight, starting from her bed, sought out
The grave where he was buried.

Cle.

There she died.

I think, that with the assistance of Camilla,
I can make out a dittie, which was framed
On that occasion; but 'tis melancholy,
And you have heard enough of woe already.

Lav.

Oh! for the sake of heaven, keep to yourself
Your gloomy dirge; remember, that my mistress
Lies all alone; she will not wink an eye;
Or if she does, will dream of them, and wake
In sad affright.

Lucr.

Oh, fear not, my Lavinia:

Tho much I like these tales of native woe,
I have no superstition, and no fears,
Which will disturb repose. How thou art moved,
I know not; but to me a pleasing calm
Succeeds these narratives of grief o'erpast;
And though I sympathise, when they are told,
It is a joy I would not be without:
For always, in my mind, Lavinia,
The soft delight, which feeling pity brings,
Tho but indulged a moment, far excels
An age of wanton gay festivity,
Which the vague soul enjoys not while it tastes.
Clelia, begin; Camilla, you assist her.

L

BALLAD.

B A L L A D.

Daughter of fruitless woe, arise!
 And quit this yew-tree's noxious shade;
 O'er Nature midnight brooding lies,
 And poisonous vapours load the glade.

Ah, gentle stranger, leave, I pray,
 A wretch with woe forlorn, like me;
 I wish to be alone; thy stay
 Doth but augment my misery.

Daughter of fruitless woe, arise!
 The clouds of heaven begin to lour,
 The cold north-east now bleakly flies,
 And drives along the fleety shower.

Stranger, in vain thou seek'st to move,
 This pillow shall support my head;
 This grave, in which lies my true love,
 Ah, when alas, shall I be dead!

Daughter of fruitless woe, arise!
 Dost thou not know how vain thy tears?
 Canst thou recall him by thy sighs?
 Will he return to all thy prayers?

Stranger,

Stranger, thou didst not know the youth;
 Nor yet the love to me he bore;
 Thou wert no witness to his truth,
 Ne'er heard'st thou his persuasive lore,

Too well, I know, my fruitless woe,
 Can ne'er recall his vital breath;
 But I to his embrace can go,
 And seek him in the house of death,

Daughter of fruitless woe, arise!
 Alas! to ears all deaf I speak;
 Cold damps suffuse her dying eyes,
 Life's quivering beam forsakes her cheek.

Lucr. Thanks, Clelia; thanks, Camilla. (In this humour,
 I'll pray unto the gods, and then to rest.) [*Afide.*
 How wears the night, my damsels? Are your tasks
 Near ended?—Gracious Powers! who enters here!
 My lord! most welcome.—

Enter COLLATINUS, TITUS, SEXTUS, BRUTUS,
 ARUNS.

Col. Welcome, these my friends,
 Lucretia, our right royal master's sons;
 Passing this way, I have prevail'd with them,
 To honour our poor house,

L 2

Lucr.

Lucr. Welcome, yourself!
 And doubly welcome, that you bring such friends!
 To whom I offer silent thankfulness.
 My heart is full of joy.—Retire, my damsels,
 And think on other work.

Ar. Rather, fair lady,
 Anger should meet us, thus unseasonably,
 And with abrupt intrusion, breaking in
 On sacred privacy.

Lucr. No, my good lord ;
 Those to whom my love, and my respect is due,
 Can ne'er intrude upon me ; had I known
 This visit, you, perhaps, might have been treated
 With better cheer, not a more kind reception.
 This evening, little did I think my house
 Would have possess'd such lodgers.

Tit. Rather, lady,
 Such birds of passage ; we must hence to-night.

Lucr. To night ! Doth not my lord, say no to that ?

Col. I would, Lucretia ; but it cannot be.
 If the house yield a small collation,
 To set before your guests, I pray prepare it :
 We must be at the camp, e'er morning dawn ;
 An hour or two will be the utmost limit
 Allow'd us here.

Lucr. With all the speed I can,
 I'll play the caterer ; though I am tempted,
 Would that delay your journey, to be tardy,
 And prove a sluggish housewife. [Exit.

Ar.

Ar. This is, indeed, a wife! here the dispute
 Must end. Henceforth, there's no comparison.
 I could have sworn it was not in my nature,
 To envy any married man his bargain;
 Nor do I envy thee: but 'tis a wife
 Of wives, I needs must own, a jewel pick'd
 From out the common pebbles. To have found her
 At work among her maids, at this late hour,
 Plying the needle, is not strange at all,
 When I have seen what I beheld just now,
 (And yet I could not have believ'd e'en that)
 But to be pleas'd at our rude interruption,
 Not to squeeze out a quaint apology,
 As, "I am quite aham'd; so unprepar'd;
 "Who could have thought! Would I had known
 of it!"

And such-like gentle hints, to tell her guests
 She wishes them away; this carriage causes
 Some little wonder.—Envy! No—Yes—No.
 I give thee joy, my friend; and yet her beauty,
 Might in some men, raise envy; but I know not
 What envy means.—Thou'rt happy, Collatinus,
 Thou must be happy, if thou know'st thy happiness.
 What think'st thou, Brutus?

Br. Happiness consists
 In thought, in thinking; that's to say, that happiness
 Is ours if we are happy—that's to say,
 We're happy, if we think that happiness
 Is ours, then we are happy.

Ar.

- Ar.* That's all true ;
 Or, that's to say, in verity thy words
 Are wondrous wise ; the cream of rhetoric,
 And marrow of morality, is thine.
- Tit.* I must express my satisfaction too ;
 And glad I am, that our dispute occasion'd
 This journey hither ; if once Collatinus
 Complain'd of my ironic praise, his conscience
 Must tell him I'm sincere, when I affirm
 I think him blest'd beyond comparison
 In such a peerless dame.

Col. Enough, enough.
 The Gods forbid I should affect indifference,
 And say you flatter me ; I am most happy.
 But Sextus heeds us not ; he seems quite lost.

Ar. Regard him not ; these reveries you know
 Are common to him. He will soon recover.

SEXTUS, *to himself.*

Had she staid here till now, I should have done
 Nothing but gaze. Nymphs, goddesses,
 Are fables ; nothing can, in heaven or earth,
 Be half so fair ; Venus in flesh and blood !
 Love's true divinity ! If such the charms
 Which meet the eye, oh, what delicious beauties !
 With what a frenzy of delight—But these
 The husband must alone—to me the senses
 Are bounded ; yet my warm imagination,
 Pregnant with rapture—

Ar.

- Ar.* Brutus, go and wake
Yon absent dreamer.
- Br.* What ho! Sextus, Sextus!
- Sex.* What, Brutus, ho! Come quick, a Salian dance!
Well done, most brisk and active, why a nimbler
And lighter beel, an attitude more graceful
I ne'er beheld: by Jove, I'll recommend thee
To the priests, and thou shalt head the band; what
say'st thou?
And spite of thy nick-name, we'll have it posted
In flaming characters upon thy back,
"This is a man," left by thy motions cheated,
The people take thee for a bear.—What mean'st
thou?
How darest thou laugh at me? Am I thy jest?
- Br.* I know not what this accusation means.
I did not laugh. Say, did I, Aruns, Titus?
- Ar.* You did, I needs must say it.
- Tit.* And at him.
- Br.* At him I never laugh'd in all my life.
- Tit.* Nay then, thou didst at us.
- Ar.* What dost thou see
In us ridiculous? Are our faces changed?
Look we like monkeys? Are our noses flatten'd?
And tails grown out?
- Br.* Nay, now I see you laugh
At me; now are you not in jest, I pray?
Was you not, Sextus? Yes, you haply think,
I can't see through it, when you laugh at me;
But

But I, perchance, read men a little deeper
Than you imagine.

Ar. Why I never doubted
Of thy sagacity ; I always found thee
Most wise, most apt, shrewd, quick, and capable ;
Yet when thou pleasest to relax, thy wit
Leaves me in doubt, whether I should prefer
The mirth-engendering friend, or cool adviser.

Br. That's spoken like himself now, that's like Aruns.

Tit. Brutus, I heard the strangest thing last week !—

Br. Aye, aye ! What was it ? Tell me.

[*Ar. Br. Tit. Col. apart.*]

Sex. I must and will—What then ? I do not care.
Marriage ! A trick ; nature ne'er meant it—
marriage !

Why how dare any man assume a right
To keep from me that beauty heaven created
To inflame my soul when look'd on, and placed
there

Passions to take the alarm, and with wild wing
Rush maddening toward the object they desire ?
I must possess her. But, her chastity—
Away, frosty idea !—Others chaste
Have seem'd, and but have seem'd. The snow
would lie

For ages, unassail'd by the warm air.
But should she—Force ! no, no. And yet why
not ?

Peace,

Peace, undigested thoughts ! Down, down, till
 ripen'd

By further time ye bloom.

Tit. and Ar. laughing.

ARUNS to TITUS.

Who, Sextus? Yes I have seen such an one ;

I saw him at the siege of Ardea.

I thought he was a soldier of indifferent,

Moderate valour ; 'twas reported thro'

A little fearful : but being son to the king,

The common people dared but mutter it.

Sex. I thank you ; what you judge me meditating

I know not : but both now, and heretofore,

My mind was in the camp. How wine could
 heat us

To such a mad exploit, at such a time,

Is shameful to reflect on ; let us mount

This instant, and return.

Col. Now we are here,

It will inroach but little on the night,

Should we partake the slender fare together,

Which will by this await us. Pray, my lords,

This way.

Sex. Along ; we follow strait.—Ye walls, disclose not

My dark conceptions ; I'll ere long return.

Till when, my soul, by this fierce sting tormented,

Will rage unsatisfied, and feel no rest. [*Exit.*

A C T IV.

S C E N E I. *The Camp.*

ARUNS, TITUS.

Ar. A knave! a base-born knave! But if he doth not
Severely pay for the insult.—Such a villain!
I offer'd him the value of his horse;
He would not part with it, not he: he would not?
But force, perforce he shall. A churlish slave—
I'll have the horse, were there a guard around it—
Of fifty thousand men, all of them knights—
Aye, and his head to boot.

Tit. What, brother, hath the wind affronted you?
Talk you to air? And chide the passing gale
For blowing in your face?

Ar. He had the assurance
To reason with me too: but if I do not
Marr all his reasoning for the future, may I—
What, Titus?

Tit. Even he.

Ar. You see me moved—
Would you have thought it? Such a paltry, base,
Ill-manner'd groom! A Roman knight! a hind—
A vile unpolish'd hind—

Tit.

Tit. Say, who is this?
Ar. Who is this? He, there—what d'ye call him?
 Fabius.

A knight! a villain: but may all the gods
 Lay on me all their heaviest punishments,
 If he within these two hours doth not treat
 The hungry worms! Nay, and I'll mount his
 horse,

The horse he loves so well: the horse he would not
 Part with to me; I'll mount that very horse,
 And make him prance upon the very spot
 Where his warm corpse lies buried, and ram in
 His earthen bed full closely round about him.
 Then see who'll reason, who'll pretend to prate;
 Then see—

Tit. Why what is this? I hear of Fabius,
 Of Fabius and a horse, and threats on threats.
 Be calm, be cool.

Ar. I've not been in a passion;
 No, not in the least: but if I don't make him
 A fearful specimen of my revenge,
 A lesson to be read with shivering horror
 By all the knights in the army—If I do not,
 Ne'er may my pallid cheek again be red;
 Ne'er may my wrinkled brow again be smooth;
 Ne'er may the flash of anger quit my eye;
 May my whole visage ne'er regain its turn
 Of native feature! If I'm not revenged,

May all the complicated ills of life
Affail me!

Tit. Oh, ye gods! how passion alters
The noblest of your works! And is this Aruns?
Is this the son of Tarquin? This the brother
Of Sextus and of Titus? what! turn'd woman!
Scarcely should I have seen my wife thus rage
In impotence of words, denied a bauble.
Had'st thou desired what thou could'st not possess,
I might forgive thee; could'st thou not revenge,
I might excuse this storming with the tongue.
But when thou may'st possess what thou desirest,
And when revenge attends upon thy beck,
Ready to punish insult, why this clamour?
This idle ineffectual rhapsody
Of empty words?

Ar. Empty or not, I reckon not.
I spake to please myself. Must I be curb'd
By every one? Not speak? Nay, Titus, stay,
You leave me not.

Tit. Then pr'ythee speak to the purpose.

Ar. I'll speak of this same horse, no other theme,
And of the base-born varlet who bestrode it;
A curriish miscreant; but let that pass.
Should one of Phœbus' steeds tire in his wain,
This would supply its place. A slave! a traitor!
I ask'd him if he would exchange with me,
And bade him cull my stud.—The head so form'd!
Answering in nicest symmetry each limb—

Such

Such harmony of shape! Such just proportion!
 I ne'er saw strength with beauty so combined.
 An eye of fire! A neck clad in effulgence,
 And glorious as the arched bow of heaven!—
 He told me, 'twas the only thing he loved,
 His sole delight, his pride; ask'd me, if I
 Would willingly give up the thing I loved;
 Suppose my mistress; begg'd I'd not desire him;
 Was sorry that he must refuse me; would I
 Give him the best Italia e'er produced,
 Nay, give him three for one; in brief, he could not,
 He would not part with it.—Such a fine creature!
 It ne'er was got by mortal Sire; the dam
 Was surely by the northern wind impregn'd.
 The grass bends not beneath his feet; he's swifter
 In his career than is a morning sun-beam;
 And graceful as the wing of Mercury,
 Sliding to earth upon an azure cloud,
 The herald of the gods. A vital spirit
 Informs each fibre, and directs its motions.

Tit. Enough, enough.

Ar. No, it is not enough.

This horse is mine, it shall be mine at least;
 I would not part with it for half a kingdom.
 Poor, foolish Fabius! Little doth he think
 My minister of vengeance dogs his heels.
 When thou dismountest, Fabius, clap his neck,
 Speak to him lovingly, as thou wert wont,
 Take thy last leave, nor see the hand of death
 Aim'd at thy unarm'd side.

Enter

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Ar. Is the deed done?

Claud. Fabius, is fled my Lord.

Ar. Fled, say'st thou? Whither?

Claud. Suspecting, as I think, my Lord, some ill,
And conscious of his just deserts, he rode
On to the postern gate; I follow'd him,
Resolv'd to execute what you commanded.
Far off upon the distant hills appear'd
A band of the Rutilian foragers.
He the sharp spur stuck in his horse's sides,
Gave him the rein, and mingled with them strait.
They shouted, wheel'd in concert to the right,
And soon escaped my eye.

Ar. Thou wert too slow.

My purpose known, thou should'st have put on
wings

As quick as thought: thou wert too slow, too slow.

Claud. My Lord, unless I had been more than human,
And could have trod with step invisible,
And swifter than the passing moments do,
I could not have done more, it was impossible.

Ar. Impossible! tut, there's a word: impossible!
There's no such thing but in the vapid brain
Of fools and cowards. Why, thou sluggish varlet,
Dost thou not know it?

Claud. What, my gracious Lord?

Ar. If thou dost not, go hence about thy business,
And

And dream of it by the way. [*Exit Claud.*] 'Tis
nothing—nothing.

He that lets slip an opportunity,
Deserves to lose the fight of it for ever.
'Tis but an accident ; it doth not signify.

Tit. Why thou art quite become the slave of humour,
And froward as a child.

Ar. Oh, heavenly Wisdom !

I see thy shining progress mid the stars,
Brightening the galaxy ! To thee the orbs
Pay adoration from their lucent spheres !
Thou crown'st the everlasting fount of day
With dazzling radiance ! Thou lead'st on the year !
The seasons in their varied liveries !
And, more than all the rest, inspirest the soul
Of thy warm votary Titus !—Let me feel,
Oh, sacred goddess ! but the faintest touch
Of thy benignity, and I will look
With such a gravity, an air so solemn,
As doth thy bird from out the hollow oak,
Circled with clasping ivy !—Oh, what pity
That I should pray in vain, who pray so seldom !
What then remains ? To hurl a curse or two
At that blind strumpet Fortune, who takes care
Always to break my shins with her damn'd wheel ;
To laugh in spite of her, a peevish laugh ;
To wish all men no happier than myself ;
To wish that I were such a fool as Brutus,
(As they are happiest whose sense is smallest)

Since

Since I can't be so wise, so sage as Titus.
 And so, farewell! I'll even to my tent,
 And try if I can sleep out this long siege;
 For waking slumber is the worst of sleep.
 And so, farewell!

Tit.

Farewel!

Ar.

But stay, inform me,

If all thy gravity and wisdom knows,
 Where Sextus leads his vagrant feet? Last night
 I mis'd him. Privately, as I'm inform'd,
 He left the camp; but for his destination
 I could not learn it: know'st thou?

Tit.

No, I know not.

Ar.

I might have guess'd so? 'twere a thing as easy
 To say when last Jove put on his disguise,
 Slunk out at heaven's back gate, and what Alcmena
 Received him to her arms. A plague on secret
 Mysterious hidden lechery, I say!
 Why can't a man be open in his dealings?
 Give me the easy fair who will not blush,
 Tho' the broad sun should stare her full i'th' face.
 A plague on pains taking! Your sly intriguers
 Are the only whoremasters; all the rest are chaste,
 And fornication is necessity.
 Imagination must forsooth be tickled;
 Your squeamish stomachs must be tantalized,
 E'er they'll be hungry. Hence your amorous parlies.
 Whisping from windows, squeezing of the hand,
 Glances, the lewd interpreters of thought;

Who

Hence all the monkey tricks, which e'en the woman
Who caufes, laughs at—Foh! I'm sick to death—
Such worfe than affes in the fhape of men!

A pimping pleasure too, not worth the toil
Of ftretching out an arm thus far. When Juno
Will be my paramour, I'll turn gallant,
Get me a pair of wings, and every night
Mount up to her ethereal bed-chamber.
Till when, I leave intrigues to thee and Sextus.
And fo, farewell! I'll to my contemplations. [*Exit.*

Tit. I know thy contemplations well; beneath
That garb of chiding spleen, and discontent,
Ambition couches, though thou feem'ft unsteady
As the vague moon; now, gay as florid fpring
Intent upon delight; now, clouded o'er,
And fow as bleak December; rating in the morn,
What thou in the evening prized'ft; yet the eagle
Looks not with eye more fix'd upon the fun,
Than thou on royalty. I've feen thee through.
And Sextus is not fo enslaved to pleasure,
But that ambition claims the upper feat
In his aspiring mind. I've feen through both.
Three kings at once! no, that can never be.
One only bird arifes from the afhes
Of the imperial phœnix; in the fky
There's but one glorious light. Let Tarquin die,
And thefe young fcyons muft not fpoil the growth
Of the elder towering oak; to o'ertop their heads,
And keep them down, cannot perhaps be done;

N

They

They grow too quick. But still they may be
 blasted ;
 The canker-worm may prey on them in secret ;
 Or one good stroke of a keen axe urged home,
 In all their pride of foliage, lays them low.—
 But peace ! Sextus, I see, is near at hand.

Enter SEXTUS.

Sextus, well met. What, thou, with matchless
 care,

From when the sun left his wave-quilted couch,
 Hast, full of anxious thoughts, and scorning rest,
 Been traversing the camp ? How stand the soldiers
 Affected to their duty ? Dost thou think
 Our ditch and palisades will guard us well ?
 And is the rampart strong in every quarter ?
 Or hast thou been an espial toward the city ?
 Keep they the guard of the wall with usual
 strictness ?

Hast thou found out a weaker place unknown ?
 Or hath thy working brain yet wove the net,
 Or limed the twig, or dug the fatal pit-fall,
 For their destruction ?

Sex.

Every hour of time
 Hath its peculiar and allotted business.
 There is an hour for war and vigorous action ;
 There is an hour for counsel and advice ;
 There is an hour for wine, and noise, and madness ;
 There is an hour for pleasure, and the feats
 Which

Which wanton Venus ever joys to look on.

Last night, my Titus—

Tit.

Was the hour of time

When Sextus—

Sex.

Pr'ythee take the fact at once—

Lay with Lucretia—Why that moon-eyed stare?

Lay with Lucretia—Dost thou understand me?

Lay with Lucretia—Need I to repeat it?

'Tis what my tongue could dwell upon with
rapture,

Thro the infinite descent of rolling ages.

Let my eyes sparkling with the new-caught joy;

Let my cheeks stain'd with a more genial hue;

Let all the dancing transports which play o'er

My face; let these my arms which held her close

In twined embrace; let these my lips which
kiss'd her,

Suck'd in her charms, and now still taste the
impression;

Let every atom of this body tell thee

That I enjoy'd Lucretia.

Tit.

What, the wife

Of Collatinus! of thy friend! thy kinsman!

Sex.

Of Collatinus, of my friend, and kinsman;

Nearer related now indeed than ever.

But say, is Titus' conscience then grown squeamish?

Was it debauch'd last night, that 'tis so sickly,

So puling in the morning?

N 2

Tit.

Tit.

Not a whit ;

But struck with some astonishment, however,
 Lucretia ! and the wife of Collatinus !
 By her consent too !

Sex.

Yes.

Tit.

By some sly trick then ;

Some damn'd insidious circumvention,
 Some dark thick plot, some artifice close-couch'd,
 Of cunning stratagem ; or else thro' fear
 Of some worse ill than death. Say now, how
 was it ?

For if there ever was among the sex,
 Or purity, or innocence, 'twas there.
 She could not be a hypocrite ; her face,
 Her look, her outward manners, spake a heart
 Unknowing of deceit ; a soul of honour,
 Where frozen chastity had fix'd her seat,
 And unpolluted nuptial sanctity.
 I do suspect thee much ; 'tis but a boast,
 Or else an act of low, of mean revenge,
 To blast that virtue, which thy utmost efforts
 Can ne'er subdue.

Sex.

Sextus is wont to boast

Of favours which he ne'er received, or take
 A pleasure in thin unsubstantial mischief.

Tit.

No ; I acquit thee there.

Sex.

E'en as thou wilt.

But I suspect shrewdly thou enviest me :

Which

Which more to raise: know that this foul of
honour,

This piece of unthaw'd snow, this pattern rare
Of nuptial purity, I found to be
A woman; found her all alone, at midnight,
Found her in bed, undress'd, found her reluctant,
Found her, indeed, chaste to outrageousness,
(Tho' that but added fuel to the flame)
Yet us'd no violence, and yet enjoy'd her,

Tit. Thou talk'st in riddles.

Sex. Hear then the plain truth.

Now two nights since, when first we saw Lucretia,
Her air, her voice, her look, her every motion,
Enkindled passion in me e'en to madness.
Thou dost remember how my soul was buried
In senselessness to every object round;
Tho' haply unsuspecting of the cause.
I swore then to possess her. All that evening
She unadvisedly with new incentives
Stir'd up my purpose; but quite unresolv'd
How to pursue that purpose, I last night
Again went thither, only one attendant
Accompanied me; business of importance
Feign'd for my quick return. Her husband's friend,
And Tarquin's son, she could not but receive
A nightly guest: yet in her eye, methought,
She bore no great good-will to Tarquin's son.
She, without doubt, had heard his character,
And hard 'twas to dissemble. I nought heeded

This

This air of coldness, but with sage discourse,
 And temperate, entertain'd her ; talk'd of modesty,
 Of self-denying virtue, of strict honour,
 And mutual holy faith 'twixt man and man ;
 Of wedlock's happy league, and the young brood
 Of smiling innocents ; then turn'd my talk
 To battles, sieges, dreadful deeds of arms,
 Adventures rare, by martial prowess won :
 A subject, to the which all woman-kind
 Open a greedy ear ; but not a word
 Of love, nor yet a sally of loose thought
 Escaped me ; thus I fell in with her humour,
 And, unsuspecting, she retired to rest.

Tit. And whither thou ? But I'll not interrupt thee.

Sex. Now was the depth of midnight ; silence reign'd
 Through all the house ; not the least sound was there ;
 You might have heard a feather fall to the ground ;
 And sleep on every brow had fix'd his dead
 And leaden hand, as nature lent her aid,
 To my design. Kind nature lent her aid,
 Nor I refused the call : with cautious tread,
 Suppose thou seest me entering the room,
 Where lay that sleeping Venus ; in one hand
 My sword, a lamp in the other ; think thou seest me
 Reading her naked charms ; think (but thou canst
 not,

It is impossible, had'st thou not seen her)
 What I then felt ; my soul was all on fire,
 My limbs all trembled ; and my salient heart

Beat,

Beat, as 'twould find a passage through my ribs.
 Half between sleep and wake, Lucretia cries,
 Art come, my lord? But, when she throughly waked,
 What a wild look of horror and surprize!
 She knew my purpose well; or, if she did not,
 I kept her not in long suspense, nor wasted
 The time in vain apology; my sword
 Threatened her instant death, without compliance;
 And, willingly, she cried, yes, willingly,
 I'll die ten thousand deaths; Oh, my dear lord!
 Where, where art thou; Oh, Sextus! I conjure
 thee

By every sacred, every tender name,
 Make me not despicable to myself,
 But slay me, and I'll thank thee.—All, that feeling
 Passionate nature could suggest, she utter'd.

Tit. And didst thou still proceed? Didst thou not find
 Thy bosom moved?

Sex. I did, but with desire.
 For fear, had from her every other thought
 Removed, her hair dishevel'd, hid but loosely
 Her blaze of beauties, as she kneeling strove
 To clasp my knees; I raised her and embraced;
 She shriek'd aloud; fearing she might awake
 The menial train, I had but one resource:
 I rush'd forth to the door, where I had placed
 My trusty slave, and dragging him by his locks,
 Swore I would slay them both upon her bed,
 And publish to the world, I caught them there

In

In the act of shame: she found resistance vain ;
 The conflict 'twixt the dread of public infamy
 And private crime, inwrapp'd her in despair ;
 I mark'd the strugglings of her soul, and seiz'd
 The joy she would, but dared not to refuse.

Tit. Thus having spoke, forever hold thy tongue.
 My breast is not cast in that tender mould,
 Strongly to feel the goadings of compunction :
 Nor have I dealt in those punctilious niceties,
 Which bind the vulgar. But this act of thine,
 Almost calls up the water in my eye,
 And raises new emotions in my heart :
 For her, I'm touch'd with pity ; and on thee,
 I look with something tending toward horror.
 Oh, hold thy tongue! ne'er mention what thou'st
 done,
 Lest that the very earth, on which thou tread'st,
 Cry out against thee.

Sex. This rebuke from thee!
 This to a stranger urge, to him who knows thee not,
 And he may be deceived. I can't but laugh,
 When I behold hypocrisy array'd
 In the unbecoming robe she stole from virtue,
 Not hiding half her nakedness. Come, swear
 By all the gods, and gulp the perjury down,
 That all thy life hath been inculpable,
 That thou hast never broke the chains of wedlock,
 Nor ever wilt ; and then, to prove thy truth,

Be

Be struck with the next Roman dame thou see'st,
And as thou'rt wont, pursue her to possession.

Tit. Whatever artifice I may have used ;
Howe'er with bribes corrupted, or with prayers
Assail'd the silly soul of yielding woman,
Ne'er did I use the argument of force.

Sex. Because thou never met'st with the temptation.

Tit. 'Tis just, I well deserve his infidelity,
Nor have so lived as to be credited. [*Aside.*
But setting this apart, dost thou behold
No future perils from this bold effect
Of unrestrain'd desire ? Compell'd to suffer
What she detested, in the frantic rage,
Or deep despair of violated virtue,
May she not to her husband, or her father,
Disclose the cause ?

Sex. Is she then super-human ?
Did I not tell thee that she was a woman ?
And on my life, she'll act like any woman :
With words like these she'll lull her frantic rage,
And puff the depth of her despair away.
'Tis done, and can't be undone ; 'tis not known ;
So there's no harm ; guilt is no guilt in secret :
Why should I make myself a wretch by blabbing ?
Why tell my husband what he can't find out ?
Sextus must love me wonderfully well,
Or he would ne'er have undergone this hazard ;
No marvel tho, when beauty, such as mine,

O

Enticed

Enticed him ; then she looks upon her mirror,
 Vanity shews her figure passing fair,
 She smiles, and thus proceeds ; beauteous as ever :
 Why, what a peevish thing this virtue is !
 And Sextus is a prince ; what Collatinus ?
 (Now comes she, mark me, to comparisons)
 A private man. Ambition's painted wings
 Now flit before her eyes, and she is blinded ;
 To hold the prince a captive in her chains !
 Grandeur is her's, and pomp, and dignity,
 And all the world holds dear and precious.
 Oh, your strong-working passions ne'er last long !
 E'er I had rode ten paces, she saw things
 In the same light which I have represented.
 And now, no longer coy, reserv'd, and stubborn,
 Sends off a messenger to invite me back ;
 Oh, I shall riot after this, my Titus,
 And shall possess her to satiety.

Tit. If thou art not found a deceitful prophet,
 Of no event hereafter will I judge.
 I wish we may not all repent of this :
 At least, I see perplexity and trouble,
 Which will ensue inevitably.

Sex.

Whence

Can danger come? Her father! and her husband!—
 And will they dare to think of a revenge?
 They may as well contrive to wrest the club
 From the hand of Hercules. But lest mischance
 Should work a miracle; as for the husband,

I'll

I'll give, e'er long, a good account of him,
 If he should not meet death; placed in the way
 Of every mortal fally, there are means
 To bring him to his grave, and mother earth,
 Is a most admirable vengeance-cooler.
 As for the father, riches are a crime,
 Which the hand of Tarquin never fails to punish
 Upon due accusation.—But, our father!
 Hath he enquired for me? Or found me absent?

Tit. No, I believe he hath not.

Sex. Let us haste
 This instant to his tent; from thence to mine,
 Where we will hold some farther intercourse,
 Touching these loose imperfect hints I've offer'd.
 [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

COLLATINUS, BRUTUS.

Col. No more—My business is not of that consequence,
 Or private nature, but upon the road
 That I may join in thy society:
 And when arrived at Rome, the ill-manner'd
 servant
 Shall not refuse admittance to Lucretius.
 Should'st thou still scruple to reveal thy business,
 I will not trouble thee.

O 2

Br.

Br.

Whate'er it be,
The information thou may'st haply learn
With real pleasure.

Col.

Even as thou wilt.



Enter a MESSENGER.

Whence comest thou thus begrimed with dust?
and faint

And breathless with fatigue? How is Lucretia?
Is all well?—

Mess. I know no more than that I bring this letter,
Which I was order'd to convey to you
With utmost speed; another messenger
Was at the same time sent, with the same orders,
To Rome, unto Lucretius.

COLLATINUS. [*Reading.*]

A deed too dreadful for my pen to write—
Extremity—without delay—bring with you
One only friend.—Eternal gods! what means
this!

A friend! the time is precious, I'll take him—
A moment can't be lost to cull and choose.
Wilt thou with me, Lucius? I know thou wilt.
Hasten this moment, bring our horses forth.
What dire portending mystery! My mind
Attempts in vain to fathom it—If sickness—
That cannot be; she would have told me so.—
Her father sent for too with equal speed!

Thought

Thought wastes but time ; come, Lucius, hence
with me !

We go not now to Rome, but to Collatia. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *Collatia.*

LUCRETIA, *alone.*

Oh, agony of agonies ! down, heart—
Down, swelling bosom—O shame ! shame ! shame !
shame !

Cover'd with shame !—Oh, conscious innocence !
Where art thou fled ? Long inmate in my breast,
Are we forever parted ? Shall my soul
No more attend thy gentle whisperings,
Or when I rise in early morn, or when
I seek my bed of slumber, where by thee
Shaded, calm sleep and happy dreams were mine ?
No more. No more. Must I ne'er see again
My husband's face with joy ? Ne'er to my heart
Strain him with rapture ? While he too with joy
Would listen to my tale of tenderness ?
No, never, never. No, Lucretia,
Thou that wert once, chaste, pure, and virtuous,
Art now polluted, vile, abominable.
How I detest myself ! wretch that I am,
How loathsome to my soul ! which fain would fly
From out its odious prison !—Why had I not
Braved the adulterer's sword ? So had I fallen
A spot-

A spotless victim. Yet, so too my name
 Would have been render'd infamous, declared
 A most abandon'd prostitute, no tongue
 My vindicator, and the bleeding proof
 Of my supposed sin weltering by my side.—
 Bitter alternative! dreadful to think on!
 Turn, turn, reflection! for across thy course
 Lies madness, and each desperate deed of frenzy.
 I cannot bear it.

Enter LAVINIA.

Say, did you call, my mistress?

Lucr. No—begone—

Yet stay: come hither: is thy lord arrived?

Lav. He is not, madam.

Lucr. Would to heaven he were!

[*Fixing her eyes on the ground.*]

Lav. What fatal accident hath caused this misery,
 I know not: but so good, so kind a mistress
 Never had servants: never till this instant
 Heard I a word expressive of impatience
 Come from her lips. Good heavens, what load
 of grief

Works in her breast, and labours for its birth!

Would that I could remove that look of woe

From that sweet face! I would myself endure

No small misfortune.—That still silent anguish

Pierces me through: I'd speak to her, but sobs

Won't suffer me.

Lucr.

Lucr. What ails thee? Art not well?

Why dost thou weep?

? *Lav.* Ah, can you ask me, madam!

What ails me! do I not behold you miserable?

Lucr. I am indeed, Lavinia.—But thy lord's
Arrival will heal all.—I pr'ythee go,
And quickly, to the end of the garden wall,
And when thou see'st him at a distance, haste,
And bring me word.

Lav. I will. Oh, you good gods,
Give her relief! Pour comfort in her bosom! [*Exit.*]

Lucr. That was a look of prayer, of prayer for me;
May it with blessings fall on her own head
A thousand fold! For me, the time is o'er:
Fruitless are all petitions; unless Jove
Could bid the past be as it had not been;
Could render void existence, root out memory.
Poor honest wretch! I could, methinks, drop tears
In sympathy with her: but for myself,
Not one have I to spare; my grief's too great:
'Tis all within; no tears, but tears of blood,
Can speak my feelings, or wash off my guilt.
What tho' with all the abhorrence virtue knows,
When forced to look on sin, I saw the deed?
Yet, 'twas committed: 'twas permitted too.
Fatal necessity! Oh, wherefore was I
Form'd all alive to honour's nicest sense!
Why from my mother's breast did I imbibe
Its generous pride! Why foster it with care!

Brood

Brood over it delighted! hold it here,
More precious than a diamond of price!
If thus—

Enter LAVINIA.

Lav. Madam, my lord is just arriv'd;
With him, your father, and Valerius,
And Lucius Junius.

Lucr. Oh heart! tremble not.
Keep fast thy fix'd intent, form'd from that moment,
This dagger's point is sharp; but flatter far
The tongue of calumny, its wounds more painful.
Sharper the loss of that self-satisfaction,
With which, in the happier days of purity,
Thou could'st thyself contemplate and admire.
Can I endure to move the spectacle
Perhaps of insult, and exulting baseness,
Glorying o'er humbled virtue? Can I bear
The gaze of curiosity? the nod?
The secret whisper? Or to be at all
Mark'd out as something that's peculiar?
Or can I bear myself? and my own thoughts?
No: thou must die, Lucretia, thou must die.
Hark! hark! they come—How shall I bear my
husband's
And father's faces! Oh, support me, heaven!
Support me, in this dreadful interview,
The thoughts of which almost take life away!
Oh, how shall I go through it!

Enter

Enter COLLATINUS, LUCRETIUS, VALERIUS,
BRUTUS.

Col. My Lucretia!

How does my dearest wife?

Luc. My daughter, say,

Why hast thou sent for us?

Lucr. Nay, come not near me—

Thou must not call me wife, thou, my dear lord,

Prized by me as my soul; nor thou, my father,

Whom, from my infancy unto this day,

I have beheld almost with adoration,

Thou must not call me daughter: thou Valerius,

Must not call me thy friend; nor, Lucius, thou;

I am not now myself; cut off, deprived

Of every near relationship; each name

Of tender estimation; I am lost—

Lost to my friends, lost to myself.

Col. What accident

Of more than human power can cancel thus

Thy interest in my breast? I must embrace thee;

Press thee close to my heart! call thee my wife,

My best beloved faithful wife! Assure thee

That all thy grief is mine.—Oh, calm this extasy!

Thou shakest all o'er as in an ague fit,

And deadly pale, now throws upon thy cheek,

A hue like to the grave, now suddenly

Glowing with hot vermilion.

P

Luc.

Luc.

Oh, Lucretia!

Believe me, when I tell thee, not thy mother
 Was dearer to me, when as chaste and pure
 As Dian's self, blooming in innocence,
 I led the virgin to her bridal bed,
 Than thou, her pledge and lively pourtraiture.
 No, nothing can withdraw my love from thee,
 While like that pattern of her sex thou livest ;
 And so thy life hath been ; in thee, well-pleas'd,
 I have beheld her form revived, her virtues,
 And female-gracing ornaments of soul.

Lucr. There was a time, when praises from that mouth

Could ever thrill my secret mind with pleasure,
 Tuned to harmonious self-complacency,
 Discover'd in each corresponding action,
 Wing'd with alacrity and joy. But now
 'Tis far, far otherwise. Thou good old man!
 These words have pierced me to the quick—My
 pain

Was keen enough before, why would'st thou make it
 Doubly excruciating? Why bring my guilt
 In stronger colours to my view?

Col.

Thy guilt!

Not heaven itself is freer from all taint
 Of guilt, or the least stain of blame, than thou.
 Is reason thine?

Lucr.

Reason is mine, indeed—

Though I could envy those who are distracted.
 The mad is happier on his bed of straw,

Than

Than the poor wretch bereaved of innocence,
 Who yet esteems that innocence tho lost,
 And who with fixed eye gazing on her,
 Is hurried into evil.

Luc. Explain thyself—

How dreadful is thy prelude! keep not thus
 In torturous suspense thy father, husband,
 And friends.

Lucr. Oh, would one word could tell it all!
 Can you not guess the whole, when I name Sextus,
 The youngest son of Tarquin?

BRUTUS. [*Aside.*]

Curse on the name!

I fear—I fear—Luckless, undone Lucretia!

Val. Say what of him?

Luc. Speak, daughter, speak.

Col. From him, what ill could flow to thee? Thou never
 Saw'st him but once, and that, the other night,
 Brought here by me; say, what is this, Lucretia?

Lucr. Would I had seen him, but that other night!
 Or would that other night that I had died
 A sudden death! But a sad fatal night
 Hath pass'd between. Oh, tongue, perform thine
 office!

And tell my husband, that these eyes beheld him
 That second night: tell him—Oh, Collatinus!
 Oh, hide me! hide me from myself!—How vain!
 No, let me stand, and dare your piercing eyes
 With bold assurance; wherefore are they fix'd,

All fix'd in silence on the ground? On me
Direct them full; Lo! here I stand, the mark
Of shame, of ignominy.

Luc. Daughter, patience,
If without thy consenting heart this deed—

Lucr. No, 'twas by my consent,—He would have slain
His slave and me; laid both on the same bed,
Then publish'd to the world, that I with him
Was a vile, base adulteress.

Luc. Oh, woe is me! Off, off, ye hoary hairs!
Oh, daughter ruin'd! Ruin'd, yet in virtue!

Col. Burst, heart! Oh, how shall I find utterance!

Val. Damn'd be the wretch! Doubly and trebly damn'd!
When forth he walks, may the red flaming sun
Strike him with livid plagues! May he be shunn'd
By all mankind! be odious to himself!
Breed vipers in his conscience! gnawing vipers!
Wish hourly for his death, yet be in tortures
A thousand years expiring!—If this fate
Attend on virtue, let us to the stews
For wives, bring up our daughters prostitutes;
No more let holy wedlock be esteem'd,
But rank commixture, like the general herd
Of beasts, inform the dwellings of mankind!

BRUTUS. [*Aside.*]

Oh, noble warmth, from forth a generous mind!
With such a colleague might I shake the Tarquins
From off their throne. Now is the time arrived—
But stay—nor yet let me unfold myself.

Col.

Col. When came he hither? Say, Lucretia.

Luc. Last evening, in the dusk. Affairs of consequence
Brought him, he told me, to Collatia;
My soul, above suspicion, thought no ill.
I entertain'd him as became myself
And him. At midnight to my chamber stole
The ruffian—Witness, all ye powers above!
I heeded not the sword which arm'd his hand;
I pray'd for death with greater earnestness
Than the departing miser prays for life.
He told me of his love, his odious love,
Intreated, promised, intermingled threats,
Assail'd on every side my woman's soul.
At length dragg'd in his slave, and would have slain us
Together on the bed.

Col.

Oh, fool! fool! fool!

Vain-glorious boaster! that could'st not conceal
Thy treasure, but rather than not be known
To be possess'd of wealth, must take the thief,
The first notorious thief thou met'st, and shew him
The glittering store; unhooded let him trace
Each winding avenue, and give to him
A guiding clue, by which whene'er he pleas'd
He might return, and bear it all away!
Oh, my Lucretia, all the fault is mine;
To me may guilt with justice be imputed;
Thou art as free, as the young innocent
First visiting the light.

Lucr.

Lucr.

Yes, Collatinus,

Believe me when I tell thee, not the least wiff
 That e're was form'd in deepest secrecy,
 Hath my soul breathed toward any other man.
 Yet, though my mind is free, my body's guilty ;
 The load from thence recoils upon my mind,
 Which shrinks beneath, as shunning intercourse
 With its polluted yoke-mate. Death must break
 These links of union, e're she can be happy.

Luc. What say'st thou? Death! Oh, daughter, hold,
 I charge thee!

The thought is horrible, it harrows up
 My soul, committing there the wildest waste.
 I charge thee, if thou hast the least regard
 For this old hoary head, which many a time,
 When thou, unconscious young one, slept'st full
 sound,

Hung o'er thee, and survey'd thy infant face
 With tenderest, fondest love, unfay that word;
 Let me conjure thee, by thy mother's memory,
 By all her soft anxieties for thee;
 Her sleepless nights, and busy days, attendant
 Upon thy welfare, from thy breast unharbour
 That rash, intruding thought!

Lucr.

Can any word

Fall from that tongue unheeded by thy daughter?—
 But death's the only test, the only evidence
 I now can give, of my integrity
 And undefiled intentions.

Col.

Col.

No one can
 Suspect thee, my Lucretia ; hesitation
 Will not against thee dare to elevate
 Her stuttering tongue. No: many happy days
 Shall yet be our's, many sweet social years,
 Blessing and blest'd—and our delighted children—
 Alas! what sudden thought, what new emotion,
 Scatters a wilder terror o'er thy face,
 Dyed with a deeper pale!

Lucr.

Didst thou say children!—
 Oh, 'tis a thought which darted cross my brain,
 Like to the blasting lightning.—Children, saidst
 thou!
 Who knows—how if—the ravisher!—That
 thought
 Would of itself determine. . As to him,
 Be't yours to judge what chastisement is due.
 For me, when I am dead, the babbling world
 Perhaps will do me justice; in your minds
 At least, my memory shall survive unfulled.
 Though I absolve myself from wilful crime,
 I can't from punishment; nor shall a woman
 Hereafter, by the example of Lucretia,
 Outlive her loss of honour. [Stabs herself.]

Col.

Oh, hold thy hand—What dost thou?—'Tis too
 late—
 Who could have thought so suddenly?—Rash
 action!
 Too surely done.—That groan! life issued with it.
 Oh, could my arms bring back thy fleeted breath,
 Thus

Thus ever would I hold thee; ever thus
In one indissoluble union.

That blow hath kill'd us both, Lucretia:
Double destruction. Oh! most loved—adored!

Luc. Horror of horrors! Wherefore did I wed?
Why get a daughter? Why with pride elated,
Behold—Oh, ruin'd virtue! Damned monster!
Had he e'er loved a child with my affection—
No breath—quite still and silent—Come, despair,
And welcome, to my breast!—Fix'd are her eyes;
Ne'er shall I drink their genial beams again;
Ne'er hear that voice—Now, now could I
blaspheme.

Oh, gods!—Cease—Patience, patience—here I
stand

Mute and resign'd to your eternal wills.
But is it thus the good meet their reward?
Art *thou* my daughter—Oh! excess of anguish!

Val. No tongue can blame this grief. Thou gentlest!
best!

Bedeck'd with every grace, each ornament,
Which dignifies, exalts—

BRUTUS, *grasping the dagger.*
Now by this blood I swear, immaculate
Before the Tarquin rape, (and you, oh, gods!
Bear witness to my oath!) that I'll pursue,
With fire and sword, and every other means
Which righteous indignation shall supply,
Tarquin the proud, his impious wife, his sons,
And

And all the accursed race, nor suffer them,
 Or any other, to be kings in Rome!
 If that I break one tittle of this vow,
 May death be mine! but not like thine, Lucretia,
 Triumphant, glorious; but detested, base,
 And ignominious as the meanest slave's,
 The most contemptuous, vilest malefactor's!

Val. What do I see? What hear? Surely my senses
 Are baffled by some vain illusion—

[While Brutus is speaking, Lucretius and Collatinus are divided, sometimes looking with astonishment on Brutus, sometimes with grief on Lucretia; when he ceases, the latter gets the mastery, and they are wholly taken up with her.]

Col. Dear, dearest half of me! Gone, gone for ever.

Luc. Child of my soul! Supporter of my being!
 But soon my heart will burst, and I shall be
 Lock'd in the arms of death, as thou art now.
 Staff of my age! Lost, lost, for ever lost.

Br. What, are ye men? There lies your bleeding
 child;

There lies your tender wife; will tears again
 Her lifeless corse reanimate? Will tears
 Revenge her timeless death? I now, methinks,
 Behold the ruffian glorying in the deed,
 Telling the tale of shame to his lewd brothers,
 And riotous associates, who agape
 Listen with greedy ear, and grin applause

Q

To

I will pursue the two prime regal monsters,
 And all their progeny! Should they take wings,
 They shall not fly my vengeance! Should they
 hide

In deepest caverns, there I'll penetrate,
 And drag them forth! nor rest, till they are swept
 From off the earth, which groans beneath their
 wickedness!

This from the bottom of my soul I swear.
 Deeds soon shall follow words. Here, take it; swear,
 Lucretius.

Luc. Wonder and astonishment

Seize on—

Br. Of that hereafter speak. Now swear.

Luc. I swear.

Br. Swear, Collatinus.

Col. I swear.

Br. Valerius,

Swear.

Val. I swear.

Br. And now, my friends, the first I e'er could call so,
 Let me embrace you round! Now, after long,
 Long penance done, I am again myself.
 I see you hardly yet believe your eyes;
 Wondering, but scarce convicted; in suspense,
 Though strong persuasion tell you all is real.
 Think, my good friends, that hitherto you saw
 My shadow only, and my mock resemblance,
 A stupid wretch, insensible to shame,

Q 2

Bending

Bending beneath each insult, whom no power
 Of art could teach ; this brutish character
 Hath in my place appear'd ; now is he vanish'd :
 And I uproused from that lethargic slumber,
 In which I lay for twenty years or more,
 Now take again my rank in the file of men,
 Call reason mine, and boast me in the name
 Of long-lost late-assumed humanity.
 My soul feels double strength from this inertness ;
 I burn for action, for the glorious day,
 When freedom shall be ours ; when 'I may say
 To the chaste manes of Lucretia,
 Now rest at peace, ye are at full revenged.
 When I shall say, Rejoice, imperial Rome,
 For tyranny is extinct, and oppression
 No more shall rule you with an iron rod.—
 Bear forth the body to the market-place ;
 Then shut the gates, that none may from Collatia
 Bear any news to the camp ; go you before,
 And tell the melancholy tale ; myself
 Will follow after, and discourse the people.
 Thence unto Rome.—And oh, you powers on high,
 Propitious prove, and let your aid be nigh !
 Still prompt the generous thought ; keep firm, my
 soul,
 That I may safely reach the purposed goal ;
 That I may pull Ambition to the ground,
 And Liberty may pour her gifts around,

ACT

A C T V.

SCENE I. *A Street in Rome.*

Enter two Citizens, one of Collatia, the other of Rome.

1st Cit. I told you how this melancholy fight,
The history of the deed shewn in its true
And native colours, by the afflicted husband
And father, with the artless eloquence
Of real grief; how the discovery
Of Brutus, and his speech, affected us.
Each braver youth stood quickly by their side
Array'd in arms, burning with indignation
Pent in their breasts. We left Collatia
And enter'd Rome; a sight so new and strange,
With the arm'd multitude, first struck the
inhabitants
With fear and terror: but when they beheld
The order of our march, peaceful and solemn,
They soon put off their fears, and throng'd to gaze.
Undress'd, unornamented, on her bier
Lay, scarce yet cold, Lucretia's chaste remains,
Beauteous in death: you might have ta'en her so,
And placed her in a temple, 'twould be sworn
'Twas

'Twas Venus' image cut in alabaſter.
 Or for her hair confuſedly ſcatter'd over
 Her comely face and neck, Dian, reclined
 After her toil, upon a mount, expoſed
 To the rude winds ; while in her breaſt the wound
 She gave herſelf, would cauſe you to admire
 What ſacrilegious hand ſhould dare to ſtab,
 And give a deity to death.

2d Cit.

Where now

Is this proceſſion? And how far behind you?

1ſt Cit. They muſt by this have well-nigh reach'd the
 forum ;

Where Brutus, who is tribune of the guards,
 (A place of truſt, which Tarquin only gave him,
 As he appear'd an object of contempt)
 Hath call'd together all the centuries.

He and Valerius are mean time to attend
 The ſenators, who are by this converſed,
 (The few whom Tarquin's ſword hath left alive)
 To lay before them his deſigns, his plans,
 And to be guided by their wiſe advice ;
 While in the forum, with Lucretia's corſe
 Expoſed to view, the father and the huſband
 Relate the manner of her death ; when this
 Is finiſh'd, Brutus ſhall harangue the people.

2d Cit. Great matters, as I think, may riſe from this.

1ſt Cit. The greateſt that can riſe ; the moſt deſired
 And leaſt expected ever to have happened,

If

For thou, alas, hast lost an equal blessing!
 Merciless villain! Dearest, dearest daughter!
 Yet let us mix our sorrows, let us drop
 Our tears together on her lifeless clay;
 Nor will your tender hearts, my countrymen,
 Forbear to sympathize with us, and join
 The sigh of grief with ours.

1st Ro. Oh, piteous deed!

2d Ro. Oh, lamentable sight!

Luc. For this compassion—

3d Ro. Silence all! attend!

Luc. For this your tenderness, my gentle friends,
 We thank you from our souls: yet e'er we raise
 The funeral pile, attend to Lucius Junius.
 He call'd you to this meeting by his office
 As tribune of the guards; private affliction
 Must yield to public benefits. Yet know
 (For why from you should I hide any thing?)
 It is for me and mine that he appears;
 For me, for him, for every Roman here.
 But, lo, he comes! Make way, my countrymen;
 And, I beseech you, list to what he utters,
 With deepest silence.

1st Ro. Room, there! room! make way!

2d Ro. Let him come forward, and ascend the rostrum.

3d Ro. Hiss! he begins; methinks his looks are alter'd.

Br. Romans and friends! you see before you now
 No blundering idiot, bearing to your ears
 The mandates of a tyrant. I cast off

The

The mask of folly, on that day assumed,
 When by the savage orders of your king,
 King do I call him? Of the monster Tarquin,
 My father, and my elder brother fell.
 Assumed for my protection, and now cast
 Aside for ever.

1st Ro. Wonderful event!

2d Ro. I'm lost in admiration.

3d Ro. Peace—no more.

Br. Would you know why I summon'd you together?
 Ask you what brings me hither? View this dagger
 Clotted with gore! Behold that frozen corse!
 See these unhappy men, whose tale of woe,
 Of horrid woe, you from their mouths have heard,
 And mingled social tears! Oh, chastity,
 Is this thy fate! Oh, Rome, how wilt thou mourn
 Thy thinn'd inhabitants, if goodness, virtue,
 Treated as crimes, must meet the stroke of death!
 If youth and beauty must be singled out;
 First prey'd on by rapacious lust, then murder'd!
 Oh! I could mourn thy fate, Lucretia!
 Could, like thy father and thy husband mourn;
 Could in laments vie with each Roman soul
 Who now beholds thee.

1st Ro. Oh Lucretia!

2d Ro. Unhappy matron!

3d Ro. Silence—he proceeds.

Br. Did I, my countrymen, say, I could mourn
 Lucretia's death?—What sorrow must I feel,

R

When

When I beheld before my eyes, as now,
 Methinks, I do, each Roman matron dead!
 When I behold each Roman maid abus'd!
 (For who shall circumscribe the range of lust?
 What numbers shall fill up his ravenous gorge?
 And bid his raging appetite be still?)
 When I behold each Roman citizen,
 Who hath a much-loved wife, a darling daughter,
 Doom'd, like these two, to death, because with grief
 Surcharg'd, they do not sit in silence down,
 But dare proclaim their feelings?—Public murder,
 For such a crime shall snatch them from the world,
 Or they shall fall by the midnight assassin;
 Nor must their friends say how they met their death,
 But lay the blame upon their own despair.

1st Ro. They shall not die.

2d Ro.

We will protect them both.

Br. Protect them, say you? Miserable men!

You know not what you say. Protect them both!
 Can you protect yourselves? You have committed
 Treason against the tyrant, and his brood
 Of monster sons; you have dared to look with pity,
 You've dropp'd a tear on murder'd innocence:
 You've seen Lucretia, and have wept her fate:
 You're partners with her father and her husband,
 In guilty sorrow. You have listen'd too
 To me, a wretch, who twenty lingering years,
 Have for your sakes impos'd upon the tyrant,
 And borne the grossest insults. You have done

All

Yet even that, I fear, would be in vain.
 We are inured too much to slavery,
 To dare resist ; we are quite reconciled.
 Determined still to drudge beneath the yoke :
 To shrink each hour at sight of some new murder,
 Some deed of baseness, treachery, and horror,
 Yet with our lips cry, Hail, all-gracious Tarquin.
 To work in sewers all day, shut up mid damps,
 Denied the sight of heaven's blessed sun,
 Yet in the eye, when we half choak'd revisit
 The upper air, to praise benignant Tarquin.
 To see his sons rush into every house,
 To see our wives ravish'd before our eyes ;
 To see each ripening tender maid deflower'd ;
 To see them kill themselves ; to see their pale,
 And ashy corse, in the public forum,
 Ranged all arow.—Yet then we are determined
 To bless kind Tarquin, mercy-loving Tarquin,
 And beg him to beget some dozen more
 Of sturdy sons, with such like acts of kindness,
 To bless his humble, faithful citizens.
 If this were not your fix'd determination,
 Say, would you seek instructions? Would you ask
 What you should do? Ask yonder conscious walls,
 Which saw his poison'd brother, saw the incest
 Committed there, and they will cry, Revenge!
 Ask yonder conscious street, where Tullia drove
 O'er her dead father's corse, 'twill cry, Revenge!
 Ask yonder senate house, whose stones are purple
 With

With human blood, and it will cry, Revenge!
 Go to the tomb where lies his murder'd wife,
 And the poor queen, who loved him as her son,
 Their unappeas'd ghosts will shriek, Revenge!
 The temples of the gods, the all-viewing heavens,
 The gods themselves, shall justify the cry,
 And swell the general sound, Revenge! Revenge!

All. Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!

Br. And we will be revenged, my countrymen!
 Brutus shall lead you on; Brutus (a name
 Which will when you're revenged, be dearer to him,
 Than all the splendent titles earth can boast.)
 Nor I alone; see where Valerius brings
 The noblest of the city! See where stand
 Lucretius! Collatinus! Age nor grief
 Depress their spirits, so as not to seek
 Glorious revenge.—You are this moment free.
 I see the tyrant fled; his soul dies in him;
 The voice of liberty hath reach'd the camp.
 I see the gladful soldiers hastening home,
 Big to enjoy that freedom you possess;
 Each one clasps close his friend, weeps on his neck,
 Unable to express the bursting pleasure
 Stretching his heart. But, when you name revenge,
 His eyes flash living fire, and he resolves,
 With you, to hunt the monsters through the world.
 For tyranny, once having found a foe,
 Meets not with an upholder. Once again
 Let me pronounce you free. Again 'tis yours

To

To bring your votes: and the first case before you,
Is, what becomes of Tarquin?

All. We banish him the city, we banish him the city.

Br. And now, what course will you yourselves pursue?

All. Arms, Brutus! arms! We'll march against the
tyrant,

Lead us against him.

Br. If you'll by my advice be over-sway'd—

All. Give it us, give it, we will follow it.

Br. Myself, with some of the Patrician youth
Well-mounted, will away unto the camp.

Do you each man, furnish'd with arms, prepared
For action, or advice, immediately

Haste to the Campus Martius, there Valerius
Shall, with the senate, to your ears impart,

And to be ratified by your consent,

That plan of government by me delineated,

When in my fatuous state each thought was busied
For you, and Rome.—Guard well the city gates;

Pay the last duties to Lucretia's corse:

And soon expect to see my safe return,

And with me, all your friends. The immortal gods
Are your defence, fear nothing, but be bold.

1st Ro. Oh, noble Brutus!

2d Ro. Giver of liberty!

3d Ro. Father of Rome!

1st Ro. Deliverer of his country!

Br. Oh, my dear countrymen! should I pretend
To express the joy I feel for you, the gratitude

You

You raise within me, for this high applause
Shewn to my poor deserts, the time we now
Possess, were much too scant, e'en years would fail.
I'm wholly yours, and long as I shall breathe
The breath of life, will only live for you.
Now I descend: and will accompany you
Without the forum; there we'll separate;
You for your arms; I, to the camp at Ardea.
The gods who long have in the book of fate
Foreseen this time; the gods who hate injustice,
Who punish perfidy, and cruel deeds,
Go with us both: their influence I obey,
The humble instrument they have appointed
To rescue you from bondage, to restore
Your ancient rites, to give you days of peace,
And liberty, the attribute of man.
But grant me one request: tho' real joy,
I know, ill brooks restraint, keep back this tumult
Of your applause; your love I'd fain acquire,
Heaven is my witness, I would die to acquire it!
But clamour ever shews ill-guided counsels,
The voice of rashness, the argument of numbers,
Of reason destitute. Not so the plan
Which we pursue, the surest grounds are ours,
Maturely founded, and late brought to light.
Let us accomplish then the end proposed,
With prudent zeal, with decent vigour, firm
Intrepid hope, and silent resolution. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

SCENE III. *The Camp: Tarquin's Tent.*

TARQUIN, MESSENGER, GUARDS.

Tar. Take this Collatian scare-crow; guard him safe.
If that the news thou bring'st shall be found false,
Prepare thee for the tortures of the cross.

Mess. My Lord, it is too true.

Tar. Away with him.

[*Exeunt Messenger and Guards.*]

Brutus! it cannot be. The gods themselves
Could not bestow on him the use of reason.
Brutus incite the people to sedition!
As soon shall the Tarpeian rock turn vocal;
As soon the wooden Jove in the capitol
Hurl the Vulcanian bolt. This knave hath heard
Some vague report when drunk, or in his sleep
Hath dream'd of this account, an unconnected,
Improbable, impossible adventure.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

My Lord, another hasty messenger
Begs your immediate hearing.

Tar. Bring him hither.

MESSENGER [*prostrating himself.*]

Pardon, most gracious Tarquin, e'er I speak.

Tar. Speak boldly, man, for thou hast nought to fear.

Mess.

Meff. I come, dread sovereign, from Rome, where Brutus
Hath urged the people to rebellion.

Tar. How, and which way ?

Meff. My Lord, this morn a herald,
As from the captain of the guards, convok'd
The general people to the public forum.
Curious to know the cause, I too went thither.
Soon was brought forth the body of Lucretia,
Attended by Lucretius and her husband,
And a large body of Collatian youth
In arms: by turns they spake unto the people;
Oft interrupted were their words, with sighs
And tears—

Tar. Proceed, be brief.

Meff. They said, Lucretia
Had slain herself—by Sextus violated.
The people moved with pity, heard the tale,
And every eye was wet.

Tar. Thy tediousness
Is insupportable: haste to the end.

Meff. Then Brutus came, and mounting in the rostrum,
First having shewn that his stupidity
Was only forged, proceeded—

Tar. 'Tis enough.
No more. Without! Prepare with utmost speed
A band of chosen horse! Where are my sons?
Why stand you thus? Where are my sons, I say?
What follow'd after he had spoke?

Meff. The people
S All

All with one voice, when he propos'd the question,
Of what becomes of Tarquin? cried, We banish
him.

Tar. How!—Dared they?—Hah! 'tis well. What
afterwards?

Mess. He then directed them first to take arms;
And, while he hasted hither to the camp,
To meet Valerius and the senators
In the Campus Martius, who would lay before
them

A scheme of government. This having heard,
I hurried straight away.

Tar. Thy loyalty
Shall meet with its reward; for them—Who waits?
Where are my sons? Quick bid those horsemen
mount,

And wait for my commands. Deep hypocrite
Beyond example!—Oh, I see through all.
But short shall be his reign; mysterious, dark,
Unfathomable villain! But his life,
His forfeit life—and the quick, easy-wrought,
Inconstant crowd, them I'll reduce much lower
Than beasts of burthen; they have lived too fat;
Kick they their master thus?—Why did I leave
One senator alive? I had done well
To have extirpated all, both root and branch.
Had done is pass'd; the present hour is mine,
And that shall be well used. On danger's verge
To act unmoved, recoil into himself,

See

See every train of possible design,
 And judge the best, is the great character
 Of the superior soul. This is the time
 Of trial, Tarquin; and the grand event,
 To stamp thee fortune-proof. This enemy,
 The tenor of his life, his perseverance,
 Marks the most dangerous, thence the most worthy
 Thou ever hadst to cope withal. But he,
 If he hath gain'd not every mortal engine
 To aid his purpose, draws upon his head
 Sure ruin.—To leave Rome, and seek the camp
 He falls in his own snare.

Enter ARUNS and TITUS.

My sons, you come
 In wish'd-for time; you know these accidents?
Tit. We heard them with amazement.
Tar. Where is Sextus?
 The ravisher of matrons; who inspires
 Idiots with sense, and raises insurrections
 Against his father?
Ar. We in vain enquired;
 He was not in his tent.
Tar. Well may he fear
 To meet my presence; by the immortal gods,
 This hand should slay him for a fool, a dolt!
 A common thief would, ere he robb'd a house,
 First kill the mastiff at the gate, who else
 Might worry him returning. As this tale

By busy rumour to the soldiers' ears
 May get access, and if it doth, his presence
 May be with fatal consequence attended,
 Bid him still hide himself, or to withdraw
 Entirely from the camp. Myself will hence,
 And with these light-arm'd horsemen, intercept
 This Brutus on the road, which being done,
 I doubt not but to get speedy admittance
 Into the city, where the unruly mob,
 Distract with fear, and multitude of counsels,
 Will of themselves be ready for submission.
 Should he escape my hands, in every avenue
 Place trusty guards, and give strict orders to them,
 To slay him ere he reach the camp.

Tit. We shall not
 Be wanting on our part.

Tar. Alas, my sons!

Ar. What ails my father?

Tar. I am well again.

A sudden damp, and creeping horror, seiz'd me.
 'Tis over now. I thought my throne fix'd firm
 As the everlasting basis of the earth.

Fool that I was, to trust to quibbling gods!

When to the Delphic fane you took your way,
 What said the dark expounder, who perplexes
 In double maze what she pretends to unfold?

These were the words of the Pythian forceress:

“Beasts shall enjoy the reason of mankind,

“E'er Tarquin from the snake disturbance find.”

This

This is the beast, this is the fated snake,
 Whom you and I have cherish'd in our bosoms;
 And now he brandishes his forked sting,
 And casts his baneful mortal venom round,
 Threatening destruction. But, avaunt vain fears?
 I have been scared by omens: but the wretch
 Who yields to superstition, well deserves
 To fall its sacrifice. I'll haste away.
 Cowards and fools misfortunes antedate:
 In his own hand the brave man holds his fate.

[*Exeunt,*

SCENE IV. *Sextus's Tent.*

ARUNS, SEXTUS, TITUS.

Ar. I do not blame the deed, the simple deed!
 Oh, you mistake me quite! the deed might stand
 Inroll'd; I'd turn my eyes another way,
 Nor add one transient slight remark of mine
 To those of conscientious, babbling, sniveling,
 Mouth-watering knaves, who envy every man
 The dainty morsel they can't eat themselves.
 But I see graved in equal characters,
 Bad consequences, such as these, to wit,
 Revenge, and mutiny, and insurrection,
 And banishment, and loss of empire; these
 Denominate the deed with me, and these
 I still will harass and perplex thee with;

And

And ring thee such alarms, that thou shalt wish
The cut-throat Brutus, or gull'd Collatinus,
Stood by thee rather, with their sharpen'd swords
Levell'd against thy throat.

Sex.

Pr'ythee no more;

I don't repent the deed: as for the consequences,
Thy words can't add a sting to my reflections.

Ar.

Yet I will sting thee, I will taunt thee still.—

No, rather let me, like a loving brother,
Turn thy apologist, and make excuses.

As thus, When lust revels predominant,
Folly and frenzy cut wild capriols

In reason's court. Or thus, with languid eye,
And whining tone—When beauty fires the sense,
Beauty, soft tyrant! amiable invader!

Consideration turns an hood-wink'd afs.

Or thus, in grave and philosophic vein—

What mortal man can with his finite glance
Survey the boundless waste of future time,
And cull out the events which there are sown

Crude, unexistent, till the all-potent hand

Of Jove, uplifts them from the dark abyfs,

And gives them form substantial?—Oh, man! man!

What a vile fool art thou! By heaven and earth,

The stalking monster man grows every day

More and more stupid and ridiculous.

See the erect machine! he lifts his head,

Proclaims himself a godling! Bend, ye abject,

Inferior animals!—Oh, could I rank thee,

Proud.

Proud miscreant, in thy place, there's not a beast
 But I would set above thee. Reason thine!
 The matchless gift of speech! An ox, an ape,
 Could I interpret, talks as well as thou dost ;
 His actions prove it.—Not foresee events
 With all thy reason! Instinct then is better.
 Which of the herd will plunge into the tide ?
 Expect the liquid element to change,
 And bear him as on land ? Did e'er the eagle
 Forth from his lofty ayerie dart to the ground
 And not expand his wings ? E'er he enjoys
 His lowing mistress, the stern bull knows well
 That he must beat his rival from the pasture.
 But why thus throw away my time on trifles !
 The most insipid theme that man can talk of
 Is of mankind. Titus, see there ! behold !
 He too will boast his reason ; yet he knows not
 The veriest insect will, when trod upon,
 Endeavour at resistance.

Tit.

To what purpose

This tends, I can't conceive. Oh, Aruns, Aruns !
 E'er we set up for masters, it were well
 Did we ourselves still practise what we teach.

Ar.

Thou, with thy musty rules !—Patience herself,
 At opening of thy mouth, would stop her ears,
 Or run away fast as her heels could bear her.
 Pour in thy potions, Titus ; his hot blood
 Wants cooling medicines, sedative morality.
 Sexsus, attend ; thy fever shall abate,

And

And thou shalt fall into a leaden slumber :
 And so I leave you both, either to other.
 Wife leach, may Phœbus aid thee at thy need!
 So shall thy patient's health be found as thine:

[*Exit.*]

Sex. Adieu, dissatisfied, and chiding humorist!

Tit. Did I not tell thee what I fear'd would follow?

Sex. I pr'ythee, do not thou reproach me too ;
 Rather advise me in this hour of danger
 How I had best dispose myself ; to leave
 The camp, would argue fear, would argue shame ;
 Nor would I mid the rabble so exalt
 Their self-conceit, to think I aught could do
 To make me in their presence hang my head
 For one, or the other cause. Besides, I doubt not,
 But that our father's ever-ready mind,
 Which like the fierce tide 'gainst the rushing
 tempest
 Still rises stronger meeting opposition,
 Will prompt him with the means of wish'd success.
 That he will gain admittance into Rome
 I little question ; and should Brutus turn
 A different way to gain the camp, those bands,
 Which with strict orders watch each avenue,
 Will render us as good account of him. [*A shout.*]
 What sound is that ? Methought it was a shout
 As of a multitude.

Tit. It was ; perhaps the guards
 Have taken Brutus prisoner, or slain him.

Enter

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Claud. Fly, fly, my lords! Brutus is in the camp;
I saw him with these eyes; he waves aloft
The bloody dagger; all the soldiers hear him
With wildest admiration and applause.
He speaks, as if he held the souls of men
Within his hand, and moulded them at pleasure.
They look on him as they would view a god,
Who, from the darkness which invested him,
Springs forth, and knitting his stern brow in
frowns,

Proclaims the vengeful doom of angry Jove.
Herminius and Horatius too have join'd him.
All cry aloud, Revenge! Revenge on Tarquin!
Death to his sons!—Fly! fly! and save yourselves!

Tit. Herminius and Horatius! Traitors.—How
Pass'd he the guards?

Claud. They brought him in triumphant.

Tit. Where's Aruns?

Claud. He is fled, my lord, to Cære,
And bids you follow him with utmost haste.

Tit. Whither wilt thou?

Sex. I shall straightway to Gabii,
As to a safe asylum. Fare thee well!

Tit. Farewel to Sextus!—Oh, pernicious fortune!
From this day forth, I date the utter ruin
Of Tarquin and his sons. [*Exeunt.*]

T

SCENE

SCENE V. *The Walls of Rome.*

TARQUIN *at the Gate; above, LUCRETIUS, COLLATINUS, VALERIUS, and Roman People.*

Luc. Whate'er he says to you, ye gentle Romans,
Let me intreat you answer not a word.
Who's he that asks admittance?

Tar. Am I then
Alter'd so much of late, that old Lucretius
Knows not his king? Why are these gates fast
barr'd?

And who is it that dares refuse me entrance?

Luc. This shall I answer straight. As for my king
I know thee not: tho' Tarquin well I know,
And know him for a tyrant, who long time,
Many a dreadful year of servitude,
Held Rome inflav'd; against that cruel tyrant
These gates are barr'd; those who refuse him
entrance

Are all the Roman people, who have dared
Proclaim him banish'd from their land for ever.

Tar. Is this thy gratitude, old man? From me
Thou hadst the authority thou now usurp'st,
The government of Rome.

Luc. When thou wert king
I held from thee the government, I own it.
Thou from the people then didst hold thy crown,
Who've

Who've since deposed thee ; from the people now
I hold the interregal dignity.

When Brutus from the camp shall with him bring
The enfranchis'd army, if to him they give,
With Collatinus join'd, as they've resolv'd,
The delegated trust, their future consuls,
I shall with readiness and pleasure yield
Into their hands my transitory sway.

Tar. Had any others in the Roman state
Fomented mid the people this rebellion,
I should not thus have wonder'd : but that you,
You three, whom I've admitted to my councils,
Loaded with honours, dignities, and gifts
Of price, that you should with the ingrateful
Brutus,

Whom as my child I've foster'd, join to ruin
Your gracious master, and kind benefactor,
Is one of those strange accidents I labour
In vain to reconcile to probability.

Luc. For all the various favours I've received
From Tarquin and his race, I am most grateful ;
But chiefly grateful for my murder'd daughter.

Col. I for my ravish'd and self-slaughter'd wife.

Val. I, in the name of all the Roman people,
Confess my gratitude ; the many favours
On them bestow'd, now for these many a year
My greatest happiness have constituted.
For Brutus, who is absent, let me thank thee,
Both for his murder'd father and his brother.

Tar. Lucretius! Collatinus! all the powers
 Who rule this universe can witness for me,
 How I detest that hateful deed; none feels
 More for the injured father and the husband;
 None curses more the impious perpetrator,
 Tho' from these loins he sprang, than I myself.
 No; let the criminal bear all the weight
 Of your just vengeance; let him be brought forth
 Before the Roman people, stand his trial,
 As by my royal word I swear he shall,
 Were he three times my son; and is his death
 Decreed, he surely dies. But must the innocent
 Be with the guilty punish'd? Must the father
 Bear the son's crimes? the crimes which he abhors?
 Yes, when I heard the tale, Lucretius,
 I started back with horror, while my heart
 Wept tears of blood.

Luc. Such tears thou shedd'st over thy poison'd brother.

Col. Such o'er thy wife, brought to her timeless end.

Val. Such tears thou shedd'st over the good old king.

Luc. Such over each assassinated noble.

Col. Such over every murder'd Roman knight.

Val. Such over every death-doom'd citizen.

Tar. How much you wrong my nature, you yourselves
 Shall be the living judges. Prove my mercy,
 Return to your allegiance, reconcile
 To my authority the ductile croud
 By you seduced: do this, and here I swear,
 In presence of the gods, by every tie

Which

And make each kingdom round you mention Rome,
 And what belongs to Rome with awe—All this
 I've done for you. For you have borne the frost
 Of keen December, and for you sustain'd
 The torrid dog-star. Have I ever hoarded
 My share of the plunder? Fill'd my treasury
 With stuff which I despis'd, but as it served
 To add to Rome new lustre?—Look behind you!
 Are not for you these sumptuous buildings rais'd?
 And for your honour? Let the gods themselves
 Declare my motives, who now dwell in temples
 Fitting their dignity, and Rome's magnificence.
 For which of these my works am I exiled?
 Oh, you have been deceived, grossly deceived!
 If I'm accus'd of any fancied crimes
 Artfully lodged against me; till the time
 You bid me reign, I shall, as it behoves me,
 Lay by my crown. Admit me then unarm'd;
 Thus as a suppliant, with his naked head,
 Admit your king; he begs at your tribunal
 To plead his cause; he asks but common justice;
 But to be heard, before he is condemn'd.

Luc. Who can refrain from laughter at this sight?
 Tarquin, the most unjust of mortal men,
 Requiring justice; Tarquin who ne'er heeded
 A suppliant's prayers, or in his wrath remember'd
 Sweet mercy, asking pity of a people,
 Whom he hath ever harras'd with oppression?
 Their glory didst thou seek? No, 'twas thy own,
 Proud

Proud man. Hadst thou thy people's glory fought,
 Or hadst thou truly known wherein thy own
 Consisted, thou wouldst have desired to see them
 Happy and free. What glory e'er did slaves
 Receive from conquest? Or what happiness
 Can slaves enjoy, seeing a splendid palace
 Or gorgeous temple?—While within the heart
 Freedom sits got inthroned, and in that shrine,
 Where heaven's pure flame should dwell, lurks
 discontent,
 And struggling, though depress'd, the generous
 ardor

They from their ancestors inherited,
 What Roman is alive to any thought
 But one, the secret wish of righteous vengeance?
 Retire, false wretch, odious to gods and men,
 Retire, e'er 'tis too late, lest, now provok'd,
 We ope our gates indeed, and rushing on thee,
 Thy sentence change from banishment to death.

Enter CLAUDIUS *to* TARQUIN.

Claud. I come, sent by the princes.

Tar.

In thy face

I read thy news; draw nearer and disclose it;
 But whisper low, that none may over-hear thee.

Claud. The guards, instead of seizing Brutus, brought him
 Into the camp; he gain'd the soldiers there,
 As he before had gain'd the citizens:
 Titus and Aruns are to Cære fled,

Sextus

Sextus to Gabii ; Brutus is at hand,
 With all the cavalry ; if you delay,
 My gracious lord, a moment, you are lost.

Tar. Ye factious demagogues ! and stubborn people !

Once more attend your king ! This messenger
 Brings me advice, the army is at hand

To aid their master ; Brutus, the arch-rebel,
 Is by their loyal ardor done to death ;

Now then prepare to feel the utmost weight
 Of my avengement : if I enter in

In all my terror, by the immortal gods,

I will have no remorse ; I'll shew no pity ;

I'll decimate the rebel crew, your limbs

Shall feed the foxes, and each bird obscene,

Unburied, scatter'd o'er the blood-stain'd earth.

What do ye tremble ?—Yet deluded people,

If e'er the army come you ope your gates,

Throw down your weapons, ask my clemency ;

You shall, as little as you have deserv'd it,

Or may expect such clemency from me,

All meet with mercy and a gracious pardon ;

Nay, and at your request, I'll spare your leaders,

Provided they exile themselves from Rome.

Val. Tyrant, thou speak'st in vain, thy artifice

Is shallow, and pierced through ; I saw pale fear

Sit on the chalk'd face of thy messenger.

The army can't degenerate so far

From those brave men whom they have left behind ;

They are not from thy native place Tarquinii,

But

But Romans born, and will with joy receive
Him who proclaims them free.—But should he
perish,

Should Brutus (which avert ye righteous powers !)
Have fail'd in his great enterprize, and met
A glorious death ; glorious in such a cause,
And hallow'd, tho by the hands of villains slain,
Of regal tools ; know, Tarquin, there are still
Enough to assume the part which he began ;
Not one, but fifty Brutus's are here,
Who will, in the defence of liberty,
Resist thy power, till the last drop shall leave
Their noble hearts : we are resolv'd while life
Is ours, to live like men ; if die we must,
As soon or late all shall, like men to die.

[*Shout at a distance.*

Luc. Hear, tyrant ! hear ! this is the sound of fate,
Which peals forth thy destruction ; 'tis the shout
Of liberty, the signal of success ;
Brutus returns in triumph ; let us all
Prepare in worthy manner to receive
Our great deliverer. This is the hour,
By destiny decreed, to teach mankind,
But chiefly guilty kings, that there are gods
Who care for mortal deeds, and rule with justice
The realms of heaven above, and earth below.

[*Exeunt.*

Tar. Ye furies, glut yourselves ! if there are gods,
Who bend so much from their prerogative,

U

To

To league with rebel subjects 'gainst their kings !
 Make sure your work ! strike here ! blast me at
 once !

Use me, as I would use the Roman people,
 Were they all as one worm beneath my feet !
 Thus would I trample them, and thus.—I leave
 thee,

High-towering city, keep thy bulwarks firm,
 With double strength, cement thy stones together :
 For if I err not, I'll raise such a flame
 Throughout Hetruria, as shall not be quench'd
 Till thou and all thy sons be burnt as stubble
 Fired with one general blaze ; should to their aid
 The traitors' guardian gods descend, I'll bear
 The hurrying storm along the troubled air,
 By vengeance raised, impell'd by brave despair. }

Exit.

SCENE VI. *Rome.*

BRUTUS and COLLATINUS as Consuls with Lictors,
 VALERIUS, LUCRETIUS, and others.

Br. Indeed, my noble friends, you judge me rightly ;
 These honours little move the mind of Brutus.
 Ne'er did I covet gew-gaws, or the farce
 Of wind-blown pomp. 'Tis not the purple robe,
 The curule chair, the lictors' keen-edg'd axe
 Inforcing homage, which e'er drew one thought
 Of

Of mine aside. But to behold a state
 Deliver'd from oppression, to expel
 Base ignominious slavery, with those
 Who forged her chains for a free people's neck,
 To see that people bless'd with liberty,
 And think that we shall hand down to our children
 The most invaluable gift of heaven,
 'Twas this expectancy alone, which cast
 A light through that black shade in which I dwelt,
 And now this having seen, could I enjoy
 The assurance of its being still continued,
 Again, without a scruple, I'd retreat
 To my obscurity, known to myself
 Alone, hail'd by no tongue, seen by no eye.

Val. That may not be; yet in her infancy,
 Her joints quite slack, unable to perform
 Their motions, and proceed alone, Rome wants
 Thy thinking head, thy executive hand,
 And father's care.—I will not say my joy
 Superior is to thine, but sure 'tis equal,
 At least the force of it can't strain a point
 Beyond its present reach. Lucretius too,
 And Collatinus, may now comfort feel,
 Mild as the beams of evening, when the sun
 Looks placid forth, after the boistrous storms
 Which overwhelm'd the day.

Luc. We do, we do.

Col. Such fellow-feeling with my noble colleague,
 Methinks my spirit hath, that I almost,

To see this hour, could venture to pass through
Those agonies, which tore my soul in twain.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. All health to Rome! her senate! and her consuls!

Br. Speak on what thou hast farther to impart.

Mess. I hither come, sent by the inhabitants
Of Gabii; they desire to mix with you
Their share of pleasure, for your late success,
And pray the gods you daily may increase
In every earthly blessing. They intreat
You'll still esteem them as your firm allies,
And ancient friends. Chiefly they hail the man,
Who first conceived, and dared, with brave resolve,
Reduce to action what his mind inspired.
Lastly, I bring advice of Sextus' death,
Who came no sooner to the gates of Gabii,
Without his usual train attending him,
Than mindful of their injuries sustain'd,
Repenting his most cruel deeds, to which
They had been long unwilling witnesses,
The populace surrounding him, with clubs
And stones, the weapons which came first to hand,
Slew the unpitied homicide.

Br. This message
Thou must deliver to the assembled fathers,
From them receive thy answer. Now, Lucretia,
Thy ghost may cease to wander o'er the earth,
And rest in peace.

Luc.

- Luc.* Blessed inhabitants
Of Gabii! Oh, ye gods, your ways are just!
Now will I fit me down, and try to bear
Hateful old age, the affliction of mortality,
But hastening on its remedy and cure.
- Col.* Yet I regret the villain should be slain
By any hand but mine.

Enter CLAUDIUS.

- Claud.* Is Brutus here?
My business is with him.
- Br.* Another messenger!
I know thee well; disclose thy errand straight.
- Claud.* I come from Aruns; what he bade me utter,
If liberty of speech be granted me,
I shall deliver.
- Br.* Speak; thy words are free.
- Claud.* Then thus he says—tell Brutus, tell that traitor,
That fool who was, that knave who ever will be;
That should I meet him in the field of battle,
Were his skull trebly thicker than it is,
I'd thoroughly examine its contents.
Is this denied me? When I bear the sway
With Titus, which perhaps he may remember
We earn'd together, I will send to Delphi,
On purpose, for that cudgel he presented
Unto the god; with which each day his shoulders
Shall be so flay'd, that he shall wish his feign'd
Were

Were turn'd to real insensibility,
 Treated with this correction during life.
 Ask him too, if his bravery wars with w
 And whether he hath slain the aged queen

Br. And dost thou bring no other message?

Claud.

Non

Br. 'Tis worthy of the sender, and the sent.

Go tell thy pleasant master, that I bear
 With Collatinus join'd, chief sway in R
 Tell him the oracle is now fulfill'd ;
 Tell him I kiss'd my mother when I fell,
 E'en in the very portico of the temple,
 The earth, the general parent of us all.
 And if 'twill farther please him, that the cu
 I to the god presented, was an emblem
 Expressive of myself, a golden rod
 Beneath a case of wood. As to his threats
 Tell him I heed them as the chiding gale,
 Or the ocean wave beating at the fix'd base
 Of a high promontory. Though should I meet
 him

Mid the ensanguin'd field in glorious fight,
 Engaged for the great cause of liberty,
 I'll dare the proudest of my country's foes,
 And with the sword of vengeance, on his crest
 Engrave a mark indelible : tell him
 No Roman murders women : that we leave
 To Tarquin and his sons ; even the croud

Pursued

Pursued her only through the streets with curses,
 Invoked the furies of her parents on her,
 And saw her pass the city gate; so hence
 In safety go, to him who sent thee hither.

[Exit Claud.

Val. That missionary did but ill deserve
 So civil a discharge.

Br. Were Aruns us,
 Neither would he have found it. Now, my
 friends,
 To-morrow will Horatius and Herminius,
 The Ardeats having to a truce agreed
 For fifteen years, lead all the army homeward.
 Then in the common meeting of the people,
 Lest they should think two kings instead of one
 (Though chosen annually) may lord it o'er them;
 One of us, Collatinus, will lay down
 Our symbols of command, only resumed
 Alternate month by month. The good Papirius,
 King of the holy things, shall offer up
 Our general sacrifice, while we again,
 And every individual then assembled,
 Both for ourselves and our posterity,
 Renew our solemn oath ne'er to admit
 One of the Tarquin race. This night (more
 grateful
 Than clouds of incense) let our secret prayers,
 Our private gratitude, and thanks, ascend

To

LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

To the high-ruling powers. For howsoe'er,
Vain man may think he plans with arduous care,
Their breath alone his sentiments inspires,
They fill his breast with more than mortal fires,
Their energy lights up the patriot flame,
They raise the humble, and the haughty tame,
They every human accident foresee,
To them not accident, but certainty.

E D I T H A.

^

T R A G E D Y.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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P R O L O G U E.

WHREE'ER Mankind to sacred freedom just,
Have soar'd above the groveling Sons of dust,
Where'er the Arts their fragrant wreathes have wove,
Where'er the virtues leagued with Patriot love,
And bright-eyed Science shed her heavenly dews,
There public taste hath nursed the Tragic Muse.
And Reason to her generous care confign'd,
The noblest, best emotions of the mind.

'Tis her's where human institutes are weak,
With firm, unbiaſt emphasis to ſpeak.
With genuine nature link perſuaſive art,
And bind in magic ties the willing heart,
She gives to view the Tyrant's naked breaſt,
What guilt diſturbſ him, and what fears infeſt.
She with abhorrence marks the Traitor's name,
And cloathſ Ambition in the robes of Shame.
Depreſſes Cruelty; and rears on high
The ſtandard of Imperial liberty.

Is Innocence by rigour ſtern ſubdu'd?
She ſteels her ſoul with conſcious fortitude.
Bids her above this ſordid earth to riſe,
And claim alliance with her native ſkies.

Who then, by partial error led aſtray,
With haſty cenſure brands the Tragic lay?
The glorious ſtrains which poliſh'd Athens taught,
Refining and exalting human thought?
When Sages praiſed the Poet's moral pen?
And liſtning Heroes felt that they were men?

What true deſert is their's, at Virtue's call,
Who make the obedient paſſions riſe or fall!
Who in her Temple bid Mankind appear,
Breaſte the warm ſigh, and drop the hallow'd tear!
For when by idiot laughter unpoſſeſt,
She, gentle Goddeſs, ſeeks the ſofter'd breaſt.
From grief itſelf a nameleſs pleaſure flows,
And pity loves to melt at fancied woes.

Not through Antiquity's obſcurer ways,
To chimes remote our Britiſh Author ſtrays,
Not from the Italian, or the French tranſlates,
Alters old plots, or even imitates.

From your own Annals he his story draws,
 Tradition long hath crown'd it with applause.
 When the fierce Danes their barbarous inroads plann'd,
 And pour'd destruction o'er each harraff land.
 When they besieged these Walls, and hoped to win,
 Nor knew superior valour dwelt within:
 Till the bold Citizens assail'd their Host,
 And drove the insulting Miscreants from their Coast.
 Thus, for their Country, dared your Sires to bleed;
 Nor have their Sons disgraced the gallant deed.
 Courageous now, as when they quell'd the Dane,
 Still faithful, loyal, generous, and humane.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

V O L N I R.

E D R E D.

R O D O L P H.

A L B E R T.

O S W Y.

B R I T H R I C, O F S I G E B E R T.

C I T I Z E N S, D A N I S H C A P T A I N S, &c.

G U N H I L D A.

E D I T H A.

SCENE. EXETER, and the adjacent Country.

E D I T H A.

A C T I.

SCENE I. *A Camp. At some distance the Castle,
and City of Exeter.*

VOLNIR, BRITHRIC.

Vol. SHALL not this city fall beneath my power?
What magic buckler guards it? To my arms
The puny offspring of this sea-girt land
Have yielded wherefoe'er I fought. My ships
Beneath their treasures bend. The ravaged coast,
Hence, to the farthest Orcades, laments
Her slaughter'd chiefs, and desolated towns.
What say'st thou Englishman! Our first assault
Hath proved in vain, will they withstand another?

Brith. Doubtless they will. In native courage bold,
The warlike sons of Isca cannot droop

Y

By

By sudden fear o'ercome. To conquer them,
 Patience with ardent valour must be joined ;
 Nor will they yield, till closed within the net
 Of extreme fate and dire necessity.

Vol. How dost thou know their character so well ?
 I thought thou told'st me, thou wert born far off,
 Upon the banks of Trent ?

Brith. I told thee true.
 But who, within these confines, is a stranger
 To the Damnonian fame ? Their worth in arms
 Even their foes confess. Before these walls
 For two long tedious months did Sweno mourn,
 Illustrious monarch, and with shame and rage
 Beheld his blasted laurels. Nor at length,
 But by a Norman traitor gain'd the place,
 Ignobly gain'd it. Why, O ill-advifed,
 Would'st thou sit down before it ?

Vol. Brithric, hold !
 No more with thy ill-omen'd notes presume
 To infest my ear. Hast thou forgot, old man,
 When first I saw thee in thy boarded ship,
 The sad survivor of thy vanquish'd crew,
 Cover'd with wounds ? When I preserv'd thy life,
 And made my foe my friend ? For Volnir ne'er
 After the rage of fight, could plunge his sword
 In the unguarded bosom of the brave.

Brith. No, Volnir, I can ne'er forget that day.

Vol. Thou hast forgot it ; else why interpose
 These frigid cautions ? Hast thou e'er with arms,
 Or

Or counfels, aided me, fince firft I urged
 The tide of war againft the Anglian fhore?
 Now, by my fword I fwear, when I have gain'd
 Some glorious victory, thefe eyes have feen
 Thy cheek bedew'd with tears.

Brith. And fay, could'ft thou
 View ruin with gigantic ftride, pafs o'er
 Thy Denmark's breaft unmoved? No, furely, no.
 In other realms thou haft not feen thefe feet
 Behind thee linger; my victorious arm
 Gothland hath witnefs'd, and the Frank, the Scot,
 Oft fled before the lightning of my fpear.
 Thefe were my enemies as well as thine.
 But can a private tye, e'en gratitude
 Strongeft of all, make me forget the love
 I owe my country? Perifh then this arm!
 May thefe white locks unfeemly ftrew the duft!
 When my advice fhall prompt, or hands dare
 execute

A guilty deed againft my native foil!

Vol. Why hath thy native foil ne'er paid thy ranfom?
 For well I know, thou art not of the race
 Of common men.

Brith. Why afk of me a queftion
 Thou beft can'ft answer? Would'ft thou have
 permitted
 A meffenger from me to feek my friends,
 Long, long e'er now my ranfom had been paid.

Y 2

Thou

Thou know'st, tho pleased, the more enlighten'd
 manners,
 And customs of well-regulated states
 By my instructions taught, to exalt me high
 Amid thy warriors, conqueror as thou art,
 Thou know'st I have not willingly forsaken
 Those I held dear. I left my soul's best portion,
 A valued wife; a young and growing daughter,
 An infant son I left. Could I forget
 In splendid slavery these tender names?
 For life I am thy debtor, and have served
 In other wars most faithfully. But still
 Affection wrings my heart, and liberty
 Is unpossess'd, tho I without a boast
 Might claim it as my due.

Vol. Go, join the foe.
 Hence murmurer to the city, and betray
 Me, and my army.

Brith. Volnir, no, I scorn
 The paths of baseness. Prisoner, to thee,
 Unransom'd never will I quit thy camp.

S C E N E II.

Enter RODOLPH, with EDITHA, and other Prisoners.

Vol. Welcome, brave Rodolph! Hast thou well explored
 The country toward the north?

Rod.

Rod. I have. No foe
 Dares stand against us, terror-struck they fly,
 And leave to us their numerous herds and flocks.
 I traced yon winding stream for many a mile,
 Through its luxuriant vale, fit haunt for gods,
 Unlike our blasted heaths, here plenty dwells,
 Clad in her richest robes. Could we possess
 The city, with this scene before our view,
 Here might we fix our home, and each nerve strung
 With double vigour, brave the utmost force
 Of the whole adverse isle. A region this,
 Worthy of none but Denmark's valiant race.—
 Bear off these prisoners. To my tent conduct
 This trembling fair one. Fear not, gentle damsel,
 Rodolph is thy protector.

Vol. Stay awhile.

Whence is that beauteous maid?

Rod. A votarefs' she.

Immured within a neighbouring abbey's walls.
 We burst the gate, and took her thence by force,

Vol. Enough. Retire. [*Exeunt Editha, &c.*

Rodolph, it ill becomes

A soldier in the clamorous field of war
 To fight at beauty's feet. 'Tis our's to teach
 The eager sword to bite the crested helm :
 To call the hawks of heaven, and bid them mark
 The joys of fight ; to drench the ground in blood.
 Nor, till return'd from war, to take the maid,
 Or blooming widow to our wish'd embrace.

Rod.

Rod. Fear not my chief ; guarded with sacred care
She dwells secure, 'till placed within my ship,
A matchless prize.

Vol. So shall thy chief applaud thee.
Now hear what we have purposed. Be it thine
To head a daring band by me selected,
And when the moon dips in the cave of night
Her silver brow, to scale with silent step
Yon castle walls ; myself will on the city
Pour my whole force, and with incessant storm
Facilitate thy enterprize.

Rod. My thoughts
Accord with thine. Plan thou each arduous deed :
And let this heart the bold designs fulfill. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

VOLNIR, BRITHRIC.

Vol. Mark'd you the virgin ?

Brith. I observed her well.
Her modesty, her air above the vulgar,
Her unaffected silent look of woe,
With strange emotions fill'd my heart. I pity her.

Vol. Her fate is to be envied. Rodolph's valour
Deserves the fairest. Where can beauty feel
True pleasure, but when clasp'd in the embrace
Of the intrepid warrior ?

Brith.

- Brith.* Tender mourner!
 Who knows her grief! Her sad anxiety!
 Torn from her friends! Perhaps an aged father
 Now beats his breast, and curses in despair,
 The cruel hand of fate. A frantic mother
 Perhaps now breathes her last, in anguish wild,
 Calling in vain upon her much-loved daughter.
- Vol.* I blush to hear this weakness; glad am I
 None of my noble Danes are witnesses
 To this thy folly; but if thou regard'st
 My anger, dare not with inglorious wailings
 Disgrace my camp. War is no school of pity.
 Nor would I, that the spirits of my followers,
 Rough and invincible, be e'er degraded
 To the soft failings of the silken crew,
 O'er whom they triumph. Why is strength im-
 parted,
 Why the heroic soul, but from the base
 Unmanly grasp of cowards, those possessions
 They merit not to wrest? Riches and beauty,
 The harvest of their labours?
- Brith.* Is it then
 Denied to feel for the afflicted?
- Vol.* No;
 But rule thy feelings; like a man, support
 Thy nature's frailty; feed on grief in secret.
- [Exit
- Brith.* O curse! to bear a mind whence sweet humanity
 By barbarous custom is exiled! To know
No

No virtue, but ferocious brutal courage!
 Yet is this chief superior to his race,
 And education which hath steel'd his soul
 To gentle pity, hath not quite erased
 The native sense of rectitude. He spared
 My life; and loved a valour like his own.—
 The thoughts of this poor virgin still distress me.
 Such is my daughter's age.—But she's far distant.
 It cannot be.—And yet her mother's features
 Rose to my mind.—'Tis but the sport of fancy.—
 Oh! could I once again behold my children,
 I then might die in peace.—But who can tell
 Whether some other band of these invaders
 May not have slain, or hurried them away
 To sad captivity? Perhaps I mourn
 The absence of the dead! or dead to me,
 Who never must behold them; doom'd to waste
 My days in misery, and die a slave.

Enter RODOLPH.

Brith. Hast thou so soon left thy fair prisoner?

Rod. New to misfortune is the maid; her sorrow
 Resists all arguments; persuasion fails;
 Nor will she hear a word of soothing comfort.
 She will be calm anon. These warmer passions
 Soonest abate. Yet 'twas a scene of terror
 From whence I snatch'd her; for the foolish crew
 Their gates had barricadoed, which provoked
 My gallant bands to deeds of vengeance. All

All

All but she, and one, whom at a postern door
A youth bore off upon his rapid steed,
Fell victims to the keen relentless sword.

Brith. Whence were the other captives ?

Rod. They were taken
From neighbouring villages, the soldier's plunder,
To them by lot distributed.

Brith. Would'st thou,
Should I request it, suffer me to visit
This captive in thy tent ?

Rod. Hah! dost thou know
What 'tis thou ask'st ?

Brith. I do. Thou would'st be willing
To dry her tears ?

Rod. I would.

Brith. 'Tis for that purpose
I ask an interview. I am her countryman,
And should I to her ear unfold thy worth,
Thy excellence above the other chiefs ;
Make her of that good fortune sensible,
Which, mid her depth of woe, to thy possession
Devoted her ; may not her mind be moved,
Sooth'd by the cheering speech of honest age,
And cast anxiety aside ?

Rod. I'll trust thee.

Thy snowy head proclaims, that in thy breast
The flame of warm desire's long since extinct.
Go Brithric. I would bend her to my wishes,
But not reluctantly. The sickly appetite

Z

Of

Of impotence may provocation need
In cold resistance, but my glowing soul
Seeks equal passion, and the yielding fair
To bless, must covet blessing.—Hence, away!
I wait on Volnir; he hath now demanded
Once more a parley; and the haughty Albert,
Exonia's Præfect to our camp draws nigh. [*Exit.*
Brith. Protect these towers, kind heaven! tho for the sins
Of guilty nations, for a time these robbers
Bear thy vindictive scourge; yet, teach mankind
At length, that sacrilege and cruelty
Will draw the terrors of thy justice down!
That mercy is thy darling attribute,
And thy arm bared to punish, not destroy!

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE I. VOLNIR'S Tent. VOLNIR and his
CAPTAINS.

Vol. Once more my noble friends, who chose me
willingly

Your leader in this war, I mean to try,
Whether by mild persuasion, or by threats,
This Albert may be shaken. For tho' frankly
You rush amid the tempest of the fight,
To you not dreadful, and pour forth your blood,
As well becomes the brave; yet do ye know
To relish life, and all its genuine pleasures.
For this we leave our barren rocks, to tear
From the luxurious arms of battening sloth,
Its wealth superfluous, and its gorgeous robes,
Rich gems, and spur to every great design
The love-exciting fair. Nor would I rashly,
When dire necessity impels not, urge
Your feet to danger's fatal paths.—Should Albert,
Depending on its strength, refuse to yield
This well-girt city, he, like other foes,
May buy our absence dearly, and bring forth
The hoarded gold and precious moveables,

Z 2

Which

Which the affrighted citizens shall give
 With pleasure ; while we seek our native land,
 With ships full-fraught, bearing a treasure thither,
 Greater than Denmark ever saw before.

Capt. Conscious of thy superior worth, we trust
 To thee our interest ; in the sanguine field,
 Or mazy treaty, stedfast to pursue
 The path where Volnir, or where wisdom leads.

Enter RODOLPH, *with* ALBERT.

Rod. The Præfect Albert.

Vol. He does well to obey
 Our summons.—Albert welcome.

Alb. Think not Dane
 Tho proud thy speech, that Albert's acts are
 govern'd,

But by his own free will. 'Tis true I come,
 And by thy message prompted ; but expecting
 No lordly looks to see, to hear no terms
 Of insult from a foe we need not dread.
 Our bulwarks laugh to scorn thy utmost force,
 Guarded by men, prepared as thou hast found,
 Buried beneath their ruins to expire,
 E'er stain their souls with infamy. I come,
 Urged by an impulse to thy breast unknown,
 That of humanity. To bid thee fly,
 For vengeance is at hand ; to bid thee spare
 The streams of blood, which fate prepares to pour
 Over these verdant fields. For tho revenge
 Inspires,

Inspires, tho to the ravages of war
 You join fell cruelty, tho smoking villages,
 Women and children murder'd, well might steel
 To dire retaliation all our hearts!
 Yet dear is every citizen to me!
 These eyes have seen enough of death already.
 This hour is thine, retire: the next is our's:
 And thy retreat cut off, one general ruin
 Involves you all.

Vol. Albert, I love thy boldness.
 A foe thou art, worthy a son of Denmark
 To cope withal. But hast thou mark'd our camp?
 And warlike preparation? Think not vainly
 Thou can't escape destruction. Flush'd with
 conquest
 In every country from the frozen sea
 To this delightful region, nought avails
 Thy bravery against us. Yonder walls
 Already totter to their deep-set base.
 Consult then this humanity of thine,
 Open the gates; so shalt thou save the lives
 Of thy devoted citizens, and taste
 Our amplest clemency.

Alb. Whence hast thou gain'd
 This confidence, audacious man? Because
 So spiritless was our defence, when lately
 We beat thee from our ramparts? When thy
 bravest
 Fell at our feet in death? And the remainder

To

To their intrenchments fled? Can this have taught thee

To boast? To threaten?—By the inhabitants
Of this one town alone thus roughly treated,
When the collected force of Devon bursts
In thunder on thee, as e'er long it will,
Thy raven's wing, whose plumes already moult,
Shall rise no more; but in the dust be trod,
Scorn'd by the meanest peasant of our isle.

Vol. So rashly warm!

Alb. So reasonably bold.

Vol. To cease this idle play of language, vain
And foreign to our purpose. Should we quit
These girded walls, devoted to our will.—
Your citizens are rich; say, with what sum
Will they their freedom and their lives redeem?

Alb. Perish the thought! were our streets paved with
gold,

Expect not Dane from us the shining treasure.
For thee we hoard up nought but steel, to which
Thou art right welcome.

Vol. Be it so.—But Albert,
When ruin enters o'er yon towers, when horror
And fell destruction riot in your streets,
Accuse not us of cruelty, the obstinate
Urge their own fate, our consciences are free.

Alb. We will acquit thee Dane, till then farewell! [*Exit.*]

Vol. Prepare my friends! from this determined man
Expect no common shock. Each to his post!

Yet

Yet hath our steady and unshaken valour,
 Met greater dangers than his utmost power
 Can bring in opposition, and with ease
 Subdued them all. Only resolve to conquer
 And you're already conquerors. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E II. RODOLPH'S Tent.

EDITHA.

O state of horror! worse than death itself!
 Yes, I would die with pleasure, to the sword
 Submit my neck, or run to meet the blow.
 But save me spotless heaven! Say, who art thou?

Enter BRITHRIC.

Brith. A friend, a countryman, by Rodolph sent—

Ed. Rodolph! detested name!

Brith. And why detested!

Thou art a stranger to his worth, his love—

Ed. 'Tis monstrous! Name it not. Said'st thou his
 love!

Thou can'st not mean it.

Brith. Calm these transports virgin,
 And hear me plead his cause.

Ed. I will not hear thee.

'Tis poison to my ears. Dishonest Englishman!
 Leave

Leave me ; hence, to the robber who employed
thee ;

Fittest society !

Brith.

Impassion'd thus,

I will not leave thee. Bred up in prosperity,
Thou hast not tasted misery's sad cup,
And therefore view'st thy lot with double anguish.
But time with lenient hand will soothe thy grief,
And teach thee to repay with gratitude,
The care, the love, the warm desires of Rodolph.

Ed.

Hast thou out-lived thy feelings ? Or art thou
A willing slave ? A traitor to thy country ?
Or wert thou forced upon this odious task ?
Thou know'st me not.—I pity and forgive thee.

Brith.

Yet if resentment for thy country's wrongs,
Or thy own injuries, if the esteem
Of honour, and the innate love of virtue
Permit thee not to yield ; try what thou can'st
To gain forbearance ; try dissimulation ;
To feign for honest purposes is lawful.
He will submit ; and lucky opportunity
Perhaps will crown thy wisdom.

Ed.

Base adviser ;

Close thy unhallow'd lips. When thee I violate,
O pure sincerity ! O holy truth,
When I shall cease thy mandates to adore !
May ignominy be my portion here,
And heaven refuse me happiness hereafter !
Of all the vices which my soul abhors,

There's

'There's none whose dire communion I would shun
 Like vile deceit ; to every other crime
 It forms a path, till the whole breast becomes
 A store-house of pollution.—As for thee,
 Whose abject mind is suited to thy station,
 Hence from my sight, and torture me no more.
 For know, I want no counsel but my own.

Brith. How I admire this warmth ! [*Afide.*] O gentle
 maid,

Whose anger in so just a cause, delights
 The heart attuned in unison with thine !
 Excuse an old man's policy, who looks
 With tenderest sympathy on thy affliction.
 Who wish'd to prove if thy interior graces
 Equal'd thy outward charms. Who knows thy
 danger,
 And would pour forth his blood to give thee safety ;
 For thou art like——O heaven !

Ed.

Can I believe

This sudden change ? Thy face indeed is honest,
 And those white hairs of age claim reverence.
 The tear too wets thy cheek.—But why suspect me ?
 Thy trial shews thou didst. Can with integrity
 Suspicion dwell ? So odious a companion ?

Brith. 'Twas not suspicion, I disclaim its weakness.

'Twas chance, 'twas curiosity, desire
 To have thee higher rise in my esteem.
 'Twas any thing but a design to injure
 Thy purity of soul. When first I saw thee,

A a

Methought

Methought my heart was link'd to thine, I vow'd
 To do thee service ; but alas ! what service
 Can I, a wretched prisoner, afford !
 I may lament, but cannot rescue thee.

Ed. O Edred where art thou ! O Bertha ! Bertha !

Brith. What said'st thou ! What !

Ed. Whence is this wild emotion ?

Why dost thou fix thy eyes, and gaze thus on me ?

Brith. Did'st thou not mention Edred ?

Ed. What of him ?

Brith. And Bertha too ?

Ed. I did.

Brith. Are they thy friends ?

Ed. My mother and my brother.

Brith. And thy name ?—

Ed. Is Editha.

Brith. Thy father ?—

Ed. Was Earl Sigebert.

Brith. I, I am he : O Editha ! my child !

I am thy long-lost father, I am Sigebert.

Ed. My father ! is it possible ! my father !

Brith. I am indeed. Oh ! I am wild with joy.

Ed. And shall I know the blessing of a father !

Brith. Thou shalt, thou shalt. Oh ! not the light itself,
 Not the warm blood which gives me motion, sense,
 Shall be so dear to me. I thought I saw
 The features of my Bertha. O my child !
 My lovely Editha !—But in this place !
 And in this Rodolph's power ! Ye angels stoop,
 Stoop

Stoop on your wings of grace, and save my child!
 Where is that best of women? Where is Bertha?
 And where thy brother? Are they not in Mercia?
 By what strange mystery art thou prisoner here?

Ed. O my dear father! (to pronounce that name
 Thrills my whole soul with pleasure.) Edred's
 valour,

And youthful merit, won the royal favour
 Of our great master Ethelred. Another
 Possesses thy inheritance; to him
 He gave domains which far exceeded thine,
 Here, in the bounds of Devon, ample rights,
 Forests, and large command. Thy sad misfortune
 Was in this grateful bounty not forgotten.
 For long we've thought thee dead, unnumber'd tears
 Hath Bertha pour'd, and still the painful sigh
 Oft swells her bosom. When she heard thy ship
 Was by a tempest sever'd from the rest,
 She fear'd the greedy waves had swallow'd it,
 And mourn'd in bitterest woe her husband's death.

Brith. Oh! had it not been sever'd, Denmark's sons
 Had not so long spread ruin o'er my country;
 I had not yielded to this Danish chief,
 Oppress'd by numbers; nor with him dragg'd out
 Eighteen long years of tedious servitude.
 Nor had the father and the daughter thus
 Met helpless captives. But where is she now?
 And where my son?

A a 2

Ed.

Ed. This morn when last I saw them—
 Oh! thou recall’st the dreadful scene of blood,
 The horrid massacre. Within that sanctuary
 Had Bertha and myself retired for safety.
 When at one gate the foe demanded entrance,
 We heard the voice of Edred at the other.
 Either by chance, or fearing their intent
 He came, but unattended; strait he placed
 My mother on his courser, and out-stripp’d
 The winds for her deliverance.

Brith. Noble youth!

Ed. By this, no doubt, he hath regain’d the city.
 Where, with his household train in deeds of danger
 He is the foremost, and encourages
 The most remiss to action.

Brith. O my daughter!
 Grief mingles with my joy.—Preserve him heaven!
 And lead him on to victory!—For thee
 I weep, my Editha. Ah! what avails it
 That thou wert snatch’d from slaughter, if thou
 now

Must be expos’d to savage violation!

Ed. Let us not murmur. That almighty power
 Who sav’d me there as by a miracle,
 Can here support me.

Brith. In that power I trust.
 But I must guard thee with a father’s love!
 And dangerous is the path I shall pursue.

I'll hence to Volnir, in whose breast I claim
 Some share of confidence, to him disclose
 Rodolph's instructions, his design on thee ;
 I will enlarge on his inglorious passion.
 So strict his discipline he will, I know,
 Divide you till they re-embark. Mean-time
 I may devise some other plan to save thee.

Ed. To thee, and heaven, do I commit myself.

Brith. Farewell my child ! I could almost persuade
 My old fond heart, that innocence, like thine,
 Might melt the most relentless son of Denmark
 To soft humanity.—Farewell ! farewell ! [*Exit.*]

Ed. Farewell ! May all-overwatching providence
 Assist thy pious care, and shield thy daughter !

Enter RODOLPH.

Rod. Once more, my beauteous captive, e'er I plunge
 Amid the storm of war, I come to hear
 More gentle accents from thy mouth, to meet
 More gentle glances from thy eyes.—Hath Brithric,
 My friend, thy ancient countryman been with thee ?

Ed. He hath.

Rod. Thou view'st me with the look of scorn.
 And his persuasions have not overcome
 That stubborn heart.

Ed. Away ! I would reproach thee.
 But sentiments like mine will prompt a language
 Thou can'st not understand.

Rod.

Rod. Hah! Do'st thou know
My power o'er thee is absolute?

Ed. I know it.

To wounds, to accidents, to violence,
This outward frame is subject; but the mind
Enjoys her glorious freedom uncontroll'd.

Rod. Nor have I hurt that mind, tho' privileged
By war and conquest.

Ed. Rather say by sacrilege,
Rapine, and cruelty. All other nations
Respect the matron and the hoary fire,
Melt at the virgin's and the infant's tear.
Thy savage race, intent on ruthless slaughter,
Heeds none of these; nor can the holiest places
Protect them from their fury. Like the tiger,
Which loves to swim in blood, and tears the flock,
Tho' gorged with food, in frantic wantonness.

Rod. What treatment can a foe expect but death,
Or slavery, from a foe? We have not yet
Enervated our minds by southern manners.
Nursed in the arms of war, I love the fight,
The whizzing arrow, and the flying spear,
The clang of shields, and tempest of the field.
To love my country, and to hate my enemy,
Be mine. What virtue can exalt the soul
Of man, but courage?

Ed. Mercy and compassion,
Which bind a wreath around the warrior's helm,
And lead his footsteps in the paths of glory.

Rod.

- Rod.* And guard him doubtless in the day of battle!
By these your Englishmen have fought so bravely,
And with resistless ardour stopp'd our course.
Such virtues ever may my foes possess!
- Ed.* O blind to truth! uncivilized barbarian!
With what disdain the polish'd soul beholds
The man who sinks himself beneath the brute!
- Rod.* No more. Thou wilt perchance repent this pride.
- Ed.* No; I despise thee from a nobler motive;
I soar above thee, conscious of a dignity
Thy heart ne'er felt, the dignity of virtue.
- Rod.* That be thy solace here! I go to execute
My chief's commands. The moon hath left the
 heavens,
The clouds of night hang o'er the sleeping city,
And lull it to its fate. Though cloath'd with
 beauty,
Excelling all my eyes have seen before,
Yet think not I shall soothe, and fawn, and kneel,
For favours in my power.—Thou art my captive.
- Ed.* But am thy captive only while I please.
Think'st thou I prize my life beyond my honour?
- Rod.* The words of many a fair, who, to enhance
The boon, would make it difficult to win.
So far I've been thy lover, when I next
Return with victory, expect thy master. [*Exit.*
- Ed.* A slave! a master!—Yet I could submit
To the most humble servile offices,
With innocence, companion of my toil,

If

If my own heart reproach'd me not, nor shame
 Sat kindling on my cheek.—And could I leave
 My native country? leave my friends? my brother?
 A mother, who her being wrapt in mine,
 Lives but in me? O my dear long-lost father!
 So lately found! Save, save me from the thought!
 Yet, what can'st thou! A slave to these barbarians!
 A wretched slave!—Oh! never shall I see
 My parents meet, a witness to their joy,
 I shall not tend their age, and smooth its cares,
 Or drop the pious tear upon their grave.—
 Who knows my future fate?—My soul shrinks
 back!

Nor thro the horrid gloom dares penetrate.
 O thou supreme o'er all! to whom I bend
 With humblest duty, let thy power be shewn!
 Confound tyrannic force! support the weak!
 And from affliction's soul remove despair!

[*Exit.*

S C E N E III. *The City.*

ALBERT and CITIZENS.

Alb. The time requires our strictest vigilance.
 Is the watch doubled? Hast thou visited
 Each quarter of the ramparts?

Cit.

I have.

Alb.

Alb. Protected by our walls, and more
 By love of liberty, by brave disdain,
 And hatred of our unrelenting foes,
 We need not fear.—This bold adventurer,
 Equal to Swein in bravery and conduct,
 Whose fame in arms hath call'd forth Denmark's
 sons,
 By choice to follow his unfolded standard,
 Shall, with his numerous host, or starve beneath
 Our unscaled mounds, or seek their ships with
 shame,
 If (as I trust you will), with steady valour,
 You guard your native city ; if your deeds
 Answer in future to your last day's actions.
 And lo ! where comes our succour and support,
 Heroic Edred !—Noble youth, right welcome !
 Thou hast succeeded in thy enterprize ?

Edr. In part, and but in part.—Alas, my friend !
 What we this morning dreaded is complete,
 The inhuman Dane no holy place reveres.
 The abbey is despoil'd, the virgin train
 Murder'd. Assisted by the hand of heaven,
 Bertha is saved.—But oh ! my noble sister !
 How cruel is her fate ! a prisoner
 To these barbarians ! Seeing them retreat,
 I turn'd my steps, and fought among the slain,
 She was not to be found.—I have not time
 To tell thee all ; for as with stealthy pace,
 Skreen'd by the gloom of night, thro secret paths

B b

The

The careful foe I shunn'd, methought I heard
 A sound confused of feet and murmuring voices,
 And strait the glimpse of armour caught my eye.
 Some action is on foot ; they seem'd to me
 As winding toward the castle.

Alb.

Let them come.

They steal not on a sleeping enemy ;
 We are prepared : and as a lofty rock
 Beats back the furious waves which rage in vain,
 So shall before our well-mann'd battlements
 These ravagers retire.—I see thy grief
 Thou gallant youth ; and for thy hapless sister
 Feel similar emotions to thy own.
 The lovely Editha all hearts confess
 Unparagon'd in beauty, and in virtue.

Edr. Oh ! witness heaven ! no common love I bore her !
 No brother ever better loved a sister ;
 And she deserved my love.—Her active soul
 Soaring above the weakness of her sex,
 My younger spirit raised to glorious daring.
 When but a boy, she to my listening ear,
 Taught all the martial deeds of my great ancestors.
 She set before my eye my father's virtues,
 (Whose early death my mother ever mourns :)
 And bade me tread like them the paths of fame.
 If aught within this breast transcends the vulgar,
 To her the debt is due, the generous fire
 By her was kindled.

Alb.

'T was unfortunate——

Edr.

Edr. Oh! it was greatly so. That they should think
 The ties of faith would check those lawless robbers!
 That I should suffer them to put in practice
 So idle a resolve! Exposed to danger,
 When here with us they might have dwelt in safety.
 For what is sacred to the Danish race?
 They spare not hoary age, nor innocence
 Within its mother's clasping arms inshrined,
 Nor e'en religion at the hallow'd altar.

Alb. Would I could comfort thee!

Edr. That wish is vain.

Nor seek I any comfort but revenge.
 Join with me there my friend! Let us this instant
 Pour forth the tide of fury on their camp.
 My eager sword is thirsty for revenge.
 The holy virgins weltering in their blood,
 My ravish'd sister's wrongs now urge me on,
 String all my nerves, and fill my soul with ardour.

Alb. Thou hast forgot thy tidings.—But whate'er
 Shall happen, all is ready for defence,
 Or vigorous onset; by each public motive,
 And private sentiment impell'd, this arm
 Shall join with thine in boldest enterprize;
 And deep upon the Danish crests, inscribe
 In bloody characters, the holy compact.
 But much I wonder, Oswy with his powers
 Is not as yet arrived; this morn he sent
 A messenger, who told me e'er the sun

Set in the west, we should behold his camp
Pitch'd on the neighbouring hills ; with hasty
march,

He from the bounds of Tamar, to our aid
Approaches.

Edr. Never did my heart esteem
That lord ; in words, most fierce, in action, cold ;
Of crafty and designing nature, he,
A slave to avarice, and inherent baseness.

Alb. He hath a beauteous daughter.

Edr. True, he hath ;
Gunhilda. With an ample dower to me
He would have given the maid ; but underneath
The veil of fairest semblance, I beheld
A soul too like her father's, and refused her.
Since which enraged, they ever have pursued me
With base insidious hate, which I despise.

[*A trumpet sounds.*]

Alb. The signal of alarm !

Enter a CITIZEN.

Cit. Our scouts inform us
A party of the foe, in deepest silence,
Is climbing the ascent beneath the castle.
Another party to the eastern gate,
With rapid haste advances.

Alb. This my Edred,
This is the wish'd-for hour, the hour of glory !

She

She holds her prize aloft, and animates
The chosen breast with tenfold intrepidity.—
The castle be thy care ; we guard the gate.
And now my friend, the warrior's courtesy,
One brief embrace!—The rest belongs to heaven.

Edr. And heaven is just.—My keen-edged sword I draw,
Which shall not to its scabbard be restored,
Till drench'd and fatiated with Danish blood.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE I. *The Camp. VOLNIR's Tent.*

VOLNIR, RODOLPH, and DANISH CAPTAINS.

Vol. Again repulsed! again with shame compell'd
 To seek our camp! The Danish genius droops,
 Oh! where was Rodolph's matchless valour! where
 That untamed spirit wont to rise superior
 To every obstacle! the waves of chance
 To stem with steady breast, and gain the shore!
 To press against the hand of opposition,
 And urge his way more swiftly for resistance!
 But love, fond love, enslaved the warrior's heart,
 Beauty's soft chains had shackled his bold spirit,
 And he was conquer'd e'er he fought the fight.
 Now, by my soul, thou see'st the fair no more,
 Till we have laid those turrets in the dust,
 And steer our course toward Denmark.

Rod. These reproaches
 No doubt become thee well. Injustice ever
 With weak excuses vindicates its actions.
 Scarce can I trust my ears; these taunts from thee!
 But I'm perhaps a stranger, and thou never
 Beheld'st

Beheld'st my footsteps in the crimson field,
 Or sword destructive dealing slaughter round.
 And didst thou take my captive from my tent?
 And do I live and bear this injury?

Vol. No more rash man. Learn thou thy duty better.
 Did I not charge thee not to wooe the maid?
 What! shall our camp be changed into a school
 Of wanton dalliance? Of inglorious love?
 • Our deeds depend not on the breath of Rodolph.
 We judge, we act, from reason's firm resolves.

Rod. Oh! would we were in Denmark! I should there
 Meet thee thy equal. See my friends, the man,
 Who acts, who judges, as firm reason dictates!
 He saw the beauteous prisoner, he loved her,
 And from his envied rival took the maid.
 But love no doubt is glorious in the chief,
 And base unmanly dalliance in the soldier.

Vol. What power withhold, that now I rush not on thee,
 And smite thee to the earth?—The fixed soul,
 Which conscious of its rectitude, despises
 A madman's calumny.—But urge no farther.
 It may be dangerous.—Yet, hear me all!
 And thou attend!—In yonder tent inclosed,
 She dwells, to me as tho she not existed,
 Or was not form'd of mortal elements,
 And subject to the passions of mankind.
 No private end I seek; the public good
 Is all my care; and from the warm emotion
 A bar of frost secures this settled bosom.

Retire;

Retire ; and in thy tent converse with shame,
 The attendant of unguarded liberty, -
 And thoughtless youth. I pardon thee. Begone.
 [*Exit. Rod.*]

Enter a SOLDIER.

Sol. As in our farthest limits toward the city,
 I with my fellows held observant watch,
 A damsel cross'd our way with two attendants.
 She bade us straitway lead her to our chief,
 And begs to be admitted to thy presence.

Vol. Bring her before us.

Enter GUNHILDA.

Vol. 'Mid the paths of death,
 And throng of hostile arms, say gentle maid,
 What brings thee hither at this hour of night?

Gun. Art thou the much-famed leader of the Danes?

Vol. My name is Volnir.

Gun. Hail illustrious chief!
 My errand is to thee, and my request
 The favour of thy private ear.

Vol. Retire. [*To the attendants.*]
 Thy will is granted. From a messenger
 So beautiful, and so rare, I may expect
 No common tidings. Whence, and who art
 thou?

Gun. From Devon's west extreme I come ; a friend
 To thee and Denmark.

Vol.

Vol. How a friend? Proceed.

Gun. Art thou ambitious o'er this town to triumph?
To gird the conqueror's laurel round thy brow?
And all thy valiant host enrich with plunder?
A female tongue shall teach thee how to act.

Vol. Whoe'er thou art, whatever be thy counsel,
Thou read'st my wish aright.

Gun. I am the daughter
Of Ofwy, powerful chief, a name to thee
Well-known, my name Gunhilda. In our veins
Flows Danish blood; e'er that inhuman massacre
Destroy'd thy countrymen, by holy union
Of marriage 'twas acquired.

Vol. Say on fair damsel.

Gun. Thus then; my father with a mighty aid
Is near at hand prepared to raise this siege;
So Albert credits, so the citizens.
But if thy heart consent with his, to terms
Which I shall now propose, the town is thine.

Vol. What bond coercive answers for his faith?

Gun. I will remain with thee a willing hostage.

Vol. 'Tis well; the terms unfold.

Gun. On Ofwy's part
He promises, when host with adverse host
Is mix'd in fight, to fly with all his troops.
Then while the citizens confusedly urge
Their passage to the walls, thy friends may enter
With the affrighted croud. Or e'er two days
Are spent, when he is in the city posted,

He will, the gate committed to his care,
 To thee deliver at a certain hour.
 From thee he asks in coin, in plate, or gems,
 Secretly given, a third part of the spoil.
 He wishes thee to curb impetuous rage,
 Nor shed unnecessary blood, but one,
 One odious life, he at thy hands requires.

Vol. Name the devoted victim.

Gun. Edred ; he
 Who every needy artizan inspires
 With pride, and every vile mechanic breast,
 With obstinacy. He it is who checks thy course,
 Thy greatest enemy and our's,

Vol. I know

The youth ; when first we for this siege prepared,
 He came with Albert, and defied our power.
 Bold were his words, and stately was his mien.
 I saw him afterwards like lightning pierce
 Our thickest ranks, his fury front to front
 Rodolph opposed, and desperate was the fight ;
 But Rodolph's arm prevailed not. On he rush'd,
 And havock mark'd his way. This night again
 His valour foil'd us ; he, our prisoners say,
 The citadel defended. We accept
 Thy terms fair stranger. To the noble Oswy,
 We swear the third part of the spoil to give,
 And Edred's forfeit life.

Gun. He asks no more.
 The first he claims a debt of justice, due

From

From thee to his deserts; the last, a sacrifice
 To the diminish'd honour of his house,
 And sullied name. 'Twere long, nor need I tell
 The cause of his desired revenge; enough
 That Edred is beyond expression false,
 Vile, contumelious, and that we would see,
 With pleasure see this island from its base
 Torn by an earthquake, and with all its rocks
 Plunged in the main, so he might sink beneath
 The ponderous ruins.

Vol. Be it as thou wilt

My generous hostage. We will pay the debt
 Of justice and of vengeance. Were he placed
 Within our power, had he a thousand lives
 He dies.

Gun. That thought gives comfort to my soul.
 For that I braved the horrors of the night,
 That steel'd the weaker nature of my sex,
 And brought me hither spite of danger's frown,
 And the pale eye of fear.

Vol. Dismiss all fear.

Here thou art safe as in thy father's palace,
 My hardy Danes shall form a bulwark round thee,
 As round the temple of some sacred power,
 By whose superior aid they may obtain
 Each splendid trophy of triumphant war,
 Wealth, conquest, and renown.—Lead to the tent
 Of Rodolph's captive, this illustrious stranger
 Collect a band of the most beautiful slaves

To wait upon her person. She demands
Respect and reverence from each son of Denmark,

Gun. Collect them not ; I need not their attendance.
Send back with speedy diligence my guides.

'Tis meet I should be private. To thy worth
I trust, great chief, for safety and protection.

Vol. We all are thine, and with obsequious readiness
Shall thy commands obey.

Gun. My confidence
Is fully tried, I thank thee for thy care. [*Exit.*

Vol. What small events may shake the firmest states !
Armies destroy, and sack imperial cities !
The veriest trifles oftentimes beget
Important consequences. Private spleen,
A female pique, perhaps a foolish quarrel,
A disappointed passion, or the sting
Of wayward pride, betrays without a blow
This town, which I almost despair'd to win
By open force. Chance governs all below.
To British treachery, British valour yields.
The rich reward, and golden harvest mine. [*Exit.*

■ S C E N E II. *The City.*

EDRED, OSWY, ALBERT.

Edr. This cold advice is out of season, *Oswy.*
I would not give to them a moment's respite.
Why not pursue the path where fortune leads ?

While

While yet they droop, and struck with fear,
lament

Our prosperous arms, let us attack their camp.
E'er the grey dawn appears above the hills,
When heavy sleep weighs down their lids o'er-
watch'd,

Let us in silence to their tents proceed,
Then like a whirlwind on their squadrons rush,
And wake them from repose to breathe their last.

Os. Was it for this, with rapid march I came
To your relief? And must experience stoop
To the rash fervour of impatient youth?
To-morrow, by the addition of my forces,
Who now fatigued and spiritless, require
Refreshment due, you gain a certain victory.
To pass by the indignity you offer
By this attempt to me; why should you court
Unnecessary peril? Rather why
With headlong madness hurry on to meet
Inevitable fate, and sure destruction?

Edr. There is a time, when what the calmer tongue
Stiles rashness, is the voice of truest wisdom.
Had we not tried these Danes thou might'st
persuade us
That they are unassailable, exempt
From wounds, nor subject to mortality.
Indignity to thee by this attempt!
We mean it not. E'er thou wert in the city,
Our plan was laid, our chosen bands prepared.

But

But should we fight, nay, overcome without thee,
 Say, should'st thou not rejoice whatever hand
 Laid low thy country's foes? The patriot heart
 Disclaims each interested sentiment,
 Nor heeds false glory but the public good.

Alb. And Oswy surely seeks the public good,
 Tho differing in opinion. This attack
 Was pre-determined; and I think it bears
 A seemly aspect. For thy speed we thank thee,
 And for thy caution Oswy. We shall guide,
 Doubt not, this enterprize, with prudence. Thou
 See that thy harras'd troops be well refresh'd.
 This night's attempt, if with success uncrown'd,
 Will not impede but that we join to-morrow,
 And with united strength engage the Danes.

Oswy. Prosperity attend you! tho I fear
 The circumspection of the enemy,
 And tremble for th' event. [Exit.

Edr. The dastard spirit,
 Not e'en a beam from heaven could enkindle.
 The lukewarm Oswy trembles for the event.
 He fears lest we should conquer. Envy, fraud,
 And every creeping passion fills his breast.
 But as we know him, so we shall not trust him.
 Now let us hence, and join our ardent bands,
 Who cover'd by the friendly veil of night,
 Shall hurl confusion thro the adverse host.

Alb. No tardiness is mine—I haste before—
 The needful orders shall with speed be given. [Exit.
 Edr.

Edr. O Editha! my sifter! haplefs maid!
 Not for my country only, but for thee
 Form'd I this bold adventure.—Generous Albert!
 He too reveres thy virtues.—Thro the gloom
 I fee methinks thy injured form wave on
 Our daring steps! The defart lionefs
 Seeks not her ravish'd young with greater rage,
 Than I will thro thefe spoilers cut my way,
 To refcue thee, or gain a glorious death. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *The Camp. VOLNIR's Tent.*

VOLNIR and one of his CAPTAINS.

Vol. 'Tis full of hope and probability.
 They hate each other; and their civil difcord
 Will work our great advantage. But be fecret,
 Nor let a word transpire, 'till opportunity
 Call us to infant action.—Hah! Gunhilda
 Again before us!

Enter GUNHILDA.

Gun. Pardon this intrufion.
 And yet my tidings are of fuch import
 As well deferve thy audience. But firft fwear,
 If I by other means than thofe propofed,
 Procure thee a full ranfom for the city,
 Thou wilt perform thy part without referve

Vol. By every holy tye I bind myfelf.

Gun.

Gun. Judge my surprize, when in my tent I found,
 In Rodolph's captive virgin, Edred's sister.
 She knew me too ; and thinks I am a prisoner :
 For I amus'd her with a piteous tale
 Of feign'd distress.—He loves this sister well.—
 And to this deity the præfect Albert
 Is thought to offer incense ; by her wiles
 Enticed to adoration.—Would they not,
 To save her life, submit to pay what price
 Thou may'st impose ?—Let Edred be the hostage.
 Two shares receive, and for the third, slay him,
 And we'll acquit thee.—Thus my noble father,
 Without suspicion, and absolved of danger,
 His foe's destruction shall enjoy ; the trash,
 The sordid trash relinquish'd.

Vol.

In thy bosom

A more than manly soul resides Gunhilda.
 In policy and courage far beyond
 The little weakness of inferior minds,
 High-soaring o'er the vulgar !—Thy desires,
 If they accept our terms, shall be fulfill'd.
 Our gratitude to thee shall know no bounds.
 Lead hither Editha, the captive maid. [*Exit Capt.*
 The dread of death perhaps will make her supplicate
 Her brother's quick decision in our favour.
 A letter she shall write, 'twill to our message
 Add double weight.—Do thou retire Gunhilda ;
 Late is the hour of night : go, seek repose.

[*Exit Gun.*
Enter

Enter EDITHA.

Ed. Why am I summon'd hither ?

Vol. Edred's sister !

Nay, start not ; thou art known.

Ed. Thou know'st me then

Born of a race, on which, tho full of worthies,
The deeds of Edred cast sublimer lustre.

Vol. He is our deadly foe.

Ed. He loves his country.

Vol. Thee too he loves.

Ed. With tenderest affection.

Vol. Then hear me virgin.—If he loves his country,

He wishes not the iron hand of war
To waste these fields ; he wishes not to see
Devouring flames inwrap yon lofty towers.

Ed. Heaven shield him from the fight !

Vol. 'Tis thou must shield him.

Ed. What say'st thou Dane !

Vol. We know thy influence o'er him.

Exert thy winning talents of persuasion ;
Write him our terms, and beg him to accept them.
We, for a stipulated sum, will quit
This shore for ever.

Ed. Never will I write

What Edred would peruse with shame and scorn.

Vol. Take heed : thy life is lost by his refusal.

D d

Ed.

Ed. A life of little consequence compared
With Edred's glory, and my country's fame.

Vol. Can'st thou support the thoughts of death ?

Ed. I can.

Vol. Of torture ?

Ed. Cease thy cruel threats barbarian !
And know the sufferings nature cannot bear,
Religion can untterrified encounter.

Vol. Prepare thee for the trial.—Yet thy freedom
Would follow his consent.

Ed. To wear for ever
The worst of chains, my own reproaching
conscience.

Vol. Will nothing bend thy mind ?

Ed. To what effect ?

Vol. To save thyself ? thy country ? and thy friends ?

Ed. Can aught incline that soul to foul dishonour,
Which looks on thee, on all thy warrior host,
On all the transient glories of this world,
Its crowded cities, realms, and mighty empires,
As nothing, when compared with vast eternity ?

Vol. Enthusiastic notions !

Ed. Reason thus

Is to the madman folly ; moderate aims
To wild ambition ; mercy to the tyrant.

Vol. This instant send a trumpet to the city,
With him a trusty messenger, to whom
Our mind impart. Let him acquaint young Edred,
Unless

Unless he move the citizens to grant
 The sum we shall require, his sister dies.
 If he return to us with his refusal,
 That moment is her last. [Exit Capt.

Ed. And think'st thou Edred

Will stoop ignobly to perform a deed
 A woman can despise?—Mistaken man!
 Whose courage is barbarity, whose policy
 Is shallow cunning! Wisdom throned above,
 Beyond thy feeble ken, with virtue joined,
 Looks down on thee with scorn.—Heroic Edred
 Will ne'er disgrace his high illustrious line;
 Nor, to preserve a sister, lose himself.

Vol. Lead her away! [Exit Ed.

Vol. There is a dignity,

An inexpressive grace, when goodness utters
 Her glowing language thro the lips of beauty.—
 Even my heart is moved, and were I placed
 In lower station, might give way to pity.
 But now my Danes this sacrifice demand,
 And Oswy's daughter.—'Tis not for a chief
 To yield to private and more humble feelings.
 He must consult the genius of his people,
 Mine thrive by innate courage and ferocity;
 By scattering dire dismay among the nations;
 And rush to conquest thro the paths of terror.

[Exit.



A C T IV.

SCENE I. *The Tent of EDITHA.*

EDITHA, GUNHILDA.

Ed. Link'd as we are in sad captivity,
I bid adieu to every private quarrel,
And thank thee for thy pity.

Gun. Why not write?
The generous soul of Edred sure would melt;
And to avert thy fate——

Ed. Cease virgin, cease.
'Twere impious to suppose it.

Gun. Yet the voice
Of nature is commanding, to obey
Its dictates, lawful.

Ed. I acknowledge it,
When nature leagues with rectitude. If not,
Blind is her boasted guidance, and may lead
The devious foot, mid all the mazy wilds,
And all the fatal labyrinths of vice:
Trust me Gunhilda, not the wealth of worlds
Should

Should tempt me to this deed.—Would'st thou to
reign

O'er the wide universe, betray thy country?

Gun. Dost thou suspect I would?

Ed. Suspect thee! no.

The advice thou gavest me was not from thy heart.

'Twas inconsiderate sympathy alone;

A weakness springing from a generous motive.

Oh! heaven forefend, that I should e'er believe

A British maid, of noble birth, like thee,

Would coolly prompt me to commit an action

Of base dishonour.

Gun. Didst thou so believe,

Thy judgment would be rash, and most unjust.

Ed. I blame thee not. Thou feel'st for my afflictions,

And would'st, if possible, preserve my life.

But I must die Gunhilda, o'er my head

Fate is impendent. Yet hath death with me

Lost half his terrors; death is my deliverer.

No more exposed to brutal treatment, now

Unblemish'd to the grave I shall descend,

Nor yet inglorious in my country's annals.

May not my lot be happier far than thine?

Oh! can I speak it!—Thou art doom'd perhaps

To savage violence.—Unawed by faith,

Strangers to that religion they profess,

These ill-converted pagans still retain

All their original fierceness.—I must drop

Amid

Amid my own calamities, a tear
For thee Gunhilda.

Gun. I for both will weep.

Ed. And yet I feel a pang, a pang severe.
Strong are affection's, strong are nature's bonds.
Each friend, now doubly amiable, appears
Before my tortured mind.—And oh! Gunhilda!
A father lately found.

Gun. A father!

Ed. Sigebert;
Long mourn'd by us as dead; preserved; alive.
Here in this hostile camp I found a father.

Gun. Most strange!

Ed. Long time a wretched slave to Volnir;
And undiscover'd under Brithric's name.
He saved me from the horrors of pollution;
But cannot now avert the stroke of death,
Or shield himself from the extremity
Of poignant anguish.—Thus to meet his
daughter!

The thought is dreadful!—Help me to recall,
O virgin! help me to recall my mind;
And with calamity like this oppress'd,
To re-assume my fortitude; for much,
Much do I need it all.

Gun. Alas! what aid

Can I impart? My words would flow in vain.
Brithric the present name he bears! 'tis well. [*Afide.*

Ed.

Ed. Yet will I strive, yet struggle with my weakness,
 May I not prove victorious? 'Tis for guilt
 To tremble; innocence should stand unmoved.
 O righteous heaven, with patience steel my soul!
 With resignation! in the hour of trial
 Guide me! support me! and tho' death be mine,
 Crown Edred with success! protect my friends!
 Preserve my father's life! preserve my country!

Enter VOLNIR and CAPTAIN.

Vol. Hah! did they thus insult thee! brave my power!
 And load me with reproaches! they shall find
 I did not threaten what I'll not perform.
 Bear her to instant death!—Thy brother scorns
 Our generous offer, and hath seal'd thy doom.

Ed. O noble Edred!—Learn barbarian, learn
 The softer and more cultivated manners
 Which thou abhorr'st, enervate not the soul.
 The most humane of brothers and of men,
 The youthful hero warm with patriot zeal,
 Could not but thus decide the dangerous conflict;
 While honour triumphs o'er fraternal love.

Vol. Remove her from our fight.

Ed. I thank thee Volnir.

I would not linger in uncertainty.
 Here thou art kind.—But from my blood expect
 No common storm; it rolls with swiftness toward
 thee,
 And Edred drives it on.

Vol.

Vol.

Quick, bear her hence.

*Enter BRITHRIC.**Brith.* Oh! spare her, and revoke the cruel orders!*Vol.* Say, art thou mad old man? How hast thou dared
To enter here unbidden?*Brith.* I am told
Thou mean'st to sacrifice this captive maid.*Vol.* She falls a victim to her brother's obstinacy,
And her own foolish pride.*Brith.* Oh! if I e'er
Have gain'd attention from thee, hear me now!
Forgive the prisoner; listen to the friend,
Who for thy glory feels!—Oft have I wept
This ravaged country and her slaughter'd sons.
But mid the heat of action, in the rage
And fury of the battle, death I know
Must take its course; nor have I once reproached
thee.Where is the fury of the battle now?
This unresisting maid! must she be slain,
To satisfy a splenetic revenge,
Beneath the greatness of thy soul to think of?
That soul, which prompted thee to spare my life?
Which thou hast told me, scorn'd to plunge a sword
In the unguarded bosom of the brave?*Vol.* Thou plead'st in vain; uncommon accidents
Call forth unusual deeds.*Brith.* Shall accident

Warp

Warp then the even tenor of thy temper?
Art thou so weak in resolution?

Vol. My prisoner, my teacher!

Brith. I have taught thee,
And thou with gratitude hast often own'd it,
In civil life, in policy, in war,
Many a glorious, true, and useful maxim.
Now let me teach thee an immortal lesson!
Who, not from passion, but from reason act,
Crush giant arrogance, protect the weak,
And tho by specious interest impell'd,
Dare not with guilt contaminate their souls,
May claim a co-equality with heaven.

Vol. I need not thy advice; begone, and leave me.

Brith. I cannot leave thee.—Didst thou but behold
This virgin with my eyes, a thousand reasons
Would in thy bosom war against her death.
Alas! can beauty influence all but thee?
Beneath that outward elegance of shape,
That unaffected dignity, I read
A soul, which Volnir cannot but approve.
A soul detesting every meaner act,
Inform'd with innocence, with purity,
Undaunted courage, and sublimest virtue.
Thou fight'st against her country—But in her,
Thou wilt inflict a wound on nature's self.
Manhood will weep, and Denmark's genius blush,
To hear that Volnir could descend so low,

E c

Because

Because he could not gain a town by treachery,
Coolly to spill a captive virgin's blood.

Vol. Brithric no more—on thee too may descend
The angry shaft—beside thee peril stands—
Beware.

Gun. Hah! Brithric! (*Whispers Vol.*)

Vol. He, her father say'st thou?

Gun. Sigebert his name, the Sire of her and Edred.
Yes, Sigebert is her father. (*Aloud.*) I cast off
The veil mysterious.—Foolish maid! behold
Thy open enemy!—tho' wrath may slumber,
It wakes to vengeance. Vengeance brought me
hither.

'Twas she that made me a firm friend to Denmark.
No captive, but the scourge of thee and thine.
The vindicator of my injured fame,
And ancient noble stock, in me insulted.

Ed. I look in vain! the lightning doth not blast her.

Sige. Astonishment! Can nature's varying hand
Produce such opposites! There the black form
Of treacherous vice—here virtue's brightest image.

Vol. Didst thou not say that Sigebert was his name?

Gun. I did.

Vol. The Earl so called?

Gun. The same.

Vol. Deceiver!

Traitor! Art thou the man, whose sword of yore

So

So often foiled the Danish strength? Wert thou
Chief of the war, in which my father perish'd?
In which the flower of Denmark's youth were
slain?

Filling our land with widows and with orphans?

Sige. I was.

Vol. Now, by yon starry cope I swear,
Thou with thy daughter diest!—The ill-forted
league

I here break off, by thy illusions form'd.

Dissembling wretch!—When first I shook the
spear,

And to revenge my country, rush'd to battle,
I swore that thou, of all the Anglian race,
Should'st never taste my mercy.—Heaven is just.
The stated period is arrived. My oath,
Tho tardily, shall be at length absolved.

Gun. Why was I thus compelled?—No more—'tis
right—

Let mischief work—my injuries demand it.

At least the scornful youth will be tormented,

And suffer worse than death in those he loves.

(Aside) (Exit.)

Vol. Bear them away to speedy execution!

Ed. My father!

Sige. Dearest, dearest Editha! *(Embracing.)*

Enter a MESSENGER.

Vol. What means this haste?

E c 2

Mess.

Mess. Rodolph, my lord, with fierce
 And hurried language stirs the camp to mutiny.
 The soldiers throng around him, thy injustice
 Themes his bold eloquence. They murmur all;
 And say the chief hath no dispensing power
 O'er old establish'd customs: that his prisoner
 Is his alone, not thine; her death, or life,
 Due to the man who earn'd her with his sword.

Vol. Fools as they are! But we will satisfy them.
 Call to my tent each leader of the bands,
 And with them let that fiery youth be present.
 They all shall learn my reasons. Individuals
 Must for the general weal their rights forego.
 Should they be ardent to support his cause,
 I need but speak; sedition will be quell'd.
 For these, their fate we for awhile defer;
 But when the rising sun gilds yonder towers,
 The foe first summon'd by the trumpet thither,
 And this discovery known, shall see their deaths.
 Mean-while divide, and guard them. (*Exit.*)

Ed. Must we part?

Sige. A little while my child, to meet for ever.

Ed. I was prepared myself.—But, oh! my father!
 Canst thou forgive?— (*Kneeling.*)

Sige. What means my Editha?

Ed. My folly? my imprudence? to intrust
 That woman with—

Sige. Oh! rise!—my blessings on thee!
 My love! my utmost tendernefs! oh! wound not
 My

My nature with the thought!—Forgive thee say'st
thou?

And could'st thou think that I would wish for life
Without my daughter? I had fondly form'd
A thousand flattering dreams, of freedom, bliss,
And future days of joy; but thou in all
Wert still predominant.—Have I forgot
The infant prattler, my prophetic soul
E'en then had fix'd to cheer my hours of age?
And can I, now I find, and feel thee all,
Which fancy in her wildest scope could frame,
Bear to protract my being, torn from thee?
Could Bertha, could my Edred, e'er have pluck'd
The barbed anguish from thy father's heart?
Oh! 'twould be misery in his worst extreme.
'Twas heaven, kind pitying heaven discovered me,
That I might die with thee.

Ed.

Oh! this is death;

This, its severest pang. I feel it here.
It pierces through each inlet of my soul;
A father's tenderness, ne'er known till now.
The filial passions swell, and almost burst
My labouring bosom; gratitude, which ne'er
Can be indulged—whose debt must be unpaid.
For fate, stern fate.—

Sig.

Oh! cease, I know it all.

All thou would'st say, all thou would'st do, I feel.
Each pious duty, every tender care,
Each soft solicitude.—O worthiest! best!

Have

Have I not known thee? tried thee? art thou not
The child of my fond heart? more dear to it
Than the warm stream which feeds it?

Ed. Thus to meet!

Thus know! thus lose my father!

Sige. Oh! thou should'st not

Have waked me from my vision to that thought.
To lose thy father! to be lost to him!—
Irrevocably lost!—And yet, 'tis fit.
For thus dissolved in tenderness, I should not
Meet death, as it becomes the brave to die.

Ed. Meet death!

Sige. The common lot of all.

Ed. 'Tis true.

Sige. To-morrow—

Ed. We must share it!

Sige. Must!—that word!

Ed. The mandate of necessity; the call
To virtue, and to fortitude.

Sige. I thank thee.

Yes, we will rouse us from lethargic sorrow.
The morn shall view us with erected mein,
And mark our tearless eye.—These Danes shall see,
And wonder at our brave contempt of death.
But ah! this night!—this dreadful separation!
Into this little night, I could methinks
Have stored whole years of happiness! while thus
I held thee, thus pour'd forth my fond endearments,
And thus received thy tribute of affection.

But

But 'twill not be—relentless savages!

(To the guards who part them.)

Have ye no mercy?—Oh! a moment longer—

My Editha!

Ed. My father!

Sige. 'Tis in vain—

Never shall I again embrace my child.

Ed. My father!—these emotions!—Oh! controul—

Left I should sink—

Sige. I will, I will, for thee

I'll force my nature. Sure I should encourage

And comfort thee—not thus by my example

Depress—but ah! I cannot—for mortality

Hath forged no bonds to curb parental love.

Farewell!—Farewell!—ye gracious powers support!—

Ed. Heaven will support us. *[Exeunt—*

[Forced off different ways.]

SCENE II. VOLNIR'S Tent.

RODOLPH and CAPTAIN.

Capt. And did they all submit!

Rod. All, all submitted.

While I was left alone to plead my cause.

They blest'd his prudent care; while I seem'd awed,

And stifled in my breast the fierce resentment.

But

But know my friend, (for such I still have found thee.)

By thee I learn'd his message to the city,
 And thus I have at least her doom retarded.
 Know then a trusty band I have engaged,
 And bound them to me with a solemn oath,
 Within this hour to force her guarded tent,
 And bear her to my ship. Then let our chief
 Lord it o'er passive slaves, I shall enjoy
 My loveliest prize, and leave to him unenvied,
 The plunder, and the war.

Capt. I am thy friend.

Twice do I owe my life in battle saved
 To thy victorious arm. Nor will forsake thee,
 Tho hazardous and desperate be thy plan.

Rod. Courage and friendship can be only tried
 In perilous extremes. By heaven, I ne'er
 Knew love till now.—Not all this city's wealth,
 Tho counted ten times o'er, should ever from me
 Ransom this Editha.—Tho I could wish
 Her brother's haughty soul to suffer pain,
 By whom alone I have been foil'd in battle:
 Tho I could wish her father might be punish'd,
 Who, as I now suspect, at first betray'd me:
 Yet by her death it shall not be. Her absence
 Let them lament. She will rejoice hereafter,
 Nor cast one sigh toward Anglia's distant shore.

Capt. But how hast thou contrived?

Rod.

Rod. I will instruct thee.

Capt. Hark! [Shouts, &c. at a distance]

Rod. 'Twas the found of onset.

Capt. It increases. [Shouts, &c.]

Rod. The clamour and tumultuous noise of battle!

Capt. A sally from the city.

Rod. Curst event!

Must I then draw again my sword for Volmir!

An hour had made me master of my wishes.

But now perhaps the opportunity

Is lost, and never may return. [Shouts, &c.]

Capt. The uproar

Spreads wider, and approaches nearer toward us.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Rod. What are thy tidings?

Mess. Ruin to the Danes.

Our camp is enter'd; havoc and confusion

Urged by the foe, now triumph o'er our troops.

They stole upon us in the silent hour,

By sleep oppress'd. Nor yet the dawn appears,

Or glimmering twilight. In their shouts resound

The hated names of Edred and of Albert.

Volmir, with more than mortal courage, holds

Their violence at bay: around his tent

The conflict grows; there he protracts awhile

The Danish fate. He bids thee Rodolph haste,

And head some chosen bands by him prepared,

To cover our retreat.

F f

Rod.

Rod. I will attend him. [Exit Mess.

Oh! were my gallant friends but now around me,
 I still might bear this much-loved maid away,
 And cut a passage thro the opposing foe!
 But what can we atchieve? Or what remains.
 But to exert a vain and fruitless bravery?
 To fight beneath this chief against our wills?
 And sell our lives as dearly as we can? [Exeunt.

A C T V.

SCENE I. Before the Tent of EDITHA.

Rod. 'Tis flight, or slaughter all.—These fierce Dam-
 nonians!

Nought can withstand their fury.—Yet I could not
 Find out the death my arm hath bravely earn'd.
 Why did they ope their ranks to let me pass?
 My followers are destroy'd—shall I alone
 Escape?—This tent! there's fascination in it.
 The guards are fled—this quarter of the camp
 Is still and solitary.—Wherefore hither
 Wander'd my steps unconscious?—Hold—'tis
 right—

There's something to be done.—Shall I submit?
 Solicit from this haughty maid protection?
 Not love? but life on stinted terms!—Ah! no.
 'Twere mean—'twere base.—Shall I, a prisoner,
 Behold her in the possession of another?

Some

Some enemy beloved, preferr'd to me?
 No never—kill her then—and so prevent it.
 But hark! I hear methinks the sound of steps.
 Darkness as yet holds back the struggling morn.
 Quick let me be.—She dies.—Prepare thee Editha!
 Keen is my sword—and desperate is my mind.
 I'll enter—did she speak? No, all is silent.
 I will not give her time to supplicate,
 Left she disarm my resolution. [*Enters the tent.*]

Enter SIGEBERT.

Sige. Freed by their flight, to whom I was intrusted,
 I come to thee my Editha! and wield
 A sword again on British foil, to guard
 Thy tent my daughter, from the lawless rage
 Of friend or foe; for beauty such as thine
 May fear them both alike.—My child! my Editha!

Enter RODOLPH from the Tent.

Rod. Who calls on Editha?

Sige. Who? Whence art thou?

Why that stern question? wherefore in this tent?

Rod. Cease thy enquiries, lest my answer please not.

Sige. Rodolph!

Rod. Betrayer! Yes.

Sige. Betrayer!

Rod. Caitiff!

False friend! and thence, the murderer of thy
 daughter.

F f 2

Sige.

Sige. My daughter!—Oh! my soul!

Rod. This hand hath slain her.

Sige. Thou could'st not—dared'st not.

Rod. Didst thou think a Briton
Should ever win the maid beloved by Rodolph?

Sige. Monster!—And canst thou to a father's ear?—
Thou hast not slain her.

Rod. By yon heaven she's dead.

This reeking steel permits me not to lye.

Sige. My curses on thee, thou inhuman murderer!
Oh! tardy feet! thus am I come to guard thee
My Editha? And have I lost thee thus?
Thou sacrilegious wretch! didst thou not fear
From that pure temple—But I can revenge
My child! I can revenge, if not protect thee.
Thus ruffian, I assail thee—guard thyself,

Rod. Away old man! and dread the arm of youth.
I covet not thy death.

Sige. Thy arm of youth
This old man braves, nay scorns. Old as I am,
I have not yet forgot to bear a sword,
I am the avenger of my daughter's death,
And thou the destined victim.

Rod. Hence! Away!

'Tis thine to weep, not fight.

Sige. And weep I will.

But first the crimson stream shall flow from thee
When thou wert in thy cradle, I have trod

The

The fields of war; thy gasping countrymen
 Then own'd my prowess; many a Danish chief
 Hath sunk in dust beneath me. In my heart
 I feel the ardour of my youth revive.
 My daughter's fate braces each feeble nerve.
 For her, for her I strike.

Rod. No more. Begone!

Sige. Thou shalt not pass.

Rod. Thou urgest on thy fate.

Why wilt thou force destruction on thy head?

Sige. Insulting wretch! Assassinating coward!

Come, to the daughter's, add the father's death!
 Nor doth he wish to live, deprived of her.

Yet neither doth he fear thy strength of youth,
 Nor doubt of conquest in so just a cause.

Rod. Take then thy death!

[*Fight. Rodolph falls, mortally wounded.*]

Sige. Death is not thine to give;

'Tis heaven's alone.—O barbarous Dane! the debt
 To vengeance thou hast paid.—Yet, what's thy life
 For her's, in lieu of Editha's?—Alas!

How can I enter here?—Support my steps

Ye trembling knees!—most miserable father!

Dead! dead!—detested place!—the deepest dun-
 geon,

The habitation of the toad and adder,

Were paradise to this polluted tent,

Where virtue, honour, lye insteep'd in blood.

Yet

Yet will I on—the horror should o'erwhelm me.

[*Enters the tent.*]

Enter EDRED.

Edr. Through the forsaken camp, in vain I seek
Thee, hapless maid!—Alas! this victory
Is but half won, if Editha be lost. [*Rodolph groans.*]
Hah! Who art thou? this twilight gloom forbids
To trace thy features.

Rod. Rodolph is my name—
Sure I have heard that voice.

Edr. The voice of Edred.
Brave, but ill-fortuned foe! I pity thee.
Thy wounds shall be with utmost care attended.
We o'er the fallen, triumph not.

Rod. In death
I thank thee youth. Twice hath thy sword pre-
vail'd
O'er me in battle. But thy softer manners
Now conquer my fierce nature.—All thy care
Were fruitless now—e'en if thou could'st forgive
me.

Edr. Forgive thee!

Rod. I thy sister lov'd—her fate
Thou know'st not—she—in yonder tent—
Lies slain—the murderer is— [Dies.]

Edr. In yonder tent!—The murderer is—Where?
Where is the murderer?—Invidious death!

T.

To stop thee there!—Slain!—Dearest, dearest
Editha!

This did I dread—O cruel, cruel Volnir!
Thou wert the murderer.—Yet pale and cold
Let me embrace thee? clasp thee to my heart!
A brother's agonizing heart!—Oh! slain
In early youth!—Yet fame is thine my sister.
Rather than prompt me to betray my country,
Thou greatly diedst.—So would I wish to fall.

[*Advancing to the tent*

Amazement! horror! Do my eyes play false?
Mock'd by this faint and dubious light?—No,
ruffian,

Thou shalt not 'scape me.—That's no doubt the
murderer!

I see him dimly standing, and his sword
Still in his hand, he holds.—He bends to earth,
And darest thou touch her sacred corse barbarian!
Out sword!—perform thy office!—But thou shalt
not

Die in this hallow'd tent—I'll drag thee thence.

[*Enters, and drags out Sigebert, who drops his
sword.*

Sige. Strike! strike!—I'll bless the hand which gives
the blow.

Edr. Most base! most execrable deed! if crimes
Beyond the common course of villainy
Deserve a punishment more fell, this act
Claims something more than death.

Sige.

Sige. Its claims damnation.

Heaven will not, cannot pardon it.

Edr. Nor I

The instrument of heaven's avenging wrath.

Prepare thee for thy death!—Thou murderous
flave!

Sure as the sun begins to streak the east

With purple light, this moment is thy last.

[*Lifting his hand.*]

Sige. O youth!—this warmth of thine! restrain thy
hand—

Art thou not—

Edr. Peace, I will not hear thee; old

And hoary in iniquity!—now— [*Going to strike.*]

Sige. Hold!

I am—

Edr. I care not who thou art—my sword—

[*Going to strike.*]

Enter EDITHA.

Ed. Thy father! spare thy father!

Edr. Gracious powers!

Sige. And is it possible!—What blest event!—

Art thou alive! restored to me again!

All-bounteous heaven! This miracle of mercy

My Editha alive! unwounded! safe!

'Tis joy too great for frail humanity—

My labouring brain turns giddy with the rapture—

The

The heart of age faints under these emotions.
 Thy arm—thy arm my son—soft—stay awhile—
 Oh! leave me not my child—I shall recover—
 And bear with calmness—hold—I'm well again;
 My strength and former faculties return.

Edr. My father!—oh! it must be so.—And have I
 Lifted my hand against thee?

Sige. Noble youth!
 Son of my much-loved Bertha! I have heard
 Thy glorious actions. Editha hath told me.
 Preserver of thy mother's sacred life!
 Of mine, and of thy sister's! more than this,
 The saviour of thy country!

Edr. I behold
 That face with reverence, and these words of thine
 Pierce thro' my inmost bosom, and enkindle
 Transports ne'er felt till now.—But how so long
 Wert thou conceal'd? How in this hostile camp?
 Why in this Danish drefs?

Sige. The tale is long;
 I'll tell thee all anon.—But how my daughter
 Hast thou escaped? In disappointed rage,
 The barbarous Rodolph said that he had slain thee.
 For which he fell by my avenging sword.
 In all the agony of frantic grief,
 Entering thy tent, I thought I found thee there,
 Yet warm—tho breathless; in despair I clasp'd
 The bleeding corse; and by the dusk deceived,
 Mourn'd over it for thine.

G g

Edred.

Edr. And there no doubt my sifter fell for thee,
By Rodolph's blind and erring fury slain.

Ed. Through the deserted camp in vain I wander'd,
I found not whom I sought, till by the hand
Of heaven directed, dubious of my way,
I measured back again the mazy path,
And found him here.

Sige. Found me indeed ; and never
To part from thee again, till nature's hand
Stops my faint pulse, and sinks me to my grave.

Edr. Oh ! be that time far off !—I long to hear
Thy sad disasters, every strange adventure,
And wonderful vicissitude of fate.
Much must thou have endured.

Sige. For eighteen years
Hath Volnir held me an unwilling prisoner.—
But now thou shalt conduct me to thy mother,
Much do I wish to see that best of women.
There shalt thou question me, and I will answer
Throughout the live-long day. Nor wilt thou hear
An uninstru&itive lesson. My experience
Hath dearly been acquired, thro' many a scene
Of checquered life, by varying fortune cast.
But now each boisterous storm is over-blown,
And I shall spend my life's decline in peace,
Sequester'd from the world.

Edr. That must not be.
I here resign to thee my borrow'd state.
Thy king, thy country, claim thy sage advice.

Nor art thou yet by years so much enfeebled,¹
But they may claim thy valour.

Sige.

Oh! my son!

Thy duty charms me. I shall not be needed;
For thou art all their own.—The tears of joy
Moisten my cheeks my children, while I think
Upon your virtues.—Happy, happy Sigebert!
In the warm hours of youth I could not feel
Such true, such home-felt satisfaction.
O'er-past misfortune, e'en to luxury
Heightens my joy. Now do I know indeed
What 'tis to be a father—exquisite
Is the delight from children such as mine.

Ed.

Benignant heaven!—ye fierce, ye boasted heroes!
Ye conquerors of the world! here look with envy.
We taste, we feel what you in vain desire,
What war and ravaged countries cannot yield,
True, real happiness. (*Trumpet.*)

Sige.

What sounds are these?

Edr.

'Tis Albert, from the slaughter of the Danes
Returning. (*Enter Albert.*) Oh! my friend!
let me embrace thee.

My Editha is safe—and I have found
A father here. This is the noble Earl
Whom well thou know'st by fame: This is my
father.

Him too from hapless slavery have we rescued.

Sige.

The brave and virtuous empty forms despise:
They mingle in an instant souls together.

Brave

Brave Albert ! second son ! whose patriot virtues
(*Embracing*)

Fill my old heart with warm affection toward thee,
Thus let me strain thee to my breast !

Alb. How sweet

Are the applauses of the wife and good !
My heart acknowledges the warmth of thine,
And every string accordant vibrates here.—
O Editha ! thou little think'st what pleasure
I feel in thy deliverance : not more
Thy brother, or thy father feels.

Ed. The thanks

A grateful soul can give, receive. The worth
Of Albert I revere ; thy country saved
Shall join its praise with mine.

Edr. How far my friend

Was thy pursuit ?

Alb. To yonder heights they fled.

There were they rallied by their chief again,
Who bravely fought. All that a leader could,
To turn the desperate fortune of the day,
He did. At length, when all was lost, he join'd
His flying bands, who now in wild dismay
Haste to their ships ; our victory's compleat.
But say my friend, the treacherous Gunhilda,
Hast thou not found her in the camp ?

Sige. She lies

Dead in this tent, slain by mistake for her.

Albert.

Alb. For Editha! just heaven!

Sige.

Now let us hence!

This accident shall be to thee explain'd.
To all my history shall be unfolded,
Each wonderful event.

Alb.

But first 'twere fit,

E'er we dismiss our troops, to seize and punish
The traitor Oswy.

Sige.

Would'st thou punish him?

Edr. Doth he not merit punishment?

Sige.

He doth.

And can he feel a greater, than to view
His murder'd child? Could cunning cruelty
Devise one more severe?—Oh! Editha!
The tortures of the rack were light to this:
Well know I what a father must endure.
To think too that she fell by his contrivance!
No, gallant Albert, seek no other vengeance.
Permit him to retreat, oppress'd with sorrow,
And stung with conscious guilt. While we reflect
With pleasure on the difference of our souls,
Which bear no sordid stains. While we rejoice,
Raised from calamity and woe, to bliss.
While we congratulate our ransom'd country,
And as we offer up our thanks to heaven,
Pray, that she ever thus may stand secure
From foreign arms, and from domestic treason.
Free, glorious, happy, to remotest ages.

EPILOGUE

E P I L O G U E.

NO longer now in pomp of grief array'd,
No longer Editha the Captive Maid;
Prepared to examine this same Tragic story,
In my own person I advance before ye.
My critic art at least this once to try,
And scan our Bard's defects with nicest eye.

Yet some apology the attempt may need—
But by your looks embolden'd, I'll proceed.

Who without terror, Rodolph's fury traces?
Why, tho' a Dane, was he refused the Graces?
Were such the manners of those Northern Climes?
Why not have bent them to our gentler times?
To seek his Mistress' life!—So desperate grown!—
He should have rather fled, and saved his own.

Surely *that* Albert might have spoke more plain.
The City's Præfect—but my dying Swain.
Why had he not some crafty scheme devised?
And ventured mid the Danish camp disguised?
He should have crept, or swam, or fought, or strove,
And hazarded his trust—to gain his Love.

The affection of a Brother!—How misplaced!
And what a violence to modern Taste!

A soul defying death! and accents Roman!
How could *they* suit with any British Woman!
The simple, and the natural!—How stupid!
I should have ransack'd all the stores of Cupid.
Hopes, fears, doubts, jealousies, and warm desires,
Darts, arrows, daggers, poison'd bowls, and fires.

Are to a Tragic Piece my powers decreed?
Let it be great and Tragical indeed.

Let Passion cease the guiding rein t' obey,
Let Grief be strain'd to its sublimest key,
In frantic fury let me curse the light,
And die enchantingly, with all my might.

But egotisms and irony apart—
Say, have our Author's numbers touch'd the heart?
Have they from Pity stole the ingenuous sigh?
And raised the trembling tear in Virtue's eye?

This is the unerring comment; this the test—
And all remarks besides—like mine—a jest.

E R R A T A.

- Preface page iii. line 4. after *man* insert *of*.
page 7. line 13. before *then*, insert *till*.
23. 25. dele *I thank*.
26. for *the gracious Gods*, read *I thank the Gods*.
40. 15. for *the*, read *their*.
47. 13. for *good*, read *God*.
122. 1. for *beheld*, read *behold*.
165. 1. dele *all*.
209. 14. for *his*, read *it's*.
211. for *VOLNIR's Tent*, read *RODOLPH's Tent*.
214. line the last, dele *the*.
250. 11. for *Entyches* read *Eutyches*.
262. 25. before *our*, insert *by*.
286. 13. for *rumours*, read *rumour*.
307. 8. for *and Antonina & my Son?* read *my Son? and Antonina?*

BELISARIUS.

A

TRAGEDY.

P R O L O G U E.

WHO hath not heard of Belifarius' fate,
 The guardian warrior of Rome's sinking state ?
 His open foes with glory he o'ercame,
 But could not Envy's rancorous venom tame :
 And when unnumber'd dangers he had braved,
 Was forced to beg from those his arm had saved.
 By malice render'd blind, he took his stand,
 And ask'd for charity's assisting hand.
 With honour, shame, thus Ministers could sport,
 Such was the gratitude which fill'd a court.

Shakespeare, who rich in genius, dared pourtray
 What'er imagination could survey,
 Or possibility's wide scope contain,
 Who mingled Kings and Jesters in his strain,
 Would not perhaps have scrupled here to trace
 The Hero's utmost lowness of disgrace ;
 Nature and truth his power would have confess'd,
 And sympathetic woe fill'd every breast.

Not thus the humbler Author of to night,
 He feels the blaze of his superiour light,
 Laments the chains which modern play-wrights bind,
 The shackles which controul the elastic mind,
 And fears (tho dignified by worth and age)
 To bring a Beggar on the Tragic stage.

He paints him great, he paints him in distress,
 In battle stern, in peace intent to bless ;
 Loyal mid persecution most unjust,
 Severely steady to his patriot trust ;
 Yet not insensible to sorrow's dart,
 With Cato's virtues, not his stoic heart ;
 With the nice feelings which adorn the man,
 Yet firmly rivetted to honour's plan.

He paints the griefs his relatives sustain,
 Filial affection, sharp domestic pain,
 Griefs which the finer nerves of passion tear,
 And pain creating frenzy and despair.

Oh ! may our efforts aid our Bard's design,
 And on your breasts stamp each pathetic line !
 So shall we draw the tear from Beauty's eye,
 So shall each manly bosom heave a sigh ;
 So shall the moral scene your hearts engage,
 And nature, sense, and virtue, grace our stage.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

JUSTINIAN.
BELISARIUS.
PHORBAS.
JUNIUS.
EUMENES.
CAIUS.
NICANOR.
NARBAL.
DECIUS.
GUARDS, MESSENGERS, PRISONERS, &c.

W O M E N.

THEODORA.
ANTONINA.
MARCELLA.

SCENE. BYZANTIUM.

BELISARIUS.

A C T I.

SCENE I. *A Square of the City.*

EUMENES, CAIUS, *meeting.*

Eum. **W**ELCOME brave Caius from the field of
war!

The field of victory! A witness thou
To the defeat of that innumerable host
Which threatened sad Byzantium with destruction,
And shook the Roman empire to its base.
A witness to the deeds of Belisarius!
His wondrous deeds! A partner in his dangers
While me, the duty of my station bound,
Reluctant, in inactive ease at home.
I envy thee my Caius.

Caius. Such a day
The ever-circling sun hath ne'er beheld.

I i

An

An enemy more dreadful than these Huns
 Our legions ne'er encounter'd. Belifarius
 Seem'd more than man ; beneath the frost of age
 He glow'd with youthful fire ; his veteran bands
 Roused by his great example, rush'd to fight
 Like lions when enraged ; wheree'er they turn'd
 Dismay attended ; they alone were victors :
 For at the first attack, our new-raised levies
 Fled panic-struck, nor join'd, but to pursue,
 And slay the routed foe.

Eum. We feel his worth ;
 And gratitude swells every panting bosom.
 Byzantium pours forth all her sons to meet,
 And grace his triumph. E'en his enemies
 Now wear the face of joy, and speak his praise.

Caius. Is it not strange, that he, so great in arms,
 So gentle in the placid hours of peace,
 So generous, that his hand though ever open,
 Is never tired of giving, so sincere
 That he ne'er promised what he'd not perform,
 Should yet have enemies, who wish his downfall ?

Eum. Envy, my friend, is their's ; the toad which lyes
 Within the stony heart, changing the air,
 The balmy air of heaven, to it's own nature,
 And sweltering in it's venom.

Caius. This success,
 This glorious victory will destroy the reptile,
 And all it's hated brood. This splendid triumph
 Will level opposition with the ground.

Nor

Nor will Justinian e'er forsake the man
To whom he owes his empire and his life.

Eum. Alas! I fear——

Caius. Thou dost not fear Justinian?

Eum. No, not Justinian: but the treacherous Narbal,
And Theodora's malice. Cruel empress!
Dissembling politician!

Caius. All their efforts
Will now be vain; and he who saved the state,
Shall guide it by his wisdom. (*Shouts.*)

Eum. Hark! he comes!
I hear the echoing multitude,

Caius. What pleasure,
What heart-felt pleasure must the godlike man
Experience now! This triumph of his age!
Transcending all his former! They for realms
And nations to the Roman yoke restored:
This, for a victory, which the Roman name,
And e'en the very being of the empire,
Preserved from total ruin.

Eum. More than this,
To triumph with the youth, the gallant youth
Who wedded his Marcella. He petition'd
That his brave son might share with him the glory,
Who nobly shared the toil.

Caius. In Phorbæ's actions
Will Belisarius live again; his soul
Shines with his fathers' virtues.

(*Shouts and trumpets.*)

Eum.

Hark ? more near

The heroes come ! I hasten to the palace.

Caius. I mingle with the pomp.*(Exeunt.)*

SCENE II. *A triumphal Arch on one side, the
Palace in front.*

*Enter BELISARIUS and PHORBAS in triumph, &c.
Soldiers with trophies, standards, &c. Prisoners, &c.
(Shouts.)*

M U S I C.

O D E.

I.

From the wild and savage north
Lo ! the furies rushing forth !
Barbarous war with slaughter died,
Rapine fell with giant stride.
Who shall meet them in the field ?
Who his fainting country shield ?

C H O R U S.

Who shall meet them, &c.

II.

Patriot virtue glowing bright
Darts impetuous to the fight.
From the lightning of his eye
See the baneful furies fly !

Peace

Peace expands her genial wings
Every hill and valley sings.

CHORUS.

Peace expands, &c.

III.

Join the willing song of praise,
Notes of grateful transport raise
To the heroes, to the band,
Saviours of their native land,
Who have gained a deathless name;
Our's is freedom, their's be fame!

GRAND CHORUS.

Join the willing song, &c.

[*The procession passes over the stage. Scene draws and discovers the inside of the Palace. A magnificent apartment. Justinian, Theodora, Narbal, Decius, &c.*]

Enter BELISARIUS, PHORBAS, GUARDS, PRISONERS, &c. who are ranged on each side of the stage. Justinian descends from his throne, and meets Belisarius.

JUSTINIAN.

Thou guardian genius of our sinking state!
In whom the antient Roman virtue lives!
Receive thy sovereign's thanks! And thou brave
youth,
Great is our debt to thee! my heart o'erflows
With

With tides of joy. The fount of life furcharged,
 Even to burſting ſwells. Did any eye
 Behold thy triumph with malignant glance,
 Quench'd be it's light! and perih henceforth all
 Who dare between us fofter difcontent,
 And fullen jealousy!

Theo. Ye triumph here,
 In the enraptured ſoul of gratitude.

Bel. What words, what language, aptly to repay
 Our ſovereign's praifes, ſhall our tongues employ?
 We fought, we conquer'd, duty claim'd the firſt,
 The laſt was heaven's. Let ſilence ſpeak the reſt.

Juſt. Thou ſon, and pupil of this matchleſs chief!
 On thee ſhall rain our favours.

Phor. Small the ſhare
 Of merit I can boaſt, tho' raifed by him,
 And by thy partial voice to ſhare his fame.

Bel. Thy modeſty gives falſe report my ſon;
 Thy courage, and thy coolneſs more than once
 Poifed the deſcending ſcale of victory.
 Even before I prompted thou wert ready,
 And years mature bore witneſs to thy conduct.

Juſt. Oh! from the ſoldier learn ſincerity,
 And lowlineſs of mind, ye ſons of peace,
 Unused to toil! Who in the ſunſhine baſk
 Which gilds a court.—Now Belifarius, heroe,
 Thy warlike labours end. The Perſian conquer'd,
 The weſtern empire from barbarians free'd,
 Afric reſtored, the Huns to ſlaughter doom'd,

Or

Or prisoners led ; with me reform the state,
 Thy valour hath preserved. With us reside ;
 Be ever near a faithful monitor :
 The sacred urim, and prophetic spirit,
 By which each act of mine shall be directed.

NARBAL. (*Aside.*)

My curses on them ! in their noon-tide height
 Unless I err, shall darkness overwhelm them.

Just. Let us revise the laws, correct abuse,
 In our more distant provinces new-brace
 The discipline relax'd, and gird the whole
 Of our vast empire in the bond of order.

Bel. Alas Justinian !

Just. Do my words displease thee ?

Bel. They penetrate my soul. Alas ! too high
 Would'st thou exalt me. Diverse are the gifts
 To diverse men assign'd. The task exceeds
 A soldier's talents.

Just. To this task what need we ?
 But native sense, unyielding honesty,
 And pure fidelity ?

Bel. Most generous Prince !
 I feel the frosty hand of age upon me,
 Yet a few years and I must sink beneath it.
 Tho mean ambition's sons I always scorn'd,
 And every honour but the silent praise
 Of my own heart ; tho low, compared with that
 The statesman's policy, the general's sway,
 And the triumphal car ; yet, plunged in action
 Through

Through a long life, I own I fight for peace.
Men I have read enough ; I would myself
Contemplate but a little time, and die.

Just. The loss is mine. Whither would'st thou retire?

Bel. In fair Ionia lies a rural vale,
Thy bounty, when we quell'd the invading Persian ;
There would I with reflection walk, there spend
The remnant of my days ; and offer up
My morning orisons, and evening prayer
For thine, and for the empire's happiness.

Just. Tho I might hope—but no ; our will submits,
Nor casts the least restraint on any thought
Of thine.—What further boon can we impart ?
Thy absence is the greatest.

Bel. Am I free?
And shall I not desire another's freedom ?
Dismiss these captives to their snow-clad wilds,
And let them learn, O Prince, from thy example
The blessings of humanity.

Just. Go ! ye are free.
(*They bend to Justinian and Belisarius.*)
(*Exeunt.*)

Just. What else my friend ? is there an enemy
Whose punishment thou ask'st for, it is granted.

Bel. The sanguinary bosom of revenge
Was never mine. I know not one whose downfall
Would give a transient pleasure to my soul.
Blest be my enemies ! They oft have taught me
Most wholesome lessons. Where exists the mind
So

So fierce, as not to yield to generosity ?
An enemy whom mercy cannot vanquish ?

Just. E'er thy departure hence, command our power.
Whate'er is placed within it's ample scope
Is freely thine.

Bel. Clad in the vest of youth,
In prime of strength, and nervous intellect,
To thy protection I resign my son.

Just. Thy staff of general—take it, (*to Phorbas*) and
succeed
To all thy father's honours.

Phor. May I wear them
With half his glory !

JUSTINIAN (*to BELISARIUS.*)
Noblest of mankind !

Thy habitation goodness shall illumine,
And wisdom consecrate. Domains most pure !
A court, where real monarchy will dwell,
Undignified by pomp, unthroned, uncrown'd,
Thou to true grandeur, which an emperor looks on
With virtuous envy ; I to toil.—Farewell !

[*Exeunt Justinian, Theodora, Belisarius, &c.*
NARBAL and DECIUS remain.

Nar. Didst thou behold this pageantry ?

Dec. I did.

Nar. And thou hast seen the rain-bow arch the sky,
Fixing each base on two aspiring hills,
Then sudden fade.—So fade these air-born heroes.

K k

Dec.

Dec. How wilt thou move Justinian ?

Nar. Know'ft thou not

His timid mind ? And how with skilful reins
The emprefs at her pleasure guides each paffion ?

Dec. Her power is great,

Nar. Most absolute.—Thou hateft

This Bellfarius—

Dec. Deep is my averfion.

Nar. Not without caufe. His fon ufurps the poft

Due to thy age and worth. I read thy foul,

And confidence fucceeded.—Theodora,

A bigot in her faith, detefts the man,

Who dares with facrilegious ftep proceed,

Scorning the limits of the holy pale.

Always was he my enemy : and once

E'en to Justinian's ear urged my difmiffion.

For which good turn—with fpeed——

Dec. Unfold thy plan.

Nar. Suppose thou feef a flave of Belifarius,

Begging admittance at the dead of night

To Theodora's prefence. Urgent bufinefs

He pleads ; the welfare of the Roman ftate

Her life, Justinian's, all that fhe holds dear,

Depends upon the tale he fhall difclofe.

Blank horror cloaths his cheek, his trembling lips

Often endeavour to perform their office,

And often fail.

Dec. Proceed.

Nar.

Nar. He smites his breast,
 Curfing his fate, that e'er he should be witness
 To actions of the master whom he loves,
 Which publish'd, will draw ruin on his head,
 But which impelling conscience will not suffer
 To hide in silence.

Dec. Well described. Go on.

Nar. Fast fall his tears. He says, that in the evening,
 Having too freely drank, to shun discovery,
 He sought out an apartment seldom used,
 There lay conceal'd. Sleep every sense oppress'd.
 Awaked by murmuring voices, cautiously
 And slow he drew his breath. The voices raised
 Proclaim'd them Belisarius' and his son's.

Dec. Well-acting slave, and plausible!—What follows?

Nar. He tells her that they spake to this effect.
 The emperor old and superstitious,
 Priest-ridden, governed by his wife and Narbal,
 Deserved no longer to direct the helm
 Of this vast monarchy. That Belisarius
 Might mount with ease into the seat of empire.
 Then read they various letters; one from Narses,
 Who now with glory spreads in Italy
 His conquering banners, urging the attempt,
 So he might bear the purple in the west.
 Another from the Persian Prince with offers
 Of strong assistance, or a sure asylum.
 The veterans too, with whom he lately quell'd
 The barbarous Huns, will aid his daring purpose.

K k 2

And

And that securely he may strike the blow,
 He feigns retirement to his rural vale
 In fair Ionia.

Dec. Is the slave so perfect ?

Nar. Shrewd, hardy, void of fear, from whom no tortures
 Could wring the secret — Still in thy mind's eye.
 Observe the progress. View how Theodora
 Affails Justinian. See the letters found,
 Produced, examined ; the known hand of Narfes ;
 The seal of Persia. Hear to strengthen all,
 Claudius the Senator, by me suborn'd ;
 He hath been founded, trusted with their plan,
 To crush our now-successful christian doctrines ;
 And in our sacred temples re-establish
 The idol worship. Hear how Eutyches
 Justinian's favour'd priest, his soul's director,
 Urges this plea with all his eloquence.
 View superstition gain predominance,
 That all-o'er-ruling principle, and love,
 Honour, respect, and every recent merit
 Shall nought avail.—E'er morn my friend, my
 Decius,
 Shall these twin stars beneath the horizon set,
 To rise no more.

Dec. Till then my thoughts will lye
 On expectations rack.

Nar. Yet calmly smile.
 Retire ; but hold thyself prepared to aid us,

As

As time shall warrant. Cherish bold ambition.
The army shall be thine. Retire my friend.

(Exit Decius.)

Nar. Oh! the delicious draught of sweet revenge
Unto the thirsty lip! e'en to the lees
I'll drain the cup, and satiate all my soul.
Say Belifarius should retreat—He leaves
His son behind, taught doubtless to perplex,
To thwart my plans; perchance to worm himself
Into Justinian's favour.—Ye are fathom'd
All-potent conquerors! short sighted heroes!
Let but Justinian with his usual ease
And weak credulity be led, and down,
Down to the regions of the grave ye fall,
While Narbal holds uncurb'd the sovereign sway.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE I. *An Apartment in the House of Belisarius.*

PHORBAS, MARCELLA.

Mar. Forgive me, Phorbas! but the scenes of night
 Are still before my eyes. I saw thee clad
 As yesterday, in rich triumphal robes;
 I stood as then, upon the northern tower
 Marking thy gallant entrance. On a sudden
 Dark dismal clouds whence sulphurous lightnings
 flash'd

Opposed my view. When strait I saw thee dead,
 Cover'd with wounds, and Narbal waving o'er thee
 A sword bedew'd with blood. I wak'd in horror;
 Nor can I yet erase the deep impressi'on.

Phor. And shall unreal dreams disturb thy peace?
 Disjointed emblems of our waking thoughts?
 Where is the wisdom of Marcella's mind?
 True, we *have* fear'd the base deceit of Narbal;
 But fresh-adorn'd with honour and renown,
 With power invest'd, in Justinian's love
 Fix'd firm, in vain will he and Theodora
 Their malice point, which stingsless, shall inflict
 No mortal wound.

Mar.

Mar. Why cannot we retire
 With Belifarius? What is power or fame,
 To those unenvied joys which blefs the country?

Phor. What joys can thy imagination paint?

Mar. Ah! canst thou ask me? Should I not possess
 Thy much-lov'd converse? balm of every care?
 The verdure of the fields, the gurgling brooks,
 The high oaks quivering to the western gale,
 The yellow corn-field, and melodious note
 Of lark, or nightingale, to me are joys
 Of secondary consequence.

Phor. No more,
 Alluring temptrefs! inclination leads
 With thee to pleasing fond ideal haunts;
 But duty, fame, and virtue fix me here.
 Well have thy father's actions earn'd retirement,
 Like autumn's fruits thick hang his honours on
 him,

Mine are but in the blossom.—lo! he comes!

BELISARIUS advancing.

Welcome the prospect of serene delight!
 Of calm content, whose gentle rays shall gild
 The evening of my life! unvex'd by storms
 Which shake ambition; far from hate and guile;
 And the pernicious blast of sickening envy.

(Seeing MARCELLA and PHORBAS.)

My Phorbas! my Marcella!—and behold

(Enter ANTONINA and JUNIUS.)

Junius and Antonina!—sweetest boy!

Thy

Thy tongue shall charm the weary hours of age,
 And soothe it's pains.—Oh! best and most beloved!
 This is the auspicious time which sets me free.
 Not with more heart-felt pleasure doth the rustic
 After the toils of day, at sun-set enter
 His lowly home. Like the old warrior horse,
 Dismiss'd by some kind master, to his hills,
 And verdant meads, once more shall I revisit
 The paths of nature, and sensations feel
 Long unexperienc'd.

Phor. Thus the ancient Roman,
 From dictatorial pomp his farm regain'd,
 Array'd in glory.—Fit for every station
 Art thou; the warrior, politician, sage,
 In thee are blended.

Bel. What from some, my son,
 Might be deem'd flattery, in thee is love,
 Respect, and filial duty.—To thy hands
 My charge, the good Justinian hath deliver'd!
 And, trust me, an important one it is,
 Requiring all thy vigour. Oh! be still,
 Just, and humane! to strictest discipline
 Add tender care, so shall the soldiers bless thee.
 Be to thy enemies, in battle, dreadful;
 But spare the suppliant, spare the unarmed head.
 Nor ever let the old disbanded warrior
 Taste of distress and penury.

Phor. To thee
 I owe what'er I am!—to thy example

What

Whate'er I shall be.

Bel. Bear thyself upright
 In camp, or court; despise the unfound policy
 Of knavish cunning. Far above the reach
 Of the mean villain soars illustrious greatness,
 And excellence of soul.—Yet prudent be thou,
 And circumspect. Above the rest of men
 Beware of Narbal; trust not Theodora.
 Safe in thy proper dignity, nor dread,
 Nor with blind confidence repose on others.
 Why weeps my daughter?

Mar. Happiness is yours.
 Here splendid care and discontent reside.
 Fain would I sacrifice some years of life
 Thus to retreat,

Bel. Be comforted my daughter.
 In such a dearth of goodness, duty calls
 On youths who like thy Phorbas feel the flame
 Of patriot love, to mingle with the crew
 Of base pretenders.—I but go before
 Your steward, and purveyor. Each addition
 Of use or ornament, I shall be pleased
 To think you one day will possess, and love
 The building, for the builder. Every tree
 I plant, will please me, when I shall reflect
 You and your children will enjoy the shade.
 It is not probable his days of trouble
 Will equal mine; long e'er he shall arrive

L 1

At

At my extent of years, I hope the army,
The state will spare him.

Enter CAIUS.

Caius! hah! thy errand!

Caius. The messenger of ill I come. Oh! fly!
Quit these vile dwellings of deceit and fraud
With rapid eagle's speed! By Narbal trusted,
Eumenes is your friend: from him I come.
Deep is the plot, and strong is the conspiracy,
Tho it's extent he knows not. He and Decius
Are ordered to convey you to the palace,
While Entyches among his pious brethren
Whispers malignant lies; that you propose
Our worship to o'erthrow, and rear again
The pagan structure from its mouldering ruins.
Narbal and Theodora have determined
That not your long deserts, your bravery, virtue,
Nor e'en your new-won triumph shall protect you.
Eumenes sees no safety but in flight.
Haste! frustrate by your speed the dire intent
Of base malevolence.—I must away,
Lest intercepted I should share your fate,
And lose all future power to aid, to serve you.

(Exit.)

Ant. Oh! fly! this instant fly!

Mar. Lose not a moment.

Phor.

Phor. Haste to Nicanor! by the port he dwells,
 And will with speed convene the band of veterans.
 In the first bark we find, with our domestics
 Steer we for Asia, where all hearts are thine.
 Meanwhile the veterans shall secure our passage.

Bel. Steer thou for Asia! seek its farthest climes!
 Fly all! but Belifarius here remains.

Ant. A prey to Narbal?

Bel. Not a fugitive,
 Proclaiming guilt.

Ant. I see, alas! thy death.

Bel. Which I have never fear'd.

Mar. Yet pity us!

Bel. I do. But will not screen myself by baseness.

Mar. What refuge then remains?

Bel. Our innocence.

Mar. What guard is that?

Bel. More than encircling armies;
 It fortifies the heart.

Mar. Oh! we are lost!

I see my Phorbas all our fate before us,

Painted in blackest characters I see it.

O Belifarius, if thou wilt not yield

To our intreaties, kill us not with sternness!

Kneel Junius! heed, oh! heed his infant prayer!

Bel. Why wound me thus Marcella! I knew not
 That I *was* stern. Your looks, your sighs affect
 me.

Various are now the feelings of my soul;

L 1 2

Pity

Pity for you, indignant rage, disdain,
 And love of glory. Mid the different conflict
 The latter triumphs. Belisarius must not
 Sink in his own opinion. Grief may rend
 My heart ; treatment unmerited stir up
 Resentment in me ; but my eye shall not
 Quit sight of the guiding star, fix'd rectitude,
 That never sets.—Lead these distress'd apart !
 Fear not. Prosperity again will smile.
 Lead them apart my son !—I meet alone
 These messengers. [*Exeunt.*

BELISARIUS (*alone.*)

'Tis true. I feel it now in every nerve—
 The energy of virtue. It supports,
 Enlightens, strengthens.—Tryer of mankind !
 Adversity ! come onward ! I will meet thee
 With open arms. To the unprepared heart
 How dreadful are thy terrors !—All that's pass'd,
 A bright extent of fame, beyond thy power
 Is placed.—Tho they have reach'd my stage of
 being,
 How many sink oblivious !—I have lived
 Compared with them, this mortal life thrice o'er.
 With blessings, praises, willing honours crown'd,
 Unforced, unbought applause.—The recollection
 Warms me throughout, and thaws the frost of age
 Which otherwise would make the thicken'd blood
 Curdle

Curdle within it's mazy labyrinths.
 Yet am I man—nature is powerful still—
 A sigh will rife ; a tear will fall—firm bound
 Is the connubial, the parental chain.
 Whatever link is shock'd, the faithful center
 Feels the vibration.—In myself prepared
 To meet each accident, for them my soul
 Is soft as melting wax.—No more of this.—
 I'm ready.—Yet is passive fortitude
 More arduous, than most intrepid action.

Enter DECIUS, EUMENES, CAIUS, SLAVE, and
 GUARDS.

Dec. The Emperor's mandate.

Bel. I obey his orders ;
 And am your prisoner. Take my sword ; it's edge
 None but his enemies e'er felt. The weapon
 Is little worth ; the cause it hath been used in
 Was always just. My son is comprehended
 Within this schedule ; he will soon attend.
 What is the imputed crime ?

Dec. My orders urge me
 To haste immediate, nor admit a parley.
 This faithful slave discovers hidden letters,
 And doubtless those the criminal hath read.

Bel. I read upon thy forehead, Narbal's creature ;
 And in his eyes, a lye.

Dec.

- Dec.* Suspect not us;
Narbal and Decius are thy friends.
- Bel.* Ulysses
Pleaded for Palamedes, when he placed
The gold within his tent, which caused his death.
- Dec.* I oft have mark'd, and wonder'd how serenity
Can with the traitor dwell. O shame! Justinian
Hath loaded thee with generous acts of kindness,
For which thy honest hand would plant a dagger
In his unthinking heart.
- Bel.* At length thy words
Betray thee. So the serpent lurks awhile
Hissing beneath his bush, e'er he discovers
His speckled crest, and brandishes his sting.
- Dec.* I came not to impart, or hear reproaches.
Tullus with me. (*to the Slave.*) Eumenes guard
the passage.
I will secure his son, these papers seize,
And strait return.—(*Exeunt Decius and Slave, &c.*)
- Eum.* Retire, and keep the door. (*to the guards.*)
Caius remain. O Belisarius would'st thou not
Enjoy thy liberty?
- Bel.* It's golden hours
Are worth a kingdom's price.
- Eum.* They may be thine.
- Bel.* What mean'st thou?
- Eum.* We have sounded
The guards, and half will join the flight; should
Decius

Offer

Offer resistance, he would rue the trial.
 Meanwhile thy family may gain the port;
 We soon will follow.

Bel. Am I then so alter'd?

Dost thou not know me? Who am I?

Eum. The man

Whom I most honour, Belifarius,

This age's glory, and it's wonder.

Bel. Hold—

No more.—Years have not changed or warp'd my
 nature;

I still am Belifarius. Art thou answer'd?

Eum. I am perforce.

Bel. Thy friendship I have always

Regarded well. This testimony of it

I mean to bury deep within my breast,

Nor let it ever rise to light against thee.

Enter DECIUS, PHORBAS, &c.

Bel. Thy looks infect my aged eyes, my son.

How did'st thou leave them?

Phor. Overcome with grief,

Too violent to utter their complaints.

They only wring their hands, sitting in silence

And motionless as statues. I should there

Have grown into the earth, had not stern force

Dragg'd me away.—'Twere best you saw them
 not.

Bel.

Bel. I see them now too well. My heart o'erflows
 With sympathizing pity. Weakness causes not
 Thy tears or mine ; for they deserve the tribute.
 So excellent in nature, so affectionate,
 With meekest duty joining tenderest love ;
 Deep will affliction penetrate their souls,
 And I feel all the wound. O my good youth!—

Dec. Are you prepared ?

Bel. We are. The stroke of malice
 May stun, but not destroy. I've seen the soldier
 Tho sunk upon his knee, rebound with vigour,
 And slay the enemy who gave the blow.
 If overcome, he for his country died,
 And cheated death, acquiring endless glory.
 The field is not the only bed of honour ;
 The gloomy prison, torturing wheel, or scaffold
 Virtue can sanctify. The thoughts of men
 No power controuls, and aften times embalm
 The memory of the good. Guilt trembles ever ;
 Fearful thro life ; and on the silken bed,
 Or stretch'd on roses, sees with ghastly eye
 Death's slow, but sure approach. It's end is
 dreadful ;
 A lesson to the present, to posterity
 A tale of ignominy and contempt.
 Proceed.—We follow.

SCENE

SCENE II.

ANTONINA. MARCELLA.

Mar. Oh! should he die, I never would survive him.
 No more of hope—I see no ray of light
 Thro the wild waste to guide our devious feet.
 Yet bounteous heaven ordains, when fortune
 lowers,

And with fierce rage the growing tempest swells,
 Mid all it's bitterest wrath, a friendly dagger
 Will give us peace. *(pulls out a dagger.)*

Fla. Oh! shun despair Marcella,
 The worst of fiends!—that fatal weapon banish.

Mar. No.—But till human strength can bear no more,
 And from the conflict shrinks—it rests in peace.

Ant. Why prophecy their deaths? Heroes e'er now
 Have felt the weight of ignominious bonds,
 Yet rose superior to their vaunting foes.
 Say, can Justinian in his height of power
 Dare to command? In their full scope of cruelty
 Can Theodora, can the treacherous Narbal
 Prompt the dire act of murder? Will they hazard
 The chance of tumult? the awaken'd anger
 Of all the Roman provinces? Can Phorbas,
 Can Belisarius perish so unjustly?

M m

And

And vengeance sleep? Trust me, ten thousand arms
Will soon be raised; and e'en among his guards,
The troops conspire, to pull destruction down
Upon the offenders heads.

Mar. And what avails
The tardy punishment? why do not now
While yet they live, vindictive armies rise?
The dead are soon forgotten; who disturbs
Their slumbers? Friendship passes far aloof
With blushing face, or at the midnight hour
May seek the tomb, then wring her hands together,
And say, too late my aid; e'er death prevented,
Why strove I not to save them?

Ant I mistrust not
The righteous gods; who ever heed the cause,
The sacred cause of innocence and virtue.

Mar. The gods are just, are good. Shall I arraign
Their high o'erruling power?—Oh! where ye sit,
(*Kneeling*)

Throned in the insufferable blaze of light,
Look down with pitying eyes, and in the time
Of deep adversity, sustain, preserve
Those whom your own enlivening spirit form'd
The best, the noblest of the human race!

Ant. It dawns. The face of hope more bright appears.
Justinian cannot but protect the men
To whom his utmost gratitude is due.
But should he fail to guard them in the hour
Of sad distress, by calumny assail'd,

Let

Let us in weeds of mourning seek the empress,
And prostrate at her feet—

Mar. O mean expedient!
Idle, and fruitless!—Shall the honour'd wife
Of Belisarius, shall his daughter stoop
To abject condescension?

Ant. Could we save them,
Shall nice fastidious notions interfere?
Or haughtiness restrain us? In her youth,
Unconscious of her present state of greatness,
We interchanged the vows of equal friendship,
Tho' now ambition has usurp'd her mind,
And bigot zeal; yet when her eyes behold us
Prone on the ground, the embers may revive
Of ancient love, and by humility
We gain a prize above the wealth of worlds.

Mar. Oh! I have rais'd my towering thoughts too high,
Admiring all the godlike qualities
Of my great father, blended happily
In Phorbas' breast, I fed my eager soul
Till it dilating view'd with fix'd indifference
Each sublunary being. Kings themselves
Sunk far beneath me brought to the sacred touch
Of this comparison. Now cast I off
Pride, glowing shame. To my condition levell'd,
I own the dust my origin! and fall,
Press'd by the hand of strong necessity,
Where, for myself, to gain a thousand years
Of mortal life, I should refuse to bend. [*Exeunt.*

M m 2

SCENE

SCENE III. *The Palace.*

JUSTINIAN, THEODORA, NARSAL.

Just. Above each earthly eye we owe our duty
 To thee, O most adored! By thee supported,
 I dare with firmness raise the rod of iron
 O'er thy contemners! Pious Eutyches
 With holy fervour hath enlarged my heart.
 His arguments and thine, my Theodora,
 Were pregnant with conviction. Justice triumphs.
 Yet would I not to death pursue its dictates;
 Degraded from their honours, and exiled,
 They pay the debt of treason. Mild their punishment,
 Shewing our sense of past deserts. And mercy,
 No less than justice, is the attribute
 Of awful Deity.—Shall man then sin?
 And shall not man relent?

Theo. Dost thou again relapse into thy weakness?
 Is this the firm resolve to do heaven service?
 But oh! remember, tho' in private station
 Thy soul might yield unblamed to melting pity,
 Not to himself alone the sovereign lives;
 Millions on thee depend, to thee look up
 For preservation. Wouldst thou then to save
 The

The proved offenders, view our fertile provinces
Laid waste by civil broils? Our cities sack'd?
Subjects gainst subjects warring? Shall the cross
Which now triumphant stands, beneath the feet
Of heathens press the dust?

Just.

Yet is it strange

So many battles fought, and victories won,
Nations subdued, armies at his disposal,
He should not till arriv'd at the utmost verge
Of trembling life, against our power rebel,
And strive for mastery.

Theo.

Who can explain

The contradictions of the human mind?
Yet oft, tho youthful years will turn abhorrent
From deeds of treachery; when age steals on,
Each early scyon in the spring put forth,
And e'en by manhood cherish'd, will be blasted.

Nar.

Such must be Belisarius. Lost in wonder,
Scarce can I now give credence to the proofs,
Forceful and clear, of his ingratitude.
But Brutus slew his father and his friend.
Wives have imbrued their hands in husbands' blood,
Brothers have slain their unsuspecting brother,
Urged by the fiend ambition.—O Justinian!
Would that my death could purchase lasting firm-
ness

To all thy plans, in deepest wisdom form'd
To bless thy subjects, and secure forever
The faith by thee protected! Would to heaven

The

The life of Belifarius could be spared !
Nor Phorbas perish !

Just. Will no danger spring
From out their ashes ?—Justice hath decreed,
The safety of the state demands their deaths.
The slave the letters found, the answers penn'd,
The words of Claudius urge the stern decree.
But ne'er could they alone this deed contrive
Of black detested villainy.—Will treason,
And restive mutiny be slain with them ?
Rather I see uprising multitudes
Quickened to action, and conspiracy
On every side, with mortal violence,
And open front, advance against our throne.

Theo. Let it advance ! Must I again Justinian
Tell thee, a kingdom is a glorious tomb ?
Thy arguments should rather string the nerves
Of speedy execution. Winged minutes
Haste on to safety ; while the tardy step
Of dull suspicion stumbles at the threshold,
And wakes the fury danger in her cave.

Nar. Say we protract the fate of Belifarius,
And sound the populace ? If his confinement
They bear with ineffectual murmurs only,
We lose not our caution. Death may follow.—
Or say the sword on Phorbas first descend ;
Without his active aid, tho' Belifarius
Should even be enlarged, the treasonous head
Wanting the hand, will give no birth to terror.

Just.

Just. The guardian care of Providence protect me!
 And your true aid, and counsel! Let the sword
 Descend on Phorbas.—Hold—receive our signet—
 Act as ourselves—their fate is in thy hands.

Nar. With pity and reluctance, to Eumenes
 I bear thy orders.

[*Exit.*

Just. Theodora! oh!
 How keen my feelings! never did I sentence
 Without a pang, the meanest of my subjects;
 But now what torture racks my inmost soul,
 And tears each finer nerve of bleeding friendship!
 Yes, witness heaven, how dearly I esteem'd them!
 Should they be guiltless!—But their crimes are
 obvious.
 How would the tongues of men exclaim against
 me!
 How branded to the world should I appear,
 How base in history's impartial page!
 Their guilt is manifest—these pangs are nature's.
 Religion, public love approve the deed.
 Oh! calm my soul! Yet tho' excelling all
 Thy sex in wisdom, fruitless were the task.
 Time only can perform that office; time
 Which softly checks the reins of headstrong grief,
 And by degrees wears out the trace of memory.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Palace.*

MARCELLA, ANTONINA, JUNIUS.

Ant. Methinks these walls are changed with their inhabitants ;

Dark do they seem, and hateful to the sight.
Is this the place where sedulous attention,
Obsequious homage, and the voice of gladness
Pursued our steps? Where each beholder's eye
Caught at our transient looks? our transient smiles?

Mar. The change is in ourselves. The fickle croud
Surrounding greatness, like the flies of June
Ope to the sun their many-coloured wings ;
When damps arise, and evening dews descend,
They sicken, and are seen no more.

Ant. Unused to fear, I tremble, and my knees
Unstable, scarce support my aged frame.
Who passes yonder? Decius! Tho' my soul
Abhors communication with that traitor,
He may be useful.—Decius!

Dec. Who-are ye,
That in despite of happiness and joy
Enter these walls array'd in weeds of sorrow?

Ant.

Ant. 'Tis true, 'tis true by heaven!
Excuse me O Eumenes! not like him
Art thou, the hungry flatterer of greatness,
The needy vassal of a slavish courtier.
Forgive the peevish error of my tongue,
Designed for him, not thee: the stroke oblique
Aim'd at another, sprung from inward pride,
And female spleen. Alas! alas! Eumenes!
Suppliants we come; wilt thou from Theodora
Humbly request an audience?

Eum. If the dart
Of death were pointed to oppose my entrance.
Tho' much I fear she will not see you, much
If seen, her ear will be to your request
Most marble-nerved.

Ant. Yet try her I conjure thee.

Eum. Is there a task Eumenes would refuse
At thy desire? I will return with speed,
And bear her answer. [Exit.

Ant. Tender-natured man!
I for thy sake retract the rash opinion
Which I had well nigh form'd, and think there
may be
Some honesty remaining in a court.

Mar. Will she admit us think'st thou?—Hark! he comes!
Was she e'er moved by melting pity?—Hark!
I marvel at his stay.—Oh! for a tongue
Of most persuasive eloquence, to move
As music did of old, the rocks and trees,

Obedient

Obedient to the magic strain!—I fear
 All will be frustrate.—How I dread this interview!
 Not yet! not yet!—She will not surely see us.
 Oh! she is stern, and not to be intreated.
 I had methought conn'd in my mind a lesson;
 But it is flown—quite lost—confusion reigns.
 Poor Junius!—oh! thy mother's heart, my boy,
 Is torn afunder.—Generous Eumenes!

Enter EUMENES.

Will she admit us? How did she receive thee?
 What said she? Did she frown upon thy message?

Eum. Most noble, and revered! too rash was I.

Propitious is the hour. To Theodora
 I proffer'd your petition; she, with calmness,
 By the soft motion of a gentle smile
 Only disturb'd, bade me to introduce you.

Ant. Supporter of the weak! whose words revive
 The drooping heart of sorrow, be our guide!
 Should'st thou be e'er unhappy, may'st thou find
 A friend congenial with thyself, to pity,
 And lend thee succour! Rather may'st thou ne'er
 Need his assistance! O ye gods shower down,
 Shower down your choicest blessings from above,
 And crown his days with happiness and peace!

N n 2

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

THEODORA (*alone.*)

The eclipse is pass'd ; and our imperial light
 May shine at length unrivall'd. Heaven is just.
 And pride laid low affords a spectacle,
 On which the greatness it before insulted
 Can look well pleas'd : e'en if religion join'd not
 To give her plaudit to the final ruin
 Of hated pagan foes.—They bore the sway—
 Justinian and myself were but as toys,
 Or secondary adventitious ornaments
 To grace their diadem ; the homagers,
 And shadows of their power ; the substance their's.
 And do they claim my pity ? It is well.

Enter EUMENES, FLAVIA, &c.

Eum. Most gracious empress ! Belisarius' wife,
 His daughter, and the son of youthful Phorbas.

Theo. Leave us ; this tender interview requires
 No prying eye. [*Exit. Eumenes.*]

Most welcome ! may believe me,
 That thus as supplicants you come before us
 Our heart feels no displeasure.

Ant. O Theodora ! prostrate at thy feet [*They kneel.*]
 See that ill-fated wretch, who heretofore
 Was honour'd with that dearest name, thy friend !
Theo.

Theo. Nay rise.—Our friend, and the illustrious daughter.
Of our renowned General at our feet!
It shall not be.

Mar. Bent lowly to the earth
By dire calamity, we rise no more,
Unless thou stretch thy hand benignant forth,
And raise us up to life.

Theo. Name your request.

Ant. And need I name it? Think O Theodora
What pangs we feel. The father and the husband;
Loyal and innocent, dragg'd from our arms
By their relentless foe; in chains; immured
Within yon hateful walls, the traitor's mansion.
O bleeding fame! O agony intolerable!
Of which ne'er may the faintest portion touch
Thy royal bosom!

Theo. Wherefore kneel to me?
I am no deity.—Mistaken worshippers!
Go, offer up your prayers to thund'ring Baal;
To pale Astarte! or your household gods.
Where are your crouds of slaves? your robes, of
state?
This garb of mourning! Doth this suit an empress?
Her, who aspired to Theodora's station?
Named you my former friendship? This your
pride
Long time has cancell'd. Now the crime, the
guilt

Of

Of those you plead for, sink you to a depth
Which mercy's peering eye in vain would fathom.

[Exit.

MARCELLA (*Starting up.*)

False woman! guilt! thine is the curse, the stain
Of spotted infamy.—Hah! Antonina!
And are we here! and have we knelt before her!
Guilt! guilt!—Oh! wherefore didst thou bring
us hither!

My heart! my head!—Haste! let us hence with
speed.

Here serpents dwell, ingratitude, deceit,
And every odious monster.—Let us hence.

Ant. Cease my Marcella! dearest boy! weep not.

Mar. And what is her religion! cruelty.

Proud too, she call'd us—But I now am calm;
This undeserved treatment hurts me not.

Yet am I proud; proud of my innocence;
Of thee my Junius, of thy father proud.

But pomp, and grandeur, wealth, and glittering
toys,

Never for their intrinsic merit prized,

Now vanish into nothing.—Riches court

The hand of fools—the base may rise to power.

The humble and the innocent are here,

O'erwhelm'd with misery.—Away! Away!

[Exeunt.

SCENE

SCENE III. *A Prison.*

BELISARIUS, PHORBAS, (*in chains.*)

Bel. Deluded Prince!

Oh! ill-condition'd state of empire! girt
By interest and deceit, a constant cloud
The regal throne envelops. At a distance
Stands truth, and weeps. An eye, like lightning
keen,

And as the sun, commanding, is required
To pierce through, or disperse the incircling
gloom,

And see the lovely mourner in her tears.

Phor. How are we fallen! the virid leaves of hope
Sear'd in their prime! O days of blifs o'erpast!
Which now but deeper tent the wounds of anguish!

Bel. Shall we of courage at a distance boast?
And when become the inmates with misfortune,
Cast back a wistful look to happiness?
Shrinking beneath the rigorous embrace
Of our too stern companion?—Conscious virtue
Irradiating the chosen mind, forbids it
To share the common fate.

Phor. Nor do I faint.

Nor shall thy son, my father, from thy side
In this severest conflict backward turn

His

His coward step.—Yet while resentment burns,
I cannot but invoke revenge, and hurl
Pernicious curses on the heads of those
Who caused our ruin.

Bel. Will they aught avail?
Sprung from the impetuous ardour of thy youth,
Will they e'er reach their bosoms? Tho I plead
not

For brutal apathy, yet patience gives
A nobler triumph, in her awful silence
Far more expressive, than the tumid look,
And boistrous words of anger.—Curse them not.

Phor. Perfection is not mine.

Bel. Nor mine, nor any man's.
Yet, what a glorious aim! seeing the fane
On yonder towering eminence, to labour
Up the rough passage, till we gain the height
Allotted to humanity!—The mind
Of busy malice hastens on our fate;
'Tis her's forever to be base and treacherous;
But our's the few short moments which remain,
To study how with dignity to live,
With dignity to die.

Phor. Again I rise.
Again my father I emerge, and shake
Despondence from me.—Hark! the jarring door!
And footsteps which the echoing vault rebounds!
Let the dark murderer enter—we're prepared.

Enter

Enter EUMENES, and GUARDS.

Eum. Ungrateful are my tidings.

Bel. Speak them boldly.

Eum. I come, alas! to bear thy son from hence
To speedy execution.

Bel. Him alone!

Eum. Such are my orders.

Bel. Lead the victim forth!

Never was foul more spotless offer'd up
To the pure gods: fit sacrifice for heaven.

Phor. Behold that best, that bravest of mankind!
He taught me how to live, and, harder task,
Hath taught me how to die.

Bel. Let me embrace thee.

I could have wish'd thee slain in glorious battle,
Slain for thy country.—But to fall unjustly
Is no mean fate. Thank heaven thou dost not
merit

The stroke of death. These tears which bathe
my cheek

Would then have sprung from a less noble motive,
For thy polluted honour. These are nature's,
Which cannot part unmoved from what it loves.

Eum. Would I could lengthen out his date of life
Till nature brake the seal! But fate withstands;
Nor will Justinian's orders brook delay.

Phor. O Belisarius! should relentless malice,
Afraid to touch thy sacred head, stop short

O o

In

In it's mid courfe ; let thy Marcella know
 My dying thoughts were fix'd on her—My fon !
 O fate!—But hence vain murmurs !—This em-
 brace—

Receive my gratitude, affection, duty,
 May the juft gods thro this dark maze of care
 Lead forth thy steps !—Cherish my memory !
 To thee, and to the virtuous I bequeath it.
 Farewell ! I go where coward fraud prepares
 No fubtle web, nor violence its chains,
 Perhaps to mix with heroes ; where at leaft
 The plagues of this infested world exift not,
 Self-blinded folly, and wide-wafting vice.

[*Exeunt.*]

Bel. Dear youth ! thy blood alone can ne'er affuage
 The thirft of hot revenge.—Haplefs old man !
 I fould have gone before him—o'er my afhes
 He fould have dropp'd the filial tear.—Alone !
 Yet not without refource ; while ftill within
 The voice of confcience foothes oppreffive grief.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. *The Houfe of Belifarius.*

ANTONINA, MARCELLA, JUNIUS.

Ant. What can detain the lingering ftep of Caius ?
 He cannot too be falfe.

Mar. Oh ! Antonina !
 Horror and death and treachery are around us ;
 Life

Life is a whirlpool of perfidious wickedness,
 We, the light straws that float upon the river,
 Are soon ingulph'd and lost amid it's waves.
 For me, I wait my dissolution calmly ;
 The death of Phorbas is my fated signal.—
 My Junius too must perish—O my son
 The barbarous wretch who triumphs o'er thy
 father,
 Will slay thee too.

Jun. You shall protect me.

Mar. None

But tygers, or the pard, would injure thee.
 But men are brutal, and humanity
 Dwells in the howling wilderness.—My comfort !
 E'en in the depth of my affliction ! Image
 Of thy dear father, come into my arms !

Ant. Who enters there ?

Mar. It is the faithful Caius.

Hah ! if thy face be index to thy soul,
 Some dreadful news thou bear'st.

Caius. Forgive me both !

Much-injured, honour'd women ! I am destined
 The oracle of ill.

Ant. Say what ?—

Mar. Are they alive ? or—

Caius. Belisarius lives.

But Phorbas is no more.—As in my turn
 Of guard, I waited on the emperor's person,
 Narbal being present, with an hasty step

Eumenes enter'd; see, he cried, the sword
Which duty brings, stain'd with the blood of
Phorbas!

So ever fall thy enemies!—Justinian
Thank'd him, and they retired.

Ant. Will not the earth
Ope wide, and swallow them up quick! Ye
heavens!

Is justice then with you an empty name!
That they yet live, and taint the vital air
With their pernicious crimes!—Marcella! Hah!
Her arms are rigid; and her eyes roll wild.
My daughter! heaven forefend?—accursed traitors!

Mar. Come near my son; come near; tread softly tho'
Thy father lies here on the couch of death.

Jun. Why look you thus? why grasp my hand so hard?

Ant. O my dear daughter! what dost thou behold?
Thy eye is riveted on viewless space.
Alas! she heeds me not.—This did I fear.
She ne'er before tasted afflictions cup,
And now drinks deep indeed.

Mar. Hark! Hark! He speaks.
His face is pale; but listen, listen, listen.
Wilt not attend to him?—See where he sits!
And hear him while he speaks? I could methinks
Give ear forever to his honey'd sounds.
Listen my son—He'll teach thee to be good—
To drive away deceit—to bear a foul
Which may be read, as the pure stream is seen
Thro

Thro the pellucid ice.—I'll fit me down
And rest, I have watch'd long.

Ant. O friend! in us thou see'st the vanity *(to Caius.*
Of human things. Where's Belifarius now?
For thirty years the empire's surest bulwark?
Preserver of the universal state?

Where is he now? in chains, in a dark dungeon.
What is his wife? a wretch who scarcely lives.
His daughter? run distracted. His brave son-in-
law?

Murder'd. The comfort of his age? the boy
Of his fond soul?—Oh! my good friend! these
thoughts

Cannot be borne; fiercely they goad the mind,
And shatter every faculty.—Good Caius,
Take, lead him forth.—Poor child! thy fate is
worst.

Thou hast most years to run in this bad world.

[Exit Caius with Junius.

My daughter!

Mar. Stand aside—come not between us—
The sun is set—cold blows the evening air.
Away ye horrid spectres! Are ye gone?
'Tis well—'tis well. Hah! they are here again.
'Tis Narbal, and Eumenes.—Save me! save me!
They wave their swords in triumph.—Where is
my lord?

Where have ye laid him?—O thou bloody corpse!
(falling on the ground.)

Do

Do I embrace thee?—No—ye shall not part us.

Ant. Marcella! calm! oh! calm this extacy!

Mar. 'Tis the old tyrant all this while.—(*springing up*)

What would ye?

Let go your hold; what, three to murder me!

What have I done?—Oh! art thou come my hero?

Phorbas shall guard me gainst you all.—Strike on

My gallant warrior! there they fall! they fall!

Spare him! no—kill him tho he grasp thy knees.—

Plead'ft thou thy hoary hair old emperor!

The hair of Belifarius too was white

As the fine-sifted snow.—Kill Narbal first—

O traitor dog! triumph! and victory!

Oh! well didst thou acquit thee—let me strain thee

With close embrace to my applauding heart.—

Who hath done this? who hath removed the
bodies?

My Lord! my Lord! nay, wherefore dost thou
shun me?

What folly's this? nay, I shall overtake you.

(*running out, Phorbas meets her.*)

Hah! who art thou? and whence?

Phor. Gods! is it thus?

Marcella! Lo! thy Phorbas!

Ant. Can it be?

Mysterious providence! my son!—behold

The poor Marcella!—Joy and grief will urge

Me too to frenzy.—O my son! my son!

How

How didst thou?—Yet I ask not—unto her
Be all thy care directed now.

Phor. O agony!

What dost thou hear? Why dost thou dart thine eye
Swift thro the vaulted space of yonder heaven?

Mar. Music! sweet music! Hift! 'tis here—'tis gone.
'Twas joy pass'd by upon a rapid sun-beam!
A Love bestrides each dancing mote—they haste
To Theodora—have you heard the news?
The good Justinian sleeps in earth, and Narbal
Is now the jolly bridegroom.

Phor. O ye powers!

Here look with pity! view your sweetest work!
Restore! restore!—

Mar. Silence! Revenge hath pierced
Her heart—the shaft sticks deep—despair
Hath thrown his cold and frosty arms about her.
See! madness raving, clanks his iron chains,
And beckons her to yon high mountain top!
She falls—down—down—it was a desperate leap.

Phor. Heart-rending fight! my trembling knees would
sink

Did not the thoughts of vengeance yet support me.
Oh! I will let it loose.—Thou dearest woman!
Look on me!—Now ye gushing streams pour down!
Empty your fountains! for I would within
Keep nought but fire.

Mar. Why weep you? have you lost
A darling husband you? and you a wife?

Oh!

Oh! I could tell you such a tale of woe—
 But I can bear misfortunes manfully.
 Yet weep—weep—for my eyes refuse their office.
 I'll save your tears, and pour them o'er his tomb—
 For he was worthy—

Phor. Oh! no more, no more.
 Left I take root e'en here; or turn to stone
 By thy all-potent magic petrified.
 View me Marcella! Know'st thou not thy husband?
 I am thy Phorbas.

Mar. Oh! I know thee well.—
 Thou art the ghost of Phorbas—do not weep—
 I soon will come to thee.—Hift! I will tell thee
 What thou know'st not; grim death is overwearied,
 And Narbal hired, his place supplies—the gods
 Look down with fear, and tremble in their heaven.
 Would I could weep! my eyes are scorch'd and dry,
 And not a single little drop will flow
 At my desire.—But art thou he indeed!
 Art thou my Phorbas! As I am alive
 Thou shouldst be he; none of the sons of men
 But he, e'er wore that look humane, or beam'd
 Forth from his eyes the soul-bewitching ray
 Of mild compassion.—Oh! my head is giddy.
 I prate I know not what.—Is my boy dead?
 Poor little Junius dead, that thou thus weep'st?
 I'm all in error Phorbas—tell me, tell me,
 Is my boy dead?—My starting tears now flow,
 And

And I will shed them o'er his grave forever,
Like ill-starr'd Niobe.

Phor. Weep on—weep on.

Oh! blessed be the dawn of opening reason!
He lives Marcella; I am he indeed;
Thy ever-loving husband.

Mar. So thou art.—

But did Eumenes' sword pierce deep? The wound
Was desperate.—Who was thy kind surgeon? who?
Oh! let me know, and I will follow him
A thousand miles on my bare knees to thank him.
My mother!—Oh! but Junius then is slain—
The son, and not the father.—Bloody Narbal!
Could nought suffice thee but the infant's death?
A mother's curse upon thee!—Fly! fly! fly!
Narbal and death still dog us at the heels.
What! linger you?

Phor. All will be marr'd again.—

Support her Antonina; lead her in.
Thou shalt behold thy son Marcella; he
Is well, and wishes to embrace thee.

Mar. Nay,

Deceive me not I pray you. I am a woman,
And very credulous.—Weak—weak too—thank
you,

I have supported you e'ernow my mother,
And will whene'er you need. [*Exeunt.*]

A C T IV.

SCENE I. *Before the House of BELISARIUS.*

Caius. Alas! what miseries involve the house
 Of Belifarius! Like a towering oak
 Which many a year had braved the storms of
 heaven,
 Yet rooted deep, magnificent in age,
 He stood but yesterday; to day an earthquake
 Hath loosed his roots, he falls, and with him falls
 The ivy, and the vine with tender foliage
 Curling around him. *(Enter Phorbas.)*

Gracious powers! 'tis he!

It must, it is reality.—Oh! say—

Alive! at liberty!—By what rare accident?—

Phor. My time is precious.—Know that to Eumenes
 Was given the mandate for my execution
 In darkest privacy.—I stood prepared.
 When he with voice indignant fired the guards,
 Who urged me to escape. One only murmured,
 A wretch long used to Narbal's cruel deeds,
 A stern assassin. Him the sword dispatched.
 And by the postern door I fought these walls.

Caius. Which my unguarded zeal had reach'd before thee.

Phor. Blame not thyself. It was the zeal of friendship.

Caius.

Caius. Too rough, and blunt my speech. Ah! how
Eumenes,

Could I believe——

Phor. No more.—Attend! I mean
Tho to his Emprefs' arms he fly for shelter,
There to pursue, and sacrifice this Narbal.
Go thou with winged haste to old Nicanor,
Bid him with utmost speed direct the veterans
By different avenues to gain the forum ;
There will I meet and head the sacred band.

Caius. My speed is needless.—Lo! the warrior comes!

Enter NICANOR.

Nic. Why loiters Phorbas in these paths of danger ?
Before Eumenes' trusty messenger
Disclosed thy fate ; my mind, as if with his
Holding free intercourse, had all things ripe
For some great, glorious action.

Phor. How content
Time and occasion with thy generous purpose ?

Nic. Already discontent with murmuring sound
Hath pass'd thro all our streets, and now the voice
Of bolder indignation rises high.
The people gather all in groupes and clusters
Haranguing one another ; tho their clamours
Are intermix'd, and all among them speakers,
They aim at one sole end, to storm the palace,
And rescue thence the hero they adore.
My veterans all are ready, at a moment

We join their bands, and give to tumult, order.
 Thy freedom is the best, most prosperous omen,
 Infusing our success. Thy youthful presence
 Will make us who already are prepared,
 And dreadful to our foes, invincible.

Phor. O noble friend! and worthy highest praise!
 How I revere thy venerable age!
 Then Belisarius shall again behold
 The all-cheering sun, and vindicate his actions
 In its meridian splendour.

Nic. Shall he not?
 Yes; or these hairs of dry antiquity
 Shall be trod low beneath the reveler's foot;
 And courtly sycophants with filken smiles
 Shall mock these wither'd limbs.—O son of him,
 Whom I these thirty years have call'd my friend,
 Whose new-strung arm I saw like lightning blast
 The Huns' fierce van! Haste! lead us, lead us on!
 The step of age shall follow swift behind,
 And in this cause of justice, more than emulate
 Thy youthful ardour.

Phor. Where are posted now
 The reverend sons of war?

Nic. All in their arms;
 Received in friendly houses in the forum.
 They wait the trumpets' sound to call them forth,
 Their heads are hoary, but their valiant hearts
 Shall urge them on to raise a dreadful storm,
 Like winter, when compelling all the winds

He

He rolls in wreathes the fleecy snow before him,
And desolates the fields.

Phor. Thou brave old man!
Thy spirit rouses mine to rapturous daring!
Haste! call them forth! march down the open
space
By yonder temple; there I mean to join them.
I, in disguise, shall to the virtuous priest,
Who is my friend.

Nic. I go. The word is justice,
And the thrice-honour'd name of Belisarius.

[*Exit.*

Phor. Thou Caius to the palace; be it thine
To act as thy own reason dictates there,
Be mindful ever of Eumeres' orders.
We have our friends amid the guards. The time
Requires all speed.—Thy asking eye inquires
For those within, Marcella is recover'd.
I left her wrapp'd in sweetest sleep. Farewell.
She too may need thy aid.

Caius. May heaven protect thee!
And crown thy head with victory and glory!

[*Exit Caius.*

Phor. O vengeance! whether by the side of Jove
Thou sitt'st, intently gazing on his face,
Watching his frown, to snatch the fiery bolt
From the crook'd beak of his imperial bird!
Whether thou ridest along the sultry sky,
While pestilence and famine yoked, draw on

Thy

Thy livid car, and death with eager joy
 Haftes close behind! Whether amid the ranks
 Of homicidal Mars, thy two-edged sword
 Thou surfeitest with slaughter! to my aid
 Be near dread goddess! In a cause more just
 Ne'er did thy breath inspire the human soul.
 Beneath thy tutelary care I move.
 Fill all my breast! with more than mortal vigour
 Brace up each sinew! that from this day's actions
 Guilt and successful villainy may tremble
 Mid the bright blaze of their prosperity!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *An Apartment in the Palace.*

Nar. Rise they in arms! the shallow populace;
 Or is it but some vain and idle rumours?
 Or rash and ill-concerted scheme of weak
 And desperate villains, quell'd as soon as plann'd?
 Yet wherefore then these terrors! Such commo-
 tions
 Fann'd to a flame, have oft whole states consumed,
 And laid strong-built authority in ashes.

Enter DECIUS.

What of these tidings?

Dec. Ruin and despair.—
 Thro every street sedition pours amain

In

In torrent streams. The name of Belifarius
 Acts as a potent charm to stir men up
 To boldest acts of treason.

Nar. Head the guards!

And join to them thy forces from the suburbs.
 Go in thy strength, and e'er it gains a leader,
 Crush the abortive mutiny.

Dec. No storm

Of common violence impends; I saw
 Nicanor and his veterans thro the forum
 Slowly proceed; upon their faces sit
 Dire rage and intrepidity.

Nar. Away!

Collect thy troops.

Dec. They are already posted

Before the palace gate. The guards are doubled.

Nar. Confusion! doth Nicanor head the crew?

And guide their frenzy?—Yet e'er they advance,
 Fly! hither bring Marcella! Times like these
 Uncommon deeds demand: Lead to the prison
 Junius and Antonina—Pity bids us.

That they may see, and comfort in his sufferings
 Him whom we labour to restore to freedom.

Of this be mindful.—Hostages like these

Are guards and armies.—To Marcella's ear

We shall our actions vindicate. The blame

Is all Justinian's.—We advised to spare

The life of Phorbas.

Dec. I obey thy orders.

Nar.

Nar. Yet stay.—Marcella is endow'd with beauty,
Might steal an hermit from his solitude,
And make him mingle with the world again.

Dec. She is most lovely.

Nar. Beauty sways not me.

A toy to please light minds, mere glittering tinsel.
But by her husband's death—

Dec. I see thy purpose.

And was she not with hatred and resentment
Against thee bent—Besides her grief is young,
And now usurps dominion o'er her soul.
For much she loved.—

Nar. She loved ambition, fame,
Greatness and pageant state. So do they all:
The real objects which the sex admire;
These, when enforced by flattery are resistless.
Much did she love; but who pretends to guess
How far the soul of woman may be moved;
By nature form'd in her fantastic mood,
They veer for ever, and are often won
To what is deem'd impossible.—With speed
Conduct her hither. [Exit Decius.

Nar. Now to search her heart.
Can I not raise her to the height of power?
Can I not swear? unswear? restore her father
To wish'd for freedom? to his wealth and honours?
Boast with what zeal I strove to save her Phorbas?
Act as the guardian genius of her son?
Desperate their state and mine.—By this alliance
Both

Both are secured beyond the stroke of fate.

Thou with thy oily tongue, Hypocrisy,
 Assist my purpose! In my eyes light up
 Thy honest-seeming taper! O'er my face
 Spread be thy tints, well-taught to emulate
 The hue of virtue! On thy downy wings
 Let me insinuate my winding course!
 Glide through each obstacle! and rest at length
 On the fair swelling bosom of success!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III. *The House of Belisarius.*

MARCELLA, ANTONINA.

Mar. My Phorbas safe; of his dear life assured;
 I rise superior to each human ill.
 And all my soul with fortitude inspired,
 Contemns malicious fate; and prompts to deeds
 Transcending my weak sex. Despair is pass'd.
 I feel new hopes, and every thought looks forward
 To brighter days, to more auspicious times.

Ant. Did I not tell thee thousands would arise,
 Armies conspire, to aid in his distress
 Thy godlike father? and avenge injustice?

Enter DECIVS.

Mar. Why enters Decius with unbidden step
 These hallow'd walls?

Q 9

Dec.

- Dec.* No enemy I come,
 Or secret spy. If heretofore I err'd,
 If my rash tongue offended, let repentance
 Atone the fault ; and by my future deeds
 Judge my sincere respect.
- Mar.* Hath fear then seiz'd thee ?
 Art thou alarm'd ? Doth Narbal's base heart
 tremble ?
 Is it to deprecate revenge thou comest ?
 No ; let it take its course. The people's voice,
 Like that of some divinity, calls loud
 For punishment upon his head and thine.
- Dec.* With temper hear me. Not impell'd by terror,
 But to uplift the fallen, console affliction,
 Am I by Narbal sent. Fenced round by arms,
 And strongly guarded by imperial power,
 What can the giddy multitude against us ?
 For thee Marcella, Narbal is alarm'd ;
 For thee he feels, and for thy widow'd state.
 Guiltless of Phorbas' death, he only begs
 To undeceive thee, and with friendly heart
 Take thee to his protection,
- Mar.* Undeceive me !
 No ; never will I meet his hateful presence.
- Dec.* Then must I gently force thee to the palace.
 Thee Antonina, he in kindness suffers
 To visit Belisarius in his prison.
 Go, with the tender Junius.—Let thy tongue
 With soothing accents cheer the hero's soul ;
 And

And elevate with hopes of speedy freedom,
 So he exert his influence to disperse
 The irritated multitude, and order
 Nicanor and his veterans to retreat.

Ant. Shall I destroy our only means of safety?

Mar. Oh! never may thy tongue belie thy heart!
 Or a breath issue from thy lips to check
 The furling billows which shall overwhelm
 Deceit and cruelty!—Lead to the palace,
 Thou servile minister of him who sent thee.
 I to this odious interview. While thee

(to Antonina.)

A sad, but not ungrateful task awaits.
 Tell Belisarius that his daughter strives
 To follow with unequal pace his footsteps.
 Reason again may shrink beneath affliction;
 But while my mind it's sacred dictates hears,
 Misfortune's iron hand, how'er oppressive,
 Shall nought avail to turn it from it's course
 Toward honour's dome, and the pure shrine of
 virtue. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *The Palace.*

Eum. The present is an awful dubious hour,
 Of dread suspense, and pregnant with the fate
 Of deeds mysterious. May no envious chance
 Render their birth abortive!—Still I move
 With unsuspected feet.—O Belisarius

Q q 2

I dared

I dared not e'en to thee intrust the secret
 Of Phorbas' safety ; dare not trust thy own.
 Heroic mind ! whose virtue will not swerve
 From its exalted course ! In prosperous hour,
 Or in adverse, most singularly great,
 He follows his sublimer plan of conduct ;
 And walks, in these degenerate days, alone ;
 A bright example to the inferior kind
 What man should be ; a creature nobly-form'd,
 Of spotless elements, and half divine.
 But scrupulous exactness doth not suit
 This vile, base æra ; this adulterous age
 Admits not purity unmixt, unstain'd.
 In seasons rank like these, what else were vice,
 Is become virtue Mutiny, rebellion
 Cast off their odious vestments, and are dress'd
 In robes of comeliness, and real grace.

Enter CAIUS.

What means this pallied hue ? this face of horror ?

Caius. Oh ! I have seen, what, like Medusa's locks
 Might rivet me immovable to earth.

When will the hand of persecution cease ?

The measure of calamity be full ?

Eum. What hast thou seen ?

Caius. Alas ! with rancour swollen,
 This low-soul'd caitiff, his destructive snares
 Spreads not for men alone, the weaker sex,
 The hapless infant, his fell rage pursues.

The

The aged dignity of Antonina
 I saw by Decius to the prison borne,
 With the young hope of Phorbas ; while Marcella
 With looks of woe, thro' which shot orient beauty,
 And conscious greatness, and insulted worth,
 By Narbal met, was led to his apartment.

Eum. What wills the monster? with what new designs
 Teems his prolific brain? He thinks perchance
 By these loved objects to avert the blow,
 And shun the people's fury.

Caius. Rather say
 As the fierce panther tears the harmless flock,
 These are the fated victims of his malice,
 And savage cruelty.

Eum. Where slept our caution?
 Why did we plant not an encircling band
 Around their sacred walls? Why did not Phorbas
 Remove them from the threatening arm of danger?
 Not leave them thus defenceless to their foe?

Caius. Occasion hath not smiled upon our purpose.
 Neither could Phorbas ward the sudden blow,
 Scarce safe himself, and in disguise compell'd
 To join Nicanor.

Eum. Let us watch with care
 The step of opportunity.—He comes
 To crush oppression, and revenge his wrongs.—
 Still found the guards; and with our chosen number
 Seize we the lucky instant to forsake
 The dastard slaves who sanctify injustice.

Should

Should Phorbas fail, should Belisarius perish,
 Better with them to die, than mid a crew
 Of tainted lepers catch the dire disease,
 And linger on a hateful life with them. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *An Apartment in the Palace.*

NARBAL, MARCELLA.

Nar. Let not the frown of scorn usurp that brow,
 The seat of mild complacence; in these eyes
 Let not pernicious anger light his fires,
 On me they ought with gentler beams to shine.

Mar. On thee! O patience heaven!

Nar. On me Marcella,
 Who eager strove with ineffectual zeal
 To save thy Phorbas. My advice was mercy.

Mar. Dost thou blaspheme with thy unhallow'd tongue,
 Profane and impious, the sweet name of mercy!
 Coeval daughter of the eternal mind!
 With whom, and Themis sitting far apart
 Almighty Jove holds converse?

Nar. Cease this strain,
 This idle rhapsody of words, nor soar
 Upon enthusiast wing too high a pitch.
 Why should Marcella mingle with the stars,
 When, on this earth, unless perverseness blast
 Their vernal prime, the flowers of soft delight
 May at her bidding spring, and gayly bloom?

Mar.

Mar. To what base purpose, is the gall within,
 Converted on that traitor tongue to balm?

Nar. Hard task is mine; to combat with aversion,
 And from thy breast that prejudice remove
 Which blinds thy better fight.—By what persuasion

O loveliest of thy sex, shall I convince thee
 With what warm ardour, even of affection
 I struggled to preserve ill-fated Phorbas?
 To Theodora, to Justinian's rashness
 Impute his death.—Within my tortured soul
 Pity, respect, and admiration join'd,
 Felt for his sufferings; it now bleeds for thine.

Mar. May I believe thee? Wert thou thus humane?

Nar. Witness O holy truth! O sacred pity
 Speak in these tears which recollection pours
 At his loved name.

Mar. Then have I wrong'd thee much,
 Thou wert his friend!

Nar. I was.

Mar. And now art mine?

Nar. Cannot Marcella find a softer name?
 If tenderest love—

Mar. Hah!—

Nar. Tenderest, truest love—

Mar. Traitor, no more.—Already have my ears
 Too long with criminal attention heard
 The odious sounds of that detested tongue.

Nar.

Nar. Tho beyond life itself thy charms I prize ;
 Yet not to guess Marcella's lofty soul
 Towering above the rank of womankind
 Would shrink, suspecting art, beneath the words
 Which strike the meaner of her sex, was weakness.
 Hear then the language of unvarnish'd sense,
 Of plain unerring reason.

Mar. What preceded,
 Was opposite to these?

Nar. The true construction
 Is, that my love, impatient of controul,
 O'erpass'd my argument.—Marcella stands
 By the warm passion unaffailable,
 Hard of access, nor easy to be won ;
 Or, tho dissimulation I abhor,
 Still thinks me false.—Now reason speaks to reason.

Mar. The ways of heaven are just, tho deep conceal'd
 From mortal sight. Else, O ye living powers !
 Might I complain, and ask for what offence,
 What unknown crime, I thus am doom'd to listen
 To words which shock each feeling of my soul.

Nar. Yet hear me ; nay, and hear me with attention.
 Thou tread'st the dark and gloomy path of danger,
 Which leads to shame, to misery, and death.
 Pride, anger, and punctilious nicety
 Impell thy steps.—While riches, honour, power
 Call thee to share with them their envied state,
 And rule his willing heart, who rules an empire.

Mar. How long ! how long must I submit!—

Nar

Nar.

The fate

Of all thy soul holds dear on thee depends.
 Dost thou not wish the freedom of thy father?
 To see him shining with redoubled lustre
 In the calm eve of life? To view thy son
 Received and fostered in the arms of greatness?
 Till he arrive at that exalted station
 Which bounds the daring journey of ambition?
 Thy mind is moved—thou wilt relent Marcella—
 These humid eyes foretell the melting heart.

Mar.

From many a various source may tears descend.
 But say mine spring from poignant grief alone,
 Is there not cause?

Nar.

There is—for thou hast lost

One, in whom every rare accomplishment,
 As in assemblage, met. Faith, virtue, wisdom,
 Courage and generosity conspired
 His character to form.—Accursed be those
 Who told him Narbal ever was his foe!
 I would have died, I would have died to save him.
 But nought my words, my suppliant knee avail'd,
 Fate steel'd Justinian, and I lost a friend—
 A friend hereafter—when convinced he knew
 How to one point our kindred bosoms beat,
 And time, the wounds of prejudice had heal'd.
 But thy affection, and my grief conjoin'd,
 In vain would penetrate the realms of death,
 And bid the disembodied shade assume
 It's warm and active functions.—O Marcella,

R r

Say

There Phorbas urged the raging tide of war.
 While in the hurry of the fight, Eumenes
 And Caius lined the party of the foe
 With a collected squadron of the guards.
 As he rush'd by, Eumenes cried aloud,
 " Let Narbal know, wheree'er he hides his head
 " In vain he'll shun the light'ning sword of Phorbas.
 " Tell him, my guardian care procured the wings,
 " With which the youthful hero flew."—The gate
 Is mann'd, but with a feeble croud, who seems
 Ready to join the enemy. Thy presence
 Is needed to invigorate their hearts,
 And beat the assailants back.

Nar. From Antonina
 That Belisarius may appease this tumult,
 What tidings bring'st thou?

Dec. She the prison enter'd,
 Resolved to cherish, rather than oppose
 His indignation. Should he stoop, she cried,
 Falsely accused, and with vile fetters loaded,
 By any deed, to guard from just revenge,
 Malicious enmity; her tongue should prompt him
 To nobler purposes, a woman's hand
 Dash the raised shield aside,

Nar. What frenzy this!
 Heroic greatness!—Blind infatuation.
 Not to perceive that our controul e'en now
 Holds in destruction rein'd.—Go, thou, Marcella,
 For know we deem far other of thy prudence,

Excite thy father's speedy interference
 To quell this mutiny. Disperse the croud,
 And ye are free as air.—Join thy endeavours;
 Be thou the herald, to the encompass'd gate
 Bear forth his message.

Mar. Shall we meanly bargain
 For freedom? for precarious life? the sword,
 Which now hangs o'er thee by a single thread,
 Shall we suspend more firmly? or remove?
 Shall Phorbas listen to amusive tales?
 Rely on hypocritic promises?
 Entangled in thy fatal net again?
 No; let the hero execute his will.
 Aid him ye gods! to purge the tainted state,
 Clear the veil'd sight of injured majesty,
 Prove his true friend, and crush his bosom viper!

Nar. Hence then all pity! every soft emotion!
 Revenge is our's—her work begins this instant.
 We will not sit in calm inaction down.
 If fall we must, not unaccompanied
 Shall be our ruin.—Perish Belisarius!
 Perish his name! his race!—Ungrateful woman!
 Am I rewarded thus!—Haste Decius, hence!
 His eyes—his eyes—Thou know'st what I would
 say. (Exit Decius.)

Mar. Beyond example barbarous! King of cruelty!
 Hah!—but thou canst not—darest not.

Nar. Never more
 Sees he the light—ne'er more beholds thy face.

Unless



Unless perchance ye meet again in heaven.

Mar. Where thou wilt never come, Thee the pure gods
Reserve for vengeance ; thee the fiends below
Expect ; the realms of Tartarus and Dis.
Where thy own guilt with punishment more fierce
Than all the infernal furies can inflict,
Shall torture thee forever.

ar. Be it so.

But know prophetic, and ill-omen'd Sibyl,
Careless of what hereafter may betide,
The present hour is mine—nor think his eyes
Ransom his life ; my bitterest foe shall die
No common death. Stern fate inwraps you all,
And e'er this great avenger can arrive,
He o'er your blood shall pass to strike at me.
Bear her to prison.

Mar. Yes, I come my father !

But how the dreadful spectacle behold !
Blind ! Blind !—In thee alas ! is virtue wounded,
The glory of mortality laid low,
Pernicious monster ! Oh ! my darling Junius !
Lend me a portion of thy fortitude,
Intrepid Phorbas ! (*Shouts, &c.*) Tremble thou
barbarian !

Near, and more near thy dismal knell is rung.
He levels at thy head the flaming bolt,
We fall but to accelerate thy doom.

(*Exit guarded.*)

Nar.

Nar. Him too the arrow or the sword may pierce;
He too is mortal. (*Afide.*) Ye, whose hearts are
true,

Whom loyalty inspires, the love of justice,
And hate of treason, follow me your leader!
This for Justinian—(*draws his sword.*) Haste we
to the gate!

Within these walls, secure we may annoy,
Or single out with missile arms the foe.
Your pay is doubled. He who Phorbas kills
A thousand pieces of the purest gold
Is his reward.—Now onward to your posts!
And let your warlike shouts resound Justinian.

(*Exeunt.*)

A C T V.

SCENE I. *An Apartment in the Palace.*

JUSTINIAN, THEODORA.

Theo. We are not yet so lost; our guards are firm,
Fly, didst thou say! O word of abject shame!
Do I forget my station? Do I yield
To womanly despair? Is my cheek pale?
Feel I the cold and shivering fit upon me?
Let multiplying perils thicken round,

The

Tho Phorbas lives, and thus avows his treason,
 Tho Caius and Eumenes march beside him,
 Yet—(*Enter a Messenger*) (*shouts*) what portend
 those shouts?

Mess. They are advanced
 Near to the gate, which they prepare to storm,
 On either side the mingled shouts arise.
 Soon will begin the desperate shock; I fear
 Left Phorbas—

Theo. Hah! is every breast appall'd?
 Nothing but terror, and the dreaded name
 Of Phorbas!—What tho he commands without?
 Have we not Narbal? Claudius? have we not
 Within, the valiant Decius? Add to these
 The imperial name, an army in itself?
 And right, and justice? Add our walls, these
 towers,
 To force impregnable? Go, bear from hence
 Courageous looks, warm hopes, by confidence
 And fortitude of mind inspired; from me
 Take thou the gift, impart it to thy fellows.
 A short resistance will disperse this wild
 Unthinking croud, or they will soon rebel
 Against their leader. Let me not behold
 Thy face again, unless with tidings fraught
 Of our success, and their disgraceful flight.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Just. Oh! how will rash-form'd judgment hurry on,
 And lose itself in error! prompt to raise

The

The worst of evils, blind when they approach!
 Such is thy state. While I pursuing still
 The advice of others, diffident myself,
 Am lost beneath thy guidance; in the morn
 Lord of the best part of this ample globe,
 And what to night!

Theo. Haste! send submissive terms!
 Crouch to these slaves, who long to spill my blood,
 Then yield me up, and be content to reign
 A mock and pageant emperor.—I will mount
 This instant on the loftiest tower, from thence
 Should I behold the daring hand of treason
 Urged by success, roll the fierce tumult on,
 And penetrate these inner walls; think not
 I will survive; the honours of my life
 Shall ne'er be wrested from me but by death.

(*Exit.*)

Just. Tempestuous woman! Ever violent!
 Is there an act throughout my lengthened reign
 Which I have wished undone, from thee it sprang.
 Too late I rue my easiness of soul,
 How oft hath fear assail'd my nighty pillow,
 How oft hath danger cross'd my path by day
 Of thy procuring!—Might this storm pass by,
 Thy power is o'er.—This solemn vow to heaven!
 If not! 'twere vain to strive.—I too can die
 Resign'd to the awful mandate.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

SCENE II. *Before the Prison.*

(Confused noise of a skirmish at some distance.)

NARBAL, DECIUS.

Nar. They rush like gaunt and hungry wolves upon us,
While our's resist like deer.—All hope is fled.
Behind, dismay, and the keen sword of Phorbas,
Before us, horrid darkness, fierce remorse,
And death.—O pangs insufferable ! fallen,
Sunk from the lofty sphere in which I fail'd,
And eagle-like gazed on the midday sun !
Brought level with the dust.

Dec. Hence with complaints,
Absurd and weak !—Or shall we hide ourselves ?
Creep into some vile nook ? and perish there ?
No ; let us measure back our steps with speed,
Meet the victorious foe, rejoin the fight,
And dearly sell our lives.

Nar. Hold—thro the clouds
A ray breaks forth.—Go thou and lend thine aid
To Claudius, who maintains the unequal contest,
The shatter'd remnant of our troops to bring
To the inner court.—Meanwhile this prison guards
Our only chance of safety. Belisarius

S s

Still

Still lives, tho blind ; his family are our's.
 Them, thro the subterraneous avenue,
 To the same place will I convey. There urge
 Thy swift retreat, and leave the rest to me.

Dec. I go with speed. [*Exit Decius.*]

Nar. Too eagerly my foul
 The dictates of resentment hath pursued.
 I should have spared his eyes—that deed may close
 The mind of Phorbas, bar up each access,
 And render him inexorable.—No—
 To save their lives he cannot but relent.
 And to preserve my own, tho shorn of honours,
 Is worth each strenuous every desperate effort ;
 Yet they too may be mine.—But should I plan
 A fruitless enterprize, and baffled fall,
 Not mean and unadorn'd shall be my death,
 The blood of glorious victims floating round.

(Enters the Prison with some of the Guards.)

SCENE III. *Before the Prison.*

(Shouts &c.)

PHORBAS, EUMENES, NICANOR, &c.

Phor. My brave associates hail! undoubted wreaths
 Are our's.—The riven gates, the flying guards
 Proclaim us conquerors.—Now haste my friends!
 Within yon dreary walls your general lies,
Groaning

Groaning beneath the weight of shameful chains ;
Quick burst the door.

Eum. (*advancing*) 'Tis open,

Phor. Let us enter! (*scene draws*)

Eum. Darknefs! and folitude!

Phor. We feek in vain.

Diffraction!—at the time of thy efcape,
Was he not here? and Antonina? my fon?

Eum. They were.—Alas! I fhudder at the thought.
When I had fcaled the battlements, the gate
Juft gain'd by thee; this way a party fled,
And, as I guefs'd, by Narbal hurried on.
This is his work—perhaps—

Phor. Perhaps e'en now

They breathe their laft.—Thus frustrated! Ye gods!
Oh! interrupt not thus our glorious courfe,
By you protected! and by you infpired!

Eum. I fee it all; from yonder dark recefs
An arched vault defcending, winds along
To the inner court; doubtlefs by that they pafs'd,
And bore the fuffering hero.

Phor. Thro the gloom

I'll penetrate, fhould it conduct my fteps
Down to the very centre.

Nic. I will follow.

Eum. 'Twere but a vain attempt. A flender guard
Not to be forced, may brave an army there.
And folid doors of brafs too firmly clofed,
Obftru& the way.

S s 2

Enter

Enter CAIUS.

Caius. Oh! horror! horror!

Phor. Say,

What means my friend?

Caius. Alas! thy father views

Yon glorious orb no more.

Phor. Ye gods! not slain!

Caius. Not slain, but rendered blind; a prisoner

Who saw the melancholy spectacle,

Affirms the fact.

Phor. Most unexampled crime!

And do we lingering stand? not fly to punish

This odious monster?—Let the furies loose!

New-waken rage! again my friends assume

The front of terror! storm the inner gate!

Bring piles of wood! Light the destructive fire!

Havock and defolation be our plan!

And if we cannot save this first of men,

With all I love, all that my soul holds dear,

Let universal ruin stamp the day :

With threefold horror!

Nic. Generous youth proceed!

One spirit guides us; if we fail to rescue,

We amply will revenge thy fathers wrongs.

Death or success be our's.

Phor. Death to his foes!

We, while indignant justice calls us on,

Rush to the goal of certain victory;

SCENE

SCENE IV. *An Apartment in the Palace.*

BELISARIUS, ANTONINA, MARCELLA, JUNIUS.

Mar. He comes, by honour, virtue, glory led,
Triumphant in his might!—Yet once before
He rescued me alas! from death my father;
From madness rescued me.—O Belisarius!
Thou dost not know what I have likewise suffer'd;
Wild-roving frenzy, and heart-piercing insult,
He will—he must—he cannot but prevail!

Bel. Idle your words; your hopes ill-form'd and vain.
Are we not still within the power of Narbal?
Hath he relented? no—but do not think
My voice shall sanctify these deeds of Phorbas.
Should he advance e'en hither with success,
He, and his lawless crew, pretend the spear,
And raise a barrier of incircling shields,
Think not I'll stain my soul; justice deceived,
Is justice still, and I will not resist it.

Mar. Are not our wrongs?—

Bel. Hah! to revenge our wrongs!
Is that the pretext of pernicious treason?
And who, when mad rebellion is on foot,
And ruffian licence bears down all before it,
Shall check them in their violent career?
Curb their dire rage? and bid them go no farther?

Mar.

Mar. O Belisarius! Thou art cruel now.
Surely thou lovest me not.

Bel. Do I not love thee?
Thou art the best of daughters. No reproach,
No blame Marcella, do I cast on thee.
I am not yet so lost to what is manly,
But that I can forgive a woman's weakness,
And think it amiable.

Ant. Self-interest now,
Should sway methinks e'en Narbal to preserve us.

Bel. So should it ever. But our blood he thirsts for,
As thou hast seen.

Ant. Most true.—Oh fight of woe!

Bel. These arms——

Mar. Perfidious, base, unmanly deed!

Bel. I stretch these arms in vain.—No longer thus—
No longer at a distance——

Ant. O most injured!
O greatly, greatly wretched!

Bel. To my heart! (*Embracing them.*)
There would I strain you, till the vital source
Were quite exhausted.—Oh! let this embrace
Emphatically speak my warmth of love;
All I now feel, all I have felt for you.
Most kind! most faithful! tenderest! loveliest!
best!

Ruin'd for me! ye ever-living powers!

(*Sinks on his knees supported by them.*)

Give

Give them, give me the fortitude we need !
 Let us not murmur at your high disposal
 Of mortal accidents !—O Jove supreme !
 Great source of all ! how'er inscrutable
 Thy universal laws, they must be right.
 And in some point of the eternal round
 Of circling years, the virtuous must be blest.
 Whatever be the cause of evil here,
 Benevolence must ultimately reign,
 And all creation hail the bounteous god.

(Shouts and tumult.)

Enter NARBAL, DECIUS, GUARDS.

Nar. Since our most generous offers are despised,
 And Phorbias deigns no answer to bestow
 But hostile threats, and fire and sword ; away !
 Bear all but Belisarius to the walls !
 There placed conspicuous, should he still persist,
 And urge on fury to it's worst extremes,
 Let the steel smite !—Him, as our last resource
 Myself will guard.

Ant. Ye shall not, shall not part us !

Mar. Murderers and slaves ! Begone !

Jun. Oh ! save me ! save me !

Mar. *(drawing a dagger, and breaking from those who hold her.)*

This to thy heart !—and let a woman's hand—

Nar.

Nar. *(wresting the dagger from her.)*
Desperate and frantic! Hah! thy stroke hath
fail'd—

Secure her—Bear them hence.—

Mar. Heaven will not fail,
Howe'er this trembling arm—Oh torture!—

Ant. Keen,
And exquisite distress! *(They are forced off)*
[*Exeunt with Decius and Guards.*

Bel. O bitterness
Of anguish, inexpressibly severe!—
Hold!—Hold!—sink not beneath the dreadful
conflict.—

Return! return! thy wonted seat assume
Firm, patient resolution!—When the soul
Of villainy, can struggling bear the load
Which guilt accumulates; affliction's force
Integrity unshaken should sustain.

Nar. Still soaring! thy stiff pride unbroken still!

Bel. Nature which form'd the reptile, form'd the bird
Of strongest wing.

Nar. Thro that affected scorn
Yet shall I pierce and sting thee to the heart.
Blind! and insensate! couldst thou not have guess'd
The chains for Narbal forged, might fit thee well?
When to Justinian thy officious tongue

Con-

Condemn'd my actions, couldst thou not have
guess'd

That Narbal might revenge too?

Bel. Heaven ordains

An antidote for every human ill.

I thank it's power, and am again myself.

Nar. To try that heart—(*Enter a Messenger*) what are
thy tidings? say?

Mess. Scarce from the wall had Decius bending down
Thy terms delivered, when an arrow flew
And pierced his brain.—The guards within ex-
claim'd

Tumultuous at thy orders, and required

To bear the family of Belisarius

From great Justinian's self to learn their doom;

A party for that purpose is detached.

Who likewise, at his own request, support

The steps of Claudius thither, wounded fore

In the late hard retreat, with loss of blood

Fainting, and as it seems, not far from death.

The rest defend the gate.

(noise of falling ruins, &c.)

Oh horror!

(going to the side of the stage.)

Lo!

The flame ascends! the massy beams give way!

Wide is the ruin scattered all around!

They drop their arms—they fly—who rushes in

T t

Thro

Thro the thick smoke impetuous?—It is he—
Phorbas himself—they follow—on he moves
Direct with rapid fury—he is here!

Nar. Draw all your swords! suspend them o'er his head—
And when you see me strike, make sure your work,
And emulate the blow.

*(He stands by the side of Belisarius with his sword
drawn; the guards behind with their's ready.)*

Enter PHORBAS, EUMENES, NICANOR, &c.

Phor. Here is our destined mark, and this the place
To hunt a bloody tyger to the death.—
Hah! what do I behold! my feet are nail'd
To the mute earth, and terror shakes my frame.

Nar. If thou, or one of that rebellious croud
Advance a step, he dies.

Phor. Quick, bid them halt.

Nic. Halt!

Nar. We transmitted lately generous terms.
They still are thine.—We give the lives of all.—
Your honours, wealth, and liberty restore—
If thou the palace quit, disband thy troops,
Confusion soothe, and quell licentious outrage.

Phor. Can't thou again his visual lamp relume?
Accursed barbarian!—But should we retire
Where is the surety?

Nar. On my word rely.

Phor. Thy word!—

Nar.

Nar. Nay then, at once! (*raises his sword.*)

Phor. Oh! hold I charge thee!
Saidst thou thy word?—

Nar. If thou demur a moment,
The stroke is given.

Bel. Ye gods! I can no longer
Command my silence.—Thou degenerate boy!
Who taught thy rash right hand to violate
This hallowed place? thus carelessly to sport
With royal blood? and haply o'er the world
Spread desolation, rapine, savage strife,
And jarring anarchy?

Phor. Oh! spare thy son!
Think what I feel! oh! spare these taunts my
father!

Bel. Why wouldst thou e'er deserve them?—shall an
injury,
However great, done to a private man,
Cause him to rise in arms? to wield on high
The death-denouncing sword? and threaten ruin
To the universal state?—Justinian! heaven
Preserve his sacred life!—ye pass not here,
But o'er this mangled frame.—Couldst thou pretend
To guide each furious arm? and when upraised,
Direct it where to strike?—young Cæsar dead,
And no successor named, couldst thou controul
Ambition's sons? eager to claim the throne?
And tear their country's vitals? to destroy

The goodly structure of these hands ? the realm
Which our joint labours had compos'd to peace ?

Nic. Why should our active swords be charm'd asleep
With incantations ? Can we save his life
By our retreat ? No ; let us therefore rush
Upon the murderers who engird him round !

Bel. Oh ! that my words could, like a pointed dart
Transfix that traitor !—Hah ! and was it he ?
The brave Nicanor ? now, in civil broils
Wasting the glory earn'd in many a field
Where honour waved her ensigns ?—But declare,
Speak all, your purpose !—Or have you been seized
With epidemic madness ?—Say my friends,
What is my life, or death !—What just complaint
Stirs you against your prince ?—I heed perchance
As little as yourselves the imperial title,
Or farce of royalty.—If e'er Justinian
Had play'd the tyrant wantonly, if orphans
Were plenty in our streets, and wailing widows,
If the whole realm harrast beneath his sway
Groan'd for redress, then 'twere a glorious cause
To bend against him the strong bow of vengeance,
Nor these old arms had fail'd to strain their nerves,
Till the points met together.

Nar. Ye have heard

The voice oracular of truth and virtue,
Obey it's dictates ; lay your weapons down ;

And

And trust my intercession to obtain
A general pardon.

Phor. Much would I perform
To save that valued life.

Bel. Why every thought
Bent on an individual's happiness?
Consult the public welfare.—But not here
Lay down your arms; despise with me this wretch,
And his commands; laugh his vain threats to
scorn;

His promises, his very oaths suspect,
For falsehood hath possess'd his total frame,
And mingled with his essence.—Few my days
Of ebbing life, should nature take it's course:
By what his cruel hand hath ravish'd from me,
Still lower in their price, of no esteem,
Useless to others, useless to myself.—
Leave therefore him to me, and me to him.
The sword will fall on unsubstantial air,
The shadow of a man.—No; seek Justinian!
To him with low submission bend; intreat
Of him forgiveness; from his sovereign will
Expect your future fate.

Nar. Nay then revenge,
And hopeless rage no longer shall postpone
Their destined task—*(going to strike.)*

Phor. Use the swift lightning's speed!
And on his head at least—

Enter

Enter JUSTINIAN and GUARDS.

(*Narbal starts and drops his sword.*)

Just. Seize that detested traitor! bear him hence
To punishment! him and the treacherous slave,
His fit companion! [*Exeunt Guards with Narbal.*

Hah! do I behold

That venerable face despoiled and blind!
Vindictive malice! groveling cruelty!
And canst thou pardon! oh! I fondly thought
At least in some degree to recompence
Thy unexampled wrongs—but what can pay
This loss sustained!—Marcella! Antonina!

Enter ANTONINA, MARCELLA, JUNIUS.

Ant. And art thou given to our desires again?

Mar. Do I then clasp my husband in my arms?

Thy boy my Phorbas.

Phor. Blessings on his head!

Ant. My son!

Mar. My father?

Bel. O my age's light! (*embracing Junius*)

Young, lovely sun-beam! I could bear adversity,
This overwhelms me.—But my sovereign! hah!
I hear his grief, the emotions of his soul.

Just. And needed I this fight to afflict my bosom
Fresh bleeding with another recent wound!

Thou

Thou know'st not Theodora's fate ; alas !
 When Phorbas had each obstacle o'ercome,
 And hope appeared extinct, from the high tower
 Where she was placed, in sudden frenzy, down
 She threw herself.—Ill-destined, hapless woman !
 Thou wert too nigh our heart.—Yet heaven is just.
 Misguided by her zeal she thought thee false,
 And lived not to be undeceived with me..
 For the perfidious Claudius is no more,
 Who in my presence all the plot disclosed,
 And died, with keen remorse, imploring mercy. 4

Bel. Am I then free from each imputed crime?
 In thy opinion free ? I have lost nothing.
 Mine is all gain. To this an empire's wealth
 Is cheap, is sordid. Dost thou know me guiltless ?

Just. I do, with joy I do.—No power on earth
 Shall e'er with darkness cloud my mind again.
 I heard thee as I entered, prime of men !
 Heard thee with admiration.—Son ! and friends
 Of this illustrious hero ! I approve
 All you have done ; yes, my warm heart approves

Phorbas, thy second self shall reap our bounties
 Unmeasured as his worth.—While they who shook
 The sceptre in my hand, shall from henceforth
 Encompass me, my firm protecting bulwarks.—
 Friend ! guardian ! reinstator of my throne !
 Above all empire ! Let me cast aside

Vain

Vain pomp, and mix myself with native greatness,
And strain thee to my heart. (*embraces Belisarius.*)

Now all indulge

Your feelings unrestrained! Your mutual joy
Indulge! while I, a sharer in your blifs,
Taste truest happiness; with new-born smiles
Bedeck the face of innocence; reward
Fidelity and courage; and repair,
Far as my power extends, those injuries
Which from my rash credulity have sprung.

Bel. Worthiest of princes!—O my son! be't thine
With zealous spirit to serve faithfully
This generous master. Ever to his ear
Prompt to receive, convey the tale of truth.
Ne'er may such goodness be abused by falsehood!
Nor smooth-tongued sycophants approach his
presence!

Thorny and rough is the nice path of empire;
And who can walk therein with foot unwounded?
Truly to search the hypocrite, and view
The villain's naked soul, is heaven's alone.
Man can but do his best, act from appearance,
And rectify the error which is known.

E P I L O G U E.

THERE are, who when the Tragic scene is past,
Require a serious Epilogue at last.

- “ Why raise the sigh, and cause the tear to flow?
“ Then, strive to banish every trace of woe?
“ Why elevate with moral truth the breast?
“ Then, lower it so soon, to whim and jest?
“ Thus sense is injured, feeling is disgraced,
“ The Tragi-comic mixture wars with taste.
“ If fashion these incongruous strains supplies,
“ The voice of fashion, genius should despise.
“ Preserve it's former dignity of stile,
“ Not close the tale of anguish, with a smile.”

These arguments are plausible indeed;

But say, will Reason sanctify the creed?

First prove the stage, the scene, the actors, real,
The story true, the sufferings not ideal.
If now, to cherish fancied grief be right,
Why two hours hence discard it? Why to night?
Why not indulge the luxury of sorrow
To morrow? And to morrow? And to morrow?
The passions warm'd, and the soft tribute paid—
Nature and taste have duly been obey'd.
The illusion hath prevail'd, the time is o'er,
And truth should reign, where fancy reign'd before.

Enough of grief in real life we find;

Enough to prove our sympathy of mind.

But with the tale of art, dismiss the sigh,

And with the fiction, cast the sorrow by.

When gathering clouds the face of heaven deform,

And the winds rave—how awful is the storm!

But who repines, if Phœbus darts his ray?

Who thinks the mists too quickly roll'd away?

Yet would we not obtrude on melancholy

Buffoonery's mask, or the broad grin of folly;

For fun and jokes in the low kennel seek,

Or raise a transient blush on virtue's cheek.

▲ decent

A decent cheerfulness, some strokes of wit
 We hold that judgment should not deem unfit.
 Not laughter's clamorous uproar we commend,
 But would with fashion, reason likewise blend.

Thus pro and con the arguments we've given;
 You must decide; we keep the balance even.
 Here liveliness—here sorrow—this a sigh,
 And that a smile of your's can lift on high.
 It trembles—it descends—'tis your decree;
 So farewell grief—and welcome gayety.

F I N I S.





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