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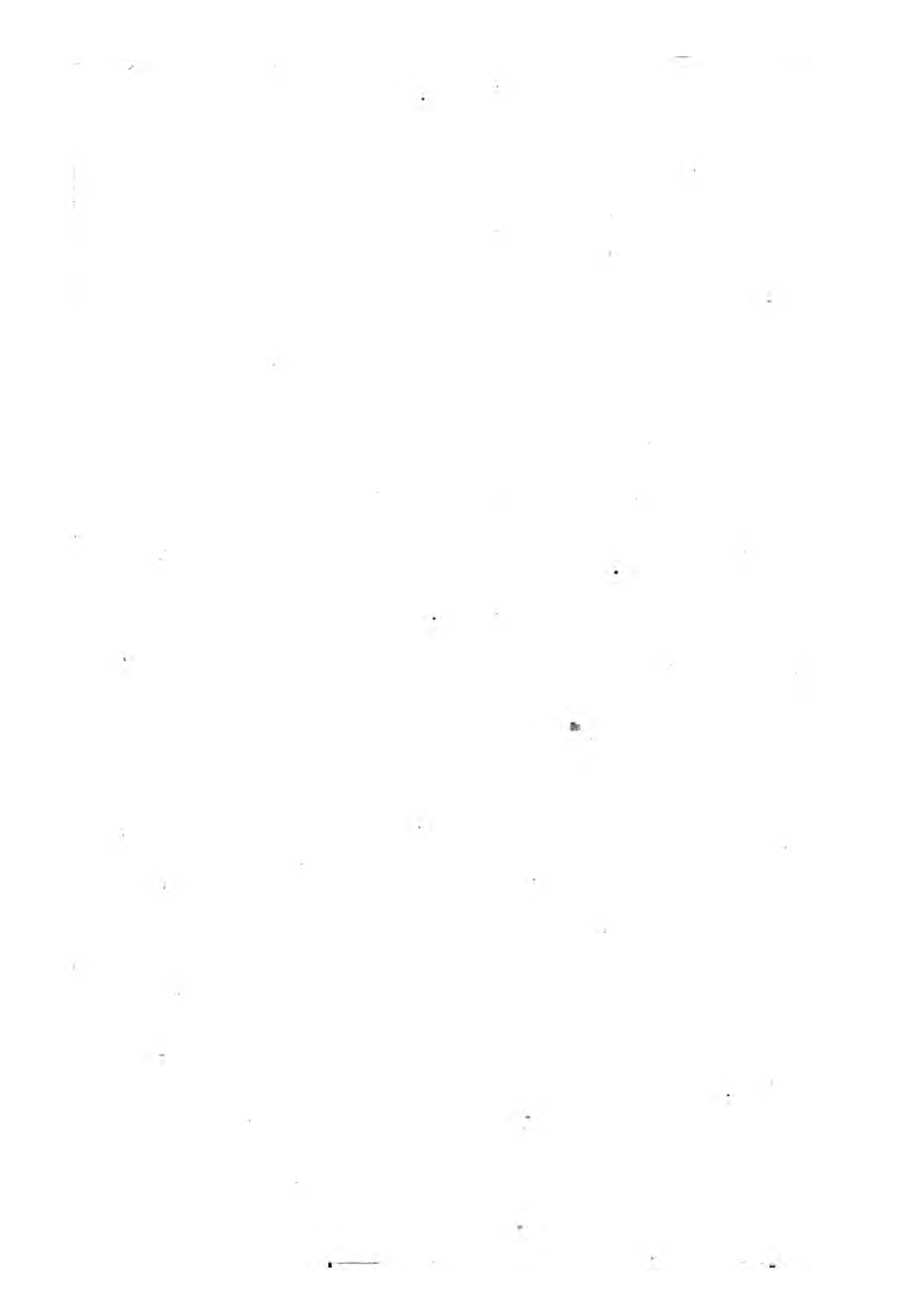
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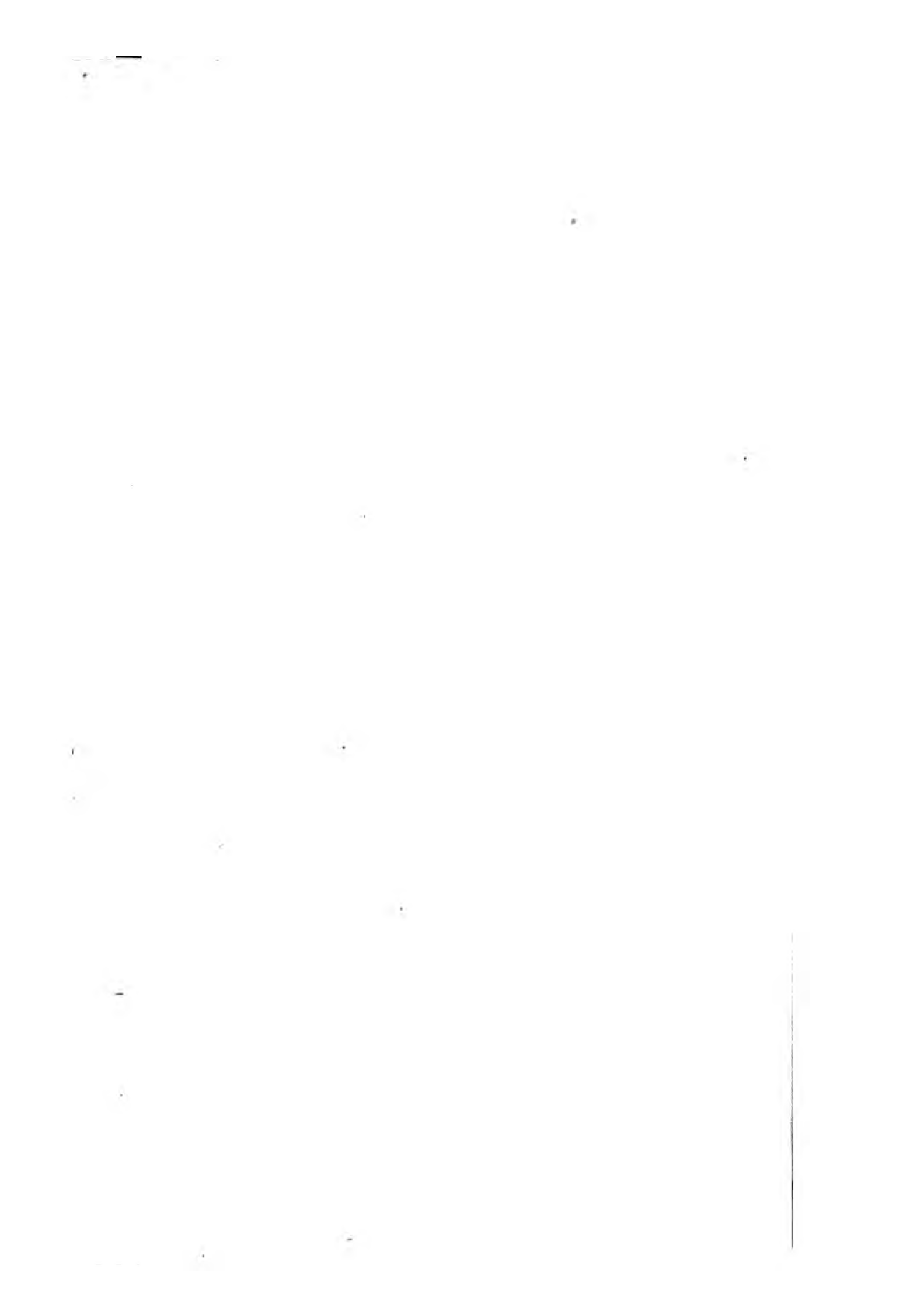
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THE  
POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

EDITED

BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Lui non trov' io, ma suoi santi vestigi  
Tutti rivolti alla superna strada  
Veggio, lunge da' laghi averni e stigi.—PETRARCA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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**THE CENCI;**

**A Tragedy.**

**IN FIVE ACTS.**





## DEDICATION.

—  
TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.  
—

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I INSCRIBE with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit,

though he must ever confer far more than he can receive ; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners, I never knew ; and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

    All happiness attend you !

    Your affectionate friend,

    PERCY B. SHELLEY.

ROME, *May* 29, 1819.

## PREFACE.

---

A MANUSCRIPT was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city, during the pontificate of Clement VIII., in the year 1599. The story is, that an old man, having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children ; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being ; a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstances and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered, and in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had, during his life, repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns ; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably

felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue \*. Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions, and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome, I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest ; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice, which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of *La Cenci*.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries, and among all ranks of people in a great city, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact, it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained, as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions, King Lear, and the two plays in which the tale of Œdipus is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of

\* The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness ; so that the communication of the MS. had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty.

popular belief and interest, before Shakspeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous : anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes, may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching of the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself ; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant, and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well : but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another ; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner, she would have been wiser and better ; but she would never have been a tragic character : the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification ; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or



wrong, false or true : thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and man which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion, with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days ; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit ; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion co-exists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration ; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and, without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge ; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act, Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death ; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation ; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine

there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature\*.

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect, I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert, that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men; and that our great ancestors, the ancient English poets, are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general, and not that of any particular class, to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted: I need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is most admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of

\* An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in "El Purgatorio de San Patricio," of Calderon: the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.

white drapery, from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate ; the eye-brows are distinct and arched ; the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed, and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear ; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another : her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer, are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent ; and, though in part modernised, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open work. One of the gates of the palace, formed of immense stones, and leading through a passage dark and lofty, and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

---

COUNT FRANCESCO CENCI.

GIACOMO,            }  
BERNARDO,         } *his Sons.*

CARDINAL CAMILLO.

ORSINO, *a Prelate.*

SAVELLA, *the Pope's Legate.*

OLIMPIO,            }  
MARZIO,             } *Assassins.*

ANDREA, *Servant to CENCI.*

*Nobles, Judges, Guards, Servants.*

LUCRETIA, *Wife of CENCI, and step-mother of his children.*

BEATRICE, *his daughter.*

---

*The SCENE lies principally in Rome, but changes during the Fourth Act to Petrella, a Castle among the Apulian Apennines.*

TIME.—During the Pontificate of Clement VIII.



# THE CENCI.

---

---

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the CENCI Palace.*

---

*Enter* COUNT CENCI *and* CARDINAL CAMILLO.

CAMILLO.

THAT matter of the murder is hushed up  
If you consent to yield his Holiness  
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.—  
It needed all my interest in the conclave  
To bend him to this point : he said that you  
Bought perilous impunity with your gold ;  
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded  
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell  
An erring soul which might repent and live :  
But that the glory and the interest  
Of the high throne he fills, little consist  
With making it a daily mart of guilt  
So manifold and hideous as the deeds  
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

CENCI.

The third of my possessions—let it go !  
Ay, I once heard the nephew of the Pope



Had sent his architect to view the ground,  
 Meaning to build a villa on my vines  
 The next time I compounded with his uncle :  
 I little thought he should outwit me so !  
 Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see  
 That which the vassal threatened to divulge,  
 Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.  
 The deed he saw could not have rated higher  
 Than his most worthless life :—it angers me !  
 Respited from Hell !—So may the Devil  
 Respite their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Clement,  
 And his most charitable nephews, pray  
 That the Apostle Peter and the saints  
 Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy  
 Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days  
 Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards  
 Of their revenue.—But much yet remains  
 To which they show no title.

CAMILLO.

Oh, Count Cenci !

So much that thou might'st honourably live,  
 And reconcile thyself with thine own heart  
 And with thy God, and with the offended world.  
 How hideously look deeds of lust and blood  
 Through those snow-white and venerable hairs !  
 Your children should be sitting round you now,  
 But that you fear to read upon their looks  
 The shame and misery you have written there.  
 Where is your wife ? Where is your gentle daughter ?  
 Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else  
 Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.  
 Why is she barred from all society  
 But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs ?  
 Talk with me, Count, you know I mean you well.

I stood beside your dark and fiery youth,  
 Watching its bold and bad career, as men  
 Watch meteors, but it vanished not—I marked  
 Your desperate and remorseless manhood ; now  
 Do I behold you, in dishonoured age,  
 Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.  
 Yet I have ever hoped you would amend,  
 And in that hope have saved your life three times.

CENCI.

For which Aldobrandino owes you now  
 My fief beyond the Pincian—Cardinal,  
 One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,  
 And so we shall converse with less restraint.  
 A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter,  
 He was accustomed to frequent my house ;  
 So the next day *his* wife and daughter came  
 And asked if I had seen him ; and I smiled :  
 I think they never saw him any more.

CAMILLO.

Thou execrable man, beware !—

CENCI.

Of thee ?

Nay, this is idle :—We should know each other.  
 As to my character for what men call crime,  
 Seeing I please my senses as I list,  
 And vindicate that right with force or guile,  
 It is a public matter, and I care not  
 If I discuss it with you. I may speak  
 Alike to you and my own conscious heart ;  
 For you give out that you have half reformed me,  
 Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent  
 If fear should not ; both will, I do not doubt.  
 All men delight in sensual luxury,

All men enjoy revenge ; and most exult  
 Over the tortures they can never feel ;  
 Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.  
 But I delight in nothing else. I love  
 The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,  
 When this shall be another's, and that mine.  
 And I have no remorse, and little fear,  
 Which are, I think, the checks of other men.  
 This mood has grown upon me, until now  
 Any design my captious fancy makes  
 The picture of its wish, and it forms none  
 But such as men like you would start to know,  
 Is as my natural food and rest debarred  
 Until it be accomplished.

CAMILLO.

Art thou not

Most miserable ?

CENCI.

Why miserable ?—

No. I am what your theologians call  
 Hardened ; which they must be in impudence,  
 So to revile a man's peculiar taste.  
 True, I was happier than I am, while yet  
 Manhood remained to act the thing I thought ;  
 While lust was sweeter than revenge ; and now  
 Invention palls ; ay, we must all grow old :  
 But that there yet remains a deed to act  
 Whose horror might make sharp an appetite  
 Duller than mine—I 'd do,—I know not what.  
 When I was young I thought of nothing else  
 But pleasure ; and I fed on honey sweets :  
 Men, by St. Thomas ! cannot live like bees,  
 And I grew tired : yet, till I killed a foe,  
 And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,

Knew I not what delight was else on earth,  
 Which now delights me little. I the rather  
 Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals ;  
 The dry, fixed eye-ball ; the pale, quivering lip,  
 Which tell me that the spirit weeps within  
 Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.  
 I rarely kill the body, which preserves,  
 Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,  
 Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear  
 For hourly pain.

CAMILLO.

Hell's most abandoned fiend  
 Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,  
 Speak to his heart as now you speak to me ;  
 I thank my God that I believe you not.

*Enter* ANDREA.

ANDREA.

My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca  
 Would speak with you.

CENCI.

Bid him attend me in the grand saloon.

[*Exit* ANDREA.]

CAMILLO.

Farewell ; and I will pray  
 Almighty God that thy false, impious words  
 Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee.

[*Exit* CAMILLO.]

CENCI.

The third of my possessions ! I must use  
 Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,  
 Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday  
 There came an order from the Pope to make  
 Fourfold provision for my cursed sons ;  
 Whom I have sent from Rome to Salamanca,



The moonlight-ruins of Mount Palatine,  
I did confess to you my secret mind.

ORSINO.

You said you loved me then.

BEATRICE.

You are a priest :  
Speak to me not of love.

ORSINO.

I may obtain  
The dispensation of the Pope to marry.  
Because I am a priest, do you believe  
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,  
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep ?

BEATRICE.

As I have said, speak to me not of love ;  
Had you a dispensation, I have not ;  
Nor will I leave this home of misery  
Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady  
To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts,  
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.  
Alas, Orsino ! All the love that once  
I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.  
Ours was a youthful contract, which you first  
Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.  
And thus I love you still, but holily,  
Even as a sister or a spirit might ;  
And so I swear a cold fidelity.  
And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.  
You have a sly, equivocating vein  
That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am !  
Where shall I turn ? Even now you look on me  
As you were not my friend, and as if you  
Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles



Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.  
 Ah ! No, forgive me ; sorrow makes me seem  
 Sterner than else my nature might have been ;  
 I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,  
 And they forebode,—but what can they forebode  
 Worse than I now endure ?

ORSINO.

All will be well.

Is the petition yet prepared ? You know  
 My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice ;  
 Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill  
 So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

BEATRICE.

Your zeal for all I wish ?—Ah me, you are cold !  
 Your utmost skill—speak but one word—

(*Aside.*) Alas !

Weak and deserted creature that I am,  
 Here I stand bickering with my only friend !

(*To ORSINO.*)

This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,  
 Orsino ; he has heard some happy news  
 From Salamanca, from my brothers there,  
 And with this outward show of love he mocks  
 His inward hate. 'Tis bold hypocrisy,  
 For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,  
 Which I have heard him pray for on his knees :  
 Great God ! that such a father should be mine !—  
 But there is mighty preparation made,  
 And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,  
 And all the chief nobility of Rome.  
 And he has bidden me and my pale mother  
 Attire ourselves in festival array.  
 Poor lady ! she expects some happy change



In his dark spirit from this act ; I none.  
 At supper I will give you the petition :  
 Till when—farewell.

ORSINO.

Farewell.

[*Exit* BEATRICE.]

I know the Pope

Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow  
 But by absolving me from the revenue  
 Of many a wealthy see ; and, Beatrice,  
 I think to win thee at an easier rate.  
 Nor shall he read her eloquent petition :  
 He might bestow her on some poor relation  
 Of his sixth-cousin, as he did her sister,  
 And I should be debarred from all access.  
 Then as to what she suffers from her father,  
 In all this there is much exaggeration :  
 Old men are testy, and will have their way ;  
 A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,  
 And live a free life as to wine or women,  
 And with a peevish temper may return  
 To a dull home, and rate his wife and children ;  
 Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.  
 I shall be well content, if on my conscience  
 There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer  
 From the devices of my love—A net  
 From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear  
 Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,  
 Whose beams anatomize me, nerve by nerve,  
 And lay me bare, and make me blush to see  
 My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no ! a friendless girl  
 Who clings to me, as to her only hope :—  
 I were a fool, not less than if a panther  
 Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye,  
 If she escape me.

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE III.

*A magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace.*

*A Banquet. Enter CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO,  
CAMILLO, NOBLES.*

CENCI.

Welcome, my friends and kinsmen ; welcome ye,  
Princes and Cardinals, Pillars of the church,  
Whose presence honours our festivity.  
I have too long lived like an anchorite,  
And, in my absence from your merry meetings,  
An evil word is gone abroad of me ;  
But I do hope that you, my noble friends,  
When you have shared the entertainment here,  
And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,  
And we have pledged a health or two together,  
Will think me flesh and blood as well as you ;  
Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,  
But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

FIRST GUEST.

In truth, my lord, you seem too light of heart,  
Too sprightly and companionable a man,  
To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.

*[To his companion.]*

I never saw such blithe and open cheer  
In any eye !

SECOND GUEST.

Some most desired event,  
In which we all demand a common joy,  
Has brought us hither ; let us hear it, Count.

CENCI.

It is indeed a most desired event.  
 If, when a parent, from a parent's heart,  
 Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all  
 A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,  
 And when he rises up from dreaming it ;  
 One supplication, one desire, one hope,  
 That he would grant a wish for his two sons,  
 Even all that he demands in their regard—  
 And suddenly, beyond his dearest hope,  
 It is accomplished, he should then rejoice,  
 And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,  
 And task their love to grace his merriment,  
 Then honour me thus far—for I am he.

BEATRICE (*to* LUCRETIA).

Great God ! How horrible ! Some dreadful ill  
 Must have befallen my brothers.

LUCRETIA.

Fear not, child,

He speaks too frankly.

BEATRICE.

Ah ! My blood runs cold.

I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,  
 Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

CENCI.

Here are the letters brought from Salamanca ;  
 Beatrice, read them to your mother. God,  
 I thank thee ! In one night didst thou perform,  
 By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.  
 My disobedient and rebellious sons  
 Are dead !—Why dead !—What means this change of cheer ?  
 You hear me not, I tell you they are dead ;  
 And they will need no food or raiment more :

The tapers that did light them the dark way  
 Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not  
 Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.  
 Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad.

BEATRICE. (*LUCRETIA sinks, half fainting ; BEATRICE supports her.*)

It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.  
 Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,  
 He would not live to boast of such a boon.  
 Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

CENCI.

Ay, as the word of God ; whom here I call  
 To witness that I speak the sober truth ;—  
 And whose most favouring providence was shown  
 Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco  
 Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,  
 When the Church fell and crushed him to a mummy ;  
 The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano  
 Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,  
 Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival ;  
 All in the self-same hour of the same night ;  
 Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.  
 I beg those friends who love me, that they mark  
 The day a feast upon their calendars.  
 It was the twenty-seventh of December :  
 Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

[*The assembly appears confused ; several of the guests rise.*]

FIRST GUEST.

Oh, horrible ! I will depart.—

SECOND GUEST.

And I.—

THIRD GUEST.

No, stay !

I do believe it is some jest ; though faith,

'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.  
 I think his son has married the Infanta,  
 Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado :  
 'Tis but to season some such news ; stay, stay !  
 I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.

CENCI (*filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up*).

Oh, thou bright wine, whose purple splendour leaps  
 And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl  
 Under the lamp-light, as my spirits do,  
 To hear the death of my accursed sons !  
 Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,  
 Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,  
 And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell ;  
 Who, if a father's curses, as men say,  
 Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,  
 And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,  
 Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art  
 Superfluous ; I have drunken deep of joy,  
 And I will taste no other wine to-night.  
 Here, Andrea ! Bear the bowl around.

A GUEST (*rising*).

Thou wretch !

Will none among this noble company  
 Check the abandoned villain ?

CAMILLO.

For God's sake,  
 Let me dismiss the guests ! You are insane,  
 Some ill will come of this.

SECOND GUEST.

Seize, silence him !

FIRST GUEST.

I will !

THIRD GUEST.

And I !

*CENCI (addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture).*

Who moves ? Who speaks ?

*[Turning to the Company.*

'Tis nothing,

Enjoy yourselves.—Beware ! for my revenge

Is as the sealed commission of a king,

That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

*[The Banquet is broken up ; several of the Guests are departing.*

BEATRICE.

I do entreat you, go not, noble guests ;  
 What although tyranny and impious hate  
 Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair ?  
 What if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs  
 Who tortures them, and triumphs ? What, if we,  
 The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,  
 His children and his wife, whom he is bound  
 To love and shelter ? Shall we therefore find  
 No refuge in this merciless wide world ?  
 Oh, think what deep wrongs must have blotted out  
 First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind,  
 Till it thus vanquish shame and fear ! Oh, think !  
 I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand  
 Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke  
 Was perhaps some paternal chastisement !  
 Have excused much, doubted ; and when no doubt  
 Remained, have sought by patience, love and tears,  
 To soften him ; and when this could not be,  
 I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights,  
 And lifted up to God, the father of all,  
 Passionate prayers : and when these were not heard,  
 I have still borne ;—until I meet you here,  
 Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast



Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,  
 His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,  
 Ye may soon share such merriment again  
 As fathers make over their children's graves.  
 Oh! Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman;  
 Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain;  
 Camillo, thou art chief justiciary;  
 Take us away!

CENCI. (*He has been conversing with CAMILLO during the first part of BEATRICE'S speech; he hears the conclusion, and now advances.*)

I hope my good friends here  
 Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps  
 Of their own throats—before they lend an ear  
 To this wild girl.

BEATRICE (*not noticing the words of CENCI*).

Dare no one look on me?  
 None answer? Can one tyrant overbear  
 The sense of many best and wisest men?  
 Or is it that I sue not in some form  
 Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?  
 Oh, God! that I were buried with my brothers!  
 And that the flowers of this departed spring  
 Were fading on my grave! and that my father  
 Were celebrating now one feast for all!

CAMILLO.

A bitter wish for one so young and gentle;  
 Can we do nothing?—

COLONNA.

Nothing that I see.  
 Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:  
 Yet I would second any one.

A CARDINAL.

And I.



CENCI.

Retire to your chamber, insolent girl !

BEATRICE.

Retire thou, impious man ! Ay, hide thyself  
 Where never eye can look upon thee more !  
 Wouldst thou have honour and obedience,  
 Who art a torturer ? Father, never dream,  
 Though thou mayst overbear this company,  
 But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me !  
 Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks  
 My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat !  
 Cover thy face from every living eye,  
 And start if thou but hear a human step :  
 Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,  
 Bow thy white head before offended God,  
 And we will kneel around, and fervently  
 Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

CENCI.

My friends, I do lament this insane girl  
 Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.  
 Good night, farewell ; I will not make you longer  
 Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.  
 Another time.—

[*Exeunt all but CENCI and BEATRICE.*

My brain is swimming round ;

Give me a bowl of wine !

(*To BEATRICE.*) Thou painted viper !

Beast that thou art ! Fair and yet terrible !

I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,

Now get thee from my sight !

[*Exit BEATRICE.*

Here, Andrea,

Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said

I would not drink this evening, but I must ;

For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail  
With thinking what I have decreed to do.

*[Drinking the wine.]*

Be thou the resolution of quick youth  
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,  
And age's firm, cold, subtle villany ;  
As if thou wert indeed my children's blood  
Which I did thirst to drink. The charm works well ;  
It must be done, it shall be done, I swear !

*[Exit.]*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.*

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*Enter* LUCRETIA *and* BERNARDO.

LUCRETIA.

Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me,  
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he  
Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.  
Oh, God Almighty, do thou look upon us,  
We have no other friend but only thee!  
Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,  
I am not your true mother.

BERNARDO.

Oh, more, more  
Than ever mother was to any child,  
That have you been to me! Had he not been  
My father, do you think that I should weep?

LUCRETIA.

Alas! poor boy, what else couldst thou have done!

*Enter* BEATRICE.BEATRICE (*in a hurried voice*).

Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?  
Ah! no, that is his step upon the stairs;  
'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;  
Mother, if I to thee have ever been

A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,  
Whose image upon earth a father is,  
Dost thou indeed abandon me? He comes;  
The door is opening now; I see his face;  
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,  
Even as he did after the feast last night.

*Enter a Servant.*

Almighty God, how merciful thou art!  
'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

SERVANT.

My master bids me say, the Holy Father  
Has sent back your petition thus unopened.

*[Giving a Paper.]*

And he demands at what hour 'twere secure  
To visit you again?

LUCRETIA.

At the Ave Mary.

*[Exit Servant.]*

So, daughter, our last hope has failed; ah me,  
How pale you look! you tremble, and you stand  
Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation,  
As if one thought were over strong for you:  
Your eyes have a chill glare; oh, dearest child!  
Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

BEATRICE.

You see I am not mad; I speak to you.

LUCRETIA.

You talked of something that your father did  
After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse  
Than when he smiled, and cried, My sons are dead!  
And every one looked in his neighbour's face  
To see if others were as white as he?  
At the first word he spoke I felt the blood

Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance ;  
 And when it past I sat all weak and wild ;  
 Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words  
 Check'd his unnatural pride ; and I could see  
 The devil was rebuked that lives in him.  
 Until this hour thus you have ever stood  
 Between us and your father's moody wrath  
 Like a protecting presence : your firm mind  
 Has been our only refuge and defence :  
 What can have thus subdued it ? What can now  
 Have given you that cold melancholy look,  
 Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear ?

BEATRICE.

What is it that you say ? I was just thinking  
 'Twere better not to struggle any more.  
 Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody,  
 Yet never—O ! before worse comes of it,  
 'Twere wise to die : it ends in that at last.

LUCRETIA.

Oh, talk not so, dear child ! Tell me at once  
 What did your father do or say to you ?  
 He stayed not after that accursed feast  
 One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

BERNARDO.

Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us !

BEATRICE (*speaking very slowly with a forced calmness*).

It was one word, mother, one little word ;  
 One look, one smile.

[*Wildly.*

Oh ! he has trampled me  
 Under his feet, and made the blood stream down  
 My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all

Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh  
 Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,  
 And we have eaten. He has made me look  
 On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust  
 Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,  
 And I have never yet despaired—but now !  
 What would I say ?

*[Recovering herself.]*

Ah ! no, 'tis nothing new.  
 The sufferings we all share have made me wild :  
 He only struck and cursed me as he passed ;  
 He said, he looked, he did,—nothing at all  
 Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.  
 Alas ! I am forgetful of my duty,  
 I should preserve my senses for your sake.

## LUCRETIA.

Nay, Beatrice ; have courage, my sweet girl.  
 If any one despairs it should be I,  
 Who loved him once, and now must live with him  
 Till God in pity call for him or me.  
 For you may, like your sister, find some husband,  
 And smile, years hence, with children round your knees ;  
 Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil,  
 Shall be remembered only as a dream.

## BEATRICE.

Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.  
 Did you not nurse me when my mother died ?  
 Did you not shield me and that dearest boy ?  
 And had we any other friend but you  
 In infancy, with gentle words and looks,  
 To win our father not to murder us ?  
 And shall I now desert you ? May the ghost  
 Of my dead mother plead against my soul,

If I abandon her who filled the place  
She left, with more even than a mother's love !

BERNARDO.

And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed  
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,  
Even though the Pope should make me free to live  
In some blithe place, like others of my age,  
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.  
Oh, never think that I will leave you, mother !

LUCRETIA.

My dear, dear children !

*Enter CENCI, suddenly.*

CENCI.

What ! Beatrice here ?

Come hither !

*[She shrinks back, and covers her face.]*

Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair ;  
Look up ! Why, yesternight you dared to look  
With disobedient insolence upon me,  
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow  
On what I meant ; whilst I then sought to hide  
That which I came to tell you—but in vain.

BEATRICE *(wildly staggering towards the door)*.

Oh, that the earth would gape ! Hide me, oh God !

CENCI.

Then it was I whose inarticulate words  
Fell from my lips, who with tottering steps  
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.  
Stay, I command you ! From this day and hour  
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,  
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,  
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,



Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind ;  
 Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber,  
 Thou too, loathed image of thy cursed mother,

[*To* BERNARDO.

Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate !

[*Exeunt* BEATRICE and BERNARDO.

(*Aside.*) So much has passed between us as must make  
 Me bold, her fearful.—'Tis an awful thing  
 To touch such mischief as I now conceive :  
 So men sit shivering on the dewy bank  
 And try the chill stream with their feet ; once in—  
 How the delighted spirit pants for joy !

LUCRETIA (*advancing timidly towards him*).

Oh, husband ! Pray forgive poor Beatrice,  
 She meant not any ill.

CENCI.

Nor you perhaps ?

Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote  
 Parricide with his alphabet ? Nor Giacomo ?  
 Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred  
 Enmity up against me with the Pope ?  
 Whom in one night merciful God cut off :  
 Innocent lambs ! They thought not any ill.  
 You were not here conspiring ? you said nothing  
 Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman ;  
 Or be condemned to death for some offence,  
 And you would be the witnesses ?—This failing.  
 How just it were to hire assassins, or  
 Put sudden poison in my evening drink ?  
 Or smother me when overcome by wine ?  
 Seeing we had no other judge but God,  
 And he had sentenced me, and there were none  
 But you to be the executioners  
 Of his decree enregistered in heaven ?  
 Oh, no ! You said not this ?

LUCRETIA.

So help me God,  
I never thought the things you charge me with !

CENCI.

If you dare speak that wicked lie again,  
I'll kill you. What ! it was not by your counsel  
That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night ?  
You did not hope to stir some enemies  
Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn  
What every nerve of you now trembles at ?  
You judged that men were bolder than they are ;  
Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

LUCRETIA.

Look not so dreadfully ! By my salvation  
I knew not aught that Beatrice designed ;  
Nor do I think she designed any thing  
Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

CENCI.

Blaspheming liar ! You are damned for this !  
But I will take you where you may persuade  
The stones you tread on to deliver you :  
For men shall there be none but those who dare  
All things ; not question that which I command.  
On Wednesday next I shall set out : you know  
That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella ?  
'Tis safely walled, and moated round about :  
Its dungeons under ground, and its thick towers  
Never told tales ; though they have heard and seen  
What might make dumb things speak. Why do you linger ?  
Make speediest preparation for the journey !

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.]

The all-beholding sun yet shines ; I hear  
A busy stir of men about the streets ;

I see the bright sky through the window panes :  
 It is a garish, broad, and peering day ;  
 Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears ;  
 And every little corner, nook, and hole,  
 Is penetrated with the insolent light.  
 Come, darkness ! Yet, what is the day to me ?  
 And wherefore should I wish for night, who do  
 A deed which shall confound both night and day ?  
 'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist  
 Of horror : if there be a sun in heaven,  
 She shall not dare to look upon its beams ;  
 Nor feel its warmth. Let her, then, wish for night ;  
 The act I think shall soon extinguish all  
 For me : I bear a darker, deadlier gloom  
 Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,  
 Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,  
 In which I walk secure and unbeheld  
 Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done !

[*Exit.*

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SCENE II.

*A Chamber in the Vatican.*

*Enter CAMILLO and GIACOMO, in conversation.*

CAMILLO.

There is an obsolete and doubtful law,  
 By which you might obtain a bare provision  
 Of food and clothing.

GIACOMO.

Nothing more ? Alas !  
 Bare must be the provision which strict law  
 Awards, and aged sullen avarice pays.  
 Why did my father not apprentice me

To some mechanic trade? I should have then  
 Been trained in no high-born necessities  
 Which I could meet not by my daily toil.  
 The eldest son of a rich nobleman  
 Is heir to all his incapacities;  
 He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,  
 Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once  
 From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food,  
 An hundred servants, and six palaces,  
 To that which nature doth indeed require?—

CAMILLO.

Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.

GIACOMO.

'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I  
 Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,  
 Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father,  
 Without a bond or witness to the deed:  
 And children, who inherit her fine senses,  
 The fairest creatures in this breathing world;  
 And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,  
 Do you not think the Pope would interpose  
 And stretch authority beyond the law?

CAMILLO.

Though your peculiar case is hard, I know  
 The Pope will not divert the course of law.  
 After that impious feast the other night  
 I spoke with him, and urged him then to check  
 Your father's cruel hand; he frowned, and said,  
 "Children are disobedient, and they sting  
 Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,  
 Requiting years of care with contumely.  
 I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;  
 His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,

And thus he is exasperated to ill.  
 In the great war between the old and young,  
 I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,  
 Will keep at least blameless neutrality."

*Enter ORSINO.*

You, my good lord Orsino, heard those words.

ORSINO.

What words?

GIACOMO.

Alas, repeat them not again!  
 There then is no redress for me; at least  
 None but that which I may achieve myself,  
 Since I am driven to the brink. But, say,  
 My innocent sister and my only brother  
 Are dying underneath my father's eye.  
 The memorable torturers of this land,  
 Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,  
 Never inflicted on their meanest slave  
 What these endure; shall they have no protection?

CAMILLO.

Why, if they would petition to the Pope,  
 I see not how he could refuse it—yet  
 He holds it of most dangerous example  
 In aught to weaken the paternal power,  
 Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.  
 I pray you now excuse me. I have business  
 That will not bear delay.

*[Exit CAMILLO.]*

GIACOMO.

But you, Orsino,  
 Have the petition; wherefore not present it!

ORSINO.

I have presented it, and backed it with

My earnest prayers, and urgent interest ;  
 It was returned unanswered. I doubt not  
 But that the strange and execrable deeds  
 Alleged in it—in truth they might well baffle  
 Any belief—have turned the Pope's displeasure  
 Upon the accusers from the criminal :  
 So I should guess from what Camillo said.

GIACOMO.

My friend, that palace-walking devil, Gold,  
 Has whispered silence to his Holiness :  
 And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire.  
 What should we do but strike ourselves to death ?  
 For he who is our murderous persecutor  
 Is shielded by a father's holy name,  
 Or I would—

*[Stops abruptly.]*

ORSINO.

What? Fear not to speak your thought.  
 Words are but holy as the deeds they cover :  
 A priest who has forsworn the God he serves ;  
 A judge who makes the truth weep at his decree ;  
 A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,  
 But as the mantle of some selfish guile ;  
 A father who is all a tyrant seems,  
 Were the profaner for his sacred name

GIACOMO.

Ask me not what I think ; the unwilling brain  
 Feigns often what it would not ; and we trust  
 Imagination with such phantasies  
 As the tongue dares not fashion into words ;  
 Which have no words, their horror makes them dim  
 To the mind's eye. My heart denies itself  
 To think what you demand.



ORSINO.

But a friend's bosom  
 Is as the inmost cave of our own mind,  
 Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day,  
 And from the all-communicating air.  
 You look what I suspected—

GIACOMO.

Spare me now!  
 I am as one lost in a midnight wood,  
 Who dares not ask some harmless passenger  
 The path across the wilderness, lest he,  
 As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.  
 I know you are my friend, and all I dare  
 Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.  
 But now my heart is heavy, and would take  
 Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.  
 Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!  
 I would that to my own suspected self  
 I could address a word so full of peace.

ORSINO.

Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold.

[*Exit* GIACOMO.]

I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo  
 To feed his hope with cold encouragement:  
 It fortunately serves my close designs  
 That 'tis a trick of this same family  
 To analyse their own and other minds.  
 Such self-anatomy shall teach the will  
 Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,  
 Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,  
 Into the depth of darkest purposes:  
 So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,  
 Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,



And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,  
 Show a poor figure to my own esteem,  
 To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do  
 As little mischief as I can; that thought  
 Shall fee the accuser conscience.

[*After a pause.*]

Now what harm  
 If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered,  
 Wherefore by me? And what if I could take  
 The profit, yet omit the sin and peril  
 In such an action? Of all earthly things  
 I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;  
 And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives  
 His daughter's dowry were a secret grave  
 If a priest wins her.—Oh, fair Beatrice!  
 Would that I loved thee not, or, loving thee,  
 Could but despise danger, and gold, and all  
 That frowns between my wish and its effect,  
 Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape:  
 Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,  
 And follows me to the resort of men,  
 And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,  
 So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire;  
 And if I strike my damp and dizzy head,  
 My hot palm scorches it: her very name,  
 But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart  
 Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably  
 I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights,  
 Till weak imagination half possesses  
 The self-created shadow. Yet much longer  
 Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:  
 From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo  
 I must work out my own dear purposes.  
 I see, as from a tower, the end of all:  
 Her father dead; her brother bound to me

By a dark secret, surer than the grave ;  
Her mother scared and unexpostulating  
From the dread manner of her wish achieved :  
And she !—Once more take courage, my faint heart ;  
What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee ?  
I have such foresight as assures success ;  
Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,  
When dread events are near, stir up men's minds  
To black suggestions ; and he prospers best,  
Not who becomes the instrument of ill,  
But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes  
Its empire and its prey of other hearts,  
Till it become his slave—as I will do.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.*

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LUCRETIA ; *to her enter* BEATRICE.

BEATRICE (*she enters staggering, and speaks wildly*).

Reach me that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt ;  
My eyes are full of blood ; just wipe them for me—  
I see but indistinctly.—

LUCRETIA.

My sweet child,  
You have no wound ; 'tis only a cold dew  
That starts from your dear brow.—Alas ! alas !  
What has befallen ?

BEATRICE.

How comes this hair undone ?  
Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,  
And yet I tied it fast.—O, horrible !  
The pavement sinks under my feet ! The walls  
Spin round ! I see a woman weeping there,  
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I  
Slide giddily as the world reels.—My God !  
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood !  
The sunshine on the floor is black ! The air  
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe  
In charnel-pits ! Pah ! I am choked ! There creeps  
A clinging, black, contaminating mist  
About me—'tis substantial, heavy, thick ;

I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues  
 My fingers and my limbs to one another,  
 And eats into my sinews, and dissolves  
 My flesh to a pollution, poisoning  
 The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life !  
 My God ! I never knew what the mad felt  
 Before ; for I am mad beyond all doubt !

[*More wildly.*]

No, I am dead ! These putrefying limbs  
 Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul,  
 Which would burst forth into the wandering air !

[*A pause.*]

What hideous thought was that I had even now ?  
 'Tis gone ; and yet its burthen remains here  
 O'er these dull eyes—upon this weary heart !  
 O, world ! O, life ! O, day ! O, misery !

LUCRETIA.

What ails thee, my poor child ? She answers not :  
 Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,  
 But not its cause ; suffering has dried away  
 The source from which it sprung.—

BEATRICE (*frantically*).

Like Parricide—

Misery has killed its father : yet its father  
 Never like mine—O, God ! What thing am I ?

LUCRETIA.

My dearest child, what has your father done ?

BEATRICE (*doubtfully*).

Who art thou, questioner ? I have no father.

[*Aside.*]

She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me,  
 It is a piteous office.

[*To LUCRETIA, in a slow, subdued voice.*]

Do you know,  
 I thought I was that wretched Beatrice  
 Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales  
 From hall to hall by the entangled hair ;  
 At others, pens up naked in damp cells  
 Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,  
 Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story  
 So did I overact in my sick dreams,  
 That I imagined—no, it cannot be !  
 Horrible things have been in this wild world,  
 Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange  
 Of good and ill ; and worse have been conceived  
 Than ever there was found a heart to do.  
 But never fancy imaged such a deed  
 As—

*[Pauses, suddenly recollecting herself.]*

Who art thou ? Swear to me, ere I die  
 With fearful expectation, that indeed  
 Thou art not what thou seemest—Mother !

LUCRETIA.

Oh ! My sweet child, know you—

BEATRICE.

Yet speak it not :  
 For then if this be truth, that other too  
 Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,  
 Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,  
 Never to change, never to pass away.  
 Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace ;  
 Thou art Lucretia ; I am Beatrice.  
 I have talked some wild words, but will no more.  
 Mother, come near me : from this point of time,  
 I am—

*[Her voice dies away faintly.]*

LUCRETIA.

Alas! what has befallen thee, child?  
What has thy father done?

BEATRICE.

What have I done?  
Am I not innocent? Is it my crime  
That one with white hair, and imperious brow,  
Who tortured me from my forgotten years,  
As parents only dare, should call himself  
My father, yet should be! —Oh, what am I?  
What name, what place, what memory shall be mine?  
What retrospects, outliving even despair?

LUCRETIA.

He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:  
We know that death alone can make us free;  
His death or ours. But what can he have done  
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury?  
Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth  
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,  
Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine  
With one another.

BEATRICE.

'Tis the restless life  
Tortured within them. If I try to speak  
I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done;  
What, yet I know not—something which shall make  
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow  
In the dread lightning which avenges it;  
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying  
The consequence of what it cannot cure.  
Some such thing is to be endured or done:  
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,  
And never anything will move me more.



But now!—Oh blood, which art my father's blood,  
 Circling through these contaminated veins,  
 If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,  
 Could wash away the crime, and punishment  
 By which I suffer—no, that cannot be!  
 Many might doubt there were a God above  
 Who sees and permits evil, and so die:  
 That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

LUCRETIA.

It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;  
 Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh! my lost child,  
 Hide not in proud impenetrable grief  
 Thy sufferings from my fear.

BEATRICE.

I hide them not.

What are the words which you would have me speak?  
 I, who can feign no image in my mind  
 Of that which has transformed me. I, whose thought  
 Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up  
 In its own formless horror. Of all words,  
 That minister to mortal intercourse,  
 Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell  
 My misery: if another ever knew  
 Aught like to it, she died as I will die,  
 And left it, as I must, without a name.  
 Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee  
 A punishment and a reward. Oh, which  
 Have I deserved?

LUCRETIA.

The peace of innocence;  
 Till in your season you be called to heaven.  
 Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done  
 No evil. Death must be the punishment  
 Of crime, or the reward of trampling down



The thorns which God has strewed upon the path  
Which leads to immortality.

BEATRICE.

Ay, death—  
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,  
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.  
If I must live day after day, and keep  
These limbs, the unworthy temple of thy spirit,  
As a foul den from which what thou abhorrest  
May mock thee, unavenged—it shall not be!  
Self-murder—no that might be no escape,  
For thy decree yawns like a Hell between  
Our will and it.—Oh! in this mortal world  
There is no vindication and no law,  
Which can adjudge and execute the doom  
Of that through which I suffer.

*Enter ORSINO.*

*(She approaches him solemnly.)* Welcome, Friend!  
I have to tell you that, since last we met,  
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,  
That neither life nor death can give me rest.  
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds  
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

ORSINO.

And what is he who has thus injured you?

BEATRICE.

The man they call my father: a dread name.

ORSINO.

It cannot be—

BEATRICE.

What it can be, or not,  
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been;



Advise me how it shall not be again.  
 I thought to die ; but a religious awe  
 Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself  
 Might be no refuge from the consciousness  
 Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak !

ORSINO.

Accuse him of the deed, and let the law  
 Avenge thee.

BEATRICE.

Oh, ice-hearted counsellor !  
 If I could find a word that might make known  
 The crime of my destroyer ; and that done,  
 My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret  
 Which cankers my heart's core ; ay, lay all bare,  
 So that my unpolluted fame should be  
 With vilest gossips a stale mouthed story ;  
 A mock, a by-word, an astonishment :—  
 If this were done, which never shall be done,  
 Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,  
 And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,  
 Baffling belief, and overpowering speech ;  
 Scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapt  
 In hideous hints—Oh, most assured redress !

ORSINO.

You will endure it then ?

BEATRICE.

Endure !—Orsino,  
 It seems your counsel is small profit.

*[Turns from him, and speaks half to herself.*

Ay,

All must be suddenly resolved and done.  
 What is this undistinguishable mist  
 Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,  
 Darkening each other ?

ORSINO.

Should the offender live ?

Triumph in his misdeed ? and make, by use,  
 His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,  
 Thine element ; until thou mayest become  
 Utterly lost ; subdued even to the hue  
 Of that which thou permittest ?

BEATRICE (*to herself*).

Mighty death !

Thou double-visaged shadow ! Only judge !  
 Rightfullest arbiter !

[*She retires, absorbed in thought.*]

LUCRETIA.

If the lightning  
 Of God has e'er descended to avenge—

ORSINO.

Blaspheme not ! His high Providence commits  
 Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs  
 Into the hands of men ; if they neglect  
 To punish crime—

LUCRETIA.

But if one, like this wretch,  
 Should mock, with gold, opinion, law, and power ?  
 If there be no appeal to that which makes  
 The guiltiest tremble ! If, because our wrongs,  
 For that they are unnatural, strange, and monstrous,  
 Exceed all measure of belief ? Oh, God !  
 If, for the very reasons which should make  
 Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs ?  
 And we, the victims, bear worse punishment  
 Than that appointed for their torturer ?

ORSINO.

Think not

But that there is redress where there is wrong,  
So we be bold enough to seize it.

LUCRETIA.

How?

If there were any way to make all sure,  
I know not—but I think it might be good  
To—

ORSINO.

Why, his late outrage to Beatrice;  
For it is such, as I but faintly guess,  
As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her  
Only one duty, how she may avenge:  
You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;  
Me, but one counsel—

LUCRETIA.

For we cannot hope  
That aid, or retribution, or resource  
Will arise thence, where every other one  
Might find them with less need.

(BEATRICE *advances.*)

ORSINO.

Then—

BEATRICE.

Peace, Orsino!  
And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray,  
That you put off, as garments overworn,  
Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,  
And all the fit restraints of daily life,  
Which have been borne from childhood, but which now  
Would be a mockery to my holier plea.  
As I have said, I have endured a wrong,  
Which, though it be expressionless, is such  
As asks atonement, both for what is past,

And lest I be reserved, day after day,  
 To load with crimes an overburthened soul,  
 And be—what ye can dream not. I have prayed  
 To God, and I have talked with my own heart,  
 And have unravelled my entangled will,  
 And have at length determined what is right.  
 Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?  
 Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

ORSINO.

I swear  
 To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,  
 My silence, and whatever else is mine,  
 To thy commands.

LUCRETIA.

You think we should devise  
 His death?

BEATRICE.

And execute what is devised,  
 And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

ORSINO.

And yet most cautious.

LUCRETIA.

For the jealous laws  
 Would punish us with death and infamy  
 For that which it became themselves to do.

BEATRICE.

Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,  
 What are the means?

ORSINO.

I know two dull, fierce outlaws,  
 Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they  
 Would trample out, for any slight caprice,  
 The meanest or the noblest life. This mood

Is marketable here in Rome. They sell  
What we now want.

LUCRETIA.

To-morrow, before dawn,  
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,  
Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines.  
If he arrive there—

BEATRICE.

He must not arrive.

ORSINO.

Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

LUCRETIA.

The sun will scarce be set.

BEATRICE.

But I remember  
Two miles on this side of the fort, the road  
Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,  
And winds with short turns down the precipice;  
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,  
Which has, from unimaginable years,  
Sustained itself with terror and with toil  
Over a gulf, and with the agony  
With which it clings seems slowly coming down;  
Even as a wretched soul hour after hour  
Clings to the mass of life; yet, clinging, leans;  
And, leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss  
In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag  
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,  
The melancholy mountain yawns—below,  
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent  
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge  
Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow,  
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,

Cedars, and yews, and pines ; whose tangled hair  
Is matted in one solid roof of shade  
By the dark ivy's twine. At noon-day here  
'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night.

ORSINO.

Before you reach that bridge make some excuse  
For spurring on your mules, or loitering  
Until—

BEATRICE.

What sound is that ?

LUCRETIA.

Hark ! No, it cannot be a servant's step ;  
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly  
Returned—Make some excuse for being here.

BEATRICE (*to ORSINO as she goes out*).

That step we hear approach must never pass  
The bridge of which we spoke.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA and BEATRICE.]

ORSINO.

What shall I do ?

Cenci must find me here, and I must bear  
The imperious inquisition of his looks  
As to what brought me hither : let me mask  
Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

*Enter* GIACOMO, *in a hurried manner*.

How ! Have you ventured thither ? know you then  
That Cenci is from home ?

GIACOMO.

I sought him here ;  
And now must wait till he returns.



ORSINO.

Great God !

Weigh you the danger of this rashness ?

GIACOMO.

Ay !

Does my destroyer know his danger ? We  
 Are now no more, as once, parent and child,  
 But man to man ; the oppressor to the oppressed ;  
 The slanderer to the slandered ; foe to foe.  
 He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,  
 And Nature casts him off, who is her shame ;  
 And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat  
 Which I will shake ? and say, I ask not gold ;  
 I ask not happy years ; nor memories  
 Of tranquil childhood ; nor home-sheltered love ;  
 Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more ;  
 But only my fair fame ; only one hoard  
 Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,  
 Under the penury heaped on me by thee ;  
 Or I will—God can understand and pardon,  
 Why should I speak with man ?

ORSINO.

Be calm, dear friend.

GIACOMO.

Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.  
 This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,  
 Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me,  
 And then denied the loan ; and left me so  
 In poverty, the which I sought to mend  
 By holding a poor office in the state.  
 It had been promised to me, and already  
 I bought new clothing for my ragged babes,  
 And my wife smiled ; and my heart knew repose ;

When Cenci's intercession, as I found,  
 Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus  
 He paid for vilest service. I returned  
 With this ill news, and we sate sad together  
 Solacing our despondency with tears  
 Of such affection and unbroken faith  
 As temper life's worst bitterness ; when he,  
 As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,  
 Mocking our poverty, and telling us  
 Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.  
 And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,  
 I spoke of my wife's dowry ; but he coined  
 A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted  
 The sum in secret riot ; and he saw  
 My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.  
 And when I knew the impression he had made,  
 And felt my wife insult with silent scorn  
 My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,  
 I went forth too : but soon returned again ;  
 Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught  
 My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,  
 " Give us clothes, father ! Give us better food !  
 What you in one night squander were enough  
 For months ! " I looked and saw that home was hell.  
 And to that hell will I return no more,  
 Until mine enemy has rendered up  
 Atonement, or, as he gave life to me,  
 I will, reversing nature's law—

ORSINO.

Trust me,  
 The compensation which thou seekest here  
 Will be denied.

GIACOMO.

Then—Are you not my friend ?

Did you not hint at the alternative,  
 Upon the brink of which you see I stand,  
 The other day when we conversed together ?  
 My wrongs were then less. That word parricide,  
 Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

ORSINO.

It must be fear itself, for the bare word  
 Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God  
 Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,  
 So sanctifying it : what you devise  
 Is, as it were, accomplished.

GIACOMO.

Is he dead ?

ORSINO.

His grave is ready. Know that since we met  
 Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

GIACOMO.

What outrage ?

ORSINO.

That she speaks not, but you may  
 Conceive such half conjectures as I do,  
 From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief  
 Of her stern brow, bent on the idle air,  
 And her severe unmodulated voice,  
 Drowning both tenderness and dread ; and last  
 From this ; that whilst her step-mother and I,  
 Bewildered in our horror, talk together  
 With obscure hints ; both self-misunderstood,  
 And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,  
 Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,  
 She interrupted us, and with a look  
 Which told, before she spoke it, he must die—

GIACOMO.

It is enough. My doubts are well appeased ;  
 There is a higher reason for the act  
 Than mine ; there is a holier judge than me,  
 A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice,  
 Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth  
 Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised  
 A living flower, but thou hast pitied it  
 With needless tears ! Fair sister, thou in whom  
 Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom  
 Did not destroy each other ! Is there made  
 Ravage of thee ? O, heart, I ask no more  
 Justification ! Shall I wait, Orsino,  
 Till he return, and stab him at the door ?

ORSINO.

Not so ; some accident might interpose  
 To rescue him from what is now most sure ;  
 And you are unprovided where to fly,  
 How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen :  
 All is contrived ; success is so assured  
 That—

*Enter* BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

'Tis my brother's voice ! You know me not ?

GIACOMO.

My sister, my lost sister !

BEATRICE.

Lost indeed !

I see Orsino has talked with you, and  
 That you conjecture things too horrible  
 To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,  
 He might return : yet kiss me ; I shall know

That then thou has consented to his death  
 Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,  
 Brotherly love, justice and clemency,  
 And all things that make tender hardest hearts,  
 Make thine hard, brother. Answer not—farewell.

*[Exeunt severally.]*

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SCENE II.

*A mean Apartment in GIACOMO'S House.*

GIACOMO *alone.*

GIACOMO.

'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.

*[Thunder, and the sound of a storm.]*

What! can the everlasting elements  
 Feel with a worm like man? If so, the shaft  
 Of mercy-winged lightning would not fall  
 On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep:  
 They are now living in unmeaning dreams:  
 But I must wake, still doubting if that deed  
 Be just which was most necessary. O,  
 Thou un replenished lamp! whose narrow fire  
 Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge  
 Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,  
 Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,  
 Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,  
 Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be  
 As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks  
 Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:  
 But that no power can fill with vital oil  
 That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood  
 Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold:  
 It is the form that moulded mine, that sinks

Into the white and yellow spasms of death :  
 It is the soul by which mine was arrayed  
 In God's immortal likeness which now stands  
 Naked before Heaven's judgment-seat !

[*A bell strikes.*

One ! Two !

The hours crawl on ; and when my hairs are white  
 My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,  
 Tortured between just hate and vain remorse ;  
 Chiding the tardy messenger of news  
 Like those which I expect. I almost wish  
 He be not dead, although my wrongs are great ;  
 Yet—'tis Orsino's step.

*Enter ORSINO.*

Speak !

ORSINO.

I am come

To say he has escaped.

GIACOMO.

Escaped !

ORSINO.

And safe

Within Petrella. He passed by the spot  
 Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

GIACOMO.

Are we the fools of such contingencies ?  
 And do we waste in blind misgivings thus  
 The hours when we should act ? Then wind and thunder,  
 Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter  
 With which Heaven mocks our weakness ! I henceforth  
 Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done,  
 But my repentance.



ORSINO.

See, the lamp is out.

GIACOMO.

If no remorse is ours when the dim air  
Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail  
When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits  
See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?  
No, I am hardened.

ORSINO.

Why, what need of this?  
Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse  
In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,  
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.  
But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.

GIACOMO (*lighting the lamp*).

And yet, once quenched, I cannot thus relume  
My father's life: do you not think his ghost  
Might plead that argument with God?

ORSINO.

Once gone,  
You cannot now recall your sister's peace;  
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope;  
Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts  
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;  
Nor your dead mother; nor—

GIACOMO.

O, speak no more!  
I am resolved, although this very hand  
Must quench the life that animated it.

ORSINO.

There is no need of that. Listen: you know  
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella



In old Colonna's time ; him whom your' ather  
 Degraded from his post? And Marzio,  
 That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year  
 Of a reward of blood, well earned and due?

GIACOMO.

I knew Olimpio ; and they say he hated  
 Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage  
 His lips grew white only to see him pass.  
 Of Marzio I know nothing.

ORSINO.

Marzio's hate  
 Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,  
 But in your name, and as at your request,  
 To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

GIACOMO.

Only to talk?

ORSINO.

The moments which even now  
 Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour,  
 May memorise their flight with death : ere then  
 They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,  
 And made an end.

GIACOMO.

Listen ! What sound is that ?

ORSINO.

The house-dog moans, and the beams crack : nought else.

GIACOMO.

It is my wife complaining in her sleep :  
 I doubt not she is saying bitter things  
 Of me ; and all my children round her dreaming  
 That I deny them sustenance.



## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle of Petrella.*

*Enter CENCI.*

CENCI.

She comes not ; yet I left her even now  
 Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty  
 Of her delay ; yet what if threats are vain ?  
 Am I not now within Petrella's moat ?  
 Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome ?  
 Might I not drag her by the golden hair ?  
 Stamp on her ? Keep her sleepless, till her brain  
 Be overworn ? Tame her with chains and famine ?  
 Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone  
 What I most seek ! No, 'tis her stubborn will,  
 Which, by its own consent, shall stoop as low  
 As that which drags it down.

*Enter LUCRETIA.*

Thou loathed wretch !  
 Hide thee from my abhorrence ; fly, begone !  
 Yet stay ! Bid Beatrice come hither.

LUCRETIA.

Oh,  
 Husband ! I pray, for thine own wretched sake,  
 Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee  
 Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,

Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.  
 And thou art old ; thy hairs are hoary grey ;  
 As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,  
 Pity thy daughter ; give her to some friend  
 In marriage ; so that she may tempt thee not  
 To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

CENCI.

What ! like her sister, who has found a home  
 To mock my hate from with prosperity ?  
 Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee,  
 And all that yet remain. My death may be  
 Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,  
 Bid her come hither, and before my mood  
 Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.

LUCRETIA.

She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence  
 She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance ;  
 And in that trance she heard a voice which said,  
 " Cenci must die ! Let him confess himself !  
 Even now the accusing angel waits to hear  
 If God, to punish his enormous crimes,  
 Harden his dying heart ! "

CENCI.

Why—such things are :  
 No doubt divine revealings may be made.  
 'Tis plain I have been favoured from above,  
 For when I cursed my sons, they died.—Ay—so—  
 As to the right or wrong, that's talk—repentance—  
 Repentance is an easy moment's work,  
 And more depends on God than me. Well—well—  
 I must give up the greater point, which was  
 To poison and corrupt her soul.

[A pause ; LUCRETIA approaches anxiously, and then shrinks  
 back as he speaks.]

One, two ;

Ay—Rocco and Cristofano my curse  
 Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find  
 Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave:  
 Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,  
 Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo,  
 He is so innocent, I will bequeath  
 The memory of these deeds, and make his youth  
 The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts  
 Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.  
 When all is done, out in the wide Campagna,  
 I will pile up my silver and my gold;  
 My costly robes, paintings, and tapestries;  
 My parchments, and all records of my wealth;  
 And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave  
 Of my possessions nothing but my name;  
 Which shall be an inheritance to strip  
 Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,  
 My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign  
 Into the hands of him who wielded it;  
 Be it for its own punishment or theirs,  
 He will not ask it of me till the lash  
 Be broken in its last and deepest wound;  
 Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,  
 Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make  
 Short work and sure.

[*Going.*

LUCRETIA (*stops him*).

Oh, stay! It was a feint:  
 She had no vision, and she heard no voice.  
 I said it but to awe thee.

CENCI.

That is well.

Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,  
 Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!

For Beatrice, worse terrors are in store,  
To bend her to my will.

LUCRETIA.

Oh! to what will?  
What cruel sufferings, more than she has known,  
Canst thou inflict?

CENCI.

Andrea! go, call my daughter,  
And if she comes not, tell her that I come.  
What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step,  
Through infamies unheard of among men;  
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon  
Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,  
One among which shall be—What? Canst thou guess?  
She shall become (for what she most abhors  
Shall have a fascination to entrap  
Her loathing will), to her own conscious self  
All she appears to others; and when dead,  
As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,  
A rebel to her father and her God,  
Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;  
Her name shall be the terror of the earth;  
Her spirit shall approach the throne of God  
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make  
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

*Enter ANDREA.*

ANDREA.

The lady Beatrice—

CENCI.

Speak, pale slave! What  
Said she?

ANDREA.

My lord, 'twas what she looked; she said:

“Go tell my father that I see the gulf  
Of Hell between us two, which he may pass ;  
I will not.”

[*Exit* ANDREA.]

CENCI.

Go thou quick, Lucretia,  
Tell her to come ; yet let her understand  
Her coming is consent : and say, moreover,  
That if she come not I will curse her.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.]

Ha !

With what but with a father's curse doth God  
Panic-strike armed victory, and make pale  
Cities in their prosperity ? The world's Father  
Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,  
Be he who asks even what men call me.  
Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers  
Awe her before I speak ? For I on them  
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

*Enter* LUCRETIA.

Well ; what ? Speak, wretch !

LUCRETIA.

She said, “ I cannot come ;  
Go tell my father that I see a torrent  
Of his own blood raging between us.”

CENCI (*kneeling*).

God !

Hear me ! If this most specious mass of flesh,  
Which thou hast made my daughter ; this my blood,  
This particle of my divided being ;  
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,  
Whose sight infects and poisons me ; this devil,  
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant



To aught good use ; if her bright loveliness  
 Was kindled to illumine this dark world ;  
 If nursed by thy selectest dew of love,  
 Such virtues blossom in her as should make  
 The peace of life, I pray thee for my sake,  
 As thou the common God and Father art  
 Of her, and me, and all ; reverse that doom !  
 Earth, in the name of God, let her food be  
 Poison, until she be encrusted round  
 With leprous stains ! Heaven, rain upon her head  
 The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,  
 Till she be speckled like a toad ; parch up  
 Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs  
 To loathed lameness ! All-beholding sun,  
 Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes  
 With thine own blinding beams !

LUCRETIA.

Peace ! peace !

For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.  
 When high God grants, he punishes such prayers.

CENCI (*leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards Heaven*).  
 He does his will, I mine ! This in addition,  
 That if she have a child——

LUCRETIA.

Horrible thought !

CENCI.

That if she ever have a child ; and thou,  
 Quick Nature ! I adjure thee by thy God,  
 That thou be fruitful in her, and increase  
 And multiply, fulfilling his command,  
 And my deep imprecation ! May it be  
 A hideous likeness of herself ; that as

From a distorting mirror, she may see  
 Her image mixed with what she most abhors,  
 Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.  
 And that the child may from its infancy  
 Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,  
 Turning her mother's love to misery :  
 And that both she and it may live, until  
 It shall repay her care and pain with hate,  
 Or what may else be more unnatural.  
 So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs  
 Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.  
 Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,  
 Before my words are chronicled in heaven.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.]

I do not feel as if I were a man,  
 But like a fiend appointed to chastise  
 The offences of some unremembered world.  
 My blood is running up and down my veins !  
 A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle :  
 I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe ;  
 My heart is beating with an expectation  
 Of horrid joy.

*Enter* LUCRETIA.

What? Speak!

LUCRETIA.

She bids thee curse ;  
 And if thy curses, as they cannot do,  
 Could kill her soul—

CENCL.

She would not come. 'Tis well,  
 I can do both : first take what I demand,  
 And then extort concession. To thy chamber !  
 Fly ere I spurn thee : and beware this night  
 That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer

To come between the tiger and his prey.

[*Exit* LUCRETIA.]

It must be late ; mine eyes grow weary dim  
 With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.  
 Conscience ! Oh, thou most insolent of lies !  
 They say that sleep, that healing dew of heaven,  
 Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain  
 Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go,  
 First to belie thee with an hour of rest,  
 Which will be deep and calm, I feel ; and then—  
 O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake  
 Thine arches with the laughter of their joy !  
 There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven  
 As o'er an angel fallen ; and upon Earth  
 All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things  
 Shall, with a spirit of unnatural life,  
 Stir and be quickened—even as I am now.

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE II.

*Before the Castle of Petrella.*

*Enter* BEATRICE *and* LUCRETIA *above on the ramparts.*

BEATRICE.

They come not yet.

LUCRETIA.

'Tis scarce midnight.

BEATRICE.

How slow

Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,  
 Lags leaden-footed Time !

LUCRETIA.

The minutes pass—  
If he should wake before the deed is done?

BEATRICE.

O, Mother! He must never wake again.  
What thou hast said persuades me that our act  
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell  
Out of a human form.

LUCRETIA.

'Tis true he spoke  
Of death and judgment with strange confidence  
For one so wicked; as a man believing  
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.  
And yet to die without confession!—

BEATRICE.

Oh!

Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,  
And will not add our dread necessity  
To the amount of his offences.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO, below.*

LUCRETIA.

See,

They come.

BEATRICE.

All mortal things must hasten thus  
To their dark end. Let us go down.

*[Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE from above.]*

OLIMPIO.

How feel you to this work?

MARZIO.

As one who thinks

A thousand crowns excellent market price  
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.

OLIMPIO.

It is the white reflection of your own,  
Which you call pale.

MARZIO.

Is that their natural hue ?

OLIMPIO.

Or 'tis my hate, and the deferred desire  
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

MARZIO.

You are inclined then to this business ?

OLIMPIO.

Ay,

If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns  
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,  
I could not be more willing.

*Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA below.*

Noble ladies !

BEATRICE.

Are ye resolved ?

OLIMPIO.

Is he asleep ?

MARZIO.

Is all

Quiet ?

LUCRETIA.

I mixed an opiate with his drink :  
He sleeps so soundly—

BEATRICE.

That his death will be

But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,  
 A dark continuance of the Hell within him,  
 Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?  
 Ye know it is a high and holy deed?

OLIMPIO.

We are resolved.

MARZIO.

As to the how this act  
 Be warranted, it rests with you.

BEATRICE.

Well, follow!

OLIMPIO.

Hush! Hark! What noise is that?

MARZIO.

Ha! some one comes!

BEATRICE.

Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest  
 Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,  
 Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,  
 That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!  
 And be your steps like mine, light, quick, and bold.

[*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE III.

*An Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA.*

LUCRETIA.

They are about it now.

BEATRICE.

Nay, it is done.

LUCRETIA.

I have not heard him groan.

BEATRICE.

He will not groan.

LUCRETIA.

What sound is that?

BEATRICE.

List! 'tis the tread of feet

About his bed.

LUCRETIA.

My God!

If he be now a cold stiff corpse—

BEATRICE.

O, fear not

What may be done, but what is left undone:

The act seals all.

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

Is it accomplished?

MARZIO.

What?

OLIMPIO.

Did you not call?

BEATRICE.

When?

OLIMPIO.

Now.

BEATRICE.

I ask if all is over?

OLIMPIO.

We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;



His thin grey hair, his stern and reverent brow,  
His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,  
And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,  
Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

MARZIO.

But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,  
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave,  
And leave me the reward. And now my knife  
Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man  
Stirred in his sleep, and said, "God! hear, O hear,  
A father's curse! What, art thou not our father?"  
And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost  
Of my dead father speaking through his lips,  
And could not kill him.

BEATRICE.

Miserable slaves!  
Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,  
Found ye the boldness to return to me  
With such a deed undone? Base palterers!  
Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience  
Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge  
Is an equivocation: it sleeps over  
A thousand daily acts disgracing men;  
And when a deed, where mercy insults Heaven—  
Why do I talk?

*[Snatching a dagger from one of them, and raising it.]*

Hadst thou a tongue to say,  
She murdered her own father, I must do it!  
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

OLIMPIO.

Stop, for God's sake!

MARZIO.

I will go back and kill him.

OLIMPIO.

Give me the weapon, we must do thy will.

BEATRICE.

Take it! Depart! Return!

[*Exeunt OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

How pale thou art!

We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime  
To leave undone.

LUCRETIA.

Would it were done!

BEATRICE.

Even whilst  
That doubt is passing through your mind, the world  
Is conscious of a change. Darkness and hell  
Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth  
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath  
Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied blood  
Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

*Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*

He is—

OLIMPIO.

Dead!

MARZIO.

We strangled him, that there might be no blood;  
And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden  
Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.

BEATRICE (*giving them a bag of coin*).

Here take this gold, and hasten to your homes.  
And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed  
By that which made me tremble, wear thou this!

[*Clothes him in a rich mantle.*

It was the mantle which my grandfather

Wore in his high prosperity, and men  
 Envied his state: so may they envy thine.  
 Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God  
 To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark,  
 If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.

[*A horn is sounded.*]

LUCRETIA.

Hark, 'tis the castle horn: my God! it sounds  
 Like the last trump.

BEATRICE.

Some tedious guest is coming.

LUCRETIA.

The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp  
 Of horses in the court! fly, hide yourselves!

[*Exeunt OLIMPIO and MARZIO.*]

BEATRICE.

Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;  
 I scarcely need to counterfeit it now;  
 The spirit which doth reign within these limbs  
 Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep  
 Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

#### SCENE IV.

*Another Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter on one side the Legate SAVELLA, introduced by a Servant, and  
 on the other LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

SAVELLA.

Lady, my duty to his Holiness  
 Be my excuse that thus unseasonably  
 I break upon your rest. I must speak with  
 Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

LUCRETIA (*in a hurried and confused manner*).

I think he sleeps ;  
 Yet, wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile,  
 He is a wicked and a wrathful man ;  
 Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,  
 Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,  
 It were not well ; indeed it were not well.  
 Wait till day-break,—

(*Aside.*) O, I am deadly sick !

SAVELLA.

I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count  
 Must answer charges of the gravest import,  
 And suddenly ; such my commission is.

LUCRETIA (*with increased agitation*).

I dare not rouse him, I know none who dare ;  
 'Twere perilous ;—you might as safely waken  
 A serpent ; or a corpse in which some fiend  
 Were laid to sleep.

SAVELLA.

Lady, my moments here  
 Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,  
 Since none else dare.

LUCRETIA (*aside*).

O, terror ! O, despair !  
 (*To BERNARDO.*) Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to  
 Your father's chamber.

[*Exeunt SAVELLA and BERNARDO.*]

*Enter* BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

'Tis a messenger  
 Come to arrest the culprit who now stands  
 Before the throne of unappealable God.

Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,  
Acquit our deed.

LUCRETIA.

Oh, agony of fear !

Would that he yet might live ! Even now I heard  
The legate's followers whisper as they passed  
They had a warrant for his instant death.  
All was prepared by unforbidden means,  
Which we must pay so dearly, having done.  
Even now they search the tower, and find the body ;  
Now they suspect the truth ; now they consult,  
Before they come to tax us with the fact ;  
O horrible, 'tis all discovered !

BEATRICE.

Mother,

What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold  
As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child,  
To fear that others know what thou hast done,  
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus  
Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks  
All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,  
And fear no other witness but thy fear.  
For if, as cannot be, some circumstance  
Should rise in accusation, we can blind  
Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,  
Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,  
As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,  
And what may follow now regards not me.  
I am as universal as the light ;  
Free as the earth-surrounding air ; as firm  
As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,  
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock,  
But shakes it not.

[*A cry within and tumult.*]

VOICES.

Murder! Murder! Murder!

*Enter* BERNARDO *and* SAVELLA.SAVELLA (*to his followers*).

Go, search the castle round ; sound the alarm ;  
 Look to the gates, that none escape !

BEATRICE.

What now ?

BERNARDO.

I know not what to say—my father's dead.

BEATRICE.

How, dead? he only sleeps ; you mistake, brother.  
 His sleep is very calm, very like death ;  
 'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.  
 He is not *dead* ?

BERNARDO.

Dead ; murdered !

LUCRETIA (*with extreme agitation*).

Oh, no, no,

He is not murdered, though he may be dead ;  
 I have alone the keys of those apartments.

SAVELLA.

Ha! Is it so ?

BEATRICE.

My lord, I pray excuse us ;  
 We will retire ; my mother is not well ;  
 She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA *and* BEATRICE.]

SAVELLA.

Can you suspect who may have murdered him ?

BERNARDO.

I know not what to think.

SAVELLA.

Can you name any  
Who had an interest in his death ?

BERNARDO.

Alas !

I can name none who had not, and those most  
Who most lament that such a deed is done ;  
My mother, and my sister, and myself.

SAVELLA.

'Tis strange ! There were clear marks of violence.  
I found the old man's body in the moonlight,  
Hanging beneath the window of his chamber  
Among the branches of a pine : he could not  
Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped  
And effortless ; 'tis true there was no blood.—  
Favour me, sir—it much imports your house  
That all should be made clear—to tell the ladies  
That I request their presence.

[*Exit* BERNARDO.]*Enter Guards, bringing in* MARZIO.

GUARD.

We have one.

OFFICER.

My lord, we found this ruffian and another  
Lurking among the rocks ; there is no doubt  
But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci :  
Each had a bag of coin ; this fellow wore  
A gold-inwoven robe, which, shining bright  
Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon,  
Betrayed them to our notice : the other fell  
Desperately fighting.

SAVELLA.

What does he confess ?



OFFICER.

He keeps firm silence ; but these lines found on him  
May speak.

SAVELLA.

Their language is at least sincere.

[*Reads.*

“ TO THE LADY BEATRICE.

“ That the atonement of what my nature sickens to conjecture may soon arrive, I send thee, at thy brother’s desire, those who will speak and do more than I dare write.

“ Thy devoted servant,

“ ORSINO.”

*Enter* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and BERNARDO.

Knowest thou this writing, lady ?

BEATRICE.

No.

SAVELLA.

Nor thou ?

LUCRETIA (*her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation*).

Where was it found ? What is it ? It should be  
Orsino’s hand ! It speaks of that strange horror  
Which never yet found utterance, but which made  
Between that hapless child and her dead father  
A gulf of obscure hatred.

SAVELLA.

Is it so ?

Is it true, lady, that thy father did  
Such outrages as to awaken in thee  
Unfilial hate ?

BEATRICE.

Not hate, ’twas more than hate ;  
This is most true, yet wherefore question me ?

SAVELLA.

There is a deed demanding question done ;  
Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

BEATRICE.

What sayest ? My lord, your words are bold and rash.

SAVELLA.

I do arrest all present in the name  
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

LUCRETIA.

O, not to Rome ! Indeed we are not guilty.

BEATRICE.

Guilty ! Who dares talk of guilt ? My lord,  
I am more innocent of parricide  
Than is a child born fatherless. Dear mother,  
Your gentleness and patience are no shield  
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,  
Which seems, but is not. What ! will human laws,  
Rather will ye who are their ministers,  
Bar all access to retribution first,  
And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do  
What ye neglect, arming familiar things  
To the redress of an unwonted crime,  
Make ye the victims who demanded it  
Culprits ? 'Tis ye are culprits ! That poor wretch  
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,  
If it be true he murdered Cenci, was  
A sword in the right hand of justest God.  
Wherefore should I have wielded it ? unless  
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name,  
God therefore scruples to avenge.

SAVELLA.

You own

That you desired his death ?

BEATRICE.

It would have been  
 A crime no less than his, if for one moment  
 That fierce desire had faded in my heart.  
 'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,  
 Ay, I even knew—for God is wise and just,  
 That some strange sudden death hung over him.  
 'Tis true that this did happen, and most true  
 There was no other rest for me on earth,  
 No other hope in Heaven;—now what of this ?

SAVELLA.

Strange thoughts beget strange deeds ; and here are both :  
 I judge thee not.

BEATRICE.

And yet, if you arrest me,  
 You are the judge and executioner  
 Of that which is the life of life : the breath  
 Of accusation kills an innocent name,  
 And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life,  
 Which is a mask without it. // 'Tis most false  
 That I am guilty of foul parricide ;  
 Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,  
 That other hands have sent my father's soul  
 To ask the mercy he denied to me.  
 Now leave us free : stain not a noble house  
 With vague surmises of rejected crime ;  
 Add to our sufferings and your own neglect  
 No heavier sum ; let them have been enough :  
 Leave us the wreck we have.

SAVELLA.

I dare not, lady.  
 I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome :  
 There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

LUCRETIA.

O, not to Rome ! O, take us not to Rome !

BEATRICE.

Why not to Rome, dear mother ? There, as here,  
 Our innocence is as an armed heel  
 To trample accusation. God is there,  
 As here, and with his shadow ever clothes  
 The innocent, the injured, and the weak ;  
 And such are we. Cheer up, dear lady ! lean  
 On me ; collect your wandering thoughts. My lord,  
 As soon as you have taken some refreshment,  
 And had all such examinations made  
 Upon the spot, as may be necessary  
 To the full understanding of this matter,  
 We shall be ready. Mother, will you come ?

LUCRETIA.

Ha ! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest  
 Self-accusation from our agony !  
 Will Giacomo be there ? Orsino ? Marzio ?  
 All present ; all confronted ; all demanding  
 Each from the other's countenance the thing  
 Which is in every heart ! O, misery !

*[She faints, and is borne out.]*

SAVELLA.

She faints ; an ill appearance this.

BEATRICE.

My lord,

She knows not yet the uses of the world.  
 She fears that power is as a beast which grasps  
 And loosens not : a snake whose look transmutes  
 All things to guilt, which is its nutriment.  
 She cannot know how well the supine slaves

Of blind authority read the truth of things  
When written on a brow of guilelessness :  
She sees not yet triumphant Innocence  
Stand at the judgment-seat of mortal man,  
A judge and an accuser of the wrong  
Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my lord ;  
Our suite will join yours in the court below.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in ORSINO'S Palace.*

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*Enter ORSINO and GIACOMO.*

GIACOMO.

Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?  
O that the vain remorse which must chastise  
Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn,  
As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!  
O that the hour when present had cast off  
The mantle of its mystery, and shown  
The ghastly form with which it now returns  
When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds  
Of conscience to their prey! Alas, alas!  
It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,  
To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

ORSINO.

It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

GIACOMO.

To violate the sacred doors of sleep;  
To cheat kind nature of the placid death  
Which she prepares for overwearied age;  
To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul,  
Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers  
A life of burning crimes—

ORSINO.

You cannot say  
I urged you to the deed.

GIACOMO.

O, had I never  
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance  
The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou  
Never with hints and questions made me look  
Upon the monster of my thought, until  
It grew familiar to desire—

ORSINO.

'Tis thus  
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts  
Upon the abettors of their own resolve;  
Or any thing but their weak, guilty selves.  
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril  
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness  
Of penitence; confess, 'tis fear disguised  
From its own shame that takes the mantle now  
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

GIACOMO.

How can that be? Already Beatrice,  
Lucretia, and the murderer, are in prison.  
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,  
Sent to arrest us.

ORSINO.

I have all prepared  
For instant flight. We can escape even now,  
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

GIACOMO.

Rather expire in tortures, as I may.  
What! will you cast by self-accusing flight  
Assured conviction upon Beatrice?



She who alone, in this unnatural work,  
 Stands like God's angel ministered upon  
 By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong  
 As turns black parricide to piety;  
 Whilst we for basest ends—I fear, Orsino,  
 While I consider all your words and looks,  
 Comparing them with your proposal now,  
 That you must be a villain. For what end  
 Could you engage in such a perilous crime,  
 Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,  
 Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar? No,  
 Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!  
 Coward and slave! But no—defend thyself;

[*Drawing.*

Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue  
 Disdains to brand thee with.

ORSINO.

Put up your weapon.

Is it the desperation of your fear  
 Makes you thus rash and sudden with your friend,  
 Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger  
 Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed  
 Was but to try you. As for me, I think  
 Thankless affection led me to this point,  
 From which, if my firm temper could repent,  
 I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak,  
 The ministers of justice wait below:  
 They grant me these brief moments. Now, if you  
 Have any word of melancholy comfort  
 To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass  
 Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

GIACOMO.

Oh, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me?  
 Would that my life could purchase thine!

ORSINO.

That wish

Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well!  
Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor?

[*Exit GIACOMO.*]

I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting  
At his own gate, and such was my contrivance  
That I might rid me both of him and them.  
I thought to act a solemn comedy  
Upon the painted scene of this new world,  
And to attain my own peculiar ends  
By some such plot of mingled good and ill  
As others weave; but there arose a Power  
Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device,  
And turned it to a net of ruin—Ha!

[*A shout is heard.*]

Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad?  
But I will pass, wrapt in a vile disguise;  
Rags on my back, and a false innocence  
Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd,  
Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then,  
For a new name, and for a country new,  
And a new life, fashioned on old desires,  
To change the honours of abandoned Rome.  
And these must be the masks of that within,  
Which must remain unaltered.—Oh, I fear  
That what is past will never let me rest!  
Why, when none else is conscious, but myself,  
Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt  
Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly  
My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave  
Of—what? A word! which those of this false world  
Employ against each other, not themselves;  
As men wear daggers not for self-offence.  
But if I am mistaken, where shall I

Find the disguise to hide me from myself,  
As now I skulk from every other eye?

[*Exit.*]

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SCENE II.

*A Hall of Justice.*

CAMILLO, JUDGES, *etc.*, are discovered seated ; MARZIO is led in.

FIRST JUDGE.

Accused, do you persist in your denial?  
I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?  
I demand who were the participators  
In your offence? Speak truth, and the whole truth.

MARZIO.

My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing;  
Olimpio sold the robe to me from which  
You would infer my guilt.

SECOND JUDGE.

Away with him!

FIRST JUDGE.

Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss,  
Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,  
That you would bandy lovers' talk with it,  
Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

MARZIO.

Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.

FIRST JUDGE.

Then speak.

MARZIO.

I strangled him in his sleep.

FIRST JUDGE.

Who urged you to it?

MARZIO.

His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate  
 Orsino sent me to Petrella; there  
 The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia  
 Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I  
 And my companion forthwith murdered him.  
 Now let me die.

FIRST JUDGE.

This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,  
 Lead forth the prisoners.

*Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded.*

Look upon this man;  
 When did you see him last?

BEATRICE.

We never saw him.

MARZIO.

You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

BEATRICE.

I know thee! How! where? when?

MARZIO.

You know 'twas I  
 Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes  
 To kill your father. When the thing was done,  
 You clothed me in a robe of woven gold,  
 And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.  
 You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,  
 You know that what I speak is true.

*[BEATRICE advances towards him; he covers his face, and  
 shrinks back.]*

Oh, dart

The terrible resentment of those eyes  
On the dread earth! Turn them away from me!  
They wound: 'twas torture forced the truth. My lords,  
Having said this, let me be led to death.

BEATRICE.

Poor wretch, I pity thee: yet stay awhile.

CAMILLO.

Guards, lead him not away.

BEATRICE.

Cardinal Camillo,

You have a good repute for gentleness  
And wisdom: can it be that you sit here  
To countenance a wicked farce like this?  
When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged  
From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart,  
And bade to answer, not as he believes,  
But as those may suspect or do desire,  
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply:  
And that in peril of such hideous torments  
As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now  
The thing you surely know, which is, that you,  
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,  
And you were told, "Confess that you did poison  
Your little nephew: that fair blue-eyed child  
Who was the load-star of your life;" and though  
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,  
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,  
And all the things hoped for or done therein,  
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,  
Yet you would say, "I confess anything"—  
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,  
The refuge of dishonourable death.  
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert  
My innocence.

CAMILLO (*much moved*).

What shall we think, my lords?  
Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen  
Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul  
That she is guiltless.

JUDGE.

Yet she must be tortured.

CAMILLO.

I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew  
(If he now lived, he would be just her age;  
His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes  
Like hers in shape, but blue, and not so deep :)  
As that most perfect image of God's love  
That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.  
She is as pure as speechless infancy!

JUDGE.

Well, be her purity on your head, my lord,  
If you forbid the rack. His Holiness  
Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime  
By the severest forms of law; nay, even  
To stretch a point against the criminals.  
The prisoners stand accused of parricide,  
Upon such evidence as justifies  
Torture.

BEATRICE.

What evidence? This man's?

JUDGE.

Even so.

BEATRICE (*to MARZIO*).

Come near. And who art thou, thus chosen forth  
Out of the multitude of living men,  
To kill the innocent?

MARZIO.

I am Marzio,

Thy father's vassal.



BEATRICE.

Fix thine eyes on mine ;  
Answer to what I ask.

[*Turning to the Judges.*]

I prithee mark  
His countenance : unlike bold calumny,  
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,  
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends  
His gaze on the blind earth.

(*To MARZIO.*) What ! wilt thou say  
That I did murder my own father ?

MARZIO.

Oh !

Spare me ! My brain swims round—I cannot speak—  
It was that horrid torture forced the truth.  
Take me away ! Let her not look on me !  
I am a guilty miserable wretch !  
I have said all I know ; now, let me die !

BEATRICE.

My lords, if by my nature I had been  
So stern, as to have planned the crime alleged,  
Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,  
And the rack makes him utter, do you think  
I should have left this two-edged instrument  
Of my misdeed ; this man ; this bloody knife,  
With my own name engraven on the heft,  
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,  
For my own death ? That with such horrible need  
For deepest silence, I should have neglected  
So trivial a precaution, as the making  
His tomb the keeper of a secret written  
On a thief's memory ? What is his poor life ?  
What are a thousand lives ? A parricide



Had trampled them like dust ; and see, he lives !

[Turning to MARZIO.

And thou—

MARZIO.

Oh, spare me ! Speak to me no more !  
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,  
Wound worse than torture.

(To the Judges.) I have told it all ;  
For pity's sake lead me away to death.

CAMILLO.

Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice,  
He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf  
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

BEATRICE.

Oh, thou who tremblest on the giddy verge  
Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me ;  
So mayst thou answer God with less dismay :  
What evil have we done thee ? I, alas !  
Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,  
And so my lot was ordered, that a father  
First turned the moments of awakening life  
To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope ; and then  
Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul,  
And my untainted fame ; and even that peace  
Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart.  
But the wound was not mortal ; so my hate  
Became the only worship I could lift  
To our great Father, who in pity and love,  
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off ;  
And thus his wrong becomes my accusation :  
And art thou the accuser ? If thou hopest  
Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth :  
Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.  
If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path

Over the trampled laws of God and man,  
 Rush not before thy Judge, and say: "My Maker,  
 I have done this and more; for there was one  
 Who was most pure and innocent on earth;  
 And because she endured what never any,  
 Guilty or innocent, endured before;  
 Because her wrongs could not be told, nor thought;  
 Because thy hand at length did rescue her;  
 I with my words killed her and all her kin."  
 Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay  
 The reverence living in the minds of men  
 Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame!  
 Think what it is to strangle infant pity,  
 Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,  
 Till it become a crime to suffer. Think  
 What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood  
 All that which shows like innocence, and is,—  
 Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent,—  
 So that the world lose all discrimination  
 Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,  
 And that which now compels thee to reply  
 To what I ask: Am I, or am I not  
 A parricide?

MARZIO.

Thou art not!

JUDGE.

What is this?

MARZIO.

I here declare those whom I did accuse  
 Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

JUDGE.

Drag him away to torments; let them be  
 Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds

Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not  
Till he confess.

MARZIO.

Torture me as ye will :  
A keener pain has wrung a higher truth  
From my last breath. She is most innocent !  
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me !  
I will not give you that fine piece of nature  
To rend and ruin.

[*Exit MARZIO, guarded.*]

CAMILLO.

What say ye now, my lords ?

JUDGE.

Let tortures strain the truth till it be white  
As snow thrice-sifted by the frozen wind.

CAMILLO.

Yet stained with blood.

JUDGE (*to BEATRICE*).

Know you this paper, lady ?

BEATRICE.

Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here  
As my accuser ! Ha ! wilt thou be he,  
Who art my judge ? Accuser, witness, judge,  
What, all in one ? Here is Orsino's name ;  
Where is Orsino ? Let his eye meet mine.  
What means this scrawl ? Alas ! ye know not what,  
And therefore on the chance that it may be  
Some evil, will ye kill us ?

*Enter an Officer.*

OFFICER.

Marzio's dead.

JUDGE.

What did he say ?

OFFICER.

Nothing. As soon as we  
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,  
As one who baffles a deep adversary ;  
And holding his breath, died.

JUDGE.

There remains nothing  
But to apply the question to those prisoners,  
Who yet remain stubborn.

CAMILLO.

I overrule  
Further proceedings, and in the behalf  
Of these most innocent and noble persons  
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

JUDGE.

Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile  
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells ;  
And be the engines ready : for this night,  
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,  
Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth  
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III.

*The Cell of a Prison.**BEATRICE is discovered asleep on a couch.**Enter BERNARDO.*

BERNARDO.

How gently slumber rests upon her face,  
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent,  
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.

After such torments as she bore last night,  
 How light and soft her breathing comes. Ah, me!  
 Methinks that I shall never sleep again.  
 But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest  
 From this sweet folded flower, thus—wake; awake;  
 What, sister, canst thou sleep?

BEATRICE (*awaking*).

I was just dreaming  
 That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest  
 This cell seems like a kind of Paradise  
 After our father's presence.

BERNARDO.

Dear, dear sister,  
 Would that thy dream were not a dream! O, God!  
 How shall I tell?

BEATRICE.

What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

BERNARDO.

Look not so calm and happy, or, even whilst  
 I stand considering what I have to say,  
 My heart will break.

BEATRICE.

See now, thou mak'st me weep:  
 How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,  
 If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

BERNARDO.

They have confessed; they could endure no more  
 The tortures—

BEATRICE.

Ha! What was there to confess?  
 They must have told some weak and wicked lie  
 To flatter their tormentors. Have they said  
 That they were guilty? O white innocence,

That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide  
Thine awful and serenest countenance  
From those who know thee not!

*Enter JUDGE, with LUCRETIA and GIACOMO, guarded.*

Ignoble hearts!

For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least  
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,  
Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust?  
And that eternal honour which should live  
Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,  
Changed to a mockery and a by-word? What!  
Will you give up these bodies to be dragged  
At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep  
The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,  
Who, that they may make our calamity  
Their worship and their spectacle, will leave  
The churches and the theatres as void  
As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude  
Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,  
Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,  
Upon us as we pass, to pass away,  
And leave—what memory of our having been?  
Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou,  
Who wert a mother to the parentless,  
Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!  
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,  
And let us each be silent as a corpse;  
It soon will be as soft as any grave.  
'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear  
Makes the rack cruel.

GIACOMO.

They will tear the truth  
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:  
For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.



LUCRETIA.

O, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die;  
 And after death, God is our judge, not they;  
 He will have mercy on us.

BERNARDO.

If indeed  
 It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;  
 And then the Pope will surely pardon you,  
 And all be well.

JUDGE.

Confess, or I will warp  
 Your limbs with such keen tortures—

BEATRICE.

Tortures! Turn  
 The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel!  
 Torture your dog, that he may tell when last  
 He lapped the blood his master shed—not me!  
 My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,  
 And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul,  
 Which weeps within tears as of burning gall  
 To see, in this ill world where none are true,  
 My kindred false to their deserted selves.  
 And with considering all the wretched life  
 Which I have lived, and its now wretched end;  
 And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth  
 To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,  
 And what slaves these; and what a world we make,  
 The oppressor and the oppressed—such pangs compel  
 My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?

JUDGE.

Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

BEATRICE.

Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God



That he permitted such an act as that  
 Which I have suffered, and which he beheld ;  
 Made it unutterable, and took from it  
 All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,  
 But that which thou hast called my father's death ?  
 Which is or is not what men call a crime,  
 Which either I have done, or have not done ;  
 Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.  
 If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,  
 And so an end of all. Now do your will ;  
 No other pains shall force another word.

JUDGE.

She is convicted, but has not confessed.  
 Be it enough. Until their final sentence  
 Let none have converse with them. You, young lord,  
 Linger not here !

BEATRICE.

O, tear him not away !

JUDGE.

Guards ! do your duty.

BERNARDO (*embracing* BEATRICE).

Oh ! would ye divide  
 Body from soul ?

OFFICER.

That is the headsman's business.  
 [*Exeunt all but* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, *and* GIACOMO.

GIACOMO.

Have I confessed ? Is it all over now ?  
 No hope ? No refuge ? O weak, wicked tongue,  
 Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been  
 Cut out and thrown to dogs first ! To have killed  
 My father first, and then betrayed my sister ;

Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure  
 In this black, guilty world, to that which I  
 So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!  
 Destitute, helpless; and I—Father! God!  
 Canst thou forgive even the unforgiving,  
 When their full hearts break thus, thus?—

*[Covers his face and weeps.]*

LUCRETIA.

O, my child!

To what a dreadful end are we all come!  
 Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain  
 Those torments? Oh! that I were all dissolved  
 Into these fast and unavailing tears,  
 Which flow and feel not!

BEATRICE.

What 'twas weak to do,  
 'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;  
 Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made  
 Our speedy act the angel of his wrath,  
 Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.  
 Let us not think that we shall die for this.  
 Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,  
 You had a manly heart. Bear up! bear up!  
 Oh! dearest lady, put your gentle head  
 Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:  
 Your eyes look pale, hollow, and overworn,  
 With heaviness of watching and slow grief.  
 Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,  
 Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,  
 Some outworn and unused monotony,  
 Such as our country gossips sing and spin,  
 Till they almost forget they live: lie down!  
 So; that will do. Have I forgot the words?  
 Faith! they are sadder than I thought they were.

## SONG.

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep  
 When my life is laid asleep?  
 Little cares for a smile or a tear,  
 The clay-cold corpse upon the bier;  
 Farewell! Heigh ho!  
 What is this whispers low?  
 There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;  
 And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep! were death like to thee,  
 Or if thou couldst mortal be,  
 I would close these eyes of pain;  
 When to wake? Never again.  
 O World! farewell!  
 Listen to the passing bell!  
 It says, thou and I must part,  
 With a light and a heavy heart.

[*The scene closes.*]

## SCENE IV.

*A Hall of the Prison.*

*Enter CAMILLO and BERNARDO.*

## CAMILLO.

The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.  
 He looked as calm and keen as is the engine  
 Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself  
 From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,  
 A rite, a law, a custom; not a man.  
 He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick  
 Of his machinery, on the advocates  
 Presenting the defences, which he tore  
 And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice:  
 "Which among ye defended their old father

Killed in his sleep?" Then to another: "Thou  
Dost this in virtue of thy place; 'tis well."  
He turned to me then, looking deprecation,  
And said these three words, coldly: "They must die."

BERNARDO.

And yet you left him not?

CAMILLO.

I urged him still;  
Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong  
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.  
And he replied, "Paolo Santa Croce  
Murdered his mother yester evening,  
And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife,  
That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young  
Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.  
Authority, and power, and hoary hair  
Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,  
You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment;  
Here is their sentence; never see me more  
Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled."

BERNARDO.

O, God, not so! I did believe indeed  
That all you said was but sad preparation  
For happy news. O, there are words and looks  
To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them,  
Now I forget them at my dearest need.  
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe  
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?  
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain  
With my perpetual cries, until in rage  
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample  
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood  
May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,

And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!  
O, wait till I return!

[*Rushes out.*]

CAMILLO.

Alas! poor boy!  
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray  
To the deaf sea.

*Enter* LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, *guarded.*

BEATRICE.

I hardly dare to fear  
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

CAMILLO.

May God in heaven be less inexorable  
To the Pope's prayers, than he has been to mine.  
Here is the sentence and the warrant.

BEATRICE (*wildly*).

Oh,

My God! Can it be possible I have  
To die so suddenly? So young to go  
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!  
To be nailed down into a narrow place;  
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more  
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again  
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost!  
How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be—  
What? O, where am I? Let me not go mad!  
Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be  
No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;  
The wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!  
If all things then should be—my father's spirit,  
His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me;  
The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!  
If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,

Even the form which tortured me on earth,  
 Masked in grey hairs and wrinkles, he should come,  
 And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix  
 His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!  
 For was he not alone omnipotent  
 On Earth, and ever present? even though dead,  
 Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,  
 And work for me and mine still the same ruin,  
 Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned  
 To teach the laws of death's untrodden realm?  
 Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,  
 O, whither, whither?

LUCRETIA.

Trust in God's sweet love,  
 The tender promises of Christ: ere night  
 Think we shall be in Paradise.

BEATRICE.

'Tis past!  
 Whatever comes, my heart shall sink no more.  
 And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:  
 How tedious, false, and cold seem all things! I  
 Have met with much injustice in this world;  
 No difference has been made by God or man,  
 Or any power moulding my wretched lot,  
 'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.  
 I am cut off from the only world I know,  
 From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.  
 You do well telling me to trust in God;  
 I hope I do trust in him. In whom else  
 Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

*[During the latter speeches GIACOMO has retired conversing  
 with CAMILLO, who now goes out; GIACOMO advances.]*

GIACOMO.

Know you not, mother—sister, know you not?



Bernardo even now is gone to implore  
The Pope to grant our pardon.

LUCRETIA.

Child, perhaps  
It will be granted. We may all then live  
To make these woes a tale for distant years :  
O, what a thought ! It gushes to my heart  
Like the warm blood.

BEATRICE.

Yet both will soon be cold :  
O, trample out that thought ! Worse than despair,  
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope :  
It is the only ill which can find place  
Upon the giddy, sharp, and narrow hour  
Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost  
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring :  
Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch  
Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free ;  
Now stench and blackness yawns, like death. O, plead  
With famine, or wind-walking pestilence,  
Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man !  
Cruel, cold, formal man ; righteous in words,  
In deeds a Cain. No, mother, we must die :  
Since such is the reward of innocent lives ;  
Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.  
And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,  
Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears  
To death as to life's sleep ; 'twere just the grave  
Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death,  
And wind me in thine all-embracing arms !  
Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,  
And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.  
Live ye, who live, subject to one another  
As we were once, who now—



*BERNARDO rushes in.*

BERNARDO.

O, horrible!

That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,  
 Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,  
 Should all be vain! The ministers of death  
 Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw  
 Blood on the face of one—what if 'twere fancy?  
 Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth  
 Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off  
 As if 'twere only rain. O, life! O, world!  
 Cover me! let me be no more! To see  
 That perfect mirror of pure innocence  
 Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,  
 Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,  
 Who made all lovely thou didst look upon—  
 Thee, light of life—dead, dark! while I say, sister,  
 To hear I have no sister; and thou, mother,  
 Whose love was a bond to all our loves—  
 Dead! The sweet bond broken!

*Enter CAMILLO and Guards.*

They come! Let me

Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves  
 Are blighted—white—cold. Say farewell, before  
 Death chokes that gentle voice! O let me hear  
 You speak!

BEATRICE.

Farewell, my tender brother. Think  
 Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:  
 And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee  
 Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,  
 But tears and patience. One thing more, my child:  
 For thine own sake be constant to the love

Thou bearest us ; and to the faith that I,  
 Though wrapt in a strange cloud of crime and shame,  
 Lived ever holy and unstained. And though  
 Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name  
 Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow  
 For men to point at as they pass, do thou  
 Forbear, and never think a thought unkind  
 Of those who perhaps love thee in their graves.  
 So mayest thou die as I do ; fear and pain  
 Being subdued. Farewell ! Farewell ! Farewell !

BERNARDO.

I cannot say farewell !

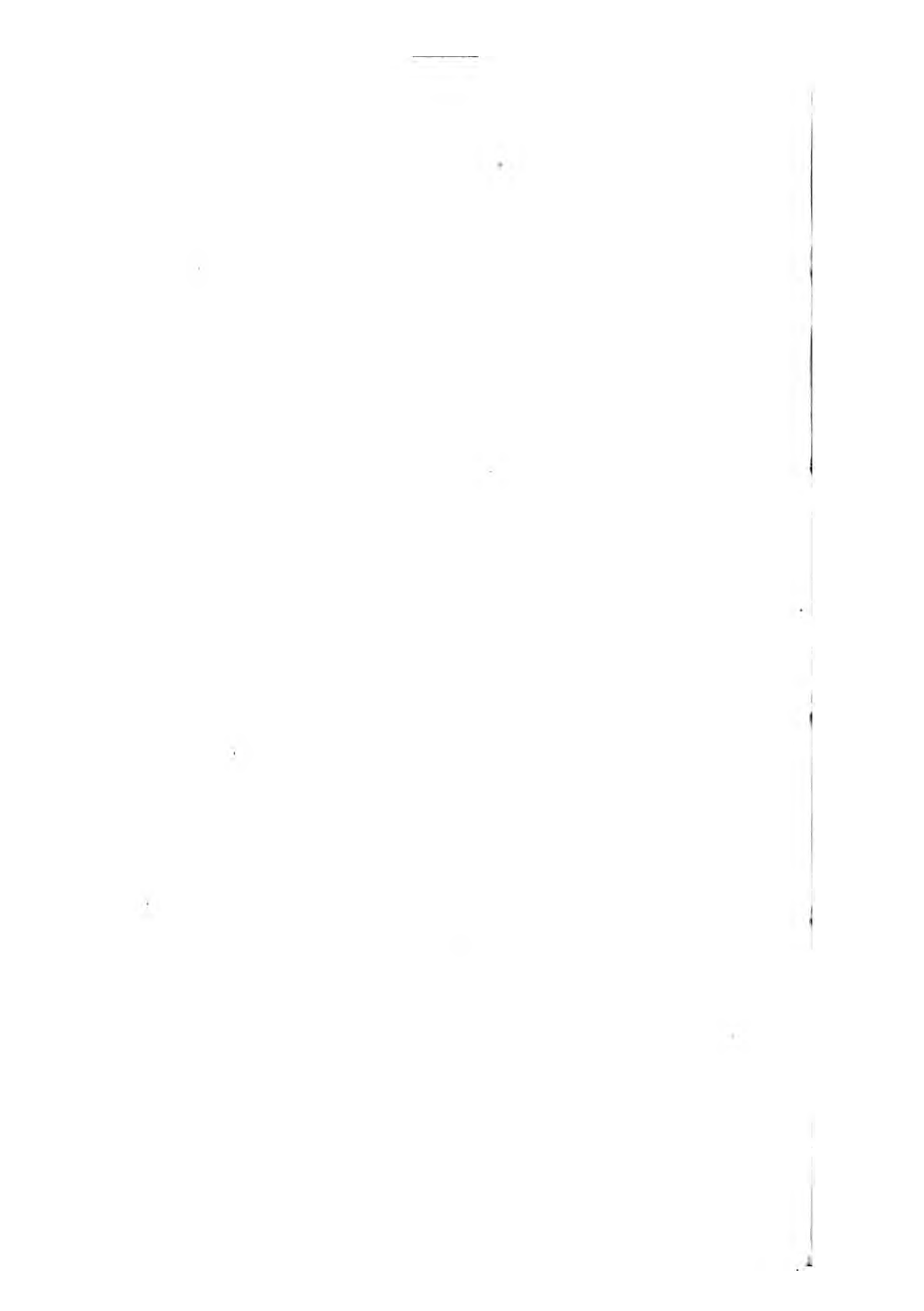
CAMILLO.

O, Lady Beatrice !

BEATRICE.

Give yourself no unnecessary pain,  
 My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, mother, tie  
 My girdle for me, and bind up this hair  
 In any simple knot : ay, that does well.  
 And yours I see is coming down. How often  
 Have we done this for one another ! now  
 We shall not do it any more. My lord,  
 We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.

END OF THE CENCI.



## NOTE ON THE CENCI.

BY THE EDITOR.

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THE sort of mistake that Shelley made, as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy—he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and, above all, though at that time not exactly aware of the fact, I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition, that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot, or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote *The Cenci*.

On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived

himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective in this portion of imagination—it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others—though he laid great store by it, as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract—too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself, for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I., and he had written to me, “Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of *St. Leon* begins with this proud and true sentiment, ‘There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute.’ Shakespeare was only a human being.” These words were written in 1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of *The Cenci*. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her appalling story. Shelley’s imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt

my incompetence ; but I entreated him to write it instead ; and he began and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth, never, alas ! through his untimely death, worked to its depths—his richly-gifted mind.

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss\*. Some friends of ours were residing in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a podere ; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fire-flies flashed from among the myrtle

\* Such feelings haunted him when, in *The Cenci*, he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of

that fair blue-eyed child,  
Who was the load-star of your life.

And say—

All see, since his most piteous death,  
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,  
And all the things hoped for, or done therein,  
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.



hedges :—nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

At the top of the house, there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed. This one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed ; this Shelley made his study ; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean ; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became water-spouts, that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward, and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other ; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of *The Cenci*. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius ; but it shows his judgment and originality, that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of *The Cenci* ; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage to which he himself alludes, as suggested by one in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*.

Shelley wished *The Cenci* to be acted. He was not a play-goer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he



saw Miss O'Neil several times ; she was then in the zenith of her glory, and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, and sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote, and when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend in London:—

“The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions ; I have attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian MS. on which my play is founded ; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately ; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed, as an acting play, hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection, considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it\*.

\* In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci's worst crime. Every one knew what it must

“I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or not. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present; founding my hopes on this, that as a composition it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of ‘Remorse;’ that the interest of the plot is incredibly greater and more real, and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed this is essential, deeply essential to its success. After it had been acted and successfully, (could I hope for such a thing) I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

“What I want you to do, is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O’Neil, and it might even seem to have been written for her, (God forbid that I should see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces) and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play—that is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor.”

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable, that he could not even submit the part to Miss O’Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some

be, but it was never imaged in words—the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci’s curse, beginning,

“That if she have a child,” &c.

other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to insure its correctness ; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text, when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped *The Cenci* as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said : " I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition ; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, *words, words.*" There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout ; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding from vehement struggle to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly, to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful, that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph ; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his

mind went the other way ; and even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments with regard to human nature and its destiny ; a desire to diffuse which, was the master passion of his soul.

# HELLAS ;

A Lyrical Drama.

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MANTIS EIM' ESΘAON 'AFONON.

ŒDIP. COLON.

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO,

LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA,

THE DRAMA OF HELLAS

IS INSCRIBED,

AS AN IMPERFECT TOKEN OF THE ADMIRATION, SYMPATHY,  
AND FRIENDSHIP

OF

THE AUTHOR.

PISA, *November* 1, 1821.

## PREFACE.

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THE poem of "Hellas," written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama, from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets, who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The *Persæ* of Æschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended, forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilisation and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment



greater than the loss of such a reward which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only *goat-song* which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected, or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalised by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilised world, to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilisation—rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institutions as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belong-

ing to our kind ; and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders, and that below the level of ordinary degradation ; let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease, as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of "Anastatius" could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes ; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The university of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution, eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country, with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity, and civilisation.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece ; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other, until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turks ;—but when was the oppressor generous or just ?

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world

waits only the news of a revolution of Germany, to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness, precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe ; and that enemy well knows the power and cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division, to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

# HELLAS.

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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MAHMUD,		DAOOD,
HASSAN,		AHASUERUS, <i>a Jew.</i>

CHORUS of Greek Captive Women.  
*Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants.*

SCENE—Constantinople. TIME—Sunset.

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SCENE, a Terrace, on the Seraglio.

MAHMUD (*sleeping*), an Indian slave sitting beside his Couch.

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN.

We strew these opiate flowers  
On thy restless pillow,—  
They were stript from Orient bowers,  
By the Indian billow.  
Be thy sleep  
Calm and deep,  
Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

INDIAN.

Away, unlovely dreams!  
Away, false shapes of sleep!  
Be his, as Heaven seems,  
Clear, and bright, and deep!

Soft as love, and calm as death,  
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

## CHORUS.

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden  
With the soul of slumber;  
It was sung by a Samian maiden,  
Whose lover was of the number  
Who now keep  
That calm sleep  
Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

## INDIAN.

I touch thy temples pale!  
I breathe my soul on thee!  
And could my prayers avail,  
All my joy should be  
Dead, and I would live to weep,  
So thou might'st win one hour of quiet sleep.

## CHORUS.

Breathe low, low,  
The spell of the mighty mistress now!  
When Conscience lulls her sated snake,  
And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.  
Breathe low, low,  
The words, which, like secret fire, shall flow  
Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

## SEMICHORUS I.

Life may change, but it may fly not;  
Hope may vanish, but can die not;  
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;  
Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

## SEMICHORUS II.

Yet were life a charnel, where  
Hope lay confined with Despair;

Yet were truth a sacred lie,  
Love were lust—

## SEMICHORUS I.

If Liberty  
Lent not life its soul of light,  
Hope its iris of delight,  
Truth its prophet's robe to wear,  
Love its power to give and bear.

## CHORUS.

In the great morning of the world,  
The spirit of God with might unfurled  
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,  
And all its banded anarchs fled,  
Like vultures frightened from Imaus,  
Before an earthquake's tread.—  
So from Time's tempestuous dawn  
Freedom's splendour burst and shone :—  
Thermopylæ and Marathon  
Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,  
The springing Fire.—The winged glory  
On Philippi half-alighted,  
Like an eagle on a promontory.  
Its unwearied wings could fan  
The quenchless ashes of Milan.  
From age to age, from man to man  
It lived ; and lit from land to land  
Florence, Albion, Switzerland.  
Then night fell ; and, as from night,  
Re-assuming fiery flight,  
From the West swift Freedom came,  
Against the course of heaven and doom,  
A second sun arrayed in flame,  
To burn, to kindle, to illumine.

From far Atlantis its young beams  
 Chased the shadows and the dreams.  
 France, with all her sanguine steams,  
     Hid, but quenched it not ; again  
     Through clouds its shafts of glory rain  
     From utmost Germany to Spain.  
 As an eagle fed with morning  
 Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,  
 When she seeks her aerie hanging  
     In the mountain-cedar's hair,  
 And her brood expect the clanging  
     Of her wings through the wild air,  
 Sick with famine ;—Freedom, so  
 To what of Greece remaineth now  
 Returns ; her hoary ruins glow  
 Like orient mountains lost in day ;  
     Beneath the safety of her wings  
 Her renovated nurselings play,  
     And in the naked lightnings  
 Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.  
 Let Freedom leave, where'er she flies,  
 A Desert, or a Paradise ;  
     Let the beautiful and the brave  
     Share her glory, or a grave.

SEMICHORUS I.

With the gifts of gladness  
     Greece did thy cradle strew ;

SEMICHORUS II.

With the tears of sadness  
     Greece did thy shroud bedew ;

SEMICHORUS I.

With an orphan's affection  
     She followed thy bier through time !



SEMICHORUS II.

And at thy resurrection  
Re-appeareth, like thou, sublime !

SEMICHORUS I.

If Heaven should resume thee,  
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend ;

SEMICHORUS II.

If Hell should entomb thee,  
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

SEMICHORUS I.

If Annihilation—

SEMICHORUS II.

Dust let her glories be ;  
And a name and a nation  
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee !

INDIAN.

His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not !  
He starts—he shudders ;—ye that love not,  
With your panting loud and fast  
Have awakened him at last.

MAHMUD (*starting from his sleep*).

Man the Seraglio-guard ! make fast the gate.  
What ! from a cannonade of three short hours ?  
'Tis false ! that breach towards the Bosphorus  
Cannot be practicable yet—Who stirs ?  
Stand to the match ; that when the foe prevails,  
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin  
The conqueror and the conquered ! Heave the tower  
Into the gap—wrench off the roof.

*Enter* HASSAN.

Ha ! what !

The truth of day lightens upon my dream,  
And I am Mahmud still.

HASSAN.

Your Sublime Highness  
Is strangely moved.

MAHMUD.

The times do cast strange shadows  
On those who watch and who must rule their course,  
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,  
Be whelmed in the fierce ebb :—and these are of them.  
Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me  
As thus from sleep into the troubled day ;  
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,  
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.  
Would that—no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest  
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle  
Of strange and secret and forgotten things.  
I bade thee summon him :—'tis said his tribe  
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

HASSAN.

The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old  
He seems to have outlived a world's decay ;  
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean  
Seem younger still than he ; his hair and beard  
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow ;  
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries  
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct  
With light, and to the soul that quickens them  
Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift  
To the winter wind :—but from his eye looks forth  
A life of unconsumed thought, which pierces  
The present, and the past, and the to-come.  
Some say that this is he whom the great prophet  
Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery,

Mocked with the curse of immortality.  
 Some feign that he is Enoch ; others dream  
 He was pre-adamite, and has survived  
 Cycles of generation and of ruin.  
 The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence,  
 And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,  
 Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,  
 In years outstretched beyond the date of man,  
 May have attained to sovereignty and science  
 Over those strong and secret things and thoughts  
 Which others fear and know not.

MAHMUD.

I would talk

With this old Jew.

HASSAN.

Thy will is even now  
 Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern  
 'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible  
 Than thou or God ! He who would question him  
 Must sail alone at sun-set, where the stream  
 Of ocean sleeps around those foamless isles  
 When the young moon is westering as now,  
 And evening airs wander upon the wave ;  
 And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,  
 Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow  
 Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water,  
 Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud,  
 Ahasuerus ! and the caverns round  
 Will answer, Ahasuerus ! If his prayer  
 Be granted, a faint meteor will arise,  
 Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind  
 Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,  
 And with the wind a storm of harmony  
 Unutterably sweet, and pilot him  
 Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus :

Thence, at the hour and place and circumstance  
 Fit for the matter of their conference,  
 The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare,  
 Win the desired communion—but that shout  
 Bodes— [*A shout within.*]

MAHMUD.

Evil, doubtless ; like all human sounds.  
 Let me converse with spirits.

HASSAN.

That shout again.

MAHMUD.

This Jew whom thou hast summoned—

HASSAN.

Will be here—

MAHMUD.

When the omnipotent hour, to which are yoked  
 He, I, and all things, shall compel—enough.  
 Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew  
 That crowd about the pilot in the storm.  
 Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!  
 They weary me, and I have need of rest.  
 Kings are like stars—they rise and set, they have  
 The worship of the world, but no repose. [*Exeunt severally.*]

CHORUS.

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever  
 From creation to decay,  
 Like the bubbles on a river,  
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away.  
 But they are still immortal  
 Who, through birth's orient portal,  
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,  
 Clothe their unceasing flight  
 In the brief dust and light  
 Gathered around their chariots as they go ;

New shapes they still may weave,  
 New Gods, new laws receive,  
 Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last  
 On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God ;  
 A Promethean conqueror came ;  
 Like a triumphal path he trod  
 The thorns of death and shame.  
 A mortal shape to him  
 Was like the vapour dim  
 Which the orient planet animates with light ;  
 Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,  
 Like blood-hounds mild and tame,  
 Nor preyed until their lord had taken flight.  
 The moon of Mahomet  
 Arose, and it shall set :  
 While blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon  
 The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep  
 From one whose dreams are paradise,  
 Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,  
 And day peers forth with her blank eyes ;  
 So fleet, so faint, so fair,  
 The Powers of earth and air  
 Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem :  
 Apollo, Pan, and Love,  
 And even Olympian Jove  
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them.  
 Our hills, and seas, and streams,  
 Dispeopled of their dreams,  
 Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,  
 Wailed for the golden years.

*Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, and others.*

MAHMUD.

More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory,  
And shall I sell it for defeat?

DAOOD.

The Janizars

Clamour for pay.

MAHMUD.

Go! bid them pay themselves  
With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins  
Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?  
No infidel children to impale on spears?  
No hoary priests after that Patriarch  
Who bent the curse against his country's heart,  
Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill!  
Blood is the seed of gold.

DAOOD.

It has been sown,  
And yet the harvest to the sickle-men  
Is as a grain to each.

MAHMUD.

Then take this signet,  
Unlock the seventh chamber, in which lie  
The treasures of victorious Solyman.  
An empire's spoils stored for a day of ruin.  
O spirit of my sires! is it not come?  
The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep;  
But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,  
Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;  
Then lead them to the rivers of fresh death.

*[Exit DAOOD.]*

Oh! miserable dawn, after a night  
More glorious than the day which it usurped!  
O, faith in God! O, power on earth! O, word



Of the great Prophet, whose overshadowing wings  
 Darkened the thrones and idols of the west,  
 Now bright!—For thy sake cursed be the hour,  
 Even as a father by an evil child,  
 When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph  
 From Caucasus to white Ceraunia !  
 Ruin above, and anarchy below ;  
 Terror without, and treachery within ;  
 The chalice of destruction full, and all  
 Thirsting to drink ; and who among us dares  
 To dash it from his lips ? and where is Hope ?

## HASSAN.

The lamp of our dominion still rides high ;  
 One God is God—Mahomet is his Prophet.  
 Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits  
 Of utmost Asia, irresistibly  
 Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry,  
 But not like them to weep their strength in tears ;  
 They have destroying lightning, and their step  
 Wakes earthquake, to consume and overwhelm,  
 And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,  
 Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen  
 With horrent arms, and lofty ships, even now,  
 Like vapours anchored to a mountain's edge,  
 Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala  
 The convoy of the ever-veering wind.  
 Samos is drunk with blood ;—the Greek has paid  
 Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.  
 The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far  
 When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah !  
 Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind,  
 Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock  
 Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.  
 So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day !



If night is mute, yet the returning sun  
Kindles the voices of the morning birds ;  
Nor at thy bidding less exultingly  
Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,  
The Anarchies of Africa unleash  
Their tempest-winged cities of the sea,  
To speak in thunder to the rebel world.  
Like sulphureous clouds half-shattered by the storm,  
They sweep the pale Ægean, while the Queen  
Of Ocean, bound upon her island throne,  
Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons,  
Who frown on Freedom, spare a smile for thee :  
Russia still hovers, as an eagle might  
Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane  
Hang tangled in inextricable fight,  
To stoop upon the victor ; for she fears  
The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine :  
But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave  
Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,  
Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy,  
And howl upon their limits : for they see  
The panther Freedom fled to her old cover,  
Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood  
Crouch around. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,  
Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,  
Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes ?  
Our arsenals and our armories are full ;  
Our forts defy assaults ; ten thousand cannon  
Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour  
Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city ;  
The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale  
The Christian merchant, and the yellow Jew  
Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.  
Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,  
Over the hills of Anatolia,

Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry  
 Sweep ;—the far-flashing of their starry lances  
 Reverberates the dying light of day.  
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law ;  
 But many-headed Insurrection stands  
 Divided in itself, and soon must fall.

MAHMUD.

Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable :  
 Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned  
 Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud  
 Which leads the rear of the departing day,  
 Wan emblem of an empire fading now !  
 See how it trembles in the blood-red air,  
 And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent,  
 Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,  
 One star with insolent and victorious light  
 Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,  
 Like arrows through a fainting antelope,  
 Strikes its weak form to death.

HASSAN.

Even as that moon

Renews itself——

MAHMUD.

Shall we be not renewed !  
 Far other bark than ours were needed now  
 To stem the torrent of descending time :  
 The spirit that lifts the slave before its lord  
 Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,  
 And spreads his ensign in the wilderness ;  
 Exults in chains ; and when the rebel falls,  
 Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust ;  
 And the inheritors of earth, like beasts  
 When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear  
 Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.  
 What were Defeat, when Victory must appal ?

Or Danger, when Security looks pale?  
 How said the messenger—who from the fort  
 - Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle  
 Of Bucharest?—that—

HASSAN.

Ibrahim's cimeter  
 Drew with its gleam swift victory from heaven,  
 To burn before him in the night of battle—  
 A light and a destruction.

MAHMUD.

Ay! the day  
 Was ours; but how?—

HASSAN.

The light Wallachians,  
 The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies,  
 Fled from the glance of our artillery  
 Almost before the thunder-stone alit;  
 One half the Grecian army made a bridge  
 Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead;  
 The other—

MAHMUD.

Speak—tremble not—

HASSAN.

Islanded  
 By victor myriads, formed in hollow square  
 With rough and stedfast front, and thrice flung back  
 The deluge of our foaming cavalry;  
 Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.  
 Our baffled army trembled like one man  
 Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,  
 From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,  
 Kneading them down with fire and iron rain.  
 Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn  
 Under the hook of the swart sickle-man,  
 The bands, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,

Grew weak and few. Then said the Pacha, "Slaves,  
Render yourselves—they have abandoned you—  
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?  
We grant your lives."—"Grant that which is thine own,"  
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!  
Another—"God, and man, and hope abandon me;  
But I to them and to myself remain  
Constant;" he bowed his head, and his heart burst.  
A third exclaimed, "There is a refuge, tyrant,  
Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm,  
Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again."  
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,  
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment  
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!  
So these survivors, each by different ways,  
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,  
Met in triumphant death; and when our army  
Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame  
Held back the base hyenas of the battle  
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,  
One rose out of the chaos of the slain;  
And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit  
Of the old saviours of the land we rule  
Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;  
Or if there burned within the dying man  
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith  
Creating what it feigned;—I cannot tell:  
But he cried, "Phantoms of the free, we come!  
Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike  
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,  
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,  
And thaw their frost-work diadems like dew;—  
O ye who float around this clime, and weave  
The garment of the glory which it wears;  
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,

Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;—  
 Progenitors of all that yet is great,  
 Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept  
 In your high ministrations, us, your sons—  
 Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!  
 And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale  
 When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread—  
 The vultures, and the dogs, your pensioners tame,  
 Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still  
 They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.  
 The exhalations and the thirsty winds  
 Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death—  
 Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter: Thus where'er  
 Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,  
 The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast  
 Of these dead limbs, upon your streams and mountains,  
 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops,  
 Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,  
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down  
 With poisoned light—Famine, and Pestilence,  
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side!  
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved  
 Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam.  
 The earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake  
 Their empire o'er the unborn world of men  
 On this one cast—but ere the die be thrown,  
 The renovated genius of our race,  
 Proud umpire of the impious game, descends  
 A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding  
 The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,  
 Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,  
 And you to oblivion!"—More he would have said,  
 But—

MAHMUD.

Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted



Their ruin in the hues of our success.  
 A rebel's crime, gilt with a rebel's tongue !  
 Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

HASSAN.

It may be so :  
 A spirit not my own wrenched me within,  
 And I have spoken words I fear and hate ;  
 Yet would I die for—

MAHMUD.

Live ! O live ! outlive  
 Me and this sinking empire :—but the fleet—

HASSAN.

Alas !

MAHMUD.

The fleet which, like a flock of clouds  
 Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner.  
 Our winged castles from their merchant ships !  
 Our myriads before their weak pirate bands !  
 Our arms before their chains ! Our years of empire  
 Before their centuries of servile fear !  
 Death is awake ! Repulsed on the waters,  
 They own no more the thunder-bearing banner  
 Of Mahmud ; but like hounds of a base breed,  
 Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

HASSAN.

Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae, saw  
 The wreck—

MAHMUD.

The caves of the Icarian isles  
 Hold each to the other in loud mockery,  
 And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes  
 First of the sea-convulsing fight—and then—  
 Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains,  
 Interpret thou their voice !

## HASSAN.

My presence bore  
 A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet  
 Bore down at day-break from the North, and hung  
 As multitudinous on the ocean line  
 As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.  
 Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,  
 Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle  
 Was kindled.—  
 First through the hail of our artillery  
 The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail  
 Dashed :—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man  
 To man, were grappled in the embrace of war,  
 Inextricable but by death or victory.  
 The tempest of the raging fight convulsed  
 To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,  
 And shook heaven's roof of golden morning clouds  
 Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.  
 In the brief trances of the artillery,  
 One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer  
 Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapt  
 The unforeseen event, till the north wind  
 Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil  
 Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory !  
 For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers  
 Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon  
 The abhorred cross glimmered behind, before,  
 Among, around us ; and that fatal sign  
 Dried with its beams the strength of Moslem hearts,  
 As the sun drinks the dew.—What more ? We fled !  
 Our noonday path over the sanguine foam  
 Was beacons, and the glare struck the sun pale,  
 By our consuming transports : the fierce light  
 Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,  
 And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding



The ravening fire even to the water's level :  
 Some were blown up ; some, settling heavily,  
 Sunk ; and the shrieks of our companions died  
 Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,  
 Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished !  
 We met the vultures legioned in the air,  
 Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind :  
 They, screaming from their cloudy mountain peaks,  
 Stopped through the sulphureous battle-smoke, and perched  
 Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,  
 Like its ill angel or its damned soul.  
 Riding upon the bosom of the sea,  
 We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.  
 Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,  
 And ravening famine left his ocean-cave  
 To dwell with war, with us, and with despair.  
 We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,  
 As with night, tempest—

MAHMUD.

Cease !

*Enter a Messenger.*

MESSSENGER.

Your Sublime Highness,  
 That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,  
 Has left the city. If the rebel fleet  
 Had anchored in the port, had victory  
 Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,  
 Panic were tamer.—Obedience and Mutiny,  
 Like giants in contention planet-struck,  
 Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace  
 In Stamboul.—

MAHMUD.

Is the grave not calmer still ?  
 Its ruins shall be mine.

HASSAN.

Fear not the Russian ;

The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay  
 Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,  
 He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,  
 And must be paid for his reserve in blood.  
 After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian  
 That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion  
 Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,  
 Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,  
 But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves !

*Enter Second Messenger.*

SECOND MESSENGER.

Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,  
 Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,  
 Corinth and Thebes, are carried by assault ;  
 And every Islamite who made his dogs  
 Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves,  
 Passed at the edge of the sword : the lust of blood,  
 Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death ;  
 But like a fiery plague breaks out anew  
 In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale  
 In its own light. The garrison of Patras  
 Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope  
 But from the Briton ; at once slave and tyrant,  
 His wishes still are weaker than his fears ;  
 Or he would sell what faith may yet remain  
 From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway ;  
 And if you buy him not, your treasury  
 Is empty even of promises—his own coin.  
 The freeman of a western poet chief  
 Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,  
 And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont ;  
 The aged Ali sits in Yanina,

A crownless metaphor of empire ;  
 His name, that shadow of his withered might,  
 Holds our besieging army like a spell  
 In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny :  
 He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth  
 Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors  
 The ruins of the city where he reigned  
 Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped  
 The costly harvest his own blood matured,  
 Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce  
 From Ypsilanti, with ten camel-loads  
 Of Indian gold.

*Enter a Third Messenger.*

MAHMUD.

What more ?

THIRD MESSENGER.

The Christian tribes  
 Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness  
 Are in revolt ;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo,  
 Tremble ;—the Arab menaces Medina ;  
 The Ethiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar,  
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed,  
 Who denies homage, claims investiture  
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands  
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians  
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,  
 Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins  
 Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake spasm,  
 Shake in the general fever. Through the city,  
 Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,  
 And prophesyings horrible and new  
 Are heard among the crowd ; that sea of men  
 Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.

A Dervise, learned in the Koran, preaches  
 That it is written how the sins of Islam  
 Must raise up a destroyer even now.  
 The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west ;  
 Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,  
 But in the omnipresence of that spirit  
 In which all live and are. Ominous signs  
 Are blazoned broadly on the noon-day sky ;  
 One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun ;  
 It has rained blood ; and monstrous births declare  
 The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.  
 The army encamped upon the Cydaris  
 Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,  
 And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,—  
 The shadows doubtless of the unborn time,  
 Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet  
 The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm  
 Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.  
 At the third watch the spirit of the plague  
 Was heard abroad flapping among the tents :  
 Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.  
 The last news from the camp is, that a thousand  
 Have sickened, and—

*Enter a Fourth Messenger.*

MAHMUD.

And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow  
 Of some untimely rumour, speak !

FOURTH MESSENGER.

One comes  
 Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood ;  
 He stood, he says, upon Clelonit's  
 Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan  
 Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters

Then trembling in the splendour of the moon ;  
 When, as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid  
 Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets  
 Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,  
 Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,  
 And smoke which strangled every infant wind  
 That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.  
 At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco  
 Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds  
 Over the sea-horizon, blotting out  
 All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse  
 He saw, or dreamed he saw the Turkish admiral  
 And two, the loftiest, of our ships of war,  
 With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven,  
 Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed ;  
 And the abhorred cross—

*Enter an Attendant.*

ATTENDANT.

Your Sublime Highness,  
 The Jew, who——

MAHMUD.

Could not come more seasonably :  
 Bid him attend. I'll hear no more ! too long  
 We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,  
 And multiply upon our shattered hopes  
 The images of ruin. Come what will !  
 To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps  
 Set in our path to light us to the edge,  
 Through rough and smooth ; nor can we suffer aught  
 Which he inflicts not in whose hand we are.

[*Exeunt.*

SEMICHORUS I.

Would I were the winged cloud  
 Of a tempest swift and loud !

I would scorn  
 The smile of morn,  
 And the wave where the moon-rise is born!  
 I would leave  
 The spirits of eve  
 A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave  
 From other threads than mine!  
 Bask in the blue noon divine  
 Who would, not I.

## SEMICHORUS II.

Whither to fly?

## SEMICHORUS I.

Where the rocks that gird th' Ægean  
 Echo to the battle pæan  
 Of the free—  
 I would flee  
 A tempestuous herald of victory!  
 My golden rain  
 For the Grecian slain  
 Should mingle in tears with the bloody main;  
 And my solemn thunder-knell  
 Should ring to the world the passing-bell  
 Of tyranny!

## SEMICHORUS II.

Ah king! wilt thou chain  
 The rack and the rain?  
 Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?  
 The storms are free,  
 But we——

## CHORUS.

O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,  
 Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!



Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,  
 These brows thy branding garland bear ;  
 But the free heart, the impassive soul,  
 Scorn thy control !

## SEMICHORUS I.

Let there be light ! said Liberty ;  
 And like sunrise from the sea,  
 Athens arose !—Around her born,  
 Shone like mountains in the morn,  
 Glorious states ;—and are they now  
 Ashes, wrecks, oblivion ?

## SEMICHORUS II.

Go

Where Thermæ and Asopus swallowed  
 Persia, as the sand does foam.  
 Deluge upon deluge followed,  
 Discord, Macedon, and Rome :  
 And, lastly, thou !

## SEMICHORUS I.

Temples and towers,  
 Citadels and marts, and they  
 Who live and die there, have been ours,  
 And may be thine, and must decay ;  
 But Greece and her foundations are  
 Built below the tide of war,  
 Based on the crystalline sea  
 Of thought and its eternity ;  
 Her citizens, imperial spirits,  
 Rule the present from the past,  
 On all this world of men inherits  
 Their seal is set.

## SEMICHORUS II.

Hear ye the blast,



Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls  
 From ruin her Titanian walls?  
 Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones  
     Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete,  
 Hear, and from their mountain thrones  
     The dæmons and the nymphs repeat  
 The harmony.

SEMICHORUS I.

I hear! I hear!

SEMICHORUS II.

The world's eyeless charioteer,  
     Destiny, is hurrying by!  
 What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds  
 Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?  
 What eagle-winged victory sits  
 At her right hand? what shadow flits  
 Before? what splendour rolls behind?  
     Ruin and Renovation cry,  
 Who but we?

SEMICHORUS I.

I hear! I hear!

The hiss as of a rushing wind,  
 The roar as of an ocean foaming,  
 The thunder as of earthquake coming,  
     I hear! I hear!

The crash as of an empire falling,  
 The shrieks as of a people calling  
 Mercy! Mercy!—How they thrill!  
 Then a shout of "Kill! kill! kill!"  
 And then a small still voice, thus—

SEMICHORUS II.

For  
 Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind,

The foul cubs like their parents are,  
 Their den is in their guilty mind,  
 And Conscience feeds them with despair.

SEMICHORUS I.

In sacred Athens, near the fane  
 Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood ;  
 Serve not the unknown God in vain,  
 But pay that broken shrine again  
 Love for hate, and tears for blood.

*Enter MAHMUD and AHASUERUS.*

MAHMUD.

Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we—

AHASUERUS.

No more !

MAHMUD.

But raised above thy fellow-men  
 By thought, as I by power.

AHASUERUS.

Thou sayest so.

MAHMUD.

Thou art an adept in the difficult lore  
 Of Greek and Frank philosophy ; thou numberest  
 The flowers, and thou measurest the stars ;  
 Thou severest element from element ;  
 Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees  
 The birth of this old world through all its cycles  
 Of desolation and of loveliness ;  
 And when man was not, and how man became  
 The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,  
 And all its narrow circles—it is much.  
 I honour thee, and would be what thou art  
 Were I not what I am ; but the unborn hour,

Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,  
 Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any  
 Mighty or wise. I apprehend not  
 What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive  
 That thou art no interpreter of dreams;  
 Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,  
 Can make the future present—let it come!  
 Moreover thou disdainest us and ours!  
 Thou art as God, whom thou contempest.

## AHASUERUS.

Disdain thee?—not the worm beneath my feet!  
 The Fathomless has care for meaner things  
 Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those  
 Who would be what they may not, or would seem  
 That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more  
 Of thee and me, the future and the past;  
 But look on that which cannot change—the One  
 The unborn, and the undying. Earth and ocean,  
 Space, and the isles of life or light that gem  
 The sapphire floods of interstellar air,  
 This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,  
 With all its cressets of immortal fire,  
 Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably  
 Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them  
 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this whole  
 Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,  
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings  
 By which they have been, are, or cease to be,  
 Is but a vision;—all that it inherits  
 Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles, and dreams;  
 Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less  
 The future and the past are idle shadows  
 Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being;  
 Nought is but that it feels itself to be.

MAHMUD.

What meanest thou? thy words stream like a tempest  
 Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake  
 The earth on which I stand, and hang like night  
 On Heaven above me. What can they avail?  
 They cast on all things, surest, brightest, best,  
 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

AHASUERUS.

Mistake me not! All is contained in each.  
 Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup  
 Is that which has been or will be, to that  
 Which is—the absent to the present. Thought  
 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,  
 Reason, Imagination, cannot die;  
 They are what that which they regard appears,  
 The stuff whence mutability can weave  
 All that it hath dominion o'er,—worlds, worms,  
 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought  
 To do with time, or place, or circumstance?  
 Wouldst thou behold the future?—ask and have!  
 Knock and it shall be opened—look, and lo!  
 The coming age is shadowed on the past,  
 As on a glass.

MAHMUD.

Wild, wilder thoughts convulse  
 My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second  
 Win Stamboul?

AHASUERUS.

Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit  
 The written fortunes of thy house and faith.  
 Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell  
 How what was born in blood must die.

HELLAS.

MAHMUD.

Thy words

Have power on me! I see—

AHASUERUS.

What hearest thou?

MAHMUD.

A far whisper—  
Terrible silence.

AHASUERUS.

What succeeds?

MAHMUD.

The sound

As of the assault of an imperial city,  
 The hiss of inextinguishable fire,  
 The roar of giant cannon;—the earthquaking  
 Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,  
 The shock of crags shot from strange engin'ry,  
 The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs,  
 And crash of brazen mail, as of the wreck  
 Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast  
 Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,  
 And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,  
 And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,  
 As of a joyous infant waked, and playing  
 With its dead mother's breast; and now more loud  
 The mingled battle-cry—ha! hear I not  
 'Εν τούτῳ νίκη. Allah-illah-Allah!

AHASUERUS.

The sulphureous mist is raised—thou seest—

MAHMUD.

A chasm,

As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;

And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,  
 Like giants on the ruins of a world,  
 Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust  
 Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one  
 Of regal port has cast himself beneath  
 The stream of war. Another, proudly clad  
 In golden arms, spurs a Tartarian barb  
 Into the gap, and with his iron mace  
 Directs the torrent of that tide of men,  
 And seems—he is—Mahomet !

AHASUERUS.

What thou see'st  
 Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream ;  
 A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that  
 Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold  
 How cities, on which empire sleeps enthroned,  
 Bow their towered crests to mutability.  
 Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,  
 Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power  
 Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,  
 Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished  
 With tears and toil, thou see'st the mortal throes  
 Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past  
 Now stands before thee like an Incarnation  
 Of the To-come ; yet wouldst thou commune with  
 That portion of thyself which was ere thou  
 Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death ;  
 Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion  
 Which called it from the uncreated deep,  
 Yon cloud of war with its tempestuous phantoms  
 Of raging death ; and draw with mighty will  
 The imperial shade hither.

[*Exit* AHASUERUS.]

MAHMUD.

Approach !



## PHANTOM.

I come

Thence whither thou must go ! The grave is fitter  
 To take the living, than give up the dead ;  
 Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here.  
 The heavy fragments of the power which fell  
 When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,  
 Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices  
 Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,  
 Wailing for glory never to return.—

A later Empire nods in its decay ;  
 The autumn of a greener faith is come,  
 And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip  
 The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built  
 Her aërie, while Dominion whelped below.  
 The storm is in its branches, and the frost  
 Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects  
 Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,  
 Ruin on ruin : thou art slow, my son ;  
 The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep  
 A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies  
 Boundless and mute ; and for thy subjects thou,  
 Like us, shall rule the ghosts of murdered life,  
 The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—  
 Mutinous passions and conflicting fears,  
 And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die !  
 Stript of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.  
 Islam must fall, but we will reign together  
 Over its ruins in the world of death :—  
 And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed  
 Unfold itself even in the shape of that  
 Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe ! woe !  
 To the weak people tangled in the grasp  
 Of its last spasms.



MAHMUD.

Spirit, woe to all!

Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe  
 To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed!  
 Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!  
 Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!  
 Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;  
 Those who are born, and those who die! But say,  
 Imperial shadow of the thing I am,  
 When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish  
 Her consummation?

PHANTOM.

Ask the cold pale Hour,  
 Rich in reversion of impending death,  
 When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe grey hairs  
 Sit care, and sorrow, and infirmity—  
 The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years,  
 Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart  
 Over the heads of men, under which burthen  
 They bow themselves unto the grave: fond wretch!  
 He leaps upon his crutch, and talks of years  
 To come, and how in hours of youth renewed  
 He will renew lost joys, and——

VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! victory!

[*The Phantom vanishes.*]

MAHMUD.

What sound of the importunate earth has broken  
 My mighty trance?

VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! victory!

MAHMUD.

Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile  
 Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response

Of hollow weakness ! Do I wake and live ?  
 Were there such things ? or may the unquiet brain,  
 Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,  
 Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear ?  
 It matters not !—for nought we see or dream,  
 Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth  
 More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,  
 The future must become the past, and I  
 As they were, to whom once this present hour,  
 This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,  
 Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy  
 Never to be attained.—I must rebuke  
 This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,  
 And dying, bring despair.—Victory !—poor slaves !

[*Exit* MAHMUD.]

VOICE WITHOUT.

Shout in the jubilee of death ! The Greeks  
 Are as a brood of lions in the net,  
 Round which the kingly hunters of the earth  
 Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food  
 Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death,  
 From Thule to the girdle of the world,  
 Come, feast ! the board groans with the flesh of men—  
 The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,  
 Famine and Thirst await : eat, drink, and die !

SEMICHORUS I.

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,  
 Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day !  
 I saw her ghastly as a tyrant's dream,  
 Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,  
 Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay  
 In visions of the dawning undelight.  
 Who shall impede her flight ?  
 Who rob her of her prey ?

## VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! victory! Russia's famished eagles  
 Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.  
 Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!  
 Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

## SEMICHORUS II.

Thou voice which art  
 The herald of the ill in splendour hid!  
 Thou echo of the hollow heart  
 Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode  
 When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed.  
 Oh bear me to those isles of jagged cloud  
 Which float like mountains on the earthquakes, 'mid  
 The momentary oceans of the lightning;  
 Or to some toppling promontory proud  
 Of solid tempest, whose black pyramid,  
 Riven, overhangs the founts intensely brightening  
 Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire  
 Before their waves expire,  
 When heaven and earth are light, and only light  
 In the thunder-night!

## VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! victory! Austria, Russia, England,  
 And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,  
 Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.  
 Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes!  
 These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners  
 Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

## SEMICHORUS I.

Alas for Liberty!  
 If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,  
 Or fate, can quell the free;  
 Alas for Virtue! when

Torments, or contumely, or the sneers  
 Of erring judging men  
 Can break the heart where it abides.  
 Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world  
 splendid,  
 Can change, with its false times and tides,  
 Like hope and terror—  
 Alas for Love!  
 And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,  
 If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror  
 Before the dazzled eyes of Error.  
 Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

## SEMICHORUS II.

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,  
 Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn  
 Through many an hostile Anarchy!  
 At length they wept aloud and cried, "The sea! the sea!"  
 Through exile, persecution, and despair,  
 Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become  
 The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb  
 Of all whose step wakes power lulled in her savage lair:  
 But Greece was as a hermit child,  
 Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built  
 To woman's growth, by dreams so mild  
 She knew not pain or guilt;  
 And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble,  
 When ye desert the free!  
 If Greece must be  
 A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,  
 And build themselves again impregnably  
 In a diviner clime,  
 To Amphionic music, on some Cape sublime,  
 Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

## SEMICHORUS I.

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made ;  
 Let the free possess the paradise they claim ;  
 Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed  
 With our ruin, our resistance, and our name !

## SEMICHORUS II.

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,  
 Our survivors be the shadows of their pride,  
 Our adversity a dream to pass away—  
 Their dishonour a remembrance to abide !

## VOICE WITHOUT.

Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends  
 The keys of ocean to the Islamite.  
 Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled,  
 And British skill directing Othman might,  
 Thunder-strike rebel victory. O keep holy  
 This jubilee of unrevenged blood!  
 Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape !

## SEMICHORUS I.

Darkness has dawned in the East  
 On the noon of time :  
 The death-birds descend to their feast,  
 From the hungry clime.  
 Let Freedom and Peace flee far  
 To a sunnier strand,  
 And follow Love's folding star!  
 To the Evening land !

## SEMICHORUS II.

The young moon has fed  
 Her exhausted horn  
 With the sunset's fire :  
 The weak day is dead,

But the night is not born ;  
 And, like loveliness panting with wild desire,  
 While it trembles with fear and delight,  
 Hesperus flies from awakening night,  
 And pants in its beauty and speed with light  
 Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.  
 Thou beacon of love ! thou lamp of the free !  
 Guide us far, far away,  
 To climes where now, veiled by the ardour of day,  
 Thou art hidden  
 From waves on which weary noon  
 Faints in her summer swoon,  
 Between kingless continents, sinless as Eden,  
 Around mountains and islands inviolably  
 Prankt on the sapphire sea.

## SEMICHORUS I.

Through the sunset of hope,  
 Like the shapes of a dream,  
 What Paradise islands of glory gleam  
 Beneath Heaven's cope.  
 Their shadows more clear float by—  
 The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,  
 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe,  
 Burst like morning on dreams, or like Heaven on death,  
 Through the walls of our prison ;  
 And Greece, which was dead, is arisen !

## CHORUS.

The world's great age begins anew,  
 The golden years return,  
 The earth doth like a snake renew  
 Her winter weeds outworn :  
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam  
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.



A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
From waves serener far ;  
A new Peneus rolls its fountains  
Against the morning-star.  
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep  
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
Fraught with a later prize ;  
Another Orpheus sings again,  
And loves, and weeps, and dies.  
A new Ulysses leaves once more  
Calypso for his native shore.

O write no more the tale of Troy,  
If earth Death's scroll must be !  
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy  
Which dawns upon the free :  
Although a subtler sphinx renew  
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,  
And to remoter time  
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
The splendour of its prime ;  
And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
All earth can take or heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose  
Shall burst, more bright and good  
Than all who fell, than One who rose,  
Than many unsubdued :  
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
But votive tears, and symbol flowers.

O cease ! must hate and death return ?  
Cease ! must men kill and die ?  
Cease ! drain not to its dregs the urn  
Of bitter prophecy.  
The world is weary of the past,  
O might it die or rest at last !

## NOTES.

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P. 131, l. 21.

*The quenchless ashes of Milan.*

MILAN was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederick Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin.—See SISMONDI'S "*Histoires des Républiques Italiennes*," a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

P. 136, l. 19.

CHORUS.

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and, to use a common and inadequate phrase, clothe themselves in matter, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatize upon a subject concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of his nature, having called us out of

non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state the solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain ; meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

P. 138, l. 9.

*No hoary priests after that Patriarch!*

The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe.

As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

P. 148, l. 28.

*The freeman of a western poet chief.*

A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or greatness, whose connexion with our character is determined by events.

P. 150, l. 4.

*The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west.*

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a sea-port near Lacedemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

P. 158, l. 7.

*The sound  
As of the assault of an imperial city.*

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1445, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as overdrawn. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensation, through the confusion of thought, with the objects of thought, and excess of passion animating the creations of the imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

P. 166, l. 26.

CHORUS.

The final chorus is indistinct and obscure as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells.

Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, &c. may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age ; but to anticipate, however darkly, a period of regeneration and happiness, is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader, " magno nec proximus intervallo" of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits, overleaping the actual reign of evil which we

endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the "lion shall lie down with the lamb," and "omnis feret omnia tellus." Let these great names be my authority and excuse.

P. 167, l. 25.

*Saturn and Love their long repose.*

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; *the One, who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan world were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing activity. The Grecian Gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said that, as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a power, who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by his sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men, has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to his innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.



## NOTE ON HELLAS.

BY THE EDITOR.

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THE south of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy—secret societies were formed—and when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundisium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821, the Austrians poured their armies into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the *congé* to their sovereign and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said, that the Austrian minister presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the grand-duke, urging their imprisonment; and the grand-duke replied, “I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up.” But though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government, beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred

for the Austrian was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes ; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the Constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

We have seen the rise and progress of reform. But the Holy Alliance was alive and active in those days, and few could dream of the peaceful triumph of liberty. It seemed then that the armed assertion of freedom in the south of Europe was the only hope of the liberals, as, if it prevailed, the nations of the north would imitate the example. Happily the reverse has proved the fact. The countries accustomed to the exercise of the privileges of freemen, to a limited extent, have extended, and are extending these limits. Freedom and knowledge have now a chance of proceeding hand in hand ; and if it continue thus, we may hope for the durability of both. Then, as I have said, in 1821, Shelley, as well as every other lover of liberty, looked upon the struggles in Spain and Italy as decisive of the destinies of the world, probably for centuries to come. The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense. When Genoa declared itself free, his hopes were at their highest. Day after day, he read the bulletins of the Austrian army, and sought eagerly to gather tokens of its defeat. He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport. His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of their cause. We were living at Pisa at that time ; and several well-informed Italians, at the head of whom we may place the celebrated Vaccá, were accustomed to seek for sympathy in their hopes from Shelley : they did not find such for the despair they too generally experienced, founded on contempt for their southern countrymen.

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While the fate of the progress of the Austrian armies then invading Naples was yet in suspense, the news of another revolution filled him with exultation. We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradja, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia, who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his viceroyalty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman to whom the drama of Hellas is dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country, which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April, 1821, he called on Shelley; bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ipsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

Shelley had hymned the dawn of liberty in Spain and Naples, in two odes, dictated by the warmest enthusiasm;—he felt himself naturally impelled to decorate with poetry the uprising of the descendants of that people, whose works he regarded with deep admiration; and to adopt the vaticinatory character in prophesying their success. “Hellas” was written in a moment of enthusiasm. It is curious to remark how well he overcomes the difficulty of forming a drama out of such scant materials. His prophecies, indeed, came true in their general, not their particular purport. He did not foresee the death of Lord Londonderry, which was to be the epoch of a change in English politics, particularly as regarded foreign affairs; nor that the navy of his country would fight for instead of against the Greeks; and by the battle of

Navarino secure their enfranchisement from the Turks. Almost against reason, as it appeared to him, he resolved to believe that Greece would prove triumphant; and in this spirit, auguring ultimate good, yet grieving over the vicissitudes to be endured in the interval, he composed his drama.

The chronological order to be observed in the arrangement of the remaining poems, is interrupted here, that his dramas may follow each other consecutively. "Hellas" was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato:

But Greece and her foundations are  
Built below the tide of war;  
Based on the crystalline sea  
Of thought and its eternity.

And again, that philosophical truth, felicitously imaged forth—

Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind,  
The foul cubs like their parents are;  
Their den is in the guilty mind,  
And conscience feeds them with despair.

The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics; the imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the regeneration of mankind—and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value.

**ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS;**  
**OR,**  
**SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT.**

**A Tragedy, in Two Acts.**



**TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DORIC.**

---

Choose Reform or Civil War,  
When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,  
Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THIS Tragedy is one of a triad, or system of three Plays, (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their Dramatic representations,) elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the SWELLFOOT dynasty. It was evidently written by some *learned Theban*, and from its characteristic dulness, apparently before the duties on the importation of *Attic salt* had been repealed by the Bœotarchs. The tenderness with which he beats the PIGS proves him to have been a *sus Bœotiae*; possibly *Epicuri de grege porcus*; for, as the poet observes,

“A fellow feeling makes us wond’rous kind.”

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity, except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last act. The word Hoydipouse, (or more properly Œdipus,) has been rendered literally SWELLFOOT, without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled, “*Swellfoot in Angaria*,” and “*Charité*,” the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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TYRANT SWELLFOOT, <i>King of Thebes.</i>	The GADFLY.
IONA TAURINA, <i>his Queen.</i>	The LEECH.
MAMMON, <i>Arch-Priest of Famine.</i>	The RAT.
PURGANAX, } <i>Wizards, Ministers of</i>	The MINOTAUR.
DAKRY } <i>SWELLFOOT.</i>	MOSES, <i>the Sow-gelder.</i>
LAOCTONOS, }	SOLOMON, <i>the Porkman.</i>
	ZEPHANIAH, <i>Pig-butcher.</i>

CHORUS of the *Swinish Multitude.*

*Guards, Attendants, Priests, &c. &c.*

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SCENE—*Thebes.*

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That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing!  
 Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors,  
 Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers,  
 Bishops and deacons, and the entire army  
 Of those fat martyrs to the persecution  
 Of stifling turtle-soup, and brandy-devils,  
 Offer their secret vows! Thou plenteous Ceres  
 Of their Eleusis, hail!

THE SWINE.

Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!

SWELLFOOT.

Ha! what are ye,  
 Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,  
 Cling round this sacred shrine?

SWINE.

Aigh! aigh! aigh!

SWELLFOOT.

What! ye that are  
 The very beasts that offered at her altar  
 With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards,  
 Ever propitiate her reluctant will  
 When taxes are withheld?

SWINE.

Ugh! ugh! ugh!

SWELLFOOT.

What! ye who grub  
 With filthy snouts my red potatoes up  
 In Allan's rushy bog? Who eat the oats  
 Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides?  
 Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest  
 From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather,  
 Which should be given to cleaner pigs than you?

THE SWINE.

SEMICHORUS I.

The same, alas ! the same ;  
Though only now the name  
Of pig remains to me.

SEMICHORUS II.

If 'twere your kingly will  
Us wretched swine to kill,  
What should we yield to thee ?

SWELLFOOT.

Why skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

CHORUS OF SWINE.

I have heard your Laureate sing,  
That pity was a royal thing ;  
Under your mighty ancestors, we pigs  
Were bless'd as nightingales on myrtle sprigs,  
Or grasshoppers that live on noon-day dew,  
And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too :  
But now our sties are fallen in, we catch  
The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch ;  
Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch,  
And then we seek the shelter of a ditch ;  
Hog-wash or grains, or ruta-baga, none  
Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

FIRST SOW.

My pigs, 'tis in vain to tug !

SECOND SOW.

I could almost eat my litter !

FIRST PIG.

I suck, but no milk will come from the dug

SECOND PIG.

Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

THE BOARS.

We fight for this rag of greasy rug,  
Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

SEMICHORUS.

Happier swine were they than we,  
Drowned in the Gadarean sea—  
I wish that pity would drive out the devils  
Which in your royal bosom hold their revels,  
And sink us in the waves of your compassion !  
Alas ! the pigs are an unhappy nation !  
Now if your majesty would have our bristles  
To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons  
With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles,  
In policy—ask else your royal Solons—  
You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw,  
And sties well thatched ; besides, it is the law !

SWELLFOOT.

This is sedition, and rank blasphemy !  
Ho ! there, my guards !

*Enter a* GUARD.

GUARD.

Your sacred Majesty ?

SWELLFOOT.

Call in the Jews, Solomon the court porkman,  
Moses the sow-gelder, and Zephaniah the hog-butcher.

GUARD.

They are in waiting, sire.

*Enter* SOLOMON, MOSES, and ZEPHANIAH.

SWELLFOOT.

Out with your knife, old Moses, and spay those sows,  
[*The Pigs run about in consternation.*]



That load the earth with pigs ; cut close and deep.  
 Moral restraint I see has no effect,  
 Nor prostitution, nor our own example,  
 Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison—  
 This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine  
 Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy—  
 Cut close and deep, good Moses.

MOSES.

Let your majesty  
 Keep the boars quiet, else—

SWELLFOOT.

Zephaniah, cut  
 That fat hog's throat, the brute seems overfed ;  
 Seditious hunks ! to whine for want of grains.

ZEPHANIAH.

Your sacred majesty, he has the dropsy ;—  
 We shall find pints of hydatids in 's liver,  
 He has not half an inch of wholesome fat  
 Upon his carious ribs—

SWELLFOOT.

'Tis all the same,  
 He 'll serve instead of riot-money, when  
 Our murmuring troops bivouaque in Thebes' streets ;  
 And January winds, after a day  
 Of butchering, will make them relish carrion.  
 Now, Solomon, I 'll sell you in a lump  
 The whole kit of them.

SOLOMON.

Why, your majesty,  
 I could not give—

SWELLFOOT.

Kill them out of the way,  
 That shall be price enough, and let me hear  
 Their everlasting grunts and whines no more !

*[Exeunt, driving in the Swine.]*

*Enter MAMMON, the Arch Priest ; and PURGANAX, Chief of the Council of Wizards.*

PURGANAX.

The future looks as black as death, a cloud,  
Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it—  
The troops grow mutinous—the revenue fails—  
There 's something rotten in us—for the level  
Of the State slopes, its very bases topple ;  
The boldest turn their backs upon themselves !

MAMMON.

Why what's the matter, my dear fellow, now ?  
Do the troops mutiny ?—decimate some regiments ;  
Does money fail ?—come to my mint—coin paper,  
Till gold be at a discount, and, ashamed  
To show his bilious face, go purge himself,  
In emulation of her vestal whiteness.

PURGANAX.

Oh, would that this were all ! The oracle !

MAMMON.

Why it was I who spoke that oracle,  
And whether I was dead drunk or inspired,  
I cannot well remember ; nor, in truth,  
The oracle itself !

PURGANAX.

The words went thus :—

“ Bœotia, choose reform or civil war !  
When through the streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
A Consort-Queen shall hunt a King with hogs,  
Riding on the Ionian Minotaur.”

MAMMON.

Now if the oracle had ne'er foretold  
This sad alternative, it must arrive,  
Or not, and so it must now that it has ;

And whether I was urged by grace divine,  
 Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words,  
 Which must, as all words must, be false or true ;  
 It matters not : for the same power made all,  
 Oracle, wine, and me and you—or none—  
 'Tis the same thing. If you knew as much  
 Of oracles as I do——

PURGANAX.

You arch-priests  
 Believe in nothing ; if you were to dream  
 Of a particular number in the lottery,  
 You would not buy the ticket !

MAMMON.

Yet our tickets  
 Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken ?  
 For prophecies, when once they get abroad,  
 Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends,  
 Or hypocrites, who, from assuming virtue,  
 Do the same actions that the virtuous do,  
 Contrive their own fulfilment. This Iona—  
 Well—you know what the chaste Pasiphae did,  
 Wife to that most religious King of Crete,  
 And still how popular the tale is here ;  
 And these dull swine of Thebes boast their descent  
 From the free Minotaur. You know they still  
 Call themselves bulls, though thus degenerate ;  
 And everything relating to a bull  
 Is popular and respectable in Thebes :  
 Their arms are seven bulls in a field gules.  
 They think their strength consists in eating beef,—  
 Now there were danger in the precedent  
 If Queen Iona——

PURGANAX.

I have taken good care  
 That shall not be. I struck the crust o' the earth

With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare !  
 And from a cavern full of ugly shapes,  
 I chose a LEECH, a GADFLY, and a RAT.  
 The gadfly was the same which Juno sent  
 To agitate Io \*, and which Ezechiel † mentions  
 That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains  
 Of utmost Ethiopia, to torment  
 Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast  
 Has a loud trumpet like the Scarabee ;  
 His crooked tail is barbed with many stings,  
 Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each  
 Immedicable ; from his convex eyes  
 He sees fair things in many hideous shapes,  
 And trumpets all his falsehood to the world.  
 Like other beetles he is fed on dung—  
 He has eleven feet with which he crawls,  
 Trailing a blistering slime ; and this foul beast  
 Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits,  
 From isle to isle, from city unto city,  
 Urging her flight from the far Chersonese  
 To fabulous Solyma, and the Ætnean Isle,  
 Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock,  
 And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez,  
 Æolia and Elysium, and thy shores,  
 Parthenope, which now, alas ! are free !  
 And through the fortunate Saturnian land,  
 Into the darkness of the West.

MAMMON.

But if  
 This Gadfly should drive Iona hither ?

PURGANAX.

Gods ! what an *if* ! but there is my grey RAT ;

\* The Prometheus Bound of Æschylus.

† And the Lord whistled for the gadfly out of Æthiopia, and for the bee out of Egypt, &c.—EZECHIEL.

So thin with want, he can crawl in and out  
Of any narrow chink and filthy hole,  
And he shall creep into her dressing-room,  
And—

MAMMON.

My dear friend, where are your wits? as if  
She does not always toast a piece of cheese,  
And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough  
To crawl through *such* chinks——

PURGANAX.

But my LEECH—a leech  
Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,  
Capaciously expatiative, which make  
His little body like a red balloon,  
As full of blood as that of hydrogen,  
Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks  
And clings and pulls—a horse-leech, whose deep maw  
The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill,  
And who, till full, will cling for ever.

MAMMON.

This  
For Queen Iona might suffice, and less;  
But 'tis the swinish multitude I fear,  
And in that fear I have——

PURGANAX.

Done what?

MAMMON.

Disinherited

My eldest son Chrysaor, because he  
Attended public meetings, and would always  
Stand prating there of commerce, public faith,  
Economy, and unadulterate coin,  
And other topics, ultra-radical;

And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise,  
 And funds, in fairy-money, bonds, and bills,  
 Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina,  
 And married her to the Gallows\*.

PURGANAX.

A good match !

MAMMON.

A high connexion, Purganax. The bridegroom  
 Is of a very ancient family  
 Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop,  
 And has great influence in both Houses ;—Oh !  
 He makes the fondest husband ; nay *too* fond :—  
 New-married people should not kiss in public ;—  
 But the poor souls love one another so !  
 And then my little grandchildren, the Gibbets,  
 Promising children as you ever saw,—  
 The young playing at hanging, the elder learning  
 How to hold radicals. They are well taught too,  
 For every Gibbet says its catechism,  
 And reads a select chapter in the Bible  
 Before it goes to play. [*A most tremendous humming is heard.*]

PURGANAX.

Ha ! what do I hear ?

*Enter GADFLY.*

MAMMON.

Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

GADFLY.

Hum ! hum ! hum !  
 From the lakes of the Alps, and the cold grey scalps  
 Of the mountains, I come !  
 Hum ! hum ! hum !

\* " If one should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone."—CYMBELINE.



From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces  
 Of golden Byzantium ;  
 From the temples divine of old Palestine,  
 From Athens and Rome,  
 With a ha ! and a hum !  
 I come ! I come !

All inn-doors and windows  
 Were open to me !  
 I saw all that sin does,  
 Which lamps hardly see  
 That burn in the night by the curtained bed,—  
 The impudent lamps ! for they blushed not red.  
 Dinging and singing,  
 From slumber I rung her,  
 Loud as the clank of an ironmonger !  
 Hum ! hum ! hum !

Far, far, far,  
 With the trump of my lips, and the sting at my hips,  
 I drove her—afar !  
 Far, far, far,  
 From city to city, abandoned of pity,  
 A ship without needle or star ;—  
 Homeless she past, like a cloud on the blast,  
 Seeking peace, finding war ;—  
 She is here in her car,  
 From afar, and afar ;—  
 Hum ! hum !

I have stung her and wrung her !  
 The venom is working ;—  
 And if you had hung her  
 With canting and quirking,  
 She could not be deader than she will be soon ;—  
 I have driven her close to you, under the moon.



Night and day, hum ! hum ! ha !  
 I have hummed her and drummed her  
 From place to place, till at last I have dumb'd her.  
 Hum ! hum ! hum !

LEECH.

I will suck  
 Blood or muck !  
 The disease of the state is a plethory,  
 Who so fit to reduce it as I ?

RAT.

I 'll slily seize and  
 Let blood from her weasand,—  
 Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny,  
 With my snaky tail, and my sides so scranny.

PURGANAX.

Aroint ye ! thou unprofitable worm ! [To the LEECH.]  
 And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell ! [To the GADFLY.]  
 To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings,  
 And the ox-headed Io.—

SWINE (*within*).

Ugh, ugh, ugh !  
 Hail ! Iona the divine,  
 We will be no longer swine,  
 But bulls with horns and dewlaps.

RAT.

For,

You know, my lord, the Minotaur——

PURGANAX (*fiercely*).

Be silent ! get to hell ! or I will call  
 The cat out of the kitchen. Well, Lord Mammon,  
 This is a pretty business ! [Exit the RAT.]

MAMMON.

I will go  
And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.

[*Exit.*]*Enter* SWELLFOOT.

SWELLFOOT.

She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes  
When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell!  
Oh, Hymen! clothed in yellow jealousy,  
And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings  
The torch of Discord with its fiery hair;  
This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens!  
Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea,  
The very name of wife had conjugal rights;  
Her cursed image ate, drank, slept with me,  
And in the arms of Adiposa oft  
Her memory has received a husband's——

[*A loud tumult, and cries of "Iona for ever!—No Swellfoot!"*]

SWELLFOOT.

Hark!

How the swine cry Iona Taurina!  
I suffer the real presence: Purganax,  
Off with her head!

PURGANAX.

But I must first impanel  
A jury of the pigs.

SWELLFOOT.

Pack them then.

PURGANAX.

Or fattening some few in two separate sties,  
And giving them clean straw, tying some bits  
Of ribbon round their legs—giving their sows  
Some tawdry lace, and bits of lustre glass,

And their young boars white and red rags, and tails  
 Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers  
 Between the ears of the old ones ; and when  
 They are persuaded, that by the inherent virtue  
 Of these things, they are all imperial pigs,  
 Good Lord ! they 'd rip each other's bellies up,  
 Not to say help us in destroying her.

SWELLFOOT.

This plan might be tried too ;—where's General Laoctonos ?

*Enter LAOCTONOS and DAKRY.*

It is my royal pleasure  
 That you, Lord General, bring the head and body,  
 If separate it would please me better, hither  
 Of Queen Iona.

LAOCTONOS.

That pleasure I well knew,  
 And made a charge with those battalions bold,  
 Called, from their dress and grin, the royal apes,  
 Upon the swine, who in a hollow square  
 Enclosed her, and received the first attack  
 Like so many rhinoceroses, and then  
 Retreating in good order, with bare tusks  
 And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe,  
 Bore her in triumph to the public sty.  
 What is still worse, some sows upon the ground  
 Have given the ape-guards apples, nuts, and gin,  
 And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry,  
 " Long live Iona ! down with Swellfoot ! "

PURGANAX.

Hark !

THE SWINE, (*without*).

Long live Iona ! down with Swellfoot !

DAKRY.

I

Went to the garret of the swineherd's tower,  
 Which overlooks the sty, and made a long  
 Harangue (all words) to the assembled swine,  
 Of delicacy, mercy, judgment, law,  
 Morals, and precedents, and purity,  
 Adultery, destitution, and divorce,  
 Piety, faith, and state necessity,  
 And how I loved the queen!—and then I wept,  
 With the pathos of my own eloquence,  
 And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which  
 Brained many a gaping pig, and there was made  
 A slough of blood and brains upon the place,  
 Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round  
 The millstones rolled, ploughing the pavement up,  
 And hurling sucking pigs into the air,  
 With dust and stones.—

*Enter MAMMON.*

MAMMON.

I wonder that grey wizards  
 Like you should be so beardless in their schemes;  
 It had been but a point of policy  
 To keep Iona and the swine apart.  
 Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction  
 Between two parties who will govern you,  
 But for my art.—Behold this BAG! it is  
 The poison BAG of that Green Spider huge,  
 On which our spies skulked in ovation through  
 The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead:  
 A bane so much the deadlier fills it now,  
 As calumny is worse than death,—for here  
 The Gadfly's venom, fifty times distilled,  
 Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech,  
 In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which

That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant,  
 Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch ;—  
 All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud,  
 Who is the Devil's Lord High Chancellor,  
 And over it the primate of all Hell  
 Murmured this pious baptism :—“ Be thou called  
 The GREEN BAG ; and this power and grace be thine :  
 That thy contents, on whomsoever poured,  
 Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks  
 To savage, foul, and fierce deformity.  
 Let all, baptised by thy infernal dew,  
 Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch !  
 No name left out which orthodoxy loves,  
 Court Journal or legitimate Review !—  
 Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover  
 Of other wives and husbands than their own—  
 The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps !  
 Wither they to a ghastly caricature  
 Of what was human !—let not man nor beast  
 Behold their face with unaverted eyes !  
 Or hear their names with ears that tingle not  
 With blood of indignation, rage, and shame !”  
 This is a perilous liquor ;—good my lords.

[SWELLFOOT *approaches to touch the GREEN BAG.*

Beware ! for God's sake, beware !—if you should break  
 The seal, and touch the fatal liquor——

PURGANAX.

There !

Give it to me. I have been use to handle  
 All sorts of poisons. His dread majesty  
 Only desires to see the colour of it.

MAMMON.

Now, with a little common sense, my lords,  
 Only undoing all that has been done,  
 (Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it,)

Our victory is assured. We must entice  
 Her majesty from the sty, and make the pigs  
 Believe that the contents of the GREEN BAG  
 Are the true test of guilt or innocence.  
 And that, if she be guilty, 'twill transform her  
 To manifest deformity like guilt.  
 If innocent, she will become transfigured  
 Into an angel, such as they say she is ;  
 And they will see her flying through the air,  
 So bright that she will dim the noon-day sun ;  
 Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits.  
 This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing  
 Swine will believe. I'll wager you will see them  
 Climbing upon the thatch of their low sties ;  
 With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail  
 Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps  
 Of one another's ears between their teeth,  
 To catch the coming hail of comfits in.  
 You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab,  
 Make them a solemn speech to this effect :  
 I go to put in readiness the feast  
 Kept to the honour of our goddess Famine,  
 Where, for more glory, let the ceremony  
 Take place of the uglification of the Queen.

DAKRY (*to SWELLFOOT.*)

I, as the keeper of your sacred conscience,  
 Humbly remind your majesty that the care  
 Of your high office, as man-milliner  
 To red Bellona, should not be deferred.

PURGANAX.

All part, in happier plight to meet again.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.



## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Public Sty.**The Boars in full Assembly.**Enter PURGANAX.*

PURGANAX.

Grant me your patience, gentlemen and boars,  
 Ye, by whose patience under public burthens  
 The glorious constitution of these sties  
 Subsists, and shall subsist. The lean pig-rates  
 Grow with the growing populace of swine,  
 The taxes, that true source of piggishness,  
 (How can I find a more appropriate term  
 To include religion, morals, peace, and plenty,  
 And all that fit Bœotia as a nation  
 To teach the other nations how to live ?)  
 Increase with piggishness itself; and still  
 Does the revenue, that great spring of all  
 The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments,  
 Which free-born pigs regard with jealous eyes,  
 Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps,  
 All the land's produce will be merged in taxes,  
 And the revenue will amount to——nothing!  
 The failure of a foreign market for  
 Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings,  
 And such home manufactures, is but partial;  
 And, that the population of the pigs,  
 Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw



And water, is a fact which is—you know—  
 That is—it is a state necessity—  
 Temporary, of course. Those impious pigs,  
 Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn  
 The settled Swellfoot system, or to make  
 Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions  
 Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipt  
 Into a loyal and an orthodox whine.  
 Things being in this happy state, the Queen  
 Iona——

*A loud cry from the Pigs.*

She is innocent! most innocent!

PURGANAX.

That is the very thing that I was saying,  
 Gentlemen swine; the Queen Iona being  
 Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes,  
 And the lean sows and boars collect about her,  
 Wishing to make her think that *we* believe  
 (I mean those more substantial pigs, who swill  
 Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw,)  
 That she is guilty; thus, the lean-pig faction  
 Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been  
 Your immemorial right, and which I will  
 Maintain you in to the last drop of—

A BOAR (*interrupting him*).

What

Does any one accuse her of?

PURGANAX.

Why, no one  
 Makes *any* positive accusation;—but  
 There were hints dropped, and so the privy wizards  
 Conceived that it became them to advise  
 His majesty to investigate their truth;—

Not for his own sake ; he could be content  
 To let his wife play any pranks she pleased,  
 If, by that sufferance, *he* could please the pigs ;  
 But then he fears the morals of the swine,  
 The sows especially, and what effect  
 It might produce upon the purity and  
 Religion of the rising generation  
 Of sucking-pigs, if it could be suspected  
 That Queen Iona—

[*A pause.*]

FIRST BOAR.

Well, go on ; we long  
 To hear what she can possibly have done.

PURGANAX.

Why, it is hinted, that a certain bull—  
 Thus much is *known* :—the milk-white bulls that feed  
 Beside Clitumnus and the crystal lakes  
 Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews  
 Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel,  
 Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath  
 Loading the morning winds until they faint  
 With living fragrance, are so beautiful !——  
 Well, *I* say nothing ;—but Europa rode  
 On such a one from Asia into Crete,  
 And the enamoured sea grew calm beneath  
 His gliding beauty. And Pasiphae,  
 Iona's grandmother,——but *she* is innocent !  
 And that both you and I, and all assert.

FIRST BOAR.

Most innocent !

PURGANAX.

Behold this BAG ; a bag—

SECOND BOAR.

Oh ! no GREEN BAGS !! Jealousy's eyes are green,

Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts,  
And verdigris, and—

PURGANAX.

Honourable swine,  
In piggish souls can prepossessions reign?  
Allow me to remind you, grass is green—  
All flesh is grass;—no bacon but is flesh—  
Ye are but bacon. This divining BAG  
(Which is not green, but only bacon colour)  
Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er  
A woman guilty of—we all know what—  
Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind,  
She never can commit the like again.  
If innocent, she will turn into an angel,  
And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits  
As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal  
Is to convert her sacred majesty  
Into an angel, (as I am sure we shall do,)  
By pouring on her head this mystic water.

*[Showing the Bag.]*

I know that she is innocent; I wish  
Only to prove her so to all the world.

FIRST BOAR.

Excellent, just, and noble Purganax!

SECOND BOAR.

How glorious it will be to see her majesty  
Flying above our heads, her petticoats  
Streaming like—like—like—

THIRD BOAR.

Any thing.

PURGANAX.

Oh, no!

But like a standard of an admiral's ship,

Or like the banner of a conquering host,  
 Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day,  
 Unravelled on the blast from a white mountain ;  
 Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane,  
 Or water-fall from a dizzy precipice  
 Scattered upon the wind.

FIRST BOAR.

Or a cow's tail,—

SECOND BOAR.

Or *any thing*, as the learned boar observed.

PURGANAX.

Gentlemen boars, I move a resolution,  
 That her most sacred majesty should be  
 Invited to attend the feast of Famine,  
 And to receive upon her chaste white body  
 Dews of Apotheosis from this BAG.

*[A great confusion is heard of the Pigs out of Doors, which communicates itself to those within. During the first Strophe, the doors of the Sty are staved in, and a number of exceedingly lean Pigs and Sows and Boars rush in.]*

SEMICHORUS I.

No ! Yes !

SEMICHORUS II.

Yes ! No !

SEMICHORUS I.

A law !

SEMICHORUS II.

A flaw !

SEMICHORUS I.

Porkers, we shall lose our wash,  
 Or must share it with the lean pigs !

FIRST BOAR.

Order! order! be not rash!  
Was there ever such a scene, pigs!

AN OLD SOW (*rushing in*).

I never saw so fine a dash  
Since I first began to wean pigs.

SECOND BOAR (*solemnly*).

The Queen will be an angel time enough.  
I vote, in form of an amendment, that  
Purganax rub a little of that stuff  
Upon his face—

PURGANAX.

[*His heart is seen to beat through his waistcoat.*

Gods! What would ye be at?

SEMICHORUS I.

Purganax has plainly shown a  
Cloven foot and jack-daw feather.

SEMICHORUS II.

I vote Swellfoot and Iona  
Try the magic test together;  
Whenever royal spouses bicker,  
Both should try the magic liquor.

AN OLD BOAR (*aside*).

A miserable state is that of pigs,  
For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs,  
The swine must bite each other's ear therefore.

AN OLD SOW (*aside*).

A wretched lot Jove has assigned to swine,  
Squabbling makes pig-herds hungry, and they dine  
On bacon, and whip sucking-pigs the more.

## CHORUS.

Hog-wash has been ta'en away :  
 If the Bull-Queen is divested,  
 We shall be in every way  
 Hunted, stript, exposed, molested ;  
 Let us do whate'er we may,  
 That she shall not be arrested.

QUEEN, we entrench you with walls of brawn,  
 And palisades of tusks, sharp as a bayonet :  
 Place your most sacred person here. We pawn  
 Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it.  
 Those who wrong you, wrong us ;  
 Those who hate you, hate us ;  
 Those who sting you, sting us ;  
 Those who bait you, bait us ;  
 The *oracle* is now about to be  
 Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny ;  
 Which says : " Thebes, choose *reform* or *civil war*,  
 When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
 A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,  
 Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR."

*Enter IONA TAURINA.*

IONA TAURINA (*coming forward*).

Gentlemen swine, and gentle lady-pigs,  
 The tender heart of every boar acquits  
 Their QUEEN, of any act incongruous  
 With native piggishness, and she reposing  
 With confidence upon the grunting nation,  
 Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all,  
 Her innocence, into their hoggish arms ;  
 Nor has the expectation been deceived  
 Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great boars,  
 (For such who ever lives among you finds you,



And so do I) the innocent are proud !  
 I have accepted your protection only  
 In compliment of your kind love and care,  
 Not for necessity. The innocent  
 Are safest there where trials and dangers wait ;  
 Innocent Queens o'er white-hot plough-shares tread  
 Unsinged ; and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it,\*  
 Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still,  
 Walked from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway,  
 Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry,  
 White-boys, and orange-boys, and constables,  
 Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured !  
 Thus I !—  
 Lord PURGANAX, I do commit myself  
 Into your custody, and am prepared  
 To stand the test, whatever it may be !

PURGANAX.

This magnanimity in your sacred majesty  
 Must please the pigs. You cannot fail of being  
 A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass,  
 Ye loyal swine, or her transfiguration  
 Will blind your wondering eyes.

AN OLD BOAR (*aside*).

Take care, my lord,  
 They do not smoke you first.

PURGANAX.

At the approaching feast  
 Of Famine, let the expiation be.

SWINE.

Content ! content !

\* " Rich and rare were the gems she wore."

*See Moore's Irish Melodies.*

IONA TAURINA (*aside*).

I, most content of all,  
Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall !

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

SCENE II.

*The interior of the Temple of FAMINE. The statue of the Goddess, a skeleton clothed in party-coloured rags, seated upon a heap of skulls and loaves intermingled. A number of exceedingly fat Priests in black garments arrayed on each side, with marrow-bones and cleavers in their hands. A flourish of trumpets.*

*Enter MAMMON as Arch-priest, SWELLFOOT, DAKRY, PURGANAX, LAOC-TONOS, followed by IONA TAURINA guarded. On the other side enter the Swine.*

CHORUS OF PRIESTS,

*Accompanied by the Court Porkman on marrow-bones and cleavers.*

Goddess bare, and gaunt, and pale,

Empress of the world, all hail !

What though Cretans old called thee

City-crested Cybele ?

We call thee FAMINE !

Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming ;

Through thee, for emperors, kings, and priests and lords,

Who rule by viziers, sceptres, bank-notes, words,

The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits,

Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots—

Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat,

Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean,

Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that !

And let things be as they have ever been ;

At least while we remain thy priests,

And proclaim thy fasts and feasts !

Through thee the sacred SWELLFOOT dynasty

Is based upon a rock amid that sea  
Whose waves are swine—so let it ever be!

[SWELLFOOT, &c. seat themselves at a table, magnificently covered at the upper end of the temple. Attendants pass over the stage with hog-wash in pails. A number of Pigs, exceedingly lean, follow them licking up the wash.

MAMMON.

I fear your sacred majesty has lost  
The appetite which you were used to have.  
Allow me now to recommend this dish—  
A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook,  
Such as is served at the great King's second table.  
The price and pains which its ingredients cost,  
Might have maintained some dozen families  
A winter or two—not more—so plain a dish  
Could scarcely disagree.—

SWELLFOOT.

After the trial,  
And these fastidious pigs are gone, perhaps  
I may recover my lost appetite,—  
I feel the gout flying about my stomach—  
Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.

PURGANAX.

[Filling his glass, and standing up.

The glorious constitution of the Pigs!

ALL.

A toast! a toast! stand up, and three times three!

DAKRY.

No heel-taps—darken day-lights!

LAOCTONOS.

Claret, somehow,  
Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!

SWELLFOOT.

Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment,  
 But 'tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine,  
 And shed more blood, than any man in Thebes.

(To PURGANAX.)

For God's sake stop the grunting of those pigs !

PURGANAX.

We dare not, sire ! 'tis Famine's privilege.

CHORUS OF SWINE.

Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine !

Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags ;  
 Thou devil which livest on damning ;  
 Saint of new churches, and cant, and GREEN BAGS ;  
 Till in pity and terror thou risest,  
 Confounding the schemes of the wisest.  
 When thou liftest thy skeleton form,  
 When the loaves and the skulls roll about,  
 We will greet thee—the voice of a storm  
 Would be lost in our terrible shout !

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine !

Hail to thee, Empress of Earth !  
 When thou risest, dividing possessions ;  
 When thou risest, uprooting oppressions ;  
 In the pride of thy ghastly mirth.  
 Over palaces, temples, and graves,  
 We will rush as thy minister-slaves,  
 Trampling behind in thy train,  
 Till all be made level again !

MAMMON.

I hear a crackling of the giant bones  
 Of the dread image, and in the black pits

Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames :  
 These prodigies are oracular, and show  
 The presence of the unseen Deity.  
 Mighty events are hastening to their doom !

SWELLFOOT.

I only hear the lean and mutinous swine  
 Grunting about the temple.

DAKRY.

In a crisis

Of such exceeding delicacy, I think  
 We ought to put her majesty, the QUEEN,  
 Upon her trial without delay.

MAMMON.

The BAG

Is here.

PURGANAX.

I have rehearsed the entire scene  
 With an ox-bladder and some ditch-water,  
 On Lady P.—it cannot fail.

*[Taking up the bag.]*

Your majesty (to SWELLFOOT)

In such a filthy business had better  
 Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you.  
 A spot or two on me would do no harm ;  
 Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad genius  
 Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell,  
 Upon my brow—which would stain all its seas,  
 But which those seas could never wash away !

IONA TAURINA.

My lord, I am ready—nay I am impatient,  
 To undergo the test.

*[A graceful figure in a semi-transparent veil passes unnoticed  
 through the Temple ; the word LIBERTY is seen through the*

*veil, as if it were written in fire upon its forehead. Its words are almost drowned in the furious grunting of the Pigs, and the business of the trial. She kneels on the steps of the Altar, and speaks in tones at first faint and low, but which ever become louder and louder.*

Mighty Empress ! Death's white wife !  
 Ghastly mother-in-law of life !  
 By the God who made thee such,  
 By the magic of thy touch,  
 By the starving and the cramming,  
 Of fasts and feasts !—by thy dread self, O Famine !  
 I charge thee ! when thou wake the multitude,  
 Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood.  
 The earth did never mean her foizon  
 For those who crown life's cup with poison  
 Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge—  
 But for those radiant spirits, who are still  
 The standard-bearers in the van of Change.  
 Be they th' appointed stewards, to fill  
 The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age !—  
 Remit, O Queen ! thy accustom'd rage !  
 Be what thou art not ! In voice faint and low  
 FREEDOM calls *Famine*,—her eternal foe,  
 To brief alliance, hollow truce.—Rise now !

[ *Whilst the veiled Figure has been chaunting this strophe, MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS, and SWELLFOOT, have surrounded IONA TAURINA, who, with her hands folded on her breast, and her eyes lifted to Heaven, stands, as with saint-like resignation, to wait the issue of the business, in perfect confidence of her innocence.*

PURGANAX, after unsealing the GREEN BAG, is gravely about to pour the liquor upon her head, when suddenly the whole expression of her figure and countenance changes ; she snatches it from his hand with a loud laugh of triumph, and empties it over SWELLFOOT and his whole Court, who are instantly changed into a number of filthy and ugly



*animals, and rush out of the Temple. The image of FAMINE then arises with a tremendous sound, the Pigs begin scrambling for the loaves, and are tripped up by the skulls ; all those who eat the loaves are turned into Bulls, and arrange themselves quietly behind the altar. The image of FAMINE sinks through a chasm in the earth, and a MINOTAUR rises.*

## MINOTAUR.

I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest  
Of all Europa's taurine progeny—  
I am the old traditional man bull ;  
And from my ancestors having been Ionian,  
I am called Ion, which, by interpretation,  
Is JOHN ; in plain Theban, that is to say,  
My name 's JOHN BULL ; I am a famous hunter,  
And can leap any gate in all Bœotia,  
Even the palings of the royal park,  
Or double ditch about the new inclosures ;  
And if your majesty will deign to mount me,  
At least till you have hunted down your game,  
I will not throw you.

## IONA TAURINA.

*[During this speech she has been putting on boots and spurs, and a hunting-cap, buckishly cocked on one side, and tucking up her hair, she leaps nimbly on his back.*

Hoa ! hoa ! tallyho ! tallyho ! ho ! ho !  
Come, let us hunt these ugly badgers down,  
These stinking foxes, these devouring otters,  
These hares, these wolves, these anything but men.  
Hey, for a whipper-in ! my loyal pigs,  
Now let your noses be as keen as beagles',  
Your steps as swift as greyhounds', and your cries  
More dulcet and symphonious than the bells  
Of village-towers, on sunshine holiday ;  
Wake all the dewy woods with jangling music.  
Give them no law (are they not beasts of blood ?)

But such as they gave you. Tallyho! ho!  
Through forest, furze, and bog, and den, and desert,  
Pursue the ugly beasts! tallyho! ho!

FULL CHORUS OF IONA AND THE SWINE.

Tallyho! tallyho!  
Through rain, hail, and snow,  
Through brake, gorse, and briar,  
Through fen, flood, and mire,  
We go! we go!

Tallyho! tallyho!  
Through pond, ditch, and slough,  
Wind them, and find them,  
Like the Devil behind them,  
Tallyho! tallyho!

[*Exeunt, in full cry; IONA driving on the SWINE, with the empty  
GREEN BAG.*]

## NOTE ON ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS.

BY THE EDITOR.

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IN the brief journal I kept in those days, I find recorded, in August 1820, Shelley "begins Swellfoot the Tyrant, suggested by the pigs at the fair of San Giuliano." This was the period of Queen Caroline's landing in England, and the struggles made by Geo. IV. to get rid of her claims; which failing, Lord Castlereagh placed the "*Green Bag*" on the table of the House of Commons, demanding, in the King's name, that an inquiry should be instituted into his wife's conduct. These circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano; a friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his Ode to Liberty; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the "chorus of frogs" in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus—and Swellfoot was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the "Society for the Suppression of Vice," who threatened

to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

Hesitation of whether it would do honour to Shelley prevented my publishing it at first; but I cannot bring myself to keep back anything he ever wrote, for each word is fraught with the peculiar views and sentiments which he believed to be beneficial to the human race; and the bright light of poetry irradiates every thought. The world has a right to the entire compositions of such a man; for it does not live and thrive by the out-worn lesson of the dullard or the hypocrite, but by the original free thoughts of men of Genius, who aspire to pluck bright truth

“————— from the pale-faced moon;  
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,  
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,  
And pluck up drowned—”

truth. Even those who may dissent from his opinions will consider that he was a man of genius, and that the world will take more interest in his slightest word, than from the waters of Lethe, which are so eagerly prescribed as medicinal for all its wrongs and woes. This drama, however, must not be judged for more than was meant. It is a mere plaything of the imagination, which even may not excite smiles among many, who will not see wit in those combinations of thought which were full of the ridiculous to the author. But, like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name.

## EARLY POEMS.

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### A SUMMER-EVENING CHURCH-YARD,

LECHDALE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

---

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere  
Each vapour that obscured the sun-set's ray ;  
And pallid evening twines its beaming hair  
In dusker braids around the languid eyes of day :  
Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,  
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,  
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea ;  
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,  
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.  
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass  
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aërial Pile ! whose pinnacles  
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,  
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,  
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,  
Around whose lessening and invisible height  
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres :

And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,  
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,

Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,  
And mingling with the still night and mute sky  
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnised and softened, death is mild

And terrorless as this serenest night :  
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child

Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight  
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep  
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

---

MUTABILITY.

---

WE are as clouds that veil the midnight moon ;  
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,  
Streaking the darkness radiantly !—yet soon  
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever :

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings  
Give various response to each varying blast,  
To whose frail frame no second motion brings  
One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest—A dream has power to poison sleep ;  
We rise—One wandering thought pollutes the day ;  
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep ;  
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away :

It is the same !—For, be it joy or sorrow,  
The path of its departure still is free ;  
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow ;  
Nought may endure but Mutability.



## ON DEATH.

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.—ECCLESIASTES.

THE pale, the cold, and the moony smile  
 Which the meteor beam of a starless night  
 Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,  
 Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,  
 Is the flame of life so fickle and wan  
 That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man ! hold thee on in courage of soul  
 Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,  
 And the billows of cloud that around thee roll  
 Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,  
 Where hell and heaven shall leave thee free  
 To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,  
 This world is the mother of all we feel,  
 And the coming of death is a fearful blow,  
 To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel ;  
 When all that we know, or feel, or see,  
 Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,  
 Where all but this frame must surely be,  
 Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear  
 No longer will live to hear or to see  
 All that is great and all that is strange  
 In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?  
 Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?  
 Who painteth the shadows that are beneath  
 The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?  
 Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be  
 With the fears and the love for that which we see?

---

 TO \* \* \* \*
 

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ΔΑΚΡΥΕΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ.

---

OH! there are spirits in the air,  
 And genii of the evening breeze,  
 And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair  
 As star-beams among twilight trees:—  
 Such lovely ministers to meet  
 Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,  
 And mountain seas, that are the voice  
 Of these inexplicable things,  
 Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice  
 When they did answer thee; but they  
 Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes  
 Beams that were never meant for thine,  
 Another's wealth;—tame sacrifice  
 To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?  
 Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,  
 Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope  
 On the false earth's inconstancy?

Did thine own mind afford no scope  
 Of love, or moving thoughts to thee?  
 That natural scenes or human smiles  
 Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled  
 Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted ;  
 The glory of the moon is dead ;  
 Night's ghost and dreams have now departed ;  
 Thine own soul still is true to thee,  
 But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever  
 Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,  
 Dream not to chase ;—the mad endeavour  
 Would scourge thee to severer pangs.  
 Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,  
 Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

---

 TO WORDSWORTH.
 

---

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know  
 That things depart which never may return ;  
 Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,  
 Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.  
 These common woes I feel. One loss is mine,  
 Which thou too feel'st ; yet I alone deplore.  
 Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine  
 On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar :  
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood  
 Above the blind and battling multitude :  
 In honoured poverty thy voice did weave  
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—  
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,  
 Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

## STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814.

AWAY! the moor is dark beneath the moon,  
 Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even :  
 Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,  
 And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of  
 heaven.  
 Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away!  
 Tempt not with one last glance thy friend's ungentle mood :  
 Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay :  
 Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home ;  
 Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth ;  
 Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,  
 And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.  
 The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine  
 head,  
 The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet :  
 But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds  
 the dead,  
 Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and  
 peace may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,  
 For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep ;  
 Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows ;  
 Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed  
 sleep.

Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee  
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to  
thee erewhile,  
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings, are  
not free  
From the music of two voices, and the light of one sweet  
smile.

---

## LINES.

THE cold earth slept below,  
Above the cold sky shone,  
And all around  
With a chilling sound,  
From caves of ice and fields of snow,  
The breath of night like death did flow  
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black,  
The green grass was not seen,  
The birds did rest  
On the bare thorn's breast,  
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,  
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack  
Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare  
Of the moon's dying light,  
As a fen-fire's beam  
On a sluggish stream  
Gleams dimly—so the moon shone there,  
And it yellowed the strings of thy tangled hair,  
That shook in the wind of night.

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved ;  
The wind made thy bosom chill ;  
The night did shed  
On thy dear head  
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie  
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky  
Might visit thee at will.

---

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL  
OF BONAPARTE.

---

I HATED thee, fallen tyrant ! I did groan  
To think that a most unambitious slave,  
Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave  
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne  
Where it had stood even now : thou didst prefer  
A frail and bloody pomp, which time has swept  
In fragments towards oblivion. Massacre,  
For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept,  
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,  
And stifled thee, their minister. I know  
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,  
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe  
Than force or fraud : old Custom, legal Crime,  
And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of time.



## NOTE ON THE EARLY POEMS.

BY THE EDITOR.

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THE remainder of Shelley's Poems will be arranged in the order in which they were written. Of course, mistakes will occur in placing some of the shorter ones; for, as I have said, many of these were thrown aside, and I never saw them till I had the misery of looking over his writings, after the hand that traced them was dust; and some were in the hands of others, and I never saw them till now. The subjects of the poems are often to me an unerring guide; but on other occasions, I can only guess, by finding them in the pages of the same manuscript book that contains poems with the date of whose composition I am fully conversant. In the present arrangement all his poetical translations will be placed together at the end of the third volume.

The loss of his early papers prevents my being able to give any of the poetry of his boyhood. Of the few I give as early poems, the greater part were published with "Alastor;" some of them were written previously, some at the same period. The poem beginning, "Oh, there are spirits in the air," was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner

heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth. The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechdale, occurred during his voyage up the Thames, in the autumn of 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air ; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly than the summer of 1815. He had just recovered from a severe pulmonary attack ; the weather was warm and pleasant. He lived near Windsor Forest, and his life was spent under its shades, or on the water ; meditating subjects for verse. Hitherto, he had chiefly aimed at extending his political doctrines ; and attempted so to do by appeals, in prose essays, to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights ; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things.

In the scanty journals kept during those years, I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815, the list is extensive. It includes in Greek ; Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus—the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Laertius. In Latin ; Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy. In English ; Milton's Poems, Wordsworth's Excursion, Southey's Madoc and Thalaba, Locke on the Human Understanding, Bacon's *Novum Organum*. In Italian ; Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the *Rêveries d'un Solitaire* of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travels. He read few novels.

## POEMS WRITTEN IN 1816.

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### THE SUNSET.

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THERE late was One, within whose subtle being,  
As light and wind within some delicate cloud  
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,  
Genius and death contended. None may know  
The sweetness of the joy which made his breath  
Fail, like the trances of the summer air,  
When, with the Lady of his love, who then  
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,  
He walked along the pathway of a field,  
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,  
But to the west was open to the sky.  
There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold  
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points  
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers,  
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,  
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay  
On the brown massy woods—and in the east  
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose  
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,  
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.—  
“Is it not strange, Isabel,” said the youth,  
“I never saw the sun? We will walk here

To-morrow ; thou shalt look on it with me.”  
That night the youth and lady mingled lay  
In love and sleep—but when the morning came  
The lady found her lover dead and cold.  
Let none believe that God in mercy gave  
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,  
But year by year lived on—in truth I think  
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles,  
And that she did not die, but lived to tend  
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,  
If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.  
For but to see her were to read the tale  
Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts  
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief ;—  
Her eye-lashes were torn away with tears,  
Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale ;  
Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins  
And weak articulations might be seen  
Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self  
Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day,  
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee !

“ Inheritor of more than earth can give,  
Passionless calm, and silence unreprieved,  
Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep ! but rest,  
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,  
Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love ;  
Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace ! ”  
This was the only moan she ever made.

## HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.



THE awful shadow of some unseen Power  
Floats tho' unseen among us ; visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower :  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,  
It visits with inconstant glance  
Each human heart and countenance ;  
Like hues and harmonies of evening,  
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,  
Like memory of music fled,  
Like aught that for its grace may be  
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.—

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate  
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon  
Of human thought or form, where art thou gone ?  
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,  
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate ?  
Ask why the sunlight not for ever  
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river ;  
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown ;  
Why fear and dream and death and birth  
Cast on the daylight of this earth  
Such gloom ; why man has such a scope  
For love and hate, despondency and hope ;

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever  
 To sage or poet these responses given :  
 Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,  
 Remain the records of their vain endeavour ;  
 Frail spells, whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,  
 From all we hear and all we see,  
 Doubt, chance, and mutability.  
 Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven,  
 Or music by the night wind sent  
 Through strings of some still instrument,  
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream,  
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds, depart  
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent.  
 Man were immortal and omnipotent,  
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,  
 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.  
 Thou messenger of sympathies  
 That wax and wane in lovers' eyes ;  
 Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,  
 Like darkness to a dying flame !  
 Depart not as thy shadow came :  
 Depart not, lest the grave should be,  
 Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
 Thro' many a listening chamber, cave, and ruin,  
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed :  
 I was not heard, I saw them not ;  
 When musing deeply on the lot  
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing



All vital things that wake to bring  
 News of birds and blossoming,  
 Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;  
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy !

I vowed ~~that~~ I would dedicate my powers  
 To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?  
 With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
 I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
 Each from his voiceless grave : they have in visioned bowers  
 Of studious zeal or love's delight  
 Outwatched with me the envious night :  
 They know that never joy illumed my brow,  
 Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free  
 This world from its dark slavery,  
 That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,  
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene  
 When noon is past : there is a harmony  
 In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,  
 Which thro' the summer is not heard nor seen,  
 As if it could not be, as if it had not been !  
 Thus let thy power, which like the truth  
 Of nature on my passive youth  
 Descended, to my onward life supply  
 Its calm, to one who worships thee,  
 And every form containing thee,  
 Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind  
 To fear himself, and love all human kind.

## MONT BLANC.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.



### I.

THE everlasting universe of things  
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,  
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—  
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs  
The source of human thought its tribute brings  
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,  
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume  
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,  
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,  
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river  
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

### II.

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—  
Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale,  
Over whose pines and crags and caverns sail  
Fast clouds, shadows, and sunbeams ; awful scene,  
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down  
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,  
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame  
Of lightning through the tempest ;—thou dost lie,  
The giant brood of pines around thee clinging,  
Children of elder time, in whose devotion,  
The chainless winds still come and ever came  
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging

To hear—an old and solemn harmony :  
 Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep  
 Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil  
 Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep  
 Which, when the voices of the desert fail,  
 Wraps all in its own deep eternity ;—  
 Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion  
 A loud, lone sound, no other sound can tame ;  
 Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,  
 Thou art the path of that unresting sound—  
 Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee,  
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange  
 To muse on my own separate fantasy,  
 My own, my human mind, which passively  
 Now renders and receives fast influencings,  
 Holding an unremitting interchange  
 With the clear universe of things around ;  
 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings  
 Now float above thy darkness, and now rest  
 Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,  
 In the still cave of the witch Poesy,  
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by  
 Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,  
 Some phantom, some faint image ; till the breast  
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

## III.

Some say that gleams of a remoter world  
 Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber,  
 And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber  
 Of those who wake and live. I look on high ;  
 Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled  
 The veil of life and death ? or do I lie  
 In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep  
 Speed far around and inaccessibly

Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,  
 Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep  
 That vanishes among the viewless gales !  
 Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,  
 Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—  
 Its subject mountains their unearthly forms  
 Pile around it, ice and rock ; broad vales between  
 Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,  
 Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread  
 And wind among the accumulated steeps ;  
 A desert peopled by the storms alone,  
 Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,  
 And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously  
 Its shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare, and high,  
 Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene  
 Where the old Earthquake-demon taught her young  
 Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea  
 Of fire envelope once this silent snow ?  
 None can reply—all seems eternal now.  
 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue  
 Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,  
 So solemn, so serene, that man may be  
 But for such faith with nature reconciled ;  
 Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal  
 Large codes of fraud and woe ; not understood,  
 By all, but which the wise, and great, and good,  
 Interpret or make felt, or deeply feel.

## IV.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,  
 Ocean, and all the living things that dwell  
 Within the dædal earth ; lightning, and rain,  
 Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,  
 The torpor of the year when feeble dreams  
 Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep

Holds every future leaf and flower,—the bound  
With which from that detested trance they leap ;  
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,  
And that of him, and all that his may be ;  
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound  
Are born and die, revolve, subside, and swell.  
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,  
Remote, serene, and inaccessible :  
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,  
On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains,  
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep,  
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,  
Slowly rolling on ; there, many a precipice  
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power  
Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,  
A city of death, distinct with many a tower  
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.  
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin  
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky  
Rolls its perpetual stream ; vast pines are strewing  
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil  
Branchless and shattered stand ; the rocks, drawn down  
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown  
The limits of the dead and living world,  
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place  
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil ;  
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,  
So much of life and joy is lost. The race  
Of man flies far in dread ; his work and dwelling  
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,  
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves  
Shine in the rushing torrent's restless gleam,  
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling  
Meet in the Vale, and one majestic River,  
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever

Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,  
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

v.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high :—the power is there,  
The still and solemn power of many sights  
And many sounds, and much of life and death.  
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,  
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend  
Upon that Mountain ; none beholds them there,  
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,  
Or the star-beams dart through them :—Winds contend  
Silently there, and heap the snow, with breath  
Rapid and strong, but silently ! Its home  
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes  
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods  
Over the snow. The secret strength of things,  
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome  
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !  
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,  
If to the human mind's imaginings  
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?

SWITZERLAND, *June 23*, 1816.



## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1816.

BY THE EDITOR.

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SHELLEY wrote little during this year. The Poem entitled "The Sunset" was written in the spring of the year, while still residing at Bishopsgate. He spent the summer on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron. He occupied himself during this voyage, by reading the *Nouvelle Héloïse* for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid, added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest enthralling interest that pervades this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to Love, that coincided with Shelley's own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views, and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful.

"Mont Blanc" was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the *History of Six Weeks' Tour, and Letters from Switzerland*:—"The Poem entitled 'Mont Blanc,' is

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written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe ; and as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untameable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.”

This was an eventful year, and less time was given to study than usual. In the list of his reading I find, in Greek : Theocritus, the Prometheus of Æschylus, several of Plutarch's Lives, and the works of Lucian. In Latin : Lucretius, Pliny's Letters, the Annals and Germany of Tacitus. In French : the History of the French Revolution, by Lacretelle. He read for the first time, this year, Montaigne's Essays, and regarded them ever after as one of the most delightful and instructive books in the world. The list is scanty in English works—Locke's Essay, Political Justice, and Coleridge's Lay Sermon, form nearly the whole. It was his frequent habit to read aloud to me in the evening ; in this way we read, this year, the New Testament, Paradise Lost, Spenser's Fairy Queen, and Don Quixote.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817.

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PRINCE ATHANASE.

A FRAGMENT.

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PART I.

THERE was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,  
Had grown quite weak and grey before his time ;  
Nor any could the restless griefs unravel

Which burned within him, withering up his prime  
And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.  
Not his the load of any secret crime,

For nought of ill his heart could understand,  
But pity and wild sorrow for the same ;  
Not his the thirst for glory or command,

Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame ;  
Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast,  
And quench in speedy smoke its feeble flame,

Had left within his soul the dark unrest :  
Nor what religion fables of the grave  
Feared he,—Philosophy's accepted guest.

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For none than he a purer heart could have,  
Or that loved good more for itself alone ;  
Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.

What sorrow, strange, and shadowy, and unknown,  
Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind?—  
If with a human sadness he did groan,

He had a gentle yet aspiring mind ;  
Just, innocent, with varied learning fed ;  
And such a glorious consolation find

In others' joy, when all their own is dead :  
He loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,  
And yet, unlike all others, it is said

That from such toil he never found relief.  
Although a child of fortune and of power,  
Of an ancestral name the orphan chief,

His soul had wedded wisdom, and her dower  
Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate  
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,

Pitying the tumult of their dark estate.—  
Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse  
The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate

Those false opinions which the harsh rich use  
To blind the world they famish for their pride ;  
Nor did he hold from any man his dues,

But, like a steward in honest dealings tried,  
With those who toiled and wept, the poor and wise,  
His riches and his cares he did divide.

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,  
What he dared do or think, though men might start,  
He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes ;

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,  
And to his many friends—all loved him well—  
Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell ;  
If not, he smiled or wept ; and his weak foes  
He neither spurned nor hated—though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,  
They past like aimless arrows from his ear.—  
Nor did his heart or mind its portal close

To those, or them, or any, whom life's sphere  
May comprehend within its wide array.  
What sadness made that vernal spirit sere ?

He knew not. Though his life day after day,  
Was failing, like an unreplenished stream,  
Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay,

Through which his soul, like Vesper's serene beam  
Piercing the chasms of ever rising clouds,  
Shone, softly burning ; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods ;  
And through his sleep, and o'er each waking hour,  
Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him by some secret power,  
Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,  
Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower to tower,

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war  
Is levied by the night-contending winds,  
And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;—

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends  
Which wake and feed on everliving woe,—  
What was this grief, which ne'er in other minds

A mirror found,—he knew not—none could know ;  
But on whoe'er might question him he turned  
The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burned,  
But asked forbearance with a mournful look ;  
Or spoke in words from which none ever learned

The cause of his disquietude ; or shook  
With spasms of silent passion ; or turned pale :  
So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail ;—  
For all who knew and loved him then perceived  
That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind,—both unrelieved  
Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.  
Some said that he was mad, others believed

That memories of an antenatal life  
Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell :  
And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell  
On souls like his, which owned no higher law  
Than love ; love calm, steadfast, invincible



By mortal fear or supernatural awe ;  
 And others,—“ ’Tis the shadow of a dream  
 Which the veiled eye of memory never saw,

“ But through the soul’s abyss, like some dark stream  
 Through shattered mines and caverns underground  
 Rolls, shaking its foundations ; and no beam

“ Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned  
 In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure.  
 Soon its exhausted waters will have found

“ A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,  
 O Athanase !—in one so good and great,  
 Evil or tumult cannot long endure.”

So spake they : idly of another’s state  
 Babbling vain words and fond philosophy :  
 This was their consolation ; such debate

Men held with one another ; nor did he,  
 Like one who labours with a human woe,  
 Decline this talk ; as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro  
 Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit ;  
 And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit  
 His weary mind, this converse vain and cold ;  
 For like an eyeless night-mare grief did sit

Upon his being ; a snake which fold by fold  
 Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend  
 Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold ;—  
 And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold\*.

\* The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement

## FRAGMENTS OF PRINCE ATHANASE.\*

### PART II.



### FRAGMENT I.

PRINCE ATHANASE had one beloved friend,  
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,  
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words ; and eyes whose arrowy light  
Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.  
He was the last whom superstition's blight

and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or gainer by this difference.—*Author's Note.*

\* The idea Shelley had formed of Prince Athanase was a good deal modelled on Alastor. In the first sketch of the Poem he named it Pandemos and Urania. Athanase seeks through the world the One whom he may love. He meets, in the ship in which he is embarked, a lady, who appears to him to embody his ideal of love and beauty. But she proves to be Pandemos, or the earthly and unworthy Venus, who, after disappointing his cherished dreams and hopes, deserts him. Athanase, crushed by sorrow, pines and dies. "On his death-bed the lady, who can really reply to his soul, comes and kisses his lips."—*The Death-bed of Athanase.* The poet describes her—

Her hair was brown, her sphered eyes were brown,  
And in their dark and liquid moisture swam,  
Like the dim orb of the eclipsed moon ;

Yet when the spirit flashed beneath, there came  
The light from them, as when tears of delight  
Double the western planet's serene frame.

This slender note is all we have to aid our imagination in shaping out the form of the poem, such as its author imaged.—*M. S.*

Had spared in Greece—the blight that cramps and blinds,—  
And in his olive bower at Ænoe  
Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea,  
One mariner who has survived his mates  
Many a drear month in a great ship—so he

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates  
Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being :  
“The mind becomes that which it contemplates,”—

And thus Zonoras, by for ever seeing  
Their bright creations, grew like wisest men ;  
And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,  
O sacred Hellas ! many weary years  
He wandered, till the path of Laian's glen

Was grass-grown—and the unremembered tears  
Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief,  
Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears :—

And as the lady looked with faithful grief  
From her high lattice o'er the rugged path,  
Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death  
Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,  
She saw beneath the chesnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight ;  
And soon within her hospitable hall  
She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall,  
 And his wan visage and his withered mien,  
 Yet calm and gentle and majestic.

And Athanase, her child, who must have been  
 Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed  
 In patient silence.

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FRAGMENT II.

SUCH was Zonoras ; and as daylight finds  
 One amaranth glittering on the path of frost,  
 When autumn nights have nipt all weaker kinds,

Thus through his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tost,  
 Shone truth upon Zonoras ; and he filled  
 From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child,  
 With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore  
 And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

And sweet and subtle talk now evermore,  
 The pupil and the master shared ; until,  
 Sharing that undiminishable store,

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill  
 Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran  
 His teacher, and did teach with native skill

Strange truths and new to that experienced man.  
 Still they were friends, as few have ever been  
 Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.

So in the caverns of the forest green,  
Or by the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,  
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen ; and when winter's roar  
Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,  
The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

Hanging upon the peaked wave afar,  
Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,  
Piercing the stormy darkness, like a star

Which pours beyond the sea one steadfast beam,  
Whilst all the constellations of the sky  
Seemed reeling through the storm ; they did but seem—

For, lo ! the wintry clouds are all gone by,  
And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing,  
And far o'er southern waves, immoveably

Belted Orion hangs—warm light is flowing  
From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.—  
“ O summer eve ! with power divine, bestowing

“ On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm  
Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,  
Filling the sky like light ! How many a spasm

“ Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness,  
Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale !  
And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,

“ And the far sighings of yon piny dale  
Made vocal by some wind, we feel not here.—  
I bear alone what nothing may avail

“To lighten—a strange load!”—No human ear  
Heard this lament; but o’er the visage wan  
Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow ran,  
Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,  
Glassy and dark.—And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend’s whole being shake,  
Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest—  
And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

And, with a soft and equal pressure, prest  
That cold lean hand:—“Dost thou remember yet  
When the curved moon then lingering in the west

“Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,  
How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea?  
’Tis just one year—sure thou dost not forget—

“Then Plato’s words of light in thee and me  
Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east,  
For we had just then read—thy memory

“Is faithful now—the story of the feast;  
And Agathon and Diotima seemed  
From death and dark forgetfulness released.”

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### FRAGMENT III.

’Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings  
From slumber, as a sphered angel’s child,  
Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,



Stands up before its mother bright and mild,  
Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems—  
So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,  
The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove  
Waxed green—and flowers burst forth like starry beams;—

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,  
And sea-buds burst beneath the waves serene :—  
How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen  
In any mirror—or the spring's young minions,  
The winged leaves amid the copses green ;—

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions  
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,  
And his own steps—and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,  
More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below,  
When winter and despondency are past.

'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase  
Pass'd the white Alps—those eagle-baffling mountains  
Slept in their shrouds of snow ;—beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless—for their fountains  
Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now,  
Or by the curdling winds—like brazen wings

Which clanged along the mountain's marble brow—  
Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung  
And filled with frozen light the chasm below.

## FRAGMENT IV.

THOU art the wine whose drunkenness is all  
We can desire, O Love! and happy souls,  
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing bowls  
Thousands who thirst for thy ambrosial dew ;  
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investest it ; and when the heavens are blue  
Thou fillest them ; and when the earth is fair,  
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear  
Beauty like some bright robe ;—thou ever soarest  
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,  
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,  
Thou floatest among men ; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore :—the weak  
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts  
The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not ?

## MARIANNE'S DREAM.

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A PALE dream came to a Lady fair,  
And said, A boon, a boon, I pray !  
I know the secrets of the air ;  
And things are lost in the glare of day,  
Which I can make the sleeping see,  
If they will put their trust in me.

And thou shalt know of things unknown,  
If thou wilt let me rest between  
The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown  
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen :  
And half in hope, and half in fright,  
The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

At first all deadly shapes were driven  
Tumultuously across her sleep,  
And o'er the vast cope of bending heaven  
All ghastly-visaged clouds did sweep ;  
And the Lady ever looked to spy  
If the gold sun shone forth on high.

And as towards the east she turned,  
She saw aloft in the morning air,  
Which now with hues of sunrise burned,  
A great black Anchor rising there ;  
And wherever the Lady turned her eyes  
It hung before her in the skies.

The sky was blue as the summer sea,  
The depths were cloudless over head.  
The air was calm as it could be,  
There was no sight nor sound of dread,  
But that black Anchor floating still  
Over the piny eastern hill.

The Lady grew sick with a weight of fear,  
To see that Anchor ever hanging,  
And veiled her eyes ; she then did hear  
The sound as of a dim low clanging,  
And looked abroad if she might know  
Was it aught else, or but the flow  
Of the blood in her own veins, to and fro.

There was a mist in the sunless air,  
Which shook as it were with an earthquake's shock,  
But the very weeds that blossomed there  
Were moveless, and each mighty rock  
Stood on its basis stedfastly ;  
The Anchor was seen no more on high.

But piled around with summits hid  
In lines of cloud at intervals,  
Stood many a mountain pyramid  
Among whose everlasting walls  
Two mighty cities shone, and ever  
Through the red mist their domes did quiver.

On two dread mountains, from whose crest,  
Might seem, the eagle for her brood  
Would ne'er have hung her dizzy nest  
Those tower-encircled cities stood.  
A vision strange such towers to see,  
Sculptured and wrought so gorgeously,  
Where human art could never be.

And columns framed of marble white,  
And giant fanes, dome over dome  
Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright  
With workmanship, which could not come  
From touch of mortal instrument,  
Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent  
From its own shapes magnificent.

But still the Lady heard that clang  
Filling the wide air far away ;  
And still the mist whose light did hang  
Among the mountains shook alway,  
So that the Lady's heart beat fast,  
As half in joy and half aghast,  
On those high domes her look she cast.

Sudden from out that city sprung  
A light that made the earth grow red ;  
Two flames that each with quivering tongue  
Licked its high domes, and over-head  
Among those mighty towers and fanes  
Dropped fire, as a volcano rains  
Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

And hark ! a rush, as if the deep  
Had burst its bonds ; she looked behind  
And saw over the western steep  
A raging flood descend, and wind  
Through that wide vale : she felt no fear,  
But said within herself, 'Tis clear  
These towers are Nature's own, and she  
To save them has sent forth the sea.

And now those raging billows came  
Where that fair Lady sate, and she

Was borne towards the showering flame  
By the wild waves heaped tumultuously,  
And, on a little plank, the flow  
Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

The waves were fiercely vomited  
From every tower and every dome,  
And dreary light did widely shed  
O'er that vast flood's suspended foam,  
Beneath the smoke which hung its night  
On the stained cope of heaven's light.

The plank whereon that Lady sate  
Was driven through the chasms, about and about,  
Between the peaks so desolate  
Of the drowning mountain, in and out,  
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails—  
While the flood was filling those hollow vales.

At last her plank an eddy crost,  
And bore her to the city's wall,  
Which now the flood had reached almost ;  
It might the stoutest heart appal  
To hear the fire roar and hiss  
Through the domes of those mighty palaces.

The eddy whirled her round and round  
Before a gorgeous gate, which stood  
Piercing the clouds of smoke which bound  
Its aery arch with light like blood ;  
She looked on that gate of marble clear  
With wonder that extinguished fear :

For it was filled with sculptures rarest,  
Of forms most beautiful and strange,



Like nothing human, but the fairest  
Of winged shapes, whose legions range  
Throughout the sleep of those who are,  
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

And as she looked, still lovelier grew  
Those marble forms ;—the sculptor sure  
Was a strong spirit, and the hue  
Of his own mind did there endure  
After the touch, whose power had braided  
Such grace, was in some sad change faded.

She looked, the flames were dim, the flood  
Grew tranquil as a woodland river  
Winding through hills in solitude ;  
Those marble shapes then seemed to quiver,  
And their fair limbs to float in motion,  
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

And their lips moved ; one seemed to speak,  
When suddenly the mountain crackt,  
And through the chasm the floor did break  
With an earth-uplifting cataract :  
The statues gave a joyous scream,  
And on its wings the pale thin dream  
Lifted the Lady from the stream.

The dizzy flight of that phantom pale  
Waked the fair Lady from her sleep,  
And she arose, while from the veil  
Of her dark eyes the dream did creep ;  
And she walked about as one who knew  
That sleep has sights as clear and true  
As any waking eyes can view.

## TO CONSTANTIA

SINGING.



THUS to be lost and thus to sink and die,  
Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia, turn!  
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,  
Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn  
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep;  
Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odour it is yet,  
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.  
Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet,  
Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

A breathless awe, like the swift change  
Unseen but felt in youthful slumbers,  
Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,  
Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.  
The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven  
By the enchantment of thy strain,  
And on my shoulders wings are woven,  
To follow its sublime career,  
Beyond the mighty moons that wane  
Upon the verge of nature's utmost sphere,  
Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear.

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers  
O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,

The blood and life within those snowy fingers  
 Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.  
 My brain is wild, my breath comes quick—  
 The blood is listening in my frame,  
 And thronging shadows, fast and thick,  
 Fall on my overflowing eyes ;  
 My heart is quivering like a flame ;  
 As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,  
 I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,  
 Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song  
 Flows on, and fills all things with melody.—  
 Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,  
 On which, like one in trance upborne,  
 Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,  
 Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.  
 Now 'tis the breath of summer night,  
 Which, when the starry waters sleep,  
 Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,  
 Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

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 TO CONSTANTIA.
 

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THE rose that drinks the fountain dew  
 In the pleasant air of noon,  
 Grows pale and blue with altered hue—  
 In the gaze of the nightly moon ;  
 For the planet of frost, so cold and bright,  
 Makes it wan with her borrowed light.

Such is my heart—roses are fair,  
 And that at best a withered blossom ;  
 But thy false care did idly wear  
 Its withered leaves in a faithless bosom !  
 And fed with love, like air and dew,  
 Its growth——

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## DEATH.

THEY die—the dead return not—Misery,  
 Sits near an open grave and calls them over,  
 A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye—  
 They are names of kindred, friend and lover,  
 Which he so feebly calls—they all are gone !  
 Fond wretch, all dead, those vacant names alone,  
 This most familiar scene, my pain—  
 These tombs alone remain.

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh ! weep no more !  
 Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder not :  
 For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door  
 Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot  
 Was even as bright and calm, but transitory,  
 And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary ;  
 This most familiar scene, my pain—  
 These tombs alone remain.

## SONNET.—OZYMANDIAS.

I MET a traveller from an antique land  
 Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed ;  
 And on the pedestal these words appear :  
 “ My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :  
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !”  
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

## ON F. G.

HER voice did quiver as we parted,  
 Yet knew I not that heart was broken  
 From which it came, and I departed  
 Heeding not the words then spoken.  
 Misery—O Misery,  
 This world is all too wide for thee.

LINES TO A CRITIC.  
—♦—

HONEY from silkworms who can gather,  
Or silk from the yellow bee ?  
The grass may grow in winter weather  
As soon as hate in me.

Hate men who cant, and men who pray,  
And men who rail like thee ;  
An equal passion to repay  
They are not coy like me.

Or seek some slave of power and gold,  
To be thy dear heart's mate ;  
Thy love will move that bigot cold,  
Sooner than me thy hate.

A passion like the one I prove  
Cannot divided be ;  
I hate thy want of truth and love—  
How should I then hate thee ?



LINES.  
—♦—

THAT time is dead for ever, child,  
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever !  
    We look on the past,  
    And stare aghast  
At the spectres wailing, pale, and ghast,  
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled  
    To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then rolled by ;  
Its waves are unreturning ;  
    But we yet stand  
    In a lone land,  
Like tombs to mark the memory  
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee  
    In the light of life's dim morning.

## NOTE ON POEMS OF 1817.

BY THE EDITOR.

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THE very illness that oppressed, and the aspect of death which had approached so near Shelley, appears to have kindled to yet keener life the Spirit of Poetry in his heart. The restless thoughts kept awake by pain clothed themselves in verse. Much was composed during this year. "The Revolt of Islam," written and printed, was a great effort—"Rosalind and Helen" was begun—and the fragments and poems I can trace to the same period, show how full of passion and reflection were his solitary hours.

In addition to such poems as have an intelligible aim and shape, many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence. As he never wandered without a book, and without implements of writing, I find many such in his manuscript books, that scarcely bear record; while some of them, broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley's mind, and desire to trace its workings. Thus in the same book that addresses "Constantia, Singing," I find these lines:—

My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim  
Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,  
Far away into the regions dim  
Of rapture—as a boat with swift sails winging  
Its way adown some many-winding river.

And this apostrophe to Music :

No, Music, thou art not the God of Love,  
Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self,  
Till it becomes all music murmurs of.

In another fragment he calls it—

The silver key of the fountain of tears,  
Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild ;  
Softest grave of a thousand fears,  
Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child,  
Is laid asleep in flowers.

And then again this melancholy trace of the sad thronging thoughts, which were the well whence he drew the idea of Athanase, and express the restless, passion-fraught emotions of one whose sensibility, kindled to too intense a life, perpetually preyed upon itself :

To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander  
With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—  
To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle  
Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle ;  
To nurse the image of unfelt caresses  
Till dim imagination just possesses  
The half created shadow.

In the next page I find a calmer sentiment, better fitted to sustain one whose whole being was love :

Wealth and dominion fade into the mass  
Of the great sea of human right and wrong,  
When once from our possession they must pass ;  
But love, though misdirected, is among  
The things which are immortal, and surpass  
All that frail stuff which will be—or which was.

In another book, which contains some passionate outbreaks with regard to the great injustice that he endured this year, the poet writes :

My thoughts arise and fade in solitude,  
 The verse that would invest them melts away  
 Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day :  
 How beautiful they were, how firm they stood,  
 Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl !

He had this year also projected a poem on the subject of Otho, inspired by the pages of Tacitus. I find one or two stanzas only, which were to open the subject :—

OTHO.

Thou wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be,  
 Last of the Romans, though thy memory claim  
 From Brutus his own glory—and on thee  
 Rests the full splendour of his sacred fame ;  
 Nor he who dared make the foul tyrant quail,  
 Amid his cowering senate with thy name,  
 Though thou and he were great—it will avail  
 To thine own fame that Otho's should not fail.

'Twill wrong thee not—thou wouldst, if thou couldst feel,  
 Abjure such envious fame—great Otho died  
 Like thee—he sanctified his country's steel,  
 At once the tyrant and tyrannicide,  
 In his own blood—a deed it was to buy  
 Tears from all men—though full of gentle pride,  
 Such pride as from impetuous love may spring,  
 That will not be refused its offering.

I insert here also the fragment of a song, though I do not know the date when it was written,—but it was early :—

TO ———.

Yet look on me—take not thine eyes away,  
 Which feed upon the love within mine own,  
 Which is indeed but the reflected ray  
 Of thine own beauty from my spirit thrown.

Yet speak to me—thy voice is as the tone  
 Of my heart's echo, and I think I hear  
 That thou yet lovest me ; yet thou alone  
 Like one before a mirror, without care

Of aught but thine own features, imaged there ;  
And yet I wear out life in watching thee ;  
A toil so sweet at times, and thou indeed  
Art kind when I am sick, and pity me.

He projected also translating the Hymns of Homer ; his version of several of the shorter ones remain, as well as that to Mercury, already published in the Posthumous Poems. His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the Hymns of Homer and the Iliad, he read the Dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles, the Symposium of Plato, and Arrian's *Historia Indica*. In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study ; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings, I find also mentioned the *Fairy Queen*, and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore, and Byron.

His life was now spent more in thought than action—he had lost the eager spirit which believed it could achieve what it projected for the benefit of mankind. And yet in the converse of daily life Shelley was far from being a melancholy man. He was eloquent when philosophy, or politics, or taste, were the subjects of conversation. He was playful—and indulged in the wild spirit that mocked itself and others—not in bitterness, but in sport. The Author of “*Nightmare Abbey*” seized on some points of his character and some habits of his life when he painted *Scythrop*. He was not addicted to “port or madeira,” but in youth he had read of “*Illuminati and Eleutherachs*,” and believed that he possessed the power of operating an immediate change in the minds of men and the state of society. These wild dreams had faded ; sorrow and adversity had struck home ; but he struggled with despondency as he did with physical pain. There are

few who remember him sailing paper boats, and watching the navigation of his tiny craft with eagerness—or repeating with wild energy “The Ancient Mariner,” and Southey’s “Old Woman of Berkeley,”—but those who do, will recollect that it was in such, and in the creations of his own fancy, when that was most daring and ideal, that he sheltered himself from the storms and disappointments, the pain and sorrow, that beset his life.



POEMS WRITTEN IN 1818.

## ADVERTISEMENT

TO ROSALIND AND HELEN, AND LINES WRITTEN AMONG  
THE EUGANEAN HILLS.

NAPLES, *Dec.* 20, 1818.

THE story of ROSALIND and HELEN is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation ; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awaken a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story ; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular, inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller to add to this collection. One, which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn, on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

## ROSALIND AND HELEN.



SCENE.—*The Shore of the Lake of Como.*

ROSALIND, HELEN, *and her Child.*

HELEN.

COME hither, my sweet Rosalind.  
'Tis long since thou and I have met :  
And yet methinks it were unkind  
Those moments to forget.  
Come, sit by me. I see thee stand  
By this lone lake, in this far land,  
Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,  
Thy sweet voice to each tone of even  
United, and thine eyes replying  
To the hues of yon fair heaven.  
Come, gentle friend ! wilt sit by me ?  
And be as thou wert wont to be  
Ere we were disunited ?  
None doth behold us now : the power  
That led us forth at this lone hour  
Will be but ill requited  
If thou depart in scorn : oh ! come,  
And talk of our abandoned home.  
Remember, this is Italy,  
And we are exiles. Talk with me

Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,  
 Barren and dark although they be,  
 Were dearer than these chesnut woods ;  
 Those heathy paths, that inland stream,  
 And the blue mountains, shapes which seem  
 Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream :  
 Which that we have abandoned now,  
 Weighs on the heart like that remorse  
 Which altered friendship leaves. I seek  
 No more our youthful intercourse.  
 That cannot be ! Rosalind, speak,  
 Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come,  
 When evening fell upon our common home,  
 When for one hour we parted,—do not frown ;  
 I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken ;  
 But turn to me. Oh ! by this cherished token  
 Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,  
 Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,  
 And not my scorned self who prayed to thee.

## ROSALIND.

Is it a dream, or do I see  
 And hear frail Helen ? I would flee  
 Thy tainting touch ; but former years  
 Arise, and bring forbidden tears ;  
 And my o'erburthened memory  
 Seeks yet its lost repose in thee.  
 I share thy crime. I cannot choose  
 But weep for thee : mine own strange grief  
 But seldom stoops to such relief ;  
 Nor ever did I love thee less,  
 Though mourning o'er thy wickedness  
 Even with a sister's woe. I knew  
 What to the evil world is due,  
 And therefore sternly did refuse

To link me with the infamy  
 Of one so lost as Helen. Now  
 Bewildered by my dire despair,  
 Wondering I blush and weep that thou  
 Shouldst love me still,—thou only!—There,  
 Let us sit on that grey stone,  
 Till our mournful talk be done.

HELEN.

Alas! not there; I cannot bear  
 The murmur of this lake to hear.  
 A sound from thee, Rosalind dear,  
 Which never yet I heard elsewhere  
 But in our native land, recurs,  
 Even here where now we meet. It stirs  
 Too much of suffocating sorrow!  
 In the dell of yon dark chesnut wood  
 Is a stone seat, a solitude  
 Less like our own. The ghost of peace  
 Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,  
 If thy kind feelings should not cease,  
 We may sit here.

ROSALIND.

Thou lead, my sweet,  
 And I will follow.

HENRY.

'Tis Fenici's seat  
 Where you are going?—This is not the way,  
 Mama; it leads behind those trees that grow  
 Close to the little river.

HELEN.

Yes; I know;  
 I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be gay,  
 Dear boy, why do you sob?

HENRY.

I do not know :  
 But it might break any one's heart to see  
 You and the lady cry so bitterly.

HELEN.

It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,  
 Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.  
 We only cried with joy to see each other ;  
 We are quite merry now—Good night.

The boy

Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,  
 And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy  
 Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee  
 Of light and unsuspecting infancy,  
 And whispered in her ear, "Bring home with you  
 That sweet, strange lady-friend." Then off he flew,  
 But stopped, and beckoned with a meaning smile,  
 Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,  
 Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way  
 Beneath the forest's solitude.  
 It was a vast and antique wood,  
 Through which they took their way ;  
 And the grey shades of evening  
 O'er that green wilderness did fling  
 Still deeper solitude.  
 Pursuing still the path that wound  
 The vast and knotted trees around,  
 Through which slow shades were wandering,  
 To a deep lawny dell they came,  
 To a stone seat beside a spring,  
 O'er which the columned wood did frame



A roofless temple, like the fane  
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,  
Man's early race once knelt beneath  
The overhanging deity.  
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,  
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,  
The pale snake, that with eager breath  
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,  
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,  
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,  
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood  
In the light of his own loveliness ;  
And the birds that in the fountain dip  
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship  
Above and round him wheel and hover.  
The fitful wind is heard to stir  
One solitary leaf on high ;  
The chirping of the grasshopper  
Fills every pause. There is emotion  
In all that dwells at noontide here :  
Then, through the intricate wild wood,  
A maze of life and light and motion  
Is woven. But there is stillness now ;  
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now :  
The snake is in his cave asleep ;  
The birds are on the branches dreaming ;  
Only the shadows creep ;  
Only the glow-worm is gleaming ;  
Only the owls and the nightingales  
Wake in this dell when day-light fails,  
And grey shades gather in the woods ;  
And the owls have all fled far away  
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,  
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.  
The accustomed nightingale still broods

On her accustomed bough,  
But she is mute ; for her false mate  
Has fled and left her desolate.

This silent spot tradition old  
Had peopled with the spectral dead.  
For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold  
And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told  
That a hellish shape at midnight led  
The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,  
And sate on the seat beside him there,  
Till a naked child came wandering by,  
When the fiend would change to a lady fair !  
A fearful tale ! The truth was worse :  
For here a sister and a brother  
Had solemnised a monstrous curse,  
Meeting in this fair solitude :  
For beneath yon very sky,  
Had they resigned to one another  
Body and soul. The multitude,  
Tracking them to the secret wood,  
Tore limb from limb their innocent child,  
And stabbed and trampled on its mother ;  
But the youth, for God's most holy grace,  
A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came  
To this lone silent spot,  
From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow  
So much of sympathy to borrow  
As soothed her own dark lot.  
Duly each evening from her home,  
With her fair child would Helen come  
To sit upon that antique seat,  
While the hues of day were pale ;

And the bright boy beside her feet  
 Now lay, lifting at intervals  
 His broad blue eyes on her ;  
 Now, where some sudden impulse calls  
 Following. He was a gentle boy  
 And in all gentle sports took joy ;  
 Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,  
 With a small feather for a sail,  
 His fancy on that spring would float,  
 If some invisible breeze might stir  
 Its marble calm : and Helen smiled  
 Through tears of awe on the gay child,  
 To think that a boy as fair as he,  
 In years which never more may be,  
 By that same fount, in that same wood,  
 The like sweet fancies had pursued ;  
 And that a mother, lost like her,  
 Had mournfully sate watching him.  
 Then all the scene was wont to swim  
 Through the mist of a burning tear.

For many months had Helen known  
 This scene ; and now she thither turned  
 Her footsteps, not alone.  
 The friend whose falsehood she had mourned,  
 Sate with her on that seat of stone.  
 Silent they sate ; for evening,  
 And the power its glimpses bring  
 Had, with one awful shadow, quelled  
 The passion of their grief. They sate  
 With linked hands, for unrepelled  
 Had Helen taken Rosalind's.  
 Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds  
 The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,  
 Which is twined in the sultry summer air

Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre,  
Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,  
And the sound of her heart that ever beat,  
As with sighs and words she breathed on her,  
Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,  
Till her thoughts were free to float and flow ;  
And from her labouring bosom now,  
Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,  
The voice of a long-pent sorrow came.

## ROSALIND.

I saw the dark earth fall upon  
The coffin ; and I saw the stone  
Laid over him whom this cold breast  
Had pillowed to his nightly rest !  
Thou knowest not, thou canst not know  
My agony. Oh ! I could not weep :  
The sources whence such blessings flow  
Were not to be approached by me !  
But I could smile, and I could sleep,  
Though with a self-accusing heart.  
In morning's light, in evening's gloom,  
I watched,—and would not thence depart,—  
My husband's unlamented tomb.  
My children knew their sire was gone ;  
But when I told them, " he is dead,"  
They laughed aloud in frantic glee,  
They clapped their hands and leaped about,  
Answering each other's ecstasy  
With many a prank and merry shout ;  
But I sat silent and alone,  
Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead ; but I  
Sate with a hard and tearless eye,

And with a heart which would deny  
 The secret joy it could not quell,  
 Low muttering o'er his loathed name ;  
 Till from that self-contention came  
 Remorse where sin was none ; a hell  
 Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell the truth. He was a man  
 Hard, selfish, loving only gold,  
 Yet full of guile : his pale eyes ran  
 With tears, which each some falsehood told,  
 And oft his smooth and bridled tongue  
 Would give the lie to his flushing cheek :  
 He was a coward to the strong ;  
 He was a tyrant to the weak,  
 On whom his vengeance he would wreak :  
 For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,  
 From many a stranger's eye would dart,  
 And on his memory cling, and follow  
 His soul to its home so cold and hollow.  
 He was a tyrant to the weak,  
 And we were such, alas the day !  
 Oft, when my little ones at play,  
 Were in youth's natural lightness gay,  
 Or if they listened to some tale  
 Of travellers, or of fairy land,—  
 When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand  
 Flashed on their faces,—if they heard  
 Or thought they heard upon the stair  
 His footstep, the suspended word  
 Died on my lips : we all grew pale ;  
 The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear  
 If it thought it heard its father near ;  
 And my two wild boys would near my knee  
 Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully.

I'll tell the truth: I loved another.  
His name in my ear was ever ringing,  
His form to my brain was ever clinging;  
Yet if some stranger breathed that name,  
My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast:  
My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,  
My days were dim in the shadow cast,  
By the memory of the same!  
Day and night, day and night,  
He was my breath and life and light,  
For three short years, which soon were past.  
On the fourth, my gentle mother  
Led me to the shrine, to be  
His sworn bride eternally.  
And now we stood on the altar stair,  
When my father came from a distant land,  
And with a loud and fearful cry,  
Rushed between us suddenly.  
I saw the stream of his thin grey hair,  
I saw his lean and lifted hand,  
And heard his words,—and live! O God!  
Wherefore do I live?—"Hold, hold!"  
He cried,—“I tell thee 'tis her brother!  
Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod  
Of yon church-yard rests in her shroud so cold.  
I am now weak, and pale, and old:  
We were once dear to one another,  
I and that corpse! Thou art our child!”  
Then with a laugh both long and wild  
The youth upon the pavement fell:  
They found him dead! All looked on me,  
The spasms of my despair to see;  
But I was calm. I went away;  
I was clammy-cold like clay!  
I did not weep—I did not speak;



But day by day, week after week,  
I walked about like a corpse alive !  
Alas ! sweet friend, you must believe  
This heart is stone—it did not break.

My father lived a little while,  
But all might see that he was dying,  
He smiled with such a woeful smile !  
When he was in the church-yard lying  
Among the worms, we grew quite poor,  
So that no one would give us bread ;  
My mother looked at me, and said  
Faint words of cheer, which only meant  
That she could die and be content ;  
So I went forth from the same church door  
To another husband's bed.  
And this was he who died at last,  
When weeks and months and years had past,  
Through which I firmly did fulfil  
My duties, a devoted wife,  
With the stern step of vanquished will,  
Walking beneath the night of life,  
Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain  
Falling for ever, pain by pain,  
The very hope of death's dear rest ;  
Which, since the heart within my breast  
Of natural life was dispossessed,  
Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green  
Upon my mother's grave,—that mother  
Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make  
My wan eyes glitter for her sake,  
Was my vowed task, the single care  
Which once gave life to my despair,—

When she was a thing that did not stir,  
And the crawling worms were cradling her  
To a sleep more deep and so more sweet  
Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,  
I lived ; a living pulse then beat  
Beneath my heart that awakened me.  
What was this pulse so warm and free ?  
Alas ! I knew it could not be  
My own dull blood : 'twas like a thought  
Of liquid love, that spread and wrought  
Under my bosom and in my brain,  
And crept with the blood through every vein ;  
And hour by hour, day after day,  
The wonder could not charm away,  
But laid in sleep my wakeful pain,  
Until I knew it was a child,  
And then I wept. For long, long years  
These frozen eyes had shed no tears :  
But now—'twas the season fair and mild  
When April has wept itself to May :  
I sate through the sweet sunny day  
By my window bowered round with leaves,  
And down my cheeks the quick tears ran  
Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,  
When warm spring showers are passing o'er :  
O Helen, none can ever tell  
The joy it was to weep once more !

I wept to think how hard it were  
To kill my babe, and take from it  
The sense of light, and the warm air,  
And my own fond and tender care,  
And love and smiles ; ere I knew yet  
That these for it might, as for me,  
Be the masks of a grinning mockery.

And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet  
To feed it from my faded breast,  
Or mark my own heart's restless beat  
Rock it to its untroubled rest;  
And watch the growing soul beneath  
Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its breath,  
Half interrupted by calm sighs;  
And search the depth of its fair eyes  
For long departed memories!  
And so I lived till that sweet load  
Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed  
The stream of years, and on it bore  
Two shapes of gladness to my sight;  
Two other babes, delightful more  
In my lost soul's abandoned night,  
Than their own country ships may be  
Sailing towards wrecked mariners,  
Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea.  
For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,  
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay  
Sucking the sullen milk away,  
About my frozen heart did play,  
And weaned it, oh how painfully!—  
As they themselves were weaned each one  
From that sweet food,—even from the thirst  
Of death, and nothingness, and rest,  
Strange inmate of a living breast!  
Which all that I had undergone  
Of grief and shame, since she, who first  
The gates of that dark refuge closed,  
Came to my sight, and almost burst  
The seal of that Lethean spring;  
But these fair shadows interposed:  
For all delights are shadows now!  
And from my brain to my dull brow

The heavy tears gather and flow :  
I cannot speak—Oh let me weep !

The tears which fell from her wan eyes  
Glimmered among the moonlight dew !  
Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs  
Their echoes in the darkness threw.  
When she grew calm, she thus did keep  
The tenor of her tale :—

He died,  
I know not how. He was not old,  
If age be numbered by its years ;  
But he was bowed and bent with fears,  
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,  
Which, like fierce fever, left him weak ;  
And his strait lip and bloated cheek  
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers ;  
And selfish cares with barren plough,  
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,  
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed  
Upon the withering life within,  
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.  
Whether his ill were death or sin  
None knew, until he died indeed,  
And then men owned they were the same.

Seven days within my chamber lay  
That corse, and my babes made holiday :  
At last, I told them what is death :  
The eldest with a kind of shame,  
Came to my knees with silent breath,  
And sate awe-stricken at my feet ;  
And soon the others left their play,  
And sate there too. It is unmeet

To shed on the brief flower of youth  
The withering knowledge of the grave ;  
From me remorse then wrung that truth.  
I could not bear the joy which gave  
Too just a response to mine own.  
In vain. I dared not feign a groan ;  
And in their artless looks I saw,  
Between the mists, of fear and awe,  
That my own thought was theirs ; and they  
Expressed it not in words, but said,  
Each in its heart, how every day  
Will pass in happy work and play,  
Now he is dead and gone away !

After the funeral all our kin  
Assembled, and the will was read.  
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead  
Have strength, their putrid shrouds within,  
To blast and torture. Those who live  
Still fear the living, but a corse  
Is merciless, and power doth give  
To such pale tyrants half the spoil  
He rends from those who groan and toil,  
Because they blush not with remorse  
Among their crawling worms. Behold,  
I have no child ! my tale grows old  
With grief, and staggers : let it reach  
The limits of my feeble speech,  
And languidly at length recline  
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty  
Among the fallen on evil days :  
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,  
And houseless Want in frozen ways

Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,  
And, worse than all, that inward stain,  
Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers  
Youth's star-light smile, and makes its tears  
First like hot gall, then dry for ever !  
And well thou knowest a mother never  
Could doom her children to this ill,  
And well he knew the same. The will  
Imported, that if e'er again  
I sought my children to behold,  
Or in my birth-place did remain  
Beyond three days, whose hours were told,  
They should inherit nought : and he,  
To whom next came their patrimony,  
A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,  
Aye watched me, as the will was read,  
With eyes askance, which sought to see  
The secrets of my agony ;  
And with close lips and anxious brow  
Stood canvassing still to and fro  
The chance of my resolve, and all  
The dead man's caution just did call ;  
For in that killing lie 'twas said—  
“ She is adulterous, and doth hold  
In secret that the Christian creed  
Is false, and therefore is much need  
That I should have a care to save  
My children from eternal fire.”  
Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,  
And therefore dared to be a liar !  
In truth, the Indian on the pyre  
Of her dead husband, half-consumed,  
As well might there be false, as I  
To those abhorred embraces doomed,  
Far worse than fire's brief agony.



As to the Christian creed, if true  
Or false, I never questioned it :  
I took it as the vulgar do :  
Nor my vext soul had leisure yet  
To doubt the things men say, or deem  
That they are other than they seem,

All present who those crimes did hear,  
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,  
Men, women, children, slunk away,  
Whispering with self-contented pride,  
Which half suspects its own base lie.  
I spoke to none, nor did abide,  
But silently I went my way.  
Nor noticed I where joyously  
Sate my two younger babes at play,  
In the court-yard through which I past ;  
But went with footsteps firm and fast  
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,  
And there, a woman with grey hairs,  
Who had my mother's servant been,  
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,  
Made me accept a purse of gold,  
Half of the earnings she had kept  
To refuge her when weak and old.

With woe, which never sleeps or slept,  
I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought—  
But on yon alp, whose snowy head  
'Mid the azure air is islanded  
(We see it o'er the flood of cloud,  
Which sunrise from its eastern caves  
Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,  
Hung with its precipices proud,  
From that grey stone where first we met),

There, now who knows the dead feel nought?  
 Should be my grave; for he who yet  
 Is my soul's soul, once said: "'Twere sweet  
 'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,  
 And winds and lulling snows, that beat  
 With their soft flakes the mountain wide,  
 When weary meteor lamps repose,  
 And languid storms their pinions close:  
 And all things strong and bright and pure,  
 And ever during, aye endure:  
 Who knows, if one were buried there,  
 But these things might our spirits make,  
 Amid the all-surrounding air,  
 Their own eternity partake?"  
 Then 'twas a wild and playful saying  
 At which I laughed or seemed to laugh:  
 They were his words: now heed my praying,  
 And let them be my epitaph.  
 Thy memory for a term may be  
 My monument. Wilt remember me?  
 I know thou wilt, and canst forgive  
 Whilst in this erring world to live  
 My soul disdained not, that I thought  
 Its lying forms were worthy aught,  
 And much less thee.

HELEN.

O speak not so,  
 But come to me and pour thy woe  
 Into this heart, full though it be,  
 Aye overflowing with its own:  
 I thought that grief had severed me  
 From all beside who weep and groan;  
 Its likeness upon earth to be,  
 Its express image; but thou art

More wretched. Sweet! we will not part  
 Henceforth, if death be not division;  
 If so, the dead feel no contrition.  
 But wilt thou hear, since last we parted  
 All that has left me broken-hearted?

ROSALIND.

Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn  
 Of their thin beams, by that delusive morn  
 Which sinks again in darkness, like the light  
 Of early love, soon lost in total night.

HELEN.

Alas! Italian winds are mild,  
 But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—  
 When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,  
 Soft music, my poor brain is wild,  
 And I am weak like a nursling child,  
 Though my soul with grief is grey and old.

ROSALIND.

Weep not at thine own words, tho' they must make  
 Me weep. What is thy tale?

HELEN.

I fear 'twill shake  
 Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well  
 Rememberest when we met no more,  
 And, though I dwelt with Lionel,  
 That friendless caution pierced me sore  
 With grief—a wound my spirit bore  
 Indignantly; but when he died,  
 With him lay dead both hope and pride.

Alas! all hope is buried now.  
 But then men dreamed the aged earth  
 Was labouring in that mighty birth,

Which many a poet and a sage  
Has aye foreseen—the happy age  
When truth and love shall dwell below  
Among the works and ways of men ;  
Which on this world not power but will  
Even now is wanting to fulfil.  
Among mankind what thence befel  
Of strife, how vain, is known too well ;  
When Liberty's dear pæan fell  
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,  
Though of great wealth and lineage high,  
Yet through those dungeon walls there came  
Thy thrilling light, O Liberty !  
And as the meteor's midnight flame  
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth  
Flashed on his visionary youth,  
And filled him, not with love, but faith,  
And hope, and courage mute in death ;  
For love and life in him were twins,  
Born at one birth : in every other  
First life, then love its course begins,  
Though they be children of one mother ;  
And so through this dark world they fleet  
Divided, till in death they meet :  
But he loved all things ever. Then  
He passed amid the strife of men,  
And stood at the throne of armed power  
Pleading for a world of woe :  
Secure as one on a rock-built tower  
O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro,  
'Mid the passions wild of human kind  
He stood, like a spirit calming them ;  
For, it was said, his words could bind  
Like music the lulled crowd, and stem  
That torrent of unquiet dream

Which mortals truth and reason deem,  
But is revenge and fear, and pride.  
Joyous he was ; and hope and peace  
On all who heard him did abide,  
Raining like dew from his sweet talk,  
As where the evening star may walk  
Along the brink of the gloomy seas,  
Liquid mists of splendour quiver.

His very gestures touched to tears  
The unpersuaded tyrant, never  
So moved before : his presence stung  
The torturers with their victims' pain,  
And none knew how ; and through their ears,  
The subtle witchcraft of his tongue  
Unlocked the hearts of those who keep  
Gold, the world's bond of slavery.  
Men wondered and some sneered to see  
One sow what he could never reap :  
For he is rich, they said, and young,  
And might drink from the depths of luxury.  
If he seeks fame, fame never crowned  
The champion of a trampled creed :  
If he seeks power, power is enthroned  
'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed  
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,  
Those who would sit near power must toil ;  
And such, there sitting, all may see.  
What seeks he ? All that others seek  
He casts away, like a vile weed  
Which the sea casts unreturningly.

That poor and hungry men should break  
The laws which wreak them toil and scorn,  
We understand ; but Lionel

We know is rich and nobly born.  
So wondered they ; yet all men loved  
Young Lionel, though few approved ;  
All but the priests, whose hatred fell  
Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,  
The withering honey-dew, which clings  
Under the bright green buds of May,  
Whilst they unfold their emerald wings :  
For he made verses wild and queer  
On the strange creeds priests hold so dear,  
Because they bring them land and gold.  
Of devils and saints and all such gear,  
He made tales which whoso heard or read  
Would laugh till he were almost dead.  
So this grew a proverb : “ Don't get old  
Till Lionel's ‘ banquet in hell ’ you hear,  
And then you will laugh yourself young again.”  
So the priests hated him, and he  
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.  
Ah! smiles and joyance quickly died,  
For public hope grew pale and dim  
In an altered time and tide,  
And in its wasting withered him,  
As a summer flower that blows too soon  
Droops in the smile of the waning moon,  
When it scatters through an April night  
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.  
None now hoped more. Grey Power was seated  
Safely on her ancestral throne ;  
And Faith, the Python, undefeated  
Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on  
Her foul and wounded train ; and men  
Were trampled and deceived again,  
And words and shows again could bind  
The wailing tribes of humankind



In scorn and famine. Fire and blood  
 Raged round the raging multitude,  
 To fields remote by tyrants sent  
 To be the scorned instrument,  
 With which they drag from mines of gore  
 The chains their slaves yet ever wore ;  
 And in the streets men met each other,  
 And by old altars and in halls,  
 And smiled again at festivals.  
 But each man found in his heart's brother  
 Cold cheer ; for all, though half deceived,  
 The outworn creeds again believed,  
 And the same round anew began,  
 Which the weary world yet ever ran.

Many then wept, not tears, but gall,  
 Within their hearts, like drops which fall  
 Wasting the fountain-stone away.  
 And in that dark and evil day  
 Did all desires and thoughts, that claim  
 Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame,  
 Love, hope, though hope was now despair—  
 Indue the colours of this change,  
 As from the all-surrounding air  
 The earth takes hues obscure and strange,  
 When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befel  
 To many, most to Lionel,  
 Whose hope was like the life of youth  
 Within him, and when dead, became  
 A spirit of unresting flame,  
 Which goaded him in his distress  
 Over the world's vast wilderness.  
 Three years he left his native land,

And on the fourth, when he returned,  
None knew him : he was stricken deep  
With some disease of mind, and turned  
Into aught unlike Lionel.

On him—on whom, did he pause in sleep,  
Serenest smiles were wont to keep,  
And, did he wake, a winged band  
Of bright persuasions, which had fed  
On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,  
Kept their swift pinions half outspread,  
To do on men his least command—  
On him, whom once 'twas paradise  
Even to behold, now misery lay :  
In his own heart 'twas merciless,  
To all things else none may express  
Its innocence and tenderness.

'Twas said that he had refuge sought  
In love from his unquiet thought  
In distant lands, and been deceived  
By some strange show ; for there were found,  
Blotted with tears, as those relieved  
By their own words are wont to do,  
These mournful verses on the ground,  
By all who read them blotted too.

“ How am I changed ! my hopes were once like fire :  
I loved, and I believed that life was love.  
How am I lost ! on wings of swift desire  
Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.  
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire  
My liquid sleep. I woke, and did approve  
All nature to my heart, and thought to make  
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.  
I love, but I believe in love no more :  
I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep

Most vainly must my weary brain implore  
Its long-lost flattery now. I wake to weep,  
And sit through the long day gnawing the core  
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,  
Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure,  
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure."

He dwelt beside me near the sea ;  
And oft in evening did we meet,  
When the waves, beneath the star-light, flee  
O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,  
And talked. Our talk was sad and sweet,  
Till slowly from his mien there passed  
The desolation which it spoke ;  
And smiles,—as when the lightning's blast  
Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,  
The next spring shows leaves pale and rare,  
But like flowers delicate and fair,  
On its rent boughs—again arrayed  
His countenance in tender light :  
His words grew subtle fire, which made  
The air his hearers breathed delight :  
His motions, like the winds, were free,  
Which bend the bright grass gracefully,  
Then fade away in circlets faint :  
And winged Hope, on which upborne  
His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,  
Like some bright spirit newly-born  
Floating amid the sunny skies,  
Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.  
Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,  
Tempering their loveliness too keen,  
Past woe its shadow backward threw,  
Till like an exhalation, spread  
From flowers half drunk with evening dew,

They did become infectious : sweet  
And subtle mists of sense and thought  
Which rapt us soon, when we might meet,  
Almost from our own looks, and aught  
The wide world holds. And so, his mind  
Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear :  
For ever now his health declined,  
Like some frail bark which cannot bear  
The impulse of an altered wind,  
Though prosperous ; and my heart grew full  
'Mid its new joy of a new care :  
For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,  
As rose-o'ershadowed lilies are ;  
And soon his deep and sunny hair,  
In this alone less beautiful,  
Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.  
The blood in his translucent veins  
Beat, not like animal life, but love  
Seemed now its sullen springs to move,  
When life had failed, and all its pains ;  
And sudden sleep would seize him oft  
Like death, so calm, but that a tear,  
His pointed eye-lashes between,  
Would gather in the light serene  
Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft  
Beneath lay undulating there.  
His breath was like inconstant flame,  
As eagerly it went and came ;  
And I hung o'er him in his sleep,  
Till, like an image in the lake  
Which rains disturb, my tears would break  
The shadow of that slumber deep ;  
Then he would bid me not to weep,  
And say, with flattery false, yet sweet,  
That death and he could never meet,

If I would never part with him.  
And so we loved, and did unite  
All that in us was yet divided :  
For when he said, that many a rite,  
By men to bind but once provided,  
Could not be shared by him and me,  
Or they would kill him in their glee,  
I shuddered, and then laughing said,  
“ We will have rites our faith to bind,  
But our church shall be the starry night,  
Our altar the grassy earth outspread,  
And our priest the muttering wind.”

'Twas sunset as I spoke : one star  
Had scarce burst forth, when from afar  
The ministers of misrule sent,  
Seized upon Lionel, and bore  
His chained limbs to a dreary tower,  
In the midst of a city vast and wide.  
For he, they said, from his mind had bent  
Against their gods keen blasphemy,  
For which, though his soul must roasted be  
In hell's red lakes immortally,  
Yet even on earth must he abide  
The vengeance of their slaves—a trial,  
I think, men call it. What avail  
Are prayers and tears, which chase denial  
From the fierce savage, nursed in hate ?  
What the knit soul that pleading and pale  
Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late  
It painted with its own delight ?  
We were divided. As I could,  
I stilled the tingling of my blood,  
And followed him in their despite,  
As a widow follows, pale and wild,

The murderers and corse of her only child ;  
And when we came to the prison door,  
And I prayed to share his dungeon floor  
With prayers which rarely have been spurned,  
And when men drove me forth and I  
Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,  
A farewell look of love he turned,  
Half-calming me ; then gazed awhile,  
As if through that black and massy pile,  
And through the crowd around him there,  
And through the dense and murky air,  
And the thronged streets, he did espy  
What poets knew and prophesy ;  
And said, with voice that made them shiver,  
And clung like music in my brain,  
And which the mute walls spoke again  
Prolonging it with deepened strain—  
“ Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,  
Or the priests of the bloody faith ;  
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,  
Whose waves they have tainted with death :  
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,  
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,  
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,  
Like wrecks, in the surge of eternity.”

I dwelt beside the prison gate,  
And the strange crowd that out and in  
Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,  
Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din,  
But the fever of care was louder within.  
Soon, but too late, in penitence  
Or fear, his foes released him thence :  
I saw his thin and languid form,  
As leaning on the jailer's arm,



Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,  
To meet his mute and faded smile,  
And hear his words of kind farewell,  
He tottered forth from his damp cell.  
Many had never wept before,  
From whom fast tears then gushed and fell :  
Many will relent no more,  
Who sobbed like infants then ; aye, all  
Who thronged the prison's stony hall,  
The rulers or the slaves of law  
Felt with a new surprise and awe  
That they were human, till strong shame  
Made them again become the same.  
The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,  
From human looks the infection caught,  
And fondly crouched and fawned on him ;  
And men have heard the prisoners say,  
Who in their rotting dungeons lay,  
That from that hour, throughout one day,  
The fierce despair and hate, which kept  
Their trampled bosoms, almost slept :  
When, like twin vultures, they hung feeding  
On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,  
Because their jailer's rule, they thought,  
Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.

I know not how, but we were free :  
And Lionel sate alone with me,  
As the carriage drove through the streets apace ;  
And we looked upon each other's face ;  
And the blood in our fingers intertwined  
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,  
As the swift emotions went and came  
Through the veins of each united frame.  
So through the long long streets we past

Of the million-peopled city vast ;  
Which is that desert, where each one  
Seeks his mate yet is alone,  
Beloved and sought and mourned of none ;  
Until the clear blue sky was seen,  
And the grassy meadows bright and green,  
And then I sunk in his embrace,  
Enclosing there a mighty space  
Of love : and so we travelled on  
By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,  
And towns, and villages, and towers,  
Day after day of happy hours.  
It was the azure time of June,  
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,  
And the warm and fitful breezes shake  
The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row brier ;  
And there were odours then to make  
The very breath we did respire  
A liquid element, whereon  
Our spirits, like delighted things  
That walk the air on subtle wings,  
Floated and mingled far away,  
'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.  
And when the evening star came forth  
Above the curve of the new bent moon,  
And light and sound ebbed from the earth,  
Like the tide of the full and weary sea  
To the depths of its own tranquillity,  
Our natures to its own repose  
Did the earth's breathless sleep attune :  
Like flowers, which on each other close  
Their languid leaves when day-light's gone,  
We lay, till new emotions came,  
Which seemed to make each mortal frame  
One soul of interwoven flame,

A life in life, a second birth,  
In worlds diviner far than earth,  
Which, like two strains of harmony  
That mingle in the silent sky,  
Then slowly disunite, past by  
And left the tenderness of tears,  
A soft oblivion of all fears,  
A sweet sleep: so we travelled on  
Till we came to the home of Lionel,  
Among the mountains wild and lone,  
Beside the hoary western sea,  
Which near the verge of the echoing shore  
The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,  
As we alighted, wept to see  
His master changed so fearfully;  
And the old man's sobs did waken me  
From my dream of unremaining gladness;  
The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness  
When I looked, and saw that there was death  
On Lionel: yet day by day  
He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,  
And in my soul I dared to say,  
Nothing so bright can pass away:  
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,  
But he is—O how beautiful!  
Yet day by day he grew more weak,  
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,  
Which ne'er was loud, became more low;  
And the light which flashed through his waxen cheek  
Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow  
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:  
And death seemed not like death in him,  
For the spirit of life o'er every limb

Lingered, a mist of sense and thought.  
When the summer wind faint odours brought  
From mountain flowers, even as it passed,  
His cheek would change, as the noon-day sea  
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.  
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,  
You might see his colour come and go,  
And the softest strain of music made  
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade  
Amid the dew of his tender eyes ;  
And the breath, with intermitting flow,  
Made his pale lips quiver and part.  
You might hear the beatings of his heart,  
Quick, but not strong ; and with my tresses  
When oft he playfully would bind  
In the bowers of mossy loneliness  
His neck, and win me so to mingle  
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,  
And our faint limbs were intertwined,  
Alas ! the unquiet life did tingle  
From mine own heart through every vein,  
Like a captive in dreams of liberty,  
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.  
But his, it seemed already free,  
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me !  
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell  
That spirit as it passed, till soon,  
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,  
Beneath its light invisible,  
Is seen when it folds its grey wings again  
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,  
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul  
Passed from beneath that strong control,  
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear  
Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,  
On a green and sea-girt promontory,  
Not far from where we dwelt, there stood  
In record of a sweet sad story,  
An altar and a temple bright  
Cirled by steps, and o'er the gate  
Was sculptured, "To Fidelity;"  
And in the shrine an image sate,  
All veiled: but there was seen the light  
Of smiles, which faintly could express  
A mingled pain and tenderness,  
Through that ethereal drapery.  
The left hand held the head, the right—  
Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,  
You might see the nerves quivering within—  
Was forcing the point of a barbed dart  
Into its side-convulsing heart.  
An unskilled hand, yet one informed  
With genius, had the marble warmed  
With that pathetic life. This tale  
It told: A dog had from the sea,  
When the tide was raging fearfully,  
Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale:  
Then died beside her on the sand,  
And she that temple thence had planned;  
But it was Lionel's own hand  
Had wrought the image. Each new moon  
That lady did, in this lone fane,  
The rites of a religion sweet,  
Whose god was in her heart and brain:  
The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn  
On the marble floor beneath her feet,  
And she brought crowns of sea-buds white,  
Whose odour is so sweet and faint,  
And weeds, like branching chrysolite,

Woven in devices fine and quaint,  
And tears from her brown eyes did stain  
The altar : need but look upon  
That dying statue, fair and wan,  
If tears should cease, to weep again :  
And rare Arabian odours came,  
Through the myrtle copses, steaming thence  
From the hissing frankincense,  
Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,  
Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,  
That ivory dome, whose azure night  
With golden stars, like heaven, was bright  
O'er the split cedars' pointed flame ;  
And the lady's harp would kindle there  
The melody of an old air,  
Softer than sleep ; the villagers  
Mixt their religion up with hers,  
And as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane :  
Daylight on its last purple cloud  
Was lingering grey, and soon her strain  
The nightingale began ; now loud,  
Climbing in circles the windless sky,  
Now dying music ; suddenly  
'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,  
And now to the hushed ear it floats  
Like field-smells known in infancy,  
Then failing, soothes the air again.  
We sate within that temple lone,  
Pavilioned round with Parian stone :  
His mother's harp stood near, and oft  
I had awakened music soft  
Amid its wires : the nightingale  
Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale :



“ Now drain the cup,” said Lionel,  
“ Which the poet-bird has crowned so well  
With the wine of her bright and liquid song !  
Heardst thou not sweet words among  
That heaven-resounding minstrelsy !  
Heardst thou not, that those who die  
Awake in a world of ecstasy ?  
That love, when limbs are interwoven,  
And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,  
And thought, to the world’s dim boundaries clinging,  
And music, when one beloved is singing,  
Is death ? Let us drain right joyously  
The cup which the sweet bird fills for me.”

He paused, and to my lips he bent  
His own : like spirit his words went  
Through all my limbs with the speed of fire ;  
And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,  
Filled me with the flame divine,  
Which in their orbs was burning far,  
Like the light of an unmeasured star,  
In the sky of midnight dark and deep :  
Yes, ’twas his soul that did inspire  
Sounds, which my skill could ne’er awaken ;  
And first, I felt my fingers sweep  
The harp, and a long quivering cry  
Burst from my lips in symphony :  
The dusk and solid air was shaken,  
As swift and swifter the notes came  
From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,  
And from my bosom, labouring  
With some unutterable thing :  
The awful sound of my own voice made  
My faint lips tremble ; in some mood  
Of wordless thought Lionel stood

So pale, that even beside his cheek  
The snowy column from its shade  
Caught whiteness: yet his countenance  
Raised upward, burned with radiance  
Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,  
Like the moon struggling through the night  
Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break  
With beams that might not be confined.

I paused, but soon his gestures kindled  
New power, as by the moving wind  
The waves are lifted, and my song  
To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,  
And from the twinkling wires among,  
My languid fingers drew and flung  
Circles of life-dissolving sound,  
Yet faint: in æry rings they bound  
My Lionel, who, as every strain  
Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien  
Sunk with the sound relaxedly;  
And slowly now he turned to me,  
As slowly faded from his face  
That awful joy: with looks serene  
He was soon drawn to my embrace,  
And my wild song then died away  
In murmurs: words, I dare not say,  
We mixed, and on his lips mine fed  
Till they methought felt still and cold:  
“What is it with thee, love?” I said;  
No word, no look, no motion! yes,  
There was a change, but spare to guess,  
Nor let that moment’s hope be told.  
I looked, and knew that he was dead,  
And fell, as the eagle on the plain  
Falls when life deserts her brain,

And the mortal lightning is veiled again.  
 O that I were now dead ! but such,  
 Did they not, love, demand too much,  
 Those dying murmurs ? He forbid.  
 O that I once again were mad !  
 And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,  
 For I would live to share thy woe.  
 Sweet boy ! did I forget thee too ?  
 Alas, we know not what we do  
 When we speak words.

No memory more

Is in my mind of that sea-shore.  
 Madness came on me, and a troop  
 Of misty shapes did seem to sit  
 Beside me, on a vessel's poop,  
 And the clear north-wind was driving it.  
 Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers,  
 And the stars methought grew unlike ours,  
 And the azure sky and the stormless sea  
 Made me believe that I had died,  
 And waked in a world, which was to me  
 Drear hell, though heaven to all beside.  
 Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,  
 Whilst animal life many long years  
 Had rescued from a chasm of tears ;  
 And when I woke, I wept to find  
 That the same lady, bright and wise,  
 With silver locks and quick brown eyes,  
 The mother of my Lionel,  
 Had tended me in my distress,  
 And died some months before. Nor less  
 Wonder, but far more peace and joy,  
 Brought in that hour my lovely boy ;  
 For through that trance my soul had well

The impress of thy being kept ;  
 And if I waked, or if I slept,  
 No doubt, though memory faithless be,  
 Thy image ever dwelt on me ;  
 And thus, O Lionel ! like thee  
 Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strange  
 I knew not of so great a change,  
 As that which gave him birth, who now  
 Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left  
 By will to me, and that of all  
 The ready lies of law bereft,  
 My child and me might well befall.  
 But let me think not of the scorn,  
 Which from the meanest I have borne,  
 When, for my child's beloved sake,  
 I mixed with slaves, to vindicate  
 The very laws themselves do make :  
 Let me not say scorn is my fate,  
 Lest I be proud, suffering the same  
 With those who live in deathless fame.

She ceased.—“ Lo, where red morning thro' the woods  
 Is burning o'er the dew !” said Rosalind.  
 And with these words they rose, and towards the flood  
 Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind  
 With equal steps and fingers intertwined :  
 Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore  
 Is shadowed with rocks, and cypresses  
 Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies,  
 And with their shadows the clear depths below,  
 And where a little terrace from its bowers,  
 Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers,  
 Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o'er

The liquid marble of the windless lake ;  
 And where the aged forest's limbs look hoar,  
 Under the leaves which their green garments make,  
 They come : 'tis Helen's home, and clean and white,  
 Like one which tyrants spare on our own land  
 In some such solitude, its casements bright  
 Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,  
 And even within 'twas scarce like Italy.  
 And when she saw how all things there were planned,  
 As in an English home, dim memory  
 Disturbed poor Rosalind : she stood as one  
 Whose mind is where his body cannot be,  
 Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,  
 And said, " Observe, that brow was Lionel's,  
 Those lips were his, and so he ever kept  
 One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.  
 You cannot see his eyes, they are two wells  
 Of liquid love : let us not wake him yet."  
 But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept  
 A shower of burning tears, which fell upon  
 His face, and so his opening lashes shone  
 With tears unlike his own, as he did leap  
 In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together  
 Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,  
 Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather  
 They wandered in their youth, through sun and rain.  
 And after many years, for human things  
 Change even like the ocean and the wind,  
 Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,  
 And in their circle thence some visitings  
 Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene :  
 A lovely child she was, of looks serene,  
 And motions which o'er things indifferent shed



The grace and gentleness from whence they came.  
And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed  
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind  
Like springs which mingle in one flood became,  
And in their union soon their parents saw  
The shadow of the peace denied to them.  
And Rosalind,—for when the living stem  
Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,—  
Died ere her time ; and with deep grief and awe  
The pale survivors followed her remains  
Beyond the region of dissolving rains,  
Up the cold mountain she was wont to call  
Her tomb ; and on Chiavenna's precipice  
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,  
Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun,  
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,  
The last, when it had sunk ; and through the night  
The charioteers of Arctos wheeled round  
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,  
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come,  
With willing steps climbing that rugged height,  
And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound  
With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,  
Filled the frore air with unaccustomed light :  
Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom  
Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,  
Whose sufferings too were less, death slower led  
Into the peace of his dominion cold :  
She died among her kindred, being old ;  
And know, that if love die not in the dead  
As in the living, none of mortal kind  
Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.



LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN  
HILLS.

—◆—

MANY a green isle needs must be  
In the deep wide sea of misery,  
Or the mariner, worn and wan,  
Never thus could voyage on  
Day and night, and night and day,  
Drifting on his dreary way,  
With the solid darkness black  
Closing round his vessel's track ;  
Whilst above, the sunless sky,  
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,  
And behind the tempest fleet  
Hurries on with lightning feet,  
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,  
Till the ship has almost drank  
Death from the o'er-brimming deep ;  
And sinks down, down, like that sleep  
When the dreamer seems to be  
Weltering through eternity ;  
And the dim low line before  
Of a dark and distant shore  
Still recedes, as ever still  
Longing with divided will ;  
But no power to seek or shun,  
He is ever drifted on

O'er the unreposing wave  
To the haven of the grave.  
What, if there no friends will greet ;  
What, if there no heart will meet  
His with love's impatient beat ;  
Wander wheresoe'er he may,  
Can he dream before that day  
To find refuge from distress  
In friendship's smile, in love's caress ?  
Then 'twill wreak him little woe  
Whether such there be or no :  
Senseless is the breast, and cold,  
Which relenting love would fold ;  
Bloodless are the veins and chill  
Which the pulse of pain did fill :  
Every little living nerve  
That from bitter words did swerve  
Round the tortured lips and brow,  
Are like sapless leaflets now  
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea  
Which tempests shake eternally,  
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,  
Lies a solitary heap,  
One white skull and seven dry bones,  
On the margin of the stones,  
Where a few grey rushes stand,  
Boundaries of the sea and land :  
Nor is heard one voice of wail  
But the sea-mews, as they sail  
O'er the billows of the gale ;  
Or the whirlwind up and down  
Howling, like a slaughtered town,  
When a king in glory rides

Through the pomp of fratricides :  
Those unburied bones around  
There is many a mournful sound ;  
There is no lament for him,  
Like a sunless vapour, dim,  
Who once clothed with life and thought  
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie  
In the waters of wide Agony :  
To such a one this morn was led  
My bark, by soft winds piloted.  
'Mid the mountains Euganean,  
I stood listening to the pæan  
With which the legioned rooks did hail  
The sun's uprise majestic ;  
Gathering round with wings all hoar,  
Through the dewy mist they soar  
Like grey shades, till the eastern heaven  
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,  
Flecked with fire and azure, lie  
In the unfathomable sky,  
So their plumes of purple grain,  
Starred with drops of golden rain,  
Gleam above the sunlight woods,  
As in silent multitudes  
On the morning's fitful gale  
Through the broken mist they sail ;  
And the vapours cloven and gleaming  
Follow down the dark steep streaming,  
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,  
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea  
The waveless plain of Lombardy,

Bounded by the vaporous air,  
Islanded by cities fair ;  
Underneath day's azure eyes,  
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,—  
A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
Amphitrite's destined halls,  
Which her hoary sire now paves  
With his blue and beaming waves.  
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,  
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined  
On the level quivering line  
Of the waters crystalline ;  
And before that chasm of light,  
As within a furnace bright,  
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,  
Shine like obelisks of fire,  
Pointing with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted skies ;  
As the flames of sacrifice  
From the marble shrines did rise  
As to pierce the dome of gold  
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City ! thou hast been  
Ocean's child, and then his queen ;  
Now is come a darker day,  
And thou soon must be his prey,  
If the power that raised thee here  
Hallow so thy watery bier.  
A less drear ruin than than now,  
With thy conquest-branded brow  
Stooping to the slave of slaves  
From thy throne among the waves,  
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew

Flies, as once before it flew,  
 O'er thine isles depopulate,  
 And all is in its ancient state,  
 Save where many a palace-gate  
 With green sea-flowers overgrown  
 Like a rock of ocean's own,  
 Topples o'er the abandon'd sea  
 As the tides change sullenly.  
 The fisher on his watery way,  
 Wandering at the close of day,  
 Will spread his sail and seize his oar,  
 Till he pass the gloomy shore,  
 Lest thy dead should, from their sleep  
 Bursting o'er the starlight deep,  
 Lead a rapid masque of death  
 O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold  
 Quivering through aërial gold,  
 As I now behold them here,  
 Would imagine not they were  
 Sepulchres, where human forms,  
 Like pollution-nourish'd worms,  
 To the corpse of greatness cling,  
 Murdered and now mouldering:  
 But if Freedom should awake  
 In her omnipotence, and shake  
 From the Celtic Anarch's hold  
 All the keys of dungeons cold,  
 Where a hundred cities lie  
 Chained like thee, ingloriously,  
 Thou and all thy sister band  
 Might adorn this sunny land,  
 Twining memories of old time  
 With new virtues more sublime ;

If not, perish thou and they ;  
 Clouds which stain truth's rising day  
 By her sun consumed away,  
 Earth can spare ye ; while like flowers,  
 In the waste of years and hours,  
 From your dust new nations spring  
 With more kindly blossoming.

Perish ! let there only be  
 Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,  
 As the garment of thy sky  
 Clothes the world immortally,  
 One remembrance, more sublime  
 Than the tattered pall of Time,  
 Which scarce hides thy visage wan :  
 That a tempest-cleaving swan  
 Of the songs of Albion,  
 Driven from his ancestral streams,  
 By the might of evil dreams,  
 Found a nest in thee ; and Ocean  
 Welcomed him with such emotion  
 That its joy grew his, and sprung  
 From his lips like music flung  
 O'er a mighty thunder-fit,  
 Chastening terror : what though yet  
 Poesy's unfailing river,  
 Which through Albion winds for ever,  
 Lashing with melodious wave  
 Many a sacred poet's grave,  
 Mourn its latest nursling fled !  
 What though thou with all thy dead  
 Scarce can for this fame repay  
 Aught thine own,—oh, rather say,  
 Though thy sins and slaveries foul  
 Overcloud a sunlike soul !



As the ghost of Homer clings  
Round Scamander's wasting springs ;  
As divinest Shakspeare's might  
Fills Avon and the world with light,  
Like omniscient power, which he  
Imaged 'mid mortality ;  
As the love from Petrarch's urn,  
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,  
A quenchless lamp, by which the heart  
Sees things unearthly ; so thou art,  
Mighty spirit : so shall be  
The city that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky,  
Like thought-winged Liberty,  
Till the universal light  
Seems to level plain and height ;  
From the sea a mist has spread,  
And the beams of morn lie dead  
On the towers of Venice now,  
Like its glory long ago.  
By the skirts of that grey cloud  
Many-domed Padua proud  
Stands, a peopled solitude,  
'Mid the harvest shining plain,  
Where the peasant heaps his grain  
In the garner of his foe,  
And the milk-white oxen slow  
With the purple vintage strain,  
Heaped upon the creaking wain,  
That the brutal Celt may swill  
Drunken sleep with savage will ;  
And the sickle to the sword  
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,  
Like a weed whose shade is poison,

Overgrows this region's foison,  
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come  
To destruction's harvest-home :  
Men must reap the things they sow,  
Force from force must ever flow,  
Or worse ; but 'tis a bitter woe  
That love or reason cannot change  
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou within whose walls  
Those mute guests at festivals,  
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,  
Played at dice for Ezzelin,  
Till Death cried, " I win, I win ! "   
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,  
But Death promised, to assuage her,  
That he would petition for  
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,  
When the destined years were o'er,  
Over all between the Po  
And the eastern Alpine snow,  
Under the mighty Austrian.  
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,  
And since that time, ay, long before,  
Both have ruled from shore to shore,  
That incestuous pair, who follow  
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,  
As Repentance follows Crime,  
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,  
Padua, now no more is burning ;  
Like a meteor, whose wild way  
Is lost over the grave of day,  
It gleams betrayed and to betray :

Once remotest nations came  
To adore that sacred flame,  
When it lit not many a hearth  
On this cold and gloomy earth ;  
Now new fires from Antique light  
Spring beneath the wide world's might ;  
But their spark lies dead in thee,  
Trampled out by tyranny.  
As the Norway woodman quells,  
In the depth of piny dells,  
One light flame among the brakes,  
While the boundless forest shakes,  
And its mighty trunks are torn  
By the fire thus lowly born ;  
The spark beneath his feet is dead,  
He starts to see the flames it fed  
Howling through the darkened sky  
With myriad tongues victoriously,  
And sinks down in fear : so thou,  
O tyranny ! beholdest now  
Light around thee, and thou hearest  
The loud flames ascend, and fearest :  
Grovel on the earth ; ay, hide  
In the dust thy purple pride !

Noon descends around me now :  
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,  
When a soft and purple mist  
Like a vaporous amethyst,  
Or an air-dissolved star  
Mingling light and fragrance, far  
From the curved horizon's bound  
To the point of heaven's profound,  
Fills the overflowing sky ;  
And the plains that silent lie

Underneath ; the leaves unsodden  
Where the infant frost has trodden  
With his morning-winged feet,  
Whose bright print is gleaming yet ;  
And the red and golden vines,  
Piercing with their trellised lines  
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness ;  
The dun and bladed grass no less,  
Pointing from this hoary tower  
In the windless air ; the flower  
Glimmering at my feet ; the line  
Of the olive sandalled Apennine  
In the south dimly islanded ;  
And the Alps, whose snows are spread  
High between the clouds and sun ;  
And of living things each one ;  
And my spirit, which so long  
Darkened this swift stream of song,  
Interpenetrated lie  
By the glory of the sky ;  
Be it love, light, harmony,  
Odour, or the soul of all  
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,  
Or the mind which feeds this verse  
Peopling the lone universe.  
Noon descends, and after noon  
Autumn's evening meets me soon,  
Leading the infantine moon,  
And that one star, which to her  
Almost seems to minister  
Half the crimson light she brings  
From the sunset's radiant springs :  
And the soft dreams of the morn  
(Which like winged winds had borne  
To that silent isle, which lies

'Mid remembered agonies,  
The frail bark of this lone being),  
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,  
And its ancient pilot, Pain,  
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be  
In the sea of life and agony :  
Other spirits float and flee  
O'er that gulf : even now, perhaps,  
On some rock the wild wave wraps,  
With folding wings they waiting sit  
For my bark, to pilot it  
To some calm and blooming cove,  
Where for me, and those I love,  
May a windless bower be built,  
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,  
In a dell 'mid lawny hills,  
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,  
And soft sunshine, and the sound  
Of old forests echoing round,  
And the light and smell divine  
Of all flowers that breathe and shine.  
We may live so happy there,  
That the spirits of the air,  
Envyng us, may even entice  
To our healing paradise  
The polluting multitude ;  
But their rage would be subdued  
By that clime divine and calm,  
And the winds whose wings rain balm  
On the uplifted soul, and leaves  
Under which the bright sea heaves ;  
While each breathless interval  
In their whisperings musical

The inspired soul supplies  
With its own deep melodies ;  
And the love which heals all strife  
Circling, like the breath of life,  
All things in that sweet abode  
With its own mild brotherhood.  
They, not it, would change ; and soon  
Every sprite beneath the moon  
Would repent its envy vain,  
And the earth grow young again.



## JULIAN AND MADDALO.

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COUNT MADDALO is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius ; and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud : he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men, and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentered and impatient feelings which consume him ; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank, and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication ; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much ; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may yet be susceptible. Without

concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems by his own account to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be, like many other stories of the same kind: the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

## JULIAN AND MADDALO :

### A CONVERSATION.

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The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,  
The goats with the green leaves of budding spring,  
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.

VIRGIL'S GALLUS.

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I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo  
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow  
Of Adria towards Venice : a bare strand  
Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,  
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,  
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,  
Is this, an uninhabited sea-side,  
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,  
Abandons ; and no other object breaks  
The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes  
Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes  
A narrow space of level sand thereon,  
Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down.  
This ride was my delight. I love all waste  
And solitary places ; where we taste  
The pleasure of believing what we see  
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be :  
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore  
More barren than its billows : and yet more  
Than all, with a remembered friend I love  
To ride as then I rode ;—for the winds drove

The living spray along the sunny air  
 Into our faces ; the blue heavens were bare,  
 Stripped to their depths by the awakening north ;  
 And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth  
 Harmonizing with solitude, and sent  
 Into our hearts aërial merriment.

So, as we rode, we talked ; and the swift thought,  
 Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,  
 But flew from brain to brain ; such glee was ours,  
 Charged with light memories of remembered hours,  
 None slow enough for sadness, till we came  
 Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.  
 This day had been cheerful but cold, and now  
 The sun was sinking, and the wind also.  
 Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be  
 Talk interrupted with such raillery  
 As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn  
 The thoughts it would extinguish :—'twas forlorn,  
 Yet pleasing ; such as once, so poets tell,  
 The devils held within the dales of hell,  
 Concerning God, freewill, and destiny.  
 Of all that Earth has been, or yet may be ;  
 All that vain men imagine or believe,  
 Or hope can paint, or suffering can achieve,  
 We descanted ; and I (for ever still  
 Is it not wise to make the best of ill ?)  
 Argued against despondency ; but pride  
 Made my companion take the darker side.  
 The sense that he was greater than his kind  
 Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind  
 By gazing on its own exceeding light.  
 Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight  
 Over the horizon of the mountains—Oh !  
 How beautiful is sunset, when the glow

Of heaven descends upon a land like thee,  
Thou paradise of exiles, Italy!  
Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers,  
Of cities they encircle!—It was ours  
To stand on thee, beholding it: and then,  
Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men  
Were waiting for us with the gondola.  
As those who pause on some delightful way,  
Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood  
Looking upon the evening, and the flood  
Which lay between the city and the shore,  
Paved with the image of the sky: the hoar  
And airy Alps, towards the north, appeared,  
Thro' mist, a heaven-sustaining bulwark, reared  
Between the east and west; and half the sky  
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,  
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew  
Down the steep west into a wondrous hue  
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent  
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent  
Among the many-folded hills—they were  
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,  
As seen from Lido through the harbour piles,  
The likeness of a clump of peaked isles—  
And then, as if the earth and sea had been  
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen  
Those mountains towering, as from waves of flame,  
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came  
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made  
Their very peaks transparent. “Ere it fade,”  
Said my companion, “I will show you soon  
A better station.” So, o'er the lagune  
We glided; and from that funereal bark  
I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark  
How from their many isles, in evening's gleam,

Its temples and its palaces did seem  
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to heaven.  
I was about to speak, when—" We are even  
Now at the point I meant," said Maddalo,  
And bade the gondolieri cease to row.  
" Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well  
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell."  
I looked, and saw between us and the sun  
A building on an island, such a one  
As age to age might add, for uses vile,—  
A windowless, deformed, and dreary pile ;  
And on the top an open tower, where hung  
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung,  
We could just hear its coarse and iron tongue :  
The broad sun sank behind it, and it tolled  
In strong and black relief—" What we behold  
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,"—  
Said Maddalo ; " and even at this hour,  
Those who may cross the water hear that bell,  
Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell,  
To vespers."—" As much skill as need to pray,  
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they,  
To their stern maker," I replied.—" O, ho !  
You talk as in years past," said Maddalo.  
" 'Tis strange men change not. You were ever still  
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
A wolf for the meek lambs : if you can't swim,  
Beware of providence." I looked on him,  
But the gay smile had faded from his eye.  
" And such," he cried, " is our mortality ;  
And this must be the emblem and the sign  
Of what should be eternal and divine ;  
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,  
Hung in a heaven-illumined tower, must toll  
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below



Round the rent heart, and pray—as madmen do ;  
For what? they know not, till the night of death,  
As sunset that strange vision, severeth  
Our memory from itself, and us from all  
We sought, and yet were baffled.” I recall  
The sense of what he said, although I mar  
The force of his expressions. The broad star  
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill ;  
And the black bell became invisible ;  
And the red tower looked grey ; and all between,  
The churches, ships, and palaces, were seen  
Huddled in gloom ; into the purple sea  
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.  
We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola  
Conveyed me to my lodging by the way.

The following morn was rainy, cold, and dim :  
Ere Maddalo arose I called on him,  
And whilst I waited with his child I played ;  
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made ;  
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being ;  
Graceful without design, and unforeseeing ;  
With eyes—Oh ! speak not of her eyes ! which seem  
Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam  
With such deep meaning as we never see  
But in the human countenance. With me  
She was a special favourite : I had nursed  
Her fine and feeble limbs, when she came first  
To this bleak world ; and yet she seemed to know  
On second sight her ancient playfellow,  
Less changed than she was by six months or so.  
For, after her first shyness was worn out,  
We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,  
When the Count entered. Salutations passed :  
“ The words you spoke last night might well have cast

A darkness on my spirit :—if man be  
 The passive thing you say, I should not see  
 Much harm in the religions and old saws,  
 (Tho' *I* may never own such leaden laws)  
 Which break a teachless nature to the yoke :  
 Mine is another faith."—Thus much I spoke,  
 And, noting he replied not, added—" See  
 This lovely child ; blithe, innocent, and free ;  
 She spends a happy time, with little care ;  
 While we to such sick thoughts subjected are,  
 As came on you last night. It is our will  
 Which thus enchains us to permitted ill.  
 We might be otherwise ; we might be all  
 We dream of, happy, high, majestic.  
 Where is the beauty, love, and truth, we seek,  
 But in our minds ? And, if we were not weak,  
 Should we be less in deed than in desire ?"—  
 —" Ay, if we were not weak,—and we aspire,  
 How vainly ! to be strong," said Maddalo :  
 " You talk Utopian "—

" It remains to know,"

I then rejoined, " and those who try, may find  
 How strong the chains are which our spirit bind :  
 Brittle perchance as straw. We are assured  
 Much may be conquered, much may be endured,  
 Of what degrades and crushes us. We know  
 That we have power over ourselves to do  
 And suffer—*what*, we know not till we try ;  
 But something nobler than to live and die :  
 So taught the kings of old philosophy,  
 Who reigned before religion made men blind ;  
 And those who suffer with their suffering kind,  
 Yet feel this faith, religion."

“ My dear friend,”

Said Maddalo, “ my judgment will not bend  
To your opinion, though I think you might  
Make such a system refutation-tight,  
As far as words go. I knew one like you,  
Who to this city came some months ago,  
With whom I argued in this sort,—and he  
Is now gone mad—and so he answered me,  
Poor fellow!—But if you would like to go,  
We’ll visit him, and his wild talk will show  
How vain are such aspiring theories.”—

“ I hope to prove the induction otherwise,  
And that a want of that true theory still,  
Which seeks a soul of goodness in things ill,  
Or in himself or others, has thus bowed  
His being :—there are some by nature proud,  
Who, patient in all else, demand but this—  
To love and be beloved with gentleness :—  
And being scorned, what wonder if they die  
Some living death? This is not destiny,  
But man’s own wilful ill.”

As thus I spoke,  
Servants announced the gondola, and we  
Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea  
Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.  
We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,  
Fierce yells and howlings, and lamentings keen,  
And laughter where complaint had merrier been,  
Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs  
Into an old court-yard. I heard on high,  
Then, fragments of most touching melody,  
But looking up saw not the singer there.—  
Thro’ the black bars in the tempestuous air

I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing,  
 Long tangled locks flung wildly forth and flowing,  
 Of those on a sudden who were beguiled  
 Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled,  
 Hearing sweet sounds. Then I :

“ Methinks there were  
 A cure of these with patience and kind care,  
 If music can thus move. But what is he,  
 Whom we seek here ?”

“ Of his sad history  
 I know but this,” said Maddalo : “ he came  
 To Venice a dejected man, and fame  
 Said he was wealthy, or he had been so.  
 Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe ;  
 But he was ever talking in such sort  
 As you do,—but more sadly ;—he seemed hurt,  
 Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,  
 To hear but of the oppression of the strong,  
 Or those absurd deceits (I think with you  
 In some respects, you know) which carry through  
 The excellent impostors of this earth  
 When they outface detection. He had worth,  
 Poor fellow ! but a humourist in his way.”

—“ Alas, what drove him mad ?”

“ I cannot say :  
 A lady came with him from France, and when  
 She left him and returned, he wandered then  
 About yon lonely isles of desert sand,  
 Till he grew wild. He had no cash nor land  
 Remaining :—the police had brought him here—  
 Some fancy took him, and he would not bear

Removal, so I fitted up for him  
 Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim ;  
 And sent him busts, and books, and urns for flowers,  
 Which had adorned his life in happier hours,  
 And instruments of music. You may guess  
 A stranger could do little more or less  
 For one so gentle and unfortunate—  
 And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight  
 From madmen's chains, and make this hell appear  
 A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear."

"Nay, this was kind of you,—he had no claim,  
 As the world says."

"None but the very same  
 Which I on all mankind, were I, as he,  
 Fallen to such deep reverse. His melody  
 Is interrupted now : we hear the din  
 Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin :  
 Let us now visit him : after this strain,  
 He ever communes with himself again,  
 And sees and hears not any."

Having said  
 These words, we called the keeper, and he led  
 To an apartment opening on the sea—  
 There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully  
 Near a piano, his pale fingers twined  
 One with the other ; and the ooze and wind  
 Rushed through an open casement, and did sway  
 His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray :  
 His head was leaning on a music-book,  
 And he was muttering ; and his lean limbs shook.  
 His lips were pressed against a folded leaf,  
 In hue too beautiful for health, and grief



Smiled in their motions as they lay apart,  
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart  
The eloquence of passion : soon he raised  
His sad meek face, and eyes lustrous and glazed,  
And spoke,—sometimes as one who wrote, and thought  
His words might move some heart that heeded not,  
If sent to distant lands ;—and then as one  
Reproaching deeds never to be undone,  
With wondering self-compassion ;—then his speech  
Was lost in grief, and then his words came each  
Unmodulated and expressionless,—  
But that from one jarred accent you might guess  
It was despair made them so uniform :  
And all the while the loud and gusty storm  
Hissed through the window, and we stood behind,  
Stealing his accents from the envious wind,  
Unseen. I yet remember what he said  
Distinctly, such impression his words made.

“ Month after month,” he cried, “ to bear this load,  
And, as a jade urged by the whip and goad,  
To drag life on—which like a heavy chain  
Lengthens behind with many a link of pain,  
And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare  
To give a human voice to my despair ;  
But live, and move, and, wretched thing ! smile on,  
As if I never went aside to groan,  
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those  
Who are most dear—not for my own repose.  
Alas ! no scorn, nor pain, nor hate, could be  
So heavy as that falsehood is to me—  
But that I cannot bear more altered faces  
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,  
More misery, disappointment, and mistrust,  
To own me for their father. Would the dust



Were covered in upon my body now !  
 That the life ceased to toil within my brow !  
 And then these thoughts would at the last be fled :  
 Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

“ What Power delights to torture us ? I know  
 That to myself I do not wholly owe  
 What now I suffer, though in part I may.  
 Alas ! none strewed fresh flowers upon the way  
 Where, wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain,  
 My shadow, which will leave me not again.  
 If I have erred, there was no joy in error,  
 But pain, and insult, and unrest, and terror ;  
 I have not, as some do, bought penitence  
 With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence ;  
 For then if love, and tenderness, and truth,  
 Had overlived Hope’s momentary youth,  
 My creed should have redeemed me from repenting ;  
 But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting  
 Met love excited by far other seeming  
 Until the end was gained :—as one from dreaming  
 Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state  
 Such as it is—

“ O thou, my spirit’s mate !  
 Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,  
 Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes  
 If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see ;  
 My secret groans must be unheard by thee ;  
 Thou wouldst weep tears, bitter as blood, to know  
 Thy lost friend’s incommunicable woe.  
 Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed  
 In friendship, let me not that name degrade,  
 By placing on your hearts the secret load  
 Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road

To peace, and that is truth, which follow ye !  
Love sometimes leads astray to misery.  
Yet think not, though subdued (and I may well  
Say that I am subdued)—that the full hell  
Within me would infect the untainted breast  
Of sacred nature with its own unrest ;  
As some perverted beings think to find  
In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind  
Which scorn or hate hath wounded.—O, how vain !  
The dagger heals not, but may rend again.  
Believe that I am ever still the same  
In creed as in resolve ; and what may tame  
My heart, must leave the understanding free,  
Or all would sink under this agony.—  
Nor dream that I will join the vulgar lie,  
Or with my silence sanction tyranny,  
Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain  
In any madness which the world calls gain ;  
Ambition, or revenge, or thoughts as stern  
As those which make me what I am, or turn  
To avarice, or misanthropy, or lust :  
Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust !  
Till then the dungeon may demand its prey ;  
And Poverty and Shame may meet and say,  
Halting beside me in the public way,—  
'That love-devoted youth is ours : let's sit  
Beside him : he may live some six months yet.'—  
Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,  
May ask some willing victim ; or ye, friends,  
May fall under some sorrow, which this heart  
Or hand may share, or vanquish, or avert ;  
I am prepared, in truth, with no proud joy,  
To do or suffer aught, as when a boy  
I did devote to justice, and to love,  
My nature, worthless now.

" I must remove  
 A veil from my pent mind. 'Tis torn aside !  
 O ! pallid as death's dedicated bride,  
 Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,  
 Am I not wan like thee ? At the grave's call  
 I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball,  
 To meet the ghastly paramour, for whom  
 Thou hast deserted me,—and made the tomb  
 Thy bridal bed. But I beside thy feet  
 Will lie, and watch ye from my winding-sheet  
 Thus—wide awake though dead—Yet stay, O, stay !  
 Go not so soon—I know not what I say—  
 Hear but my reasons—I am mad, I fear,  
 My fancy is o'erwrought—thou art not here,  
 Pale art thou 'tis most true——but thou art gone—  
 Thy work is finished ; I am left alone.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

" Nay was it I who woo'd thee to this breast,  
 Which like a serpent thou envenomest  
 As in repayment of the warmth it lent ?  
 Didst thou not seek me for thine own content ?  
 Did not thy love awaken mine ? I thought  
 That thou wert she who said ' You kiss me not  
 Ever ; I fear you do not love me now.'  
 In truth I loved even to my overthrow  
 Her who would fain forget these words, but they  
 Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

" You say that I am proud ; that when I speak,  
 My lip is tortured with the wrongs, which break  
 The spirit it expresses.—Never one  
 Humbled himself before, as I have done ;  
 Even the instinctive worm on which we tread  
 Turns, though it wound not—then, with prostrate head,  
 Sinks in the dust, and writhes like me—and dies :

—No :—wears a living death of agonies ;  
 As the slow shadows of the pointed grass  
 Mark the eternal periods, its pangs pass,  
 Slow, ever-moving, making moments be  
 As mine seem,—each an immortality!

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

“ That you had never seen me ! never heard  
 My voice ! and more than all had ne'er endured  
 The deep pollution of my loathed embrace ;  
 That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face !  
 That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out  
 The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root  
 With mine own quivering fingers ! so that ne'er  
 Our hearts had for a moment mingled there,  
 To disunite in horror ! These were not  
 With thee like some suppressed and hideous thought,  
 Which flits athwart our musings, but can find  
 No rest within a pure and gentle mind—  
 Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,  
 And sear'dst my memory o'er them,—for I heard  
 And can forget not—they were ministered,  
 One after one, those curses. Mix them up  
 Like self-destroying poisons in one cup ;  
 And they will make one blessing, which thou ne'er  
 Didst imprecate for on me——death !

“ It were

A cruel punishment for one most cruel,  
 If such can love, to make that love the fuel  
 Of the mind's hell—hate, scorn, remorse, despair :  
 But *me*, whose heart a stranger's tear might wear  
 As water-drops the sandy fountain stone ;  
 Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan  
 For woes which others hear not, and could see  
 The absent with a glass of phantasy,

And near the poor and trampled sit and weep,  
 Following the captive to his dungeon deep ;  
*Me*, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep  
 The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth,  
 And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,  
 When all beside was cold :—that thou on me  
 Should rain these plagues of blistering agony—  
 Such curses are from lips once eloquent  
 With love's too partial praise ! Let none relent  
 Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name  
 Henceforth, if an example for the same  
 They seek :—for thou on me lookedst so and so,  
 And didst speak thus and thus. I live to show  
 How much men bear and die not.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

“ Thou wilt tell,

With the grimace of hate, how horrible  
 It was to meet my love when thine grew less ;  
 Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address  
 Such features to love's work . . . This taunt, though true,  
 (For indeed Nature nor in form nor hue  
 Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)  
 Shall not be thy defence : for since thy lip  
 Met mine first, years long past,—since thine eye kindled  
 With soft fire under mine,—I have not dwindled,  
 Nor changed in mind, or body, or in aught  
 But as love changes what it loveth not  
 After long years and many trials.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

“ How vain

Are words ; I thought never to speak again,  
 Not even in secret, not to my own heart—  
 But from my lips the unwilling accents start,  
 And from my pen the words flow as I write,  
 Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears—my sight



## LII.

“ This is slavery—savage men,  
Or wild beasts within a den,  
Would endure not as ye do :  
But such ills they never knew.

## LIII.

“ What art thou, Freedom? Oh! could slaves  
Answer from their living graves  
This demand, tyrants would flee  
Like a dream's dim imagery.

## LIV.

“ Thou art not, as impostors say,  
A shadow soon to pass away,  
A superstition, and a name  
Echoing from the cave of Fame.

## LV.

“ For the labourer thou art bread  
And a comely table spread,  
From his daily labour come,  
In a neat and happy home.

## LVI.

“ Thou art clothes, and fire, and food  
For the trampled multitude :  
No—in countries that are free  
Such starvation cannot be,  
As in England now we see.

## LVII.

“ To the rich thou art a check ;  
When his foot is on the neck  
Of his victim, thou dost make  
That he treads upon a snake.



## LVIII.

“Thou art Justice—ne'er for gold  
 May thy righteous laws be sold,  
 As laws are in England :—thou  
 Shieldest alike the high and low.

## LIX.

“Thou art Wisdom—freemen never  
 Dream that God will doom for ever  
 All who think those things untrue,  
 Of which priests make such ado.

## LX.

“Thou art Peace—never by thee  
 Would blood and treasure wasted be,  
 As tyrants wasted them, when all  
 Leagued to quench thy flame in Gaul.

## LXI.

“What if English toil and blood  
 Was poured forth, even as a flood?  
 It availed,—O Liberty!  
 To dim—but not extinguish thee.

## LXII.

“Thou art Love—the rich have kist  
 Thy feet; and like him following Christ,  
 Given their substance to the free,  
 And through the rough world followed thee.

## LXIII.

“Oh turn their wealth to arms, and make  
 War for thy beloved sake,  
 On wealth and war and fraud; whence they  
 Drew the power which is their prey.

## LXIV.

“ Science, and Poetry, and Thought,  
 Are thy lamps ; they make the lot  
 Of the dwellers in a cot  
 Such, they curse their maker not.

## LXV.

“ Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,  
 All that can adorn and bless,  
 Art thou : let deeds, not words, express  
 Thine exceeding loveliness.

## LXVI.

“ Let a great assembly be  
 Of the fearless and the free,  
 On some spot of English ground,  
 Where the plains stretch wide around.

## LXVII.

“ Let the blue sky overhead,  
 The green earth on which ye tread,  
 All that must eternal be,  
 Witness the solemnity.

## LXVIII.

“ From the corners uttermost  
 Of the bounds of English coast ;  
 From every hut, village, and town,  
 Where those who live and suffer, moan  
 For others' misery, or their own :

## LXIX.

“ From the workhouse and the prison,  
 Where pale as corpses newly risen,  
 Women, children, young, and old,  
 Groan for pain, and weep for cold ;

## LXX.

“ From the haunts of daily life,  
Where is waged the daily strife  
With common wants and common cares,  
Which sow the human heart with tares.

## LXXI.

“ Lastly, from the palaces,  
Where the murmur of distress  
Echoes, like the distant sound  
Of a wind, alive around ;

## LXXII.

“ Those prison-halls of wealth and fashion,  
Where some few feel such compassion  
For those who groan, and toil, and wail,  
As must make their brethren pale ;

## LXXIII.

“ Ye who suffer woes untold,  
Or to feel, or to behold  
Your lost country bought and sold  
With a price of blood and gold.

## LXXIV.

“ Let a vast assembly be,  
And with great solemnity  
Declare with ne'er said words, that ye  
Are, as God has made ye, free.

## LXXV.

“ Be your strong and simple words  
Keen to wound as sharpened swords,  
And wide as targes let them be,  
With their shade to cover ye.

## LXXVI.

“ Let the tyrants pour around  
With a quick and startling sound,  
Like the loosening of a sea,  
Troops of armed emblazonry.

## LXXVII.

“ Let the charged artillery drive,  
Till the dead air seems alive  
With the clash of clanging wheels,  
And the tramp of horses' heels.

## LXXVIII.

“ Let the fixed bayonet  
Gleam with sharp desire to wet  
Its bright point in English blood,  
Looking keen as one for food.

## LXXIX.

“ Let the horsemen's scimitars  
Wheel and flash, like sphereless stars,  
Thirsting to eclipse their burning  
In a sea of death and mourning.

## LXXX.

“ Stand ye calm and resolute,  
Like a forest close and mute,  
With folded arms, and looks which are  
Weapons of an unvanquished war.

## LXXXI.

“ And let Panic, who outspeeds  
The career of armed steeds,  
Pass, a disregarded shade,  
Through your phalanx undismayed.

## LXXXII.

“ Let the laws of your own land,  
Good or ill, between ye stand,  
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,  
Arbiters of the dispute.

## LXXXIII.

“ The old laws of England—they  
Whose reverend heads with age are grey,  
Children of a wiser day ;  
And whose solemn voice must be  
Thine own echo—Liberty !

## LXXXIV.

“ On those who first should violate  
Such sacred heralds in their state,  
Rest the blood that must ensue ;  
And it will not rest on you.

## LXXXV.

“ And if then the tyrants dare,  
Let them ride among you there ;  
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew ;  
What they like, that let them do.

## LXXXVI.

“ With folded arms and steady eyes,  
And little fear, and less surprise,  
Look upon them as they slay,  
Till their rage has died away :

## LXXXVII.

“ Then they will return with shame,  
To the place from which they came,  
And the blood thus shed will speak  
In hot blushes on their cheek :

## LXXXVIII.

“ Every woman in the land  
 Will point at them as they stand—  
 They will hardly dare to greet  
 Their acquaintance in the street :

## LXXXIX.

“ And the bold true warriors,  
 Who have hugged danger in the wars,  
 Will turn to those who would be free,  
 Ashamed of such base company :

## XC.

“ And that slaughter to the nation  
 Shall steam up like inspiration,  
 Eloquent, oracular,  
 A volcano heard afar :

## XCI.

“ And these words shall then become  
 Like Oppression's thundered doom,  
 Ringing through each heart and brain,  
 Heard again—again—again !

## XCII.

“ Rise, like lions after slumber  
 In unvanquishable number !  
 Shake your chains to earth, like dew  
 Which in sleep had fallen on you :  
 Ye are many—they are few ! ”



# PETER BELL THE THIRD.

BY

MICHING MALLECHO, ESQ.

---

Is it a party in a parlour,  
Crammed just as they on earth were crammed,  
Some sipping punch—some sipping tea,  
But, as you by their faces see,  
All silent, and all—damned!

*Peter Bell, by W. WORDSWORTH.*

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OPHELIA.—What means this, my lord?

HAMLET.—Marry, this is Miching Mallecho; it means mischief.

SHAKSPEARE.

## DEDICATION.

---

TO THOMAS BROWN, ESQ., THE YOUNGER, H.F.

---

DEAR TOM,

Allow me to request you to introduce Mr. Peter Bell to the respectable family of the Fudges ; although he may fall short of those very considerable personages in the more active properties which characterise the Rat and the Apostate, I suspect that even you, their historian, will confess that he surpasses them in the more peculiarly legitimate qualification of intolerable dulness.

You know Mr. Examiner Hunt ; well—it was he who presented me to two of the Mr. Bells. My intimacy with the younger Mr. Bell naturally sprung from this introduction to his brothers. And in presenting him to you, I have the satisfaction of being able to assure you that he is considerably the dullest of the three.

There is this particular advantage in an acquaintance with any one of the Peter Bells, that if you know one Peter Bell, you know three Peter Bells ; they are not one, but three ; not three, but one. An awful mystery, which, after having caused torrents of blood, and having been hymned by groans enough to deafen the music of the spheres, is at length illustrated to the satisfaction of all parties in the theological world, by the nature of Mr. Peter Bell.

Peter is a polyhedric Peter, or a Peter with many sides. He

changes colours like a cameleon, and his coat like a snake. He is a Proteus of a Peter. He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound ; then dull ; then prosy and dull ; and now dull—O, so very dull ! it is an ultra-legitimate dulness.

You will perceive that it is not necessary to consider Hell and the Devil as supernatural machinery. The whole scene of my epic is in “this world which is”—So Peter informed us before his conversion to *White Obi*—

—The world of all of us, and where  
We find our happiness, or not at all.

Let me observe that I have spent six or seven days in composing this sublime piece ; the orb of my moonlight genius has made the fourth part of its revolution round the dull earth which you inhabit, driving you mad, while it has retained its calmness and its splendour, and I have been fitting this its last phase “to occupy a permanent station in the literature of my country.”

Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better ; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge ; posterity sets all to rights.

Allow me to observe that so much has been written of Peter Bell, that the present history can be considered only, like the *Iliad*, as a continuation of that series of cyclic poems, which have already been candidates for bestowing immortality upon, at the same time that they receive it from, his character and adventures. In this point of view, I have violated no rule of syntax in beginning my composition with a conjunction ; the full stop which closes the poem continued by me, being, like the full stops at the end of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a full stop of a very qualified import.

Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the *Fudges*, you will receive from them ; and in the firm expectation, that when London shall be an habitation of bitterns, when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh ; when the piers of Waterloo-Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing

in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism, the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges, and their historians,

I remain, dear Tom,

Yours sincerely,

MICHING MALLECHO.

*December 1, 1819.*

P.S.—Pray excuse the date of place ; so soon as the profits of the publication come in, I mean to hire lodgings in a more respectable street.

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DEATH.  
The DEVIL.  
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SIN.  
GRACE.  
DAMNATION.  
DOUBLE DAMNATION.

## PROLOGUE.

PETER BELLS, one, two and three,  
O'er the wide world wandering be.—  
First, the antenatal Peter,  
Wrapt in weeds of the same metre,  
The so long predestined raiment  
Clothed, in which to walk his way meant  
The second Peter ; whose ambition  
Is to link the proposition,  
As the mean of two extremes—  
(This was learnt from Aldric's themes)  
Shielding from the guilt of schism  
The orthodoxal syllogism ;  
The First Peter—he who was  
Like the shadow in the glass  
Of the second, yet unripe,  
His substantial antitype.—  
Then came Peter Bell the Second,  
Who henceforward must be reckoned  
The body of a double soul,  
And that portion of the whole  
Without which the rest would seem  
Ends of a disjointed dream.—  
And the Third is he who has  
O'er the grave been forced to pass

To the other side, which is,—  
Go and try else,—just like this.

Peter Bell the First was Peter  
Smugger, milder, softer, neater,  
Like the soul before it is  
Born from *that* world into *this*.  
The next Peter Bell was he,  
Predevote, like you and me,  
To good or evil as may come ;  
His was the severer doom,—  
For he was an evil Cotter,  
And a polygamic Potter.\*  
And the last is Peter Bell,  
Damned since our first parents fell,  
Damned eternally to Hell—  
Surely he deserves it well !

\* The oldest scholiasts read—

*A dodecagamic Potter.*

This is at once more descriptive and more megalophonous,—but the alliteration of the text had captivated the vulgar ear of the herd of later commentators.



## PETER BELL THE THIRD.

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### PART THE FIRST.

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#### DEATH.

AND Peter Bell, when he had been  
With fresh-imported Hell-fire warmed,  
Grew serious—from his dress and mien  
'Twas very plainly to be seen  
Peter was quite reformed.

His eyes turned up, his mouth turned down ;  
His accent caught a nasal twang ;  
He oiled his hair,\* there might be heard  
The grace of God in every word  
Which Peter said or sang.

But Peter now grew old, and had  
An ill no doctor could unravel ;  
His torments almost drove him mad ;—  
Some said it was a fever bad—  
Some swore it was the gravel.

\* To those who have not duly appreciated the distinction between *Whale* and *Russia* oil, this attribute might rather seem to belong to the Dandy than the Evangelic. The effect, when to the windward, is indeed so similar, that it requires a subtle naturalist to discriminate the animals. They belong, however, to distinct genera.

His holy friends then came about,  
 And with long preaching and persuasion,  
 Convinced the patient that, without  
 The smallest shadow of a doubt,  
 He was predestined to damnation.

They said—"Thy name is Peter Bell ;  
 Thy skin is of a brimstone hue ;  
 Alive or dead—aye, sick or well—  
 The one God made to rhyme with hell ;  
 The other, I think, rhymes with you."

Then Peter set up such a yell !—  
 The nurse, who with some water gruel  
 Was climbing up the stairs, as well  
 As her old legs could climb them—fell  
 And broke them both—the fall was cruel.

The Parson from the casement leapt  
 Into the lake of Windermere—  
 And many an eel—though no adept  
 In God's right reason for it—kept  
 Gnawing his kidneys half a year.

And all the rest rushed through the door,  
 And tumbled over one another,  
 And broke their skulls.—Upon the floor  
 Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and swore,  
 And cursed his father and his mother ;

And raved of God, and sin, and death,  
 Blaspheming like an infidel ;  
 And said, that with his clenched teeth,  
 He'd seize the earth from underneath,  
 And drag it with him down to hell.

As he was speaking came a spasm,  
And wrenched his gnashing teeth asunder ;  
Like one who sees a strange phantasm  
He lay,—there was a silent chasm  
Betwixt his upper jaw and under.

And yellow death lay on his face ;  
And a fixed smile that was not human  
Told, as I understand the case,  
That he was gone to the wrong place :—  
I heard all this from the old woman.

Then there came down from Langdale Pike  
A cloud, with lightning, wind and hail ;  
It swept over the mountains like  
An ocean,—and I heard it strike  
The woods and crags of Grasmere vale.

And I saw the black storm come  
Nearer, minute after minute ;  
Its thunder made the cataracts dumb ;  
With hiss, and clash, and hollow hum,  
It neared as if the Devil was in it.

The Devil *was* in it :—he had bought  
Peter for half-a-crown ; and when  
The storm which bore him vanished, nought  
That in the house that storm had caught  
Was ever seen again.

The gaping neighbours came next day—  
They found all vanished from the shore :  
The Bible, whence he used to pray,  
Half scorched under a hen-coop lay ;  
Smashed glass—and nothing more !

## PART THE SECOND.

## THE DEVIL.

THE DEVIL, I safely can aver,  
Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting ;  
Nor is he, as some sages swear,  
A spirit, neither here nor there,  
In nothing—yet in everything.

He is—what we are ; for sometimes  
The Devil is a gentleman ;  
At others a bard bartering rhymes  
For sack ; a statesman spinning crimes ;  
A swindler, living as he can ;

A thief, who cometh in the night,  
With whole boots and net pantaloons,  
Like some one whom it were not right  
To mention ;—or the luckless wight,  
From whom he steals nine silver spoons.

But in this case he did appear  
Like a slop-merchant from Wapping,  
And with smug face, and eye severe,  
On every side did perk and peer  
Till he saw Peter dead or napping.

He had on an upper Benjamin  
(For he was of the driving schism)  
In the which he wrapt his skin  
From the storm he travelled in,  
For fear of rheumatism.

He called the ghost out of the corse ;—  
 It was exceedingly like Peter,—  
 Only its voice was hollow and hoarse—  
 It had a queerish look of course—  
 Its dress too was a little neater.

The Devil knew not his name and lot,  
 Peter knew not that he was Bell :  
 Each had an upper stream of thought,  
 Which made all seem as it was not ;  
 Fitting itself to all things well.

Peter thought he had parents dear,  
 Brothers, sisters, cousins, cronies,  
 In the fens of Lincolnshire ;  
 He perhaps had found them there  
 Had he gone and boldly shown his

Solemn phiz in his own village ;  
 Where he thought oft when a boy  
 He'd clomb the orchard walls to pillage  
 The produce of his neighbour's tillage,  
 With marvellous pride and joy.

And the Devil thought he had,  
 'Mid the misery and confusion  
 Of an unjust war, just made  
 A fortune by the gainful trade  
 Of giving soldiers rations bad—  
 The world is full of strange delusion.

That he had a mansion planned  
 In a square like Grosvenor-square,  
 That he was aping fashion, and  
 That he now came to Westmoreland  
 To see what was romantic there.

And all this, though quite ideal,—  
 Ready at a breath to vanish,—  
 Was a state not more unreal  
 Than the peace he could not feel,  
 Or the care he could not banish.

After a little conversation,  
 The Devil told Peter, if he chose,  
 He 'd bring him to the world of fashion  
 By giving him a situation  
 In his own service—and new clothes.

And Peter bowed, quite pleased and proud,  
 And after waiting some few days  
 For a new livery—dirty yellow  
 Turned up with black—the wretched fellow  
 Was bowled to Hell in the Devil's chaise.

### PART THE THIRD.

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#### HELL.

HELL is a city much like London—  
 A populous and a smoky city ;  
 There are all sorts of people undone,  
 And there is little or no fun done ;  
 Small justice shown, and still less pity.

There is a Castles, and a Canning,  
 A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh ;  
 All sorts of caitiff corpses planning,  
 All sorts of cozening for trepanning  
 Corpses less corrupt than they.



There is a \* \* \*, who has lost  
 His wits, or sold them, none knows which ;  
 He walks about a double ghost,  
 And though as thin as Fraud almost—  
 Ever grows more grim and rich.

There is a Chancery Court ; a King ;  
 A manufacturing mob ; a set  
 Of thieves who by themselves are sent  
 Similar thieves to represent ;  
 An army ; and a public debt.

Which last is a scheme of paper money,  
 And means—being interpreted—  
 Bees, “ keep your wax—give us the honey,  
 And we will plant, while skies are sunny,  
 Flowers, which in winter serve instead.”

There is great talk of revolution—  
 And a great chance of despotism—  
 German soldiers—camps—confusion—  
 Tumults—lotteries—rage—delusion—  
 Gin—suicide—and methodism.

Taxes too, on wine and bread,  
 And meat, and beer, and tea, and cheese,  
 From which those patriots pure are fed,  
 Who gorge before they reel to bed  
 The tenfold essence of all these.

There are mincing women, mewing,  
 (Like cats, who *amant misère*,\*)

\* One of the attributes in Linnaeus's description of the Cat. To a similar cause the caterwauling of more than one species of this genus is to be referred ;—except, indeed, that the poor quadruped is compelled to quarrel with its own pleasures, whilst the biped is supposed only to quarrel with those of others.

Of their own virtue, and pursuing  
 Their gentler sisters to that ruin,  
 Without which—what were chastity.\*

Lawyers—judges—old hobnobbers  
 Are there—bailiffs—chancellors—  
 Bishops—great and little robbers—  
 Rhymesters—pamphleteers—stock-jobbers—  
 Men of glory in the wars,—

Things whose trade is, over ladies  
 To lean, and flirt, and stare, and simper,  
 Till all that is divine in woman  
 Grows cruel, courteous, smooth, inhuman,  
 Crucified 'twixt a smile and whimper.

Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moiling,  
 Frowning, preaching—such a riot!  
 Each with never-ceasing labour,  
 Whilst he thinks he cheats his neighbour,  
 Cheating his own heart of quiet.

And all these meet at levees ;—  
 Dinners convivial and political ;—  
 Suppers of epic poets ;—teas,  
 Where small talk dies in agonies ;—  
 Breakfasts professional and critical ;

Lunches and snacks so aldermanic  
 That one would furnish forth ten dinners,

\* What would this husk and excuse for a virtue be without its kernel prostitution, or the kernel prostitution without this husk of a virtue? I wonder the women of the town do not form an association, like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for the support of what may be called the "King, Church, and Constitution" of their order. But this subject is almost too horrible for a joke.

Where reigns a Cretan-tongued panic,  
Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Alemannic  
Should make some losers, and some winners

At conversazioni—balls—  
Conventicles—and drawing-rooms—  
Courts of law—committees—calls  
Of a morning—clubs—book-stalls—  
Churches—masquerades—and tombs.

And this is Hell—and in this smother  
All are damnable and damned ;  
Each one damning, damns the other ;  
They are damned by one another,  
By none other are they damned.

'Tis a lie to say, " God damns ! " \*  
Where was Heaven's Attorney General  
When they first gave out such flams ?  
Let there be an end of shams,  
They are mines of poisonous mineral.

Statesmen damn themselves to be  
Cursed ; and lawyers damn their souls  
To the auction of a fee ;  
Churchmen damn themselves to see  
God's sweet love in burning coals.

The rich are damned, beyond all cure,  
To taunt, and starve, and trample on  
The weak and wretched ; and the poor  
Damn their broken hearts to endure  
Stripe on stripe, with groan on groan.

\* This libel on our national oath, and this accusation of all our countrymen of being in the daily practice of solemnly asseverating the most enormous falsehood, I fear deserves the notice of a more active Attorney General than that here alluded to.

Sometimes the poor are damned indeed  
To take,—not means for being blest,—  
But Cobbett's snuff, revenge ; that weed  
From which the worms that it doth feed  
Squeeze less than they before possessed.

And some few, like we know who,  
Damned—but God alone knows why—  
To believe their minds are given  
To make this ugly Hell a Heaven ;  
In which faith they live and die.

Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken,  
Each man be he sound or no  
Must indifferently sicken ;  
As when day begins to thicken,  
None knows a pigeon from a crow,—

So good and bad, sane and mad,  
The oppressor and the oppressed ;  
Those who weep to see what others  
Smile to inflict upon their brothers ;  
Lovers, haters, worst and best ;

All are damned—they breathe an air,  
Thick, infected, joy-dispelling :  
Each pursues what seems most fair,  
Mining like moles, through mind, and there  
Scoop palace-caverns vast, where Care  
In throned state is ever dwelling.

## PART THE FOURTH.

—  
SIN.

Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor-square,  
A footman in the devil's service!  
And the misjudging world would swear  
That every man in service there  
To virtue would prefer vice.

But Peter, though now damned, was not  
What Peter was before damnation.  
Men oftentimes prepare a lot  
Which ere it finds them, is not what  
Suits with their genuine station.

All things that Peter saw and felt  
Had a peculiar aspect to him;  
And when they came within the belt  
Of his own nature, seemed to melt,  
Like cloud to cloud, into him.

And so the outward world uniting  
To that within him, he became  
Considerably uninviting  
To those, who meditation slighting,  
Were moulded in a different frame.

And he scorned them, and they scorned him;  
And he scorned all they did; and they  
Did all that men of their own trim  
Are wont to do to please their whim,  
Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

Such were his fellow-servants ; thus  
His virtue, like our own, was built  
Too much on that indignant fuss  
Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us  
To bully out another's guilt.

He had a mind which was somehow  
At once circumference and centre  
Of all he might or feel or know ;  
Nothing went ever out, although  
Something did ever enter.

He had as much imagination  
As a pint-pot ;—he never could  
Fancy another situation,  
From which to dart his contemplation,  
Than that wherein he stood.

Yet his was individual mind,  
And new created all he saw  
In a new manner, and refined  
Those new creations, and combined  
Them, by a master-spirit's law.

Thus—though unimaginitive—  
An apprehension clear, intense,  
Of his mind's work, had made alive  
The things it wrought on ; I believe  
Wakening a sort of thought in sense.

But from the first 'twas Peter's drift  
To be a kind of moral eunuch,  
He touched the hem of nature's shift,  
Felt faint—and never dared uplift  
The closest, all-concealing tunic,



She laughed the while, with an arch smile,  
 And kissed him with a sister's kiss,  
 And said—" My best Diogenes,  
 I love you well—but, if you please,  
 Tempt not again my deepest bliss.

" 'Tis you are cold—for I, not coy,  
 Yield love for love, frank, warm and true ;  
 And Burns, a Scottish peasant boy—  
 His errors prove it—knew my joy  
 More, learned friend, than you.

*" Bocca bacciata non perde ventura  
 Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna :—*  
 So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet words might cure a  
 Male prude, like you, from what you now endure, a  
 Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant laguna."

Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe,  
 And smoothed his spacious forehead down,  
 With his broad palm ;—'twixt love and fear,  
 He looked, as he no doubt felt, queer,  
 And in his dream sate down.

The Devil was no uncommon creature ;  
 A leaden-witted thief—just huddled  
 Out of the dross and scum of nature ;  
 A toad-like lump of limb and feature,  
 With mind, and heart, and fancy muddled.

He was that heavy, dull, cold thing,  
 The spirit of evil well may be :  
 A drone too base to have a sting ;  
 Who gluts, and grimes his lazy wing,  
 And calls lust, luxury.

Now he was quite the kind of wight  
Round whom collect, at a fixed æra,  
Venison, turtle, hock, and claret,—  
Good cheer—and those who come to share it—  
And best East Indian madeira!

It was his fancy to invite  
Men of science, wit, and learning,  
Who came to lend each other light;  
He proudly thought that his gold's might  
Had set those spirits burning.

And men of learning, science, wit,  
Considered him as you and I  
Think of some rotten tree, and sit  
Lounging and dining under it,  
Exposed to the wide sky.

And all the while, with loose fat smile,  
The willing wretch sat winking there,  
Believing 'twas his power that made  
That jovial scene—and that all paid  
Homage to his unnoticed chair.

Though to be sure this place was Hell;  
He was the Devil—and all they—  
What though the claret circled well,  
And wit, like ocean, rose and fell?—  
Were damned eternally.

## PART THE FIFTH.

—♦—  
GRACE.

AMONG the guests who often staid  
 Till the Devil's petits-soupers,  
 A man there came, fair as a maid,  
 And Peter noted what he said,  
 Standing behind his master's chair.

He was a mighty poet—and  
 A subtle-souled psychologist;  
 All things he seemed to understand,  
 Of old or new—of sea or land—  
 But his own mind—which was a mist.

This was a man who might have turned  
 Hell into Heaven—and so in gladness  
 A Heaven unto himself have earned;  
 But he in shadows undiscerned  
 Trusted,—and damned himself to madness.

He spoke of poetry, and how  
 “ Divine it was—a light—a love—  
 A spirit which like wind doth blow  
 As it listeth, to and fro;  
 A dew rained down from God above.

“ A power which comes and goes like dream,  
 And which none can ever trace—  
 Heaven's light on earth—Truth's brightest beam.”  
 And when he ceased there lay the gleam  
 Of those words upon his face.

Now Peter, when he heard such talk,  
    Would, heedless of a broken pate,  
Stand like a man asleep, or baulk  
Some wishing guest of knife or fork,  
    Or drop and break his master's plate.

At night he oft would start and wake  
    Like a lover, and began  
In a wild measure songs to make  
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,  
    And on the heart of man.

And on the universal sky—  
    And the wide earth's bosom green,—  
And the sweet, strange mystery  
Of what beyond these things may lie,  
    And yet remain unseen.

For in his thought he visited  
    The spots in which, ere dead and damned,  
He his wayward life had led ;  
Yet knew not whence the thoughts were fed,  
    Which thus his fancy crammed.

And these obscure remembrances  
    Stirred such harmony in Peter,  
That whensoever he should please,  
He could speak of rocks and trees  
    In poetic metre.

For though it was without a sense  
    Of memory, yet he remembered well  
Many a ditch and quick-set fence ;  
Of lakes he had intelligence,  
    He knew something of heath, and fell.

He had also dim recollections  
Of pedlars tramping on their rounds ;  
Milk-pans and pails ; and odd collections  
Of saws, and proverbs ; and reflections  
Old parsons make in burying-grounds.

But Peter's verse was clear, and came  
Announcing from the frozen hearth  
Of a cold age, that none might tame  
The soul of that diviner flame  
It augured to the Earth.

Like gentle rains, on the dry plains,  
Making that green which late was grey,  
Or like the sudden moon, that stains  
Some gloomy chamber's window panes  
With a broad light like day.

For language was in Peter's hand,  
Like clay, while he was yet a potter ;  
And he made songs for all the land,  
Sweet both to feel and understand,  
As pipkins late to mountain Cotter.

And Mr. ——, the bookseller,  
Gave twenty pounds for some ;—then scorning  
A footman's yellow coat to wear,  
Peter, too proud of heart, I fear,  
Instantly gave the Devil warning.

Whereat the Devil took offence,  
And swore in his soul a great oath then,  
“ That for his damned impertinence,  
He 'd bring him to a proper sense  
Of what was due to gentlemen ! ”—

## PART THE SIXTH.

## DAMNATION.

“ O THAT mine enemy had written  
 A book ! ”—cried Job :—a fearful curse ;  
 If to the Arab, as the Briton,  
 ’Twas galling to be critic-bitten :—  
 The Devil to Peter wished no worse.

When Peter’s next new book found vent,  
 The Devil to all the first Reviews  
 A copy of it silyly sent,  
 With five-pound note as compliment,  
 And this short notice—“ Pray abuse.”

Then *seriatim*, month and quarter,  
 Appeared such mad tirades.—One said—  
 “ Peter seduced Mrs. Foy’s daughter,  
 Then drowned the mother in Ullswater,  
 The last thing as he went to bed.”

Another—“ Let him shave his head !  
 Where ’s Dr. Willis ?—Or is he joking ?  
 What does the rascal mean or hope,  
 No longer imitating Pope,  
 In that barbarian Shakspeare poking ? ”

One more, “ Is incest not enough ?  
 And must there be adultery too ?  
 Grace after meat ? Miscreant and Liar !  
 Thief ! Blackguard ! Scoundrel ! Fool ! Hell-fire  
 Is twenty times too good for you.



“ By that last book of yours WE think  
 You 've double damned yourself to scorn ;  
 We warned you whilst yet on the brink  
 You stood. From your black name will shrink  
 The babe that is unborn.”

All these Reviews the Devil made  
 Up in a parcel, which he had  
 Safely to Peter's house conveyed.  
 For carriage, ten-pence Peter paid—  
 Untied them—read them—went half mad.

“ What ! ” cried he, “ this is my reward  
 For nights of thought, and days of toil ?  
 Do poets, but to be abhorred  
 By men of whom they never heard,  
 Consume their spirits' oil ?

“ What have I done to them ?—and who  
 Is Mrs. Foy ? 'Tis very cruel  
 To speak of me and Emma so !  
 Adultery ! God defend me ! Oh !  
 I 've half a mind to fight a duel.

“ Or,” cried he, a grave look collecting,  
 “ Is it my genius, like the moon,  
 Sets those who stand her face inspecting,  
 That face within their brain reflecting,  
 Like a crazed bell-chime, out of tune ? ”

For Peter did not know the town,  
 But thought, as country readers do,  
 For half a guinea or a crown,  
 He bought oblivion or renown  
 From God's own voice \* in a review.

\* *Vox populi vox dei.* As Mr. Godwin truly observes of a more famous saying, of some merit as a popular maxim, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy.

All Peter did on this occasion  
 Was, writing some sad stuff in prose.  
 It is a dangerous invasion  
 When poets criticise ; their station  
 Is to delight, not pose.

The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair,  
 For Born's translation of Kant's book ;  
 A world of words, tail foremost, where  
 Right—wrong—false—true—and foul—and fair,  
 As in a lottery-wheel are shook.

Five thousand crammed octavo pages  
 Of German psychologies,—he  
 Who his *furor verborum* assuages  
 Thereon, deserves just seven months' wages  
 More than will e'er be due to me.

I looked on them nine several days,  
 And then I saw that they were bad ;  
 A friend, too, spoke in their dispraise,—  
 He never read them ;—with amaze  
 I found Sir William Drummond had.

When the book came, the Devil sent  
 It to P. Verbovale,\* Esquire,  
 With a brief note of compliment,  
 By that night's Carlisle mail. It went,  
 And set his soul on fire.

\* Quasi, *Qui valet verba*:—*i. e.* all the words which have been, are, or may be expended by, for, against, with, or on him. A sufficient proof of the utility of this history. Peter's progenitor who selected this name seems to have possessed a *pure anticipated cognition* of the nature and modesty of this ornament of his posterity.

Fire, which *ex luce præbens fumum*,  
 Made him beyond the bottom see  
 Of truth's clear well—when I and you Ma'am,  
 Go, as we shall do, *subter humum*,  
 We may know more than he.

Now Peter ran to seed in soul  
 Into a walking paradox ;  
 For he was neither part nor whole,  
 Nor good, nor bad—nor knave nor fool,  
 —Among the woods and rocks.

Furious he rode, where late he ran,  
 Lashing and spurring his tame hobby ;  
 Turned to a formal puritan,  
 A solemn and unsexual man,—  
 He half believed *White Obi*.

This steed in vision he would ride,  
 High trotting over nine-inch bridges,  
 With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride,  
 Mocking and mowing by his side—  
 A mad-brained goblin for a guide—  
 Over corn-fields, gates, and hedges.

After these ghastly rides, he came  
 Home to his heart, and found from thence  
 Much stolen of its accustomed flame ;  
 His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame  
 Of their intelligence.

To Peter's view, all seemed one hue ;  
 He was no whig, he was no tory ;  
 No Deist and no Christian he ;—  
 He got so subtle, that to be  
 Nothing, was all his glory.

One single point in his belief  
 From his organisation sprung,  
 The heart-enrooted faith, the chief  
 Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf,  
 That "happiness is wrong ;"

So thought Calvin and Dominic ;  
 So think their fierce successors, who  
 Even now would neither stint nor stick  
 Our flesh from off our bones to pick,  
 If they might "do their do."

His morals thus were undermined :—  
 The old Peter—the hard, old Potter  
 Was born anew within his mind ;  
 He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined,  
 As when he tramped beside the Otter.\*

In the death hues of agony  
 Lambently flashing from a fish,  
 Now Peter felt amused to see  
 Shades like a rainbow's rise and flee,  
 Mixed with a certain hungry wish.†

\* A famous river in the new Atlantis of the Dynastophylic Panti-socratists.

† See the description of the beautiful colours produced during the agonising death of a number of trout, in the fourth part of a long poem in blank verse, published within a few years. That poem contains curious evidence of the gradual hardening of a strong but circumscribed sensibility, of the perversion of a penetrating but panic-stricken understanding. The author might have derived a lesson which he had probably forgotten from these sweet and sublime verses.

This lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,  
 Taught both by what she<sup>a</sup> shows and what conceals,  
 Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
 With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

<sup>a</sup> Nature.

So in his Country's dying face  
 He looked—and lovely as she lay,  
 Seeking in vain his last embrace,  
 Wailing her own abandoned case,  
 With hardened sneer he turned away :

And coolly to his own soul said ;—  
 “ Do you not think that we might make  
 A poem on her when she's dead :—  
 Or, no—a thought is in my head—  
 Her shroud for a new sheet I'll take.

“ My wife wants one.—Let who will bury  
 This mangled corpse ! And I and you,  
 My dearest Soul, will then make merry,  
 As the Prince Regent did with Sherry,—  
 Ay—and at last desert me too.”

And so his Soul would not be gay,  
 But moaned within him ; like a fawn  
 Moaning within a cave, it lay  
 Wounded and wasting, day by day,  
 Till all its life of life was gone.

As troubled skies stain waters clear,  
 The storm in Peter's heart and mind  
 Now made his verses dark and queer :  
 They were the ghosts of what they were,  
 Shaking dim grave-clothes in the wind.

For he now raved enormous folly,  
 Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools, and Graves,  
 'Twould make George Colman melancholy,  
 To have heard him, like a male Molly,  
 Chaunting those stupid staves.

Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse  
 On Peter while he wrote for freedom,  
 So soon as in his song they spy  
 The folly which soothes tyranny,  
 Praise him, for those who feed 'em.

“ He was a man, too great to scan ;—  
 A planet lost in truth's keen rays :—  
 His virtue, awful and prodigious ;—  
 He was the most sublime, religious,  
 Pure-minded Poet of these days.”

As soon as he read that, cried Peter,  
 “ Eureka ! I have found the way  
 To make a better thing of metre  
 Than e'er was made by living creature  
 Up to this blessed day.”

Then Peter wrote odes to the Devil ;—  
 In one of which he meekly said :  
 “ May Carnage and Slaughter,  
 Thy niece and thy daughter,  
 May Rapine and Famine,  
 Thy gorge ever cramming,  
 Glut thee with living and dead !

“ May death and damnation,  
 And consternation,  
 Flit up from hell with pure intent !  
 Slash them at Manchester,  
 Glasgow, Leeds and Chester ;  
 Drench all with blood from Avon to Trent.

“ Let thy body-guard yeomen  
 Hew down babes and women,



And laugh with bold triumph till Heaven be rent,  
 When Moloch in Jewry,  
 Munched children with fury,  
 It was thou, Devil, dining with pure intent."\*

## PART THE SEVENTH.

### DOUBLE DAMNATION.

THE Devil now knew his proper cue.—  
 Soon as he read the ode, he drove  
 To his friend Lord Mac Murderhouse's,  
 A man of interest in both houses,  
 And said :—" For money or for love,  
 " Pray find some cure or sinecure ;  
 To feed from the superfluous taxes,  
 A friend of ours—a poet—fewer  
 Have fluttered tamer to the lure  
 Than he." His lordship stands and racks his

Stupid brains, while one might count  
 As many beads as he had boroughs,—  
 At length replies ; from his mean front,  
 Like one who rubs out an account,  
 Smoothing away the unmeaning furrows :

\* It is curious to observe how often extremes meet. Cobbett and Peter use the same language for a different purpose : Peter is indeed a sort of metrical Cobbett. Cobbett is, however, more mischievous than Peter, because he pollutes a holy and now unconquerable cause with the principles of legitimate murder ; whilst the other only makes a bad one ridiculous and odious.

If either Peter or Cobbett should see this note, each will feel more indignation at being compared to the other than at any censure implied in the moral perversion laid to their charge.

“ It happens fortunately, dear Sir,  
 I can. I hope I need require  
 No pledge from you, that he will stir  
 In our affairs ;—like Oliver,  
 That he ’ll be worthy of his hire.”

These words exchanged, the news sent off  
 To Peter, home the Devil hied,—  
 Took to his bed ; he had no cough,  
 No doctor,—meat and drink enough,—  
 Yet that same night he died.

The Devil’s corpse was leaded down ;  
 His decent heirs enjoyed his pelf,  
 Mourning-coaches, many a one,  
 Followed his hearse along the town :—  
 Where was the devil himself ?

When Peter heard of his promotion,  
 His eyes grew like two stars for bliss :  
 There was a bow of sleek devotion,  
 Engendering in his back ; each motion  
 Seemed a Lord’s shoe to kiss.

He hired a house, bought plate, and made  
 A genteel drive up to his door,  
 With sifted gravel neatly laid,—  
 As if defying all who said,  
 Peter was ever poor.

But a disease soon struck into  
 The very life and soul of Peter—  
 He walked about—slept—had the hue  
 Of health upon his cheeks—and few  
 Dug better—none a heartier eater.

And yet a strange and horrid curse  
Clung upon Peter, night and day,  
Month after month the thing grew worse,  
And deadlier than in this my verse,  
I can find strength to say.

Peter was dull—he was at first  
Dull—O, so dull—so very dull !  
Whether he talked, wrote, or rehearsed—  
Still with this dulness was he cursed—  
Dull—beyond all conception—dull.

No one could read his books—no mortal,  
But a few natural friends, would hear him ;  
The parson came not near his portal ;  
His state was like that of the immortal  
Described by Swift—no man could bear him.

His sister, wife, and children yawned,  
With a long, slow, and drear ennui,  
All human patience far beyond ;  
Their hopes of Heaven each would have pawned,  
Any where else to be.

But in his verse, and in his prose,  
The essence of his dulness was  
Concentred and compressed so close,  
'Twould have made Guatimozin dose  
On his red gridiron of brass.

A printer's boy, folding those pages,  
Fell slumbrously upon one side ;  
Like those famed seven who slept three ages.  
To wakeful frenzy's vigil rages,  
As opiates, were the same applied.

Even the Reviewers who were hired  
To do the work of his reviewing,  
With adamantine nerves, grew tired ;—  
Gaping and torpid they retired,  
To dream of what they should be doing.

And worse and worse, the drowsy curse  
Yawned in him, till it grew a pest—  
A wide contagious atmosphere,  
Creeping like cold through all things near ;  
A power to infect and to infest.

His servant-maids and dogs grew dull ;  
His kitten, late a sportive elf,  
The woods and lakes, so beautiful,  
Of dim stupidity were full,  
All grew dull as Peter's self.

The earth under his feet—the springs,  
Which lived within it a quick life,  
The air, the winds of many wings,  
That fan it with new murmurings,  
Were dead to their harmonious strife.

The birds and beasts within the wood,  
The insects, and each creeping thing,  
Were now a silent multitude ;  
Love's work was left unwrought—no brood  
Near Peter's house took wing.

And every neighbouring cottager  
Stupidly yawned upon the other :  
No jack-ass brayed ; no little cur  
Cocked up his ears ;—no man would stir  
To save a dying mother.

Yet all from that charmed district went  
But some half-idiot and half-knave,  
Who rather than pay any rent,  
Would live with marvellous content,  
Over his father's grave.

No bailiff dared within that space,  
For fear of the dull charm, to enter ;  
A man would bear upon his face,  
For fifteen months in any case,  
The yawn of such a venture.

Seven miles above—below—around—  
This pest of dulness holds its sway ;  
A ghastly life without a sound ;  
To Peter's soul the spell is bound—  
How should it ever pass away ?

## LINES,

WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH ADMINISTRATION.

---

CORPSES are cold in the tomb,  
 Stones on the pavement are dumb,  
 Abortions are dead in the womb,  
 And their mothers look pale—like the white shore  
 Of Albion, free no more.

Her sons are as stones in the way—  
 They are masses of senseless clay—  
 They are trodden and move not away,—  
 The abortion, with which she travaileth,  
 Is Liberty—smitten to death.

Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor,  
 For thy Victim is no redressor,  
 Thou art sole lord and possessor  
 Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions—they pave  
 Thy path to the grave.

Hearest thou the festival din,  
 Of death, and destruction, and sin,  
 And wealth, crying Havoc! within—  
 'Tis the Bacchanal triumph, which makes truth dumb,  
 Thine Epithalamium.

Ay, marry thy ghastly wife!  
 Let fear, and disquiet, and strife  
 Spread thy couch in the chamber of life,  
 Marry Ruin, thou tyrant! and God be thy guide  
 To the bed of the bride.



## SONG

TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND.



MEN of England, wherefore plough  
 For the lords who lay ye low ?  
 Wherefore weave with toil and care,  
 The rich robes your tyrants wear ?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,  
 From the cradle to the grave,  
 Those ungrateful drones who would  
 Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood !

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
 Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,  
 That these stingless drones may spoil  
 The forced produce of your toil ?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,  
 Shelter, food, love's gentle balm ?  
 Or what is it ye buy so dear  
 With your pain and with your fear ?

The seed ye sow, another reaps ;  
 The wealth ye find, another keeps ;  
 The robes ye weave, another wears ;  
 The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap ;  
 Find wealth,—let no impostor heap ;  
 Weave robes,—let not the idle wear ;  
 Forge arms,—in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells ;  
 In halls ye deck, another dwells.  
 Why shake the chains ye wrought ? Ye see  
 The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,  
 Trace your grave, and build your tomb,  
 And weave your winding-sheet, till fair  
 England be your sepulchre.

---

ENGLAND IN 1819.

---

AN old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—  
 Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
 Through public scorn—mud from a muddy spring,—  
 Rulers, who neither see, nor feel, nor know,  
 But leech-like to their fainting country cling,  
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—  
 A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—  
 An army, which liberticide and prey  
 Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,  
 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay,—  
 Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed ;  
 A Senate—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—  
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may  
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

## SIMILES.

FOR TWO POLITICAL CHARACTERS OF 1819.



As from an ancestral oak  
 Two empty ravens sound their clarion,  
 Yell by yell, and croak by croak,  
 When they scent the noonday smoke  
 Of fresh human carrion :—

As two gibbering night-birds flit,  
 From their bowers of deadly hue,  
 Through the night to frighten it,  
 When the morn is in a fit,  
 And the stars are none or few :—

As a shark and dog-fish wait  
 Under an Atlantic isle,  
 For the negro-ship, whose freight  
 Is the theme of their debate,  
 Wrinkling their red gills the while—

Are ye, two vultures sick for battle,  
 Two scorpions under one wet stone,  
 Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle,  
 Two crows perched on the murrained cattle,  
 Two vipers tangled into one.

## AN ODE,

TO THE ASSERTORS OF LIBERTY.



ARISE, arise, arise !

There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread ;  
 Be your wounds like eyes  
 To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.  
 What other grief were it just to pay ?  
 Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they ;  
 Who said they were slain on the battle-day ?

Awaken, awaken, awaken !

The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes ;  
 Be the cold chains shaken  
 To the dust, where your kindred repose, repose :  
 Their bones in the grave will start and move,  
 When they hear the voices of those they love,  
 Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner !

When Freedom is riding to conquest by :  
 Though the slaves that fan her  
 Be famine and toil, giving sigh for sigh.  
 And ye who attend her imperial car,  
 Lift not your hands in the banded war,  
 But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory,

To those who have greatly suffered and done !  
 Never name in story  
 Was greater than that which ye shall have won

Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,  
 Whose revenge, pride, and power, they have overthrown:  
 Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow  
 With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:  
 Hide the blood-stains now  
 With hues which sweet nature has made divine,  
 Green strength, azure hope, and eternity.  
 But let not the pansy among them be;  
 Ye were injured, and that means memory.

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ODE TO HEAVEN.

—◆—  
 CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

FIRST SPIRIT.

PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights!  
 Paradise of golden lights!  
 Deep, immeasurable, vast,  
 Which art now, and which wert then!  
 Of the present and the past,  
 Of the eternal where and when,  
 Presence-chamber, temple, home,  
 Ever-canopying dome,  
 Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,  
 Earth, and all earth's company;  
 Living globes which ever throng  
 Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;  
 And green worlds that glide along;  
 And swift stars with flashing tresses;

And icy moons most cold and bright,  
 And mighty suns beyond the night,  
 Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,  
 Heaven! for thou art the abode  
 Of that power which is the glass  
 Wherein man his nature sees.  
 Generations as they pass  
 Worship thee with bended knees.  
 Their unremaining gods and they  
 Like a river roll away ;  
 Thou remainest such alway.

## SECOND SPIRIT.

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,  
 Round which its young fancies clamber,  
 Like weak insects in a cave,  
 Lighted up by stalactites ;  
 But the portal of the grave,  
 Where a world of new delights  
 Will make thy best glories seem  
 But a dim and noonday gleam  
 From the shadow of a dream !

## THIRD SPIRIT.

Peace ! the abyss is wreathed with scorn  
 At your presumption, atom-born !  
 What is heaven ? and what are ye  
 Who its brief expanse inherit ?  
 What are suns and spheres which flee  
 With the instinct of that spirit  
 Of which ye are but a part ?  
 Drops which Nature's mighty heart  
 Drives through thinnest veins. Depart !



What is heaven? a globe of dew,  
 Filling in the morning new  
 Some eyed flower, whose young leaves waken  
 On an unimagined world :  
 Constellated suns unshaken,  
 Orbits measureless, are furled  
 In that frail and fading sphere,  
 With ten millions gathered there,  
 To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

---

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.\*

I.

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou,  
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
 Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

\* This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset, with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
 With living hues and odours plain and hill :

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;  
 Destroyer and preserver ; hear, oh hear !

## II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,  
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread  
 On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge  
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
 Will be the doom of a vast sepulchre,  
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere  
 Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst : Oh hear !

## III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baïæ's bay,  
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou  
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,  
 And tremble and despoil themselves : Oh hear !

## IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;  
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;  
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
 Than thou, O uncontrollable ! If even  
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,  
 As then, when to outstrip the skyey speed  
 Scarce seemed a vision, I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
 Oh ! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !  
 I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
 One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

## V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :  
 What if my leaves are falling like its own !  
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,  
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce  
 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth;  
 And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,  
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

---

AN EXHORTATION.

---

CAMELEONS feed on light and air:  
 Poets' food is love and fame:  
 If in this wide world of care  
 Poets could but find the same  
 With as little toil as they,  
 Would they ever change their hue  
 As the light cameleons do,  
 Suiting it to every ray  
 Twenty times a-day?

Poets are on this cold earth,  
 As cameleons might be,  
 Hidden from their early birth  
 In a cave beneath the sea;  
 Where light is, cameleons change!

Where love is not, poets do :  
 Fame is love disguised : if few  
 Find either, never think it strange  
 That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power  
 A poet's free and heavenly mind :  
 If bright cameleons should devour  
 Any food but beams and wind,  
 They would grow as earthly soon  
 As their brother lizards are.  
 Children of a sunnier star,  
 Spirits from beyond the moon,  
 Oh, refuse the boon !

---

ON

THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI,

IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY.

---

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,  
 Upon the cloudy mountain peak supine ;  
 Below, far lands are seen tremblingly ;  
 Its horror and its beauty are divine.  
 Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie  
 Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine,  
 Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,  
 The agonies of anguish and of death.

Yet it is less the horror than the grace  
 Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone  
 Whereon the lineaments of that dead face  
 Are graven, till the characters be grown

Into itself, and thought no more can trace ;  
 'Tis the melodious hues of beauty thrown  
 Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,  
 Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

And from its head as from one body grow,  
 As [            ] grass out of a watery rock,  
 Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow,  
 And their long tangles in each other lock,  
 And with unending involutions show  
 Their mailed radiance, as it were to mock  
 The torture and the death within, and saw  
 The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

And from a stone beside, a poisonous eft  
 Peeps idly into these Gorgonian eyes ;  
 Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft  
 Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise  
 Out of the cave this hideous light hath cleft,  
 And he comes hastening like a moth that hies  
 After a taper ; and the midnight sky  
 Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror ;  
 For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare  
 Kindled by that inextricable error,  
 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air  
 Become a [            ] and ever-shifting mirror  
 Of all the beauty and the terror there—  
 A woman's countenance, with serpent locks,  
 Gazing in death on heaven from those wet rocks.



## TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

(With what truth I may say—  
 Roma! Roma! Roma!  
 Non è piu come era prima!)

My lost William, thou in whom  
 Some bright spirit lived, and did  
 That decaying robe consume  
 Which its lustre faintly hid,  
 Here its ashes find a tomb,  
 But beneath this pyramid  
 Thou art not—if a thing divine  
 Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine  
 Is thy mother's grief and mine.

Where art thou, my gentle child?  
 Let me think thy spirit feeds,  
 With its life intense and mild,  
 The love of living leaves and weeds,  
 Among these tombs and ruins wild;—  
 Let me think that through low seeds  
 Of the sweet flowers and sunny grass,  
 Into their hues and scents may pass,  
 A portion —————

*June, 1819.*

## NOTE ON THE POEMS OF 1810.

BY THE EDITOR.

---

THOUGH Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during "the good old times" had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature, the necessaries of life, when fairly earned by labour, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism, that looked upon the people as not to be consulted or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing *The Cenci*, when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote the *Masque of Anarchy*, which he sent to his friend, Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the *Examiner*, of which he was then the Editor.

"I did not insert it," Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable

and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, "because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of his spirit, that walked in this flaming robe of verse." Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day; but they rose when human life was respected by the minister in power; such was not the case during the administration which excited Shelley's abhorrence.

The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual; portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired those beginning,—

My Father Time is old and grey,

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty; they might make a patriot of any man, whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.

Shelley loved the people, and respected them as often more virtuous, as always more suffering, and, therefore, more deserving of sympathy, than the great. He believed that a clash between the two classes of society was inevitable, and he eagerly ranged himself on the people's side. He had an idea of publishing a series of poems adapted expressly to commemorate their circumstances and wrongs—he wrote a few, but in those days of prosecution for libel they could not be printed. They are not among the best of his productions,

a writer being always shackled when he endeavours to write down to the comprehension of those who could not understand or feel a highly imaginative style ; but they show his earnestness, and with what heartfelt compassion he went home to the direct point of injury—that oppression is detestable, as being the parent of starvation, nakedness, and ignorance. Besides these outpourings of compassion and indignation, he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph—such is the scope of the Ode to the Assertors of Liberty. He sketched also a new version of our national anthem, as addressed to Liberty.

God prosper, speed, and save,  
 God raise from England's grave  
     Her murdered Queen !  
 Pave with swift victory  
 The steps of Liberty,  
 Whom Britons own to be  
     Immortal Queen.

See, she comes throned on high,  
 On swift Eternity !  
     God save the Queen !  
 Millions on millions wait  
 Firm, rapid, and elate,  
 On her majestic state !  
     God save the Queen !

She is thine own pure soul  
 Moulding the mighty whole,  
     God save the Queen !  
 She is thine own deep love  
 Rained down from heaven above,  
 Wherever she rest or move,  
     God save our Queen !

Wilder her enemies  
 In their own dark disguise,  
     God save our Queen !  
 All earthly things that dare  
 Her sacred name to bear,  
 Strip them, as kings are, bare ;  
     God save the Queen !

Be her eternal throne  
 Built in our hearts alone,  
     God save the Queen !  
 Let the oppressor hold  
 Canopied seats of gold ;  
 She sits enthroned of old  
     O'er our hearts Queen.

Lips touched by seraphim  
 Breathe out the choral hymn  
     God save the Queen !  
 Sweet as if Angels sang,  
 Loud as that trumpet's clang  
 Wakening the world's dead gang,  
     God save the Queen !

Shelley had suffered severely from the death of our son during this summer. His heart, attuned to every kindly affection, was full of burning love for his offspring. No words can express the anguish he felt when his elder children were torn from him. In his first resentment against the Chancellor, on the passing of the decree, he had written a curse, in which there breathes, besides haughty indignation, all the tenderness of a father's love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences. It is as follows :—

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

THY country's curse is on thee, darkest Crest  
 Of that foul, knotted, many-headed worm,  
 Which rends our Mother's bosom—Priestly Pest !  
 Masked Resurrection of a buried form !\*

Thy country's curse is on thee ! Justice sold,  
 Truth trampled, Nature's land-marks overthrown,  
 And heaps of fraud-accumulated gold,  
 Plead, loud as thunder, at Destruction's throne.

And whilst that slow sure Angel, which aye stands,  
 Watching the beck of Mutability,  
 Delays to execute her high commands,  
 And, though a nation weeps, spares thine and thee ;

---

\* The Star-chamber.

O let a father's curse be on thy soul,  
 And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb,  
 And both on thy grey head, a leaden cowl,  
 To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom !

I curse thee by a parent's outraged love,  
 By hopes long cherished and too lately lost,  
 By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove,  
 By griefs which thy stern nature never crost :

By those infantine smiles of happy light,  
 Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth,  
 Quenched even when kindled, in untimely night,  
 Hiding the promise of a lovely birth :

By those unpractised accents of young speech,  
 Which he who is a father thought to frame  
 To gentlest lore, such as the wisest teach ;  
*Thou* strike the lyre of mind ! O grief and shame !

By all the happy see in children's growth,  
 That undeveloped flower of budding years,  
 Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,  
 Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears :

By all the days under a hireling's care  
 Of dull constraint and bitter heaviness,—  
 O wretched ye, if ever any were,  
 Sadder than orphans, yet not fatherless !

By the false cant, which on their innocent lips,  
 Must hang like poison on an opening bloom,  
 By the dark creeds which cover with eclipse  
 Their pathway from the cradle to the tomb :

By thy most impious Hell, and all its terrors,  
 By all the grief, the madness, and the guilt  
 Of thine impostures, which must be their errors,  
 That sand on which thy crumbling Power is built

By thy complicity with lust and hate,  
 Thy thirst for tears, thy hunger after gold,  
 The ready frauds which ever on thee wait,  
 The servile arts in which thou hast grown old ;

By thy most killing sneer, and by thy smile,  
 By all the acts and snares of thy black den,  
 And—for thou canst outweep the crocodile,—  
 By thy false tears—those millstones braining men ;



By all the hate which checks a father's love,  
 By all the scorn which kills a father's care,  
 By those most impious hands that dared remove  
 Nature's high bounds—by thee—and by despair !

Yes, the despair which bids a father groan,  
 And cry, my children are no longer mine ;  
 The blood within those veins may be mine own,  
 But, Tyrant, their polluted souls are thine.

I curse thee, though I hate thee not ; O slave !  
 If thou couldst quench the earth-consuming hell  
 Of which thou art a dæmon, on thy grave  
 This curse should be a blessing. Fare thee well !

At one time, while the question was still pending, the Chancellor had said some words that seemed to intimate that Shelley should not be permitted the care of any of his children, and for a moment he feared that our infant son would be torn from us. He did not hesitate to resolve, if such were menaced, to abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child ; and I find some unfinished stanzas addressed to this son, whom afterwards we lost at Rome, written under the idea that we might suddenly be forced to cross the sea, so to preserve him. This poem, as well as the one previously quoted, were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public ; they were the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the uncontrollable emotions of his heart :—

The billows on the beach are leaping around it,  
 The bark is weak and frail,  
 The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it  
 Darkly strew the gale.  
 Come with me, thou delightful child,  
 Come with me, though the wave is wild,  
 And the winds are loose, we must not stay,  
 Or the slaves of law may rend thee away.

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,  
 They have made them unfit for thee ;  
 They have withered the smile and dried the tear,  
 Which should have been sacred to me.  
 To a blighting faith and a cause of crime  
 They have bound them slaves in youthly time,  
 And they will curse my name and thee,  
 Because we fearless are and free.

Come thou, beloved as thou art,  
 Another sleepeth still,  
 Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,  
 Which thou with joy wilt fill ;  
 With fairest smiles of wonder thrown  
 On that which is indeed our own,  
 And which in distant lands will be  
 The dearest playmate unto thee.

Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever,  
 Or the priests of the evil faith ;  
 They stand on the brink of that raging river,  
 Whose waves they have tainted with death.  
 It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,  
 Around them it foams and rages and swells ;  
 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,  
 Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

Rest, rest, shriek not, thou gentle child !  
 The rocking of the boat thou fearest,  
 And the cold spray and the clamour wild ?  
 There sit between us two, thou dearest ;  
 Me and thy mother—well we know  
 The storm at which thou tremblest so,  
 With all its dark and hungry graves,  
 Less cruel than the savage slaves  
 Who hunt thee o'er these sheltering waves.

This hour will in thy memory  
 Be a dream of days forgotten ;  
 We soon shall dwell by the azure sea  
 Of serene and golden Italy,  
 Or Greece, the Mother of the free.  
 And I will teach thine infant tongue  
 To call upon their heroes old  
 In their own language, and will mould  
 Thy growing spirit in the flame  
 Of Grecian lore ; that by such name  
 A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim.

I ought to observe that the fourth verse of this effusion is introduced in *Rosalind and Helen*.

When afterwards this child died at Rome, he wrote, apropos of the English burying-ground in that city, "This spot is the repository of a sacred loss, of which the yearnings of a parent's heart are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love, as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here. I envy death the body far less than the oppressors the minds of those whom they have torn from me. The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections."

In this new edition I have added to the poems of this year, "Peter Bell the Third." A critique on Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the Author of *Peter Bell* is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more;—he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet—a man of lofty and creative genius,—quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind; but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted even as transcendently as the Author of *Peter Bell*, with the highest qualities of genius,

must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written, as a warning—not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth or with Coleridge, (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem,) and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal;—it contains something of criticism on the compositions of these great poets, but nothing injurious to the men themselves.

No poem contains more of Shelley's peculiar views, with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and of the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written—and though, like the burlesque drama of Swellfoot, it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry—so much of *himself* in it, that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

END OF VOL. II.



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