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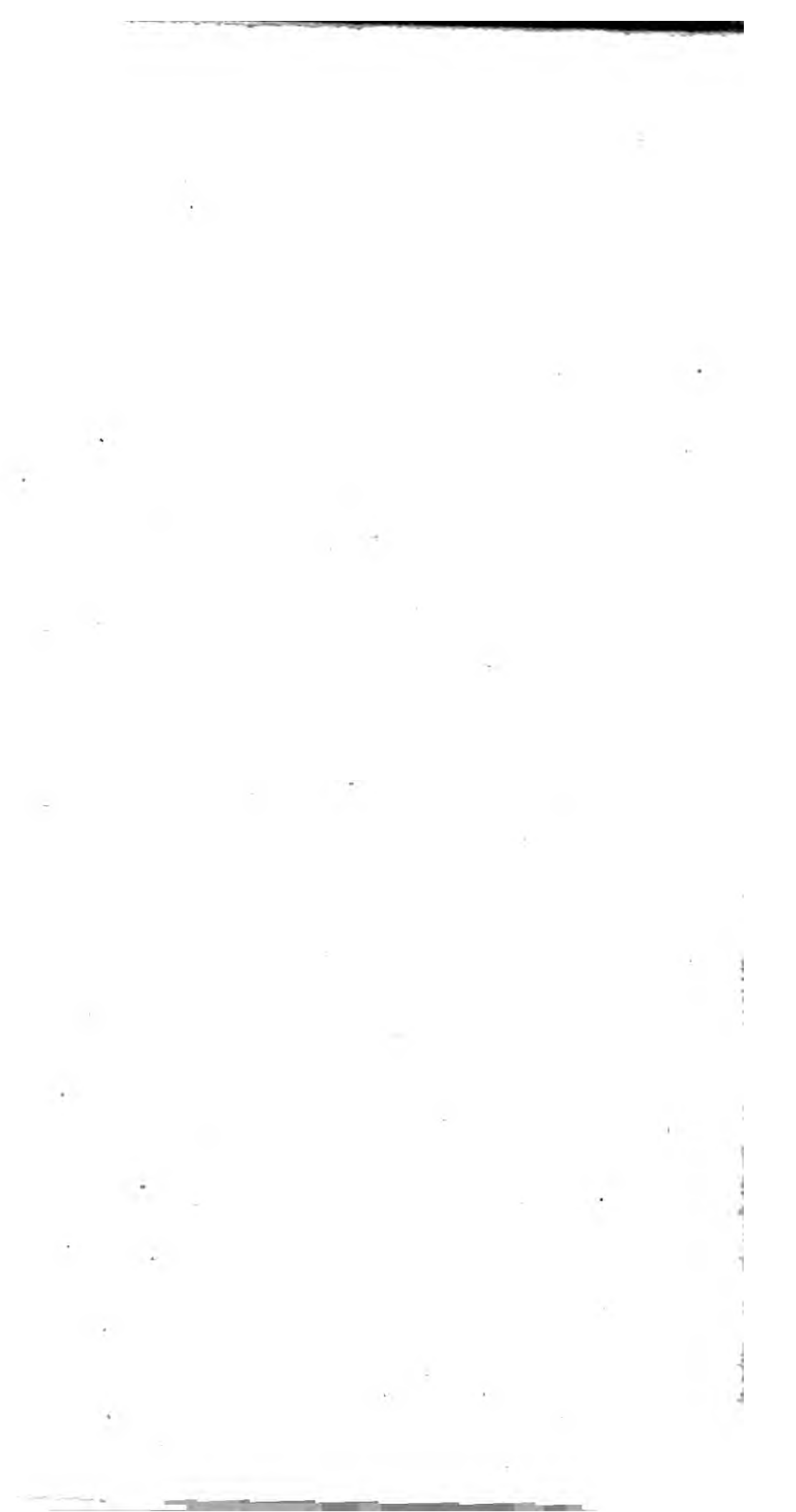
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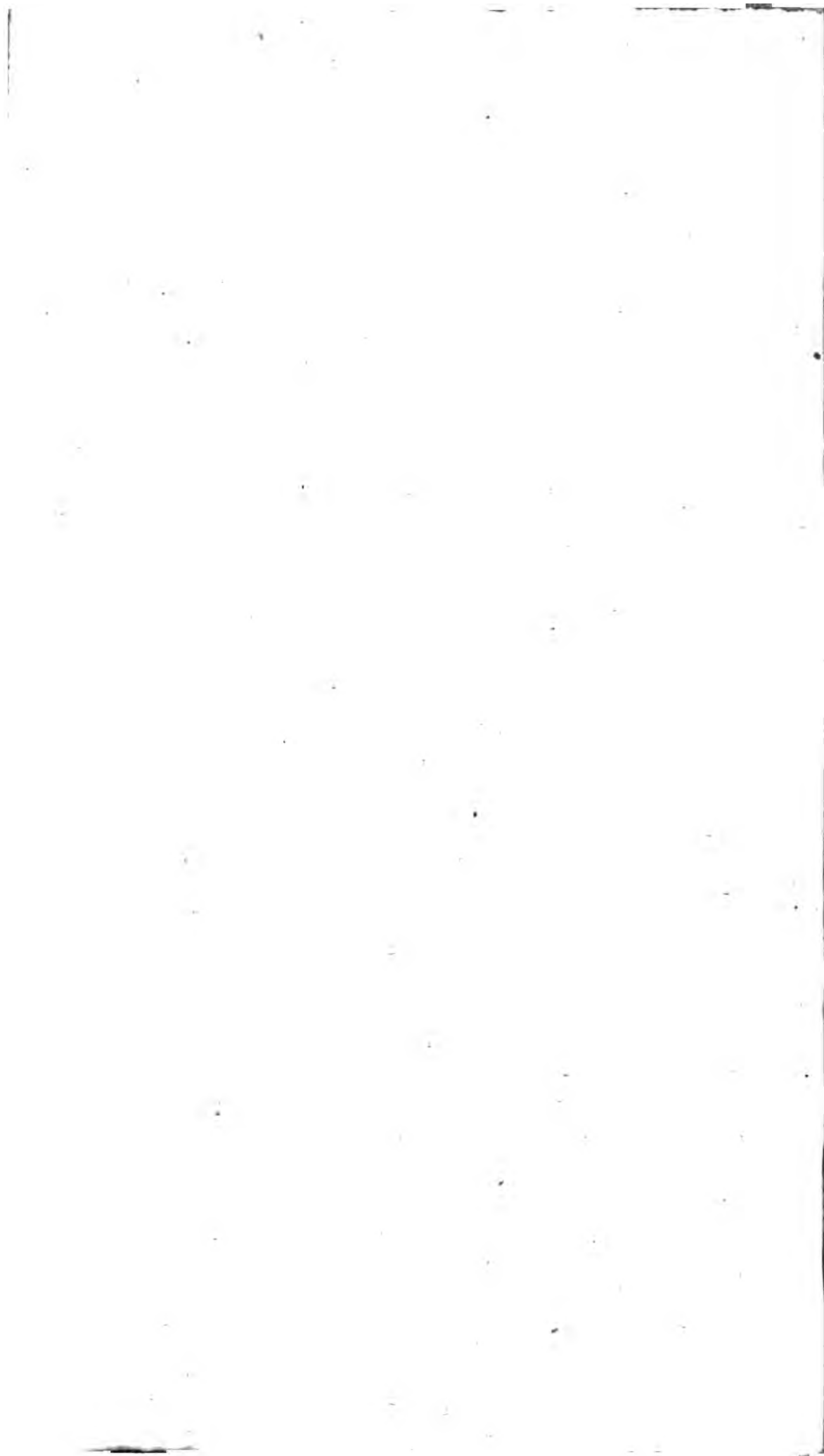
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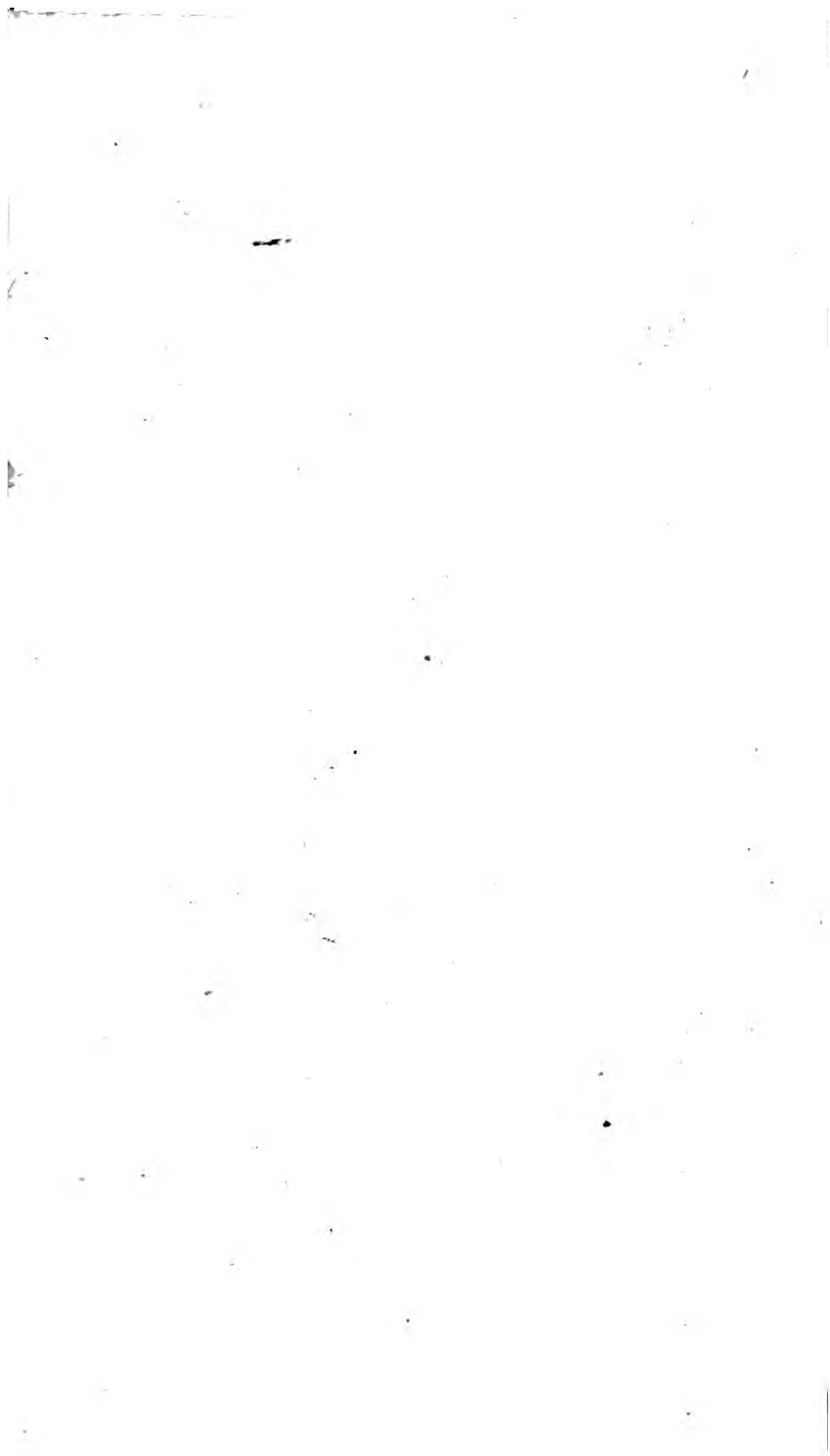
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Brutus condemns his two Sons. *J. Hall sculp*

THE
DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

Translated by the Rev. Mr. FRANCKLIN.

V O L. I.



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. NEWBERRY, R. BALDWIN, S. CROWDER
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M.DCC.LXI.

This VOLUME contains

A LETTER from Mr. DE VOLTAIRE to Father
PORÉE, a Jesuit.

PREFACE to OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS, a Tragedy.

PREFACE to MARIAMNE.

MARIAMNE, a Tragedy.

DISCOURSE on TRAGEDY, in a Letter to Lord
BOLINGBROKE.

BRUTUS, a Tragedy.

[3]

A

L E T T E R

F R O M

M R. V O L T A I R E.

T O

F A T H E R P O R É E, a J E S U I T.

YOU will receive, my dear father, by this packet, the new edition of my tragedy of Oedipus. I have taken care to wash out, as well as I could, the disagreeable colours of a love-plot, very ill placed, which, in spite of myself, I was obliged to mix with those strokes of the manly and terrible, which the subject naturally demands. I must at the same time inform you, in my own justification, that, * young as I was when Oedipus was

* Oedipus was written when Mr. de Voltaire was but nineteen years of age. It was played for the first time in 1718, and ran five-and-forty nights. Du Frêne, a celebrated actor, and of the same age with the author, played the part of Oedipus; and Madame Desmarêts, a famous actress, did Jocasta, and soon after quitted the stage. In this edition, the part of Philoctetes is restored, and stands exactly as it was in the first representation.

written, it was then very nearly the same as it now stands: my mind filled with the reading of the antients, and your judicious reflections on them, and little acquainted with the theatre of Paris, I set about the performance as if I had been at Athens. I consulted Mr. Dacier, who was of the country: he advised me to put a chorus into every scene, after the manner of the Greeks: he might as well have advised me to walk about the streets of Paris with Plato's gown on. I had much ado only to persuade the players to perform the chorusses which appear three or four times in the piece; and greater still was the difficulty to make them act a tragedy almost without any love in it: the actresses laughed at me when they found there was never a tender scene for them; the reciprocal confidence of Oedipus and Jocasta, taken partly from Sophocles, was thought quite insipid: in a word, the actors, who at that time were all grand signiors and petits-mâtres, absolutely refused to represent it. I was extremely young, and believed they might be in the right of it. To please them, I spoiled my play, by inserting several uninteresting scenes of tenderness in a subject intirely foreign to them. When I had put a little love into it, they became partly reconciled; but would by no means permit me to bring in the grand scene between Oedipus and Jocasta: Sophocles

phocles and his imitator were treated with equal contempt. I still persevered, repeated my reasons, employed my friends to solicit, and at last, by dint of powerful protection, got my Oedipus on the stage. One of the actors, whose name was Quinaut, declared openly, that the piece should be played exactly as it was written, with the vile fourth act taken from the Greek; which would be a sufficient punishment for my obstinacy. Besides all this, I was looked on as a rash young man, for daring to write on a subject which the great Corneille had already treated so successfully. At that time Corneille's Oedipus was esteemed a master-piece: I thought it a poor performance, but durst not say so till about twelve years after, when all the world were of the same opinion. In things of this nature, it is generally some years before strict justice is suffered to take place. The two tragedies of La Motte on this subject met with it indeed a little sooner than ordinary. Father Tournemine has, I suppose, shewn to you the little preface in which I have attacked him. Mons. de la Motte has a great deal of wit: he is not unlike the famous Grecian wrestler, who, when he was thrown down, could always prove that he was uppermost. We totally disagree in our opinions; but you have taught me to dispute like a man of honour and a

gentleman. I wrote against him with so much politeness, that I even desired him to criticise himself that preface wherein I have endeavoured in every line to prove him in the wrong ; and my little polemic dissertation met with his applause. This is the method which men of letters should always make use of in their controversies with each other ; and this they would always pursue, who had been under your tuition : but they are generally as full of acrimony as a lawyer, and as angry as a Jansenist. Polite literature is grown, of all things, the most unpolite. We cabal, we asperse, we calumniate, we write verses against one another. It is pleasant enough that we should be at liberty to tell folks in writing what we dare not speak to their faces. You, my dear father, taught me to avoid all such mean practices ; how to live, as well as how to write.

With love alone the heav'n-born muses glow,
 No jealous pangs th' immortal sisters know ;
 They taste no gall, but with ambrosia fed,
 O'er all their kind their genial influence shed ;
 When Jove convenes them to the blest abodes,
 He calls not satire to the feast of gods,
 Lest the foul fiend should ranc'rous hate inspire,
 And jar the strings of their harmonious lyre.

Adieu,

[7]

Adieu, my dear father, and believe me attached to you and yours by that tender regard which I owe you, and which those who were educated by you do not always retain.

Paris, Jan. 7th,
1729.

P R E F A C E .

P R E F A C E.

THE Oedipus, now re-printed, was represented for the first time at the end of the year 1718, and received with great indulgence by the public, it has even since that time supported itself on the stage, and is seen to this day with some pleasure, in spite of all its faults; a circumstance which I attribute partly to its advantage of being always well acted, and partly to the pomp and solemnity of the spectacle, together with some intrinsic merit in the piece. P. Folard, the jesuit, and Mr. de la Motte,* of the French academy, have both of them since treated the same subject, and both avoided the errors which I had fallen into. It is not my business to criticise their performances, my censures and my praises would be equally liable to suspicion: still further is my intention from pretending to lay down rules for writing tragedy. I am persuaded, that all those refined reasonings, so often reiterated, are scarce worth one single scene of genius;

* Mons. de la Motte presented the world with two Oedipus's, one in verse, the other in prose, in the year 1726: that in verse was played four times; the prose was never represented at all. See La Motte's works, duodecimo. vol. ii. and iii.

and that we may learn more from † *Cinna* and *Polyeucte*, than from all the precepts of ‡ *D'Aubignac*. *Severus* and *Paulinus* are true masters of the art. All the books on painting, which were ever written by the greatest connoisseurs, would not give a young painter half the instruction as only the sight of a head by *Raphael*.

The principles of all the arts that depend on the imagination are easy and simple, all drawn from nature and from reason. Our *Pradons* and *Boyers* knew them as well as our *Corneille's* and *Racine's*; the only difference was, and always will be, in their application of them. The worst composers had the same rules of music before them, as the authors of *Armida* and *Iffe*. *Pouffin* worked upon the same principles as *Vignon*. 'Tis as useless, therefore, to talk of rules in a preface to a tragedy, as it would be to a painter to endeavour to prejudice the public in his favour, by a dissertation on his pictures; or to a musician, to prove by demonstration, that his compositions must be sure to please.

But since *Monf. de la Motte* seems desirous of establishing rules, directly opposite to those which our

† *Cinna* and *Polyeucte*, two tragedies by *Corneille*.

‡ *La Pratique du Theatre*, par l'Abbé *D'Aubignac*, a very judicious and sensible performance.

great masters submitted to, it is but just to defend the antient laws; not because they are ancient, but because they are good and necessary, and because those laws might find a very powerful adversary in a man of his distinguished merit.

OF THE THREE UNITIES.

Mr. de la Motte would abolish the unities of action, time, and place. The French were the first of the moderns, who revived the wise rules of the antient theatre: other nations refused for a long time submission to a yoke, which they thought too severe; but as the laws were just, and reason must triumph at last, in process of time they yielded also. Even in England, at this day, authors give us notice at the beginning of their pieces, that the time employed in the action is equal to that of the representation, and thus go further than ourselves who taught them. All nations now begin to look upon those ages as barbarous, when this practice was entirely unknown to the greatest geniuses, such as Lopez de Vega and Shakespeare; they acknowledge their obligation to us for awakening them from this gothicism; and shall a Frenchman after this exercise all his wit and abilities to reduce us once more to the same standard?

Had

Had I nothing more to offer in opposition to Mr. de la Motte, than that Corneille, Racine, Moliere, Addison, Congreve, and Maffei, have all observed the rules of the theatre, it would be sufficient to prevent the violation of them; but a man of such superior understanding as M. de la Motte has a right to expect that we should oppose him rather by reason than by authority.

What is a theatrical performance? The representation of an action. Why of a single action, and not of two or three? Doubtless, because the human mind is incapable of embracing more than one object at a time; because the interest, which is divided, is soon destroyed; because we are disgusted at seeing two different events even in a picture; it is, in short, because nature alone points out to us this precept, which is as invariable as herself.

For the same reason unity of place is essential; for a single action cannot possibly happen in several places at a time: if the persons of the drama are at Athens in the first act, how can they be at Persia in the second? Did Le Brun paint Alexander at Arbele and the Indies on the same canvas? ‘I should not be in the least surprized,’ (says M. de la Motte, with all the smartness imaginable) ‘to see a sensible people, not fond of rules, reconcile themselves to the represen-

‘ tation of Coriolanus, condemned at Rome in the
 ‘ first act, received by the Volsci in the third, besieging
 ‘ Rome in the fourth,’ &c. But, in the first place,
 I cannot conceive how a sensible and refined people
 can possibly be an enemy to rules; rules suggested by
 good sense, and calculated for their pleasure: and se-
 condly, is it not evident, that in this case there would
 in fact be three distinct tragedies, and that such a per-
 formance, however well executed, and put into the
 best poetry, would in effect be after all no more, than
 a piece of Jodelle or Hardy’s versified by an inge-
 nious modern.

The unity of time naturally follows the other two,
 of which this is, I think, an incontestible proof: I
 come to a tragedy, that is to say, to the representation
 of an action; the subject is the accomplishment of
 this single action. A conspiracy is formed against
 Augustus at Rome; I want to know what happens to
 Augustus and to the conspirators. If the poet makes
 the action last fifteen days, he ought to give me an ac-
 count of what passes during that time; I come
 there to be informed of every circumstance, and no-
 thing should pass that is useless. If he represents the
 events of fifteen days, there must be at least fifteen
 different actions, however inconsiderable they may all
 be: it is no longer the accomplishment of that single
 action

action of the conspiracy, towards which we are to proceed as speedily as possible, but a long tedious history, which cannot be interesting, because it is not lively ; because the whole will be at too great a distance from the decisive moment, from the catastrophe, which is the principal thing I am in expectation of. I don't go to the play to hear the history of a hero, but to see one single event of his life, and there perhaps I meet with many. But further, the spectator is but three hours at the theatre, the action therefore should last no longer than that time ; *Cinna*, *Andromache*, *Oedipus*, *Corneille's*, *la Motte's*, and my own (if I may be permitted to mention it) are all within this rule. If some other pieces require more time, it is a licence, which can only be pardoned in favour of great beauties in the work, and the more this licence is indulged, the more faulty it becomes.

We often extend the unity of time to twenty-four hours, and the unity of place to the whole circumference of a palace. More severity would prevent the handling some very fine subjects, and more indulgence would open the way to intolerable abuses ; for if it was once made an established rule, that a theatric action might continue for two days, one author would soon extend it to two weeks, and another to two years ; and in the same manner, if the place of the
scene:

scene was not confined to certain limits, we should soon see tragedies, like the old Julius Cæsar of the English, where Brutus and Cassius are at Rome in the first act, and in Theffaly in the fifth.

The observation of these rules serves not only to prevent faults, but it is likewise productive of true beauties, in the same manner as the rules of fine architecture well followed necessarily compose a building agreeable to the eye. We easily perceive, that by adhering to the unities of time, place, and action, the piece must be simple. It is this which constitutes the merit of all Racine's performances, and is that very perfection which Aristotle required. Mr. de la Motte, in defending one of his own tragedies, prefers a multiplicity of events to this noble simplicity, and imagines the truth of his sentiments confirmed by the little applause which Berenice met with, and the great character which the Cid bears to this day. Certain it is, that the Cid is much more affecting than Berenice; but Berenice is only contemptible, because it is rather an elegy than a simple tragedy: and the Cid, the action of which is truly tragic, is not indebted for its success to the multiplicity of events, but pleases in spite of that multiplicity; as it affects us in spite of the Infanta, and not because of the Infanta.

Mr. de la Motte believes that we may be superior to all these rules, by adhering solely to the unity of interest,

interest, which, he tells us, was invented by himself, and calls a paradox; but this unity of interest appears to me to be nothing more in reality than the unity of action. ‘ If many persons (says he) are differently interested in the same event, and all of them such characters as are worthy of my attention, there must be unity of action, and not unity of interest.’ Since I took the liberty of differing with Mr. de la Motte on this subject I have perused and re-considered Corneille’s discourse on the three unities. The reader had better consult this great master than me. Observe how he expresses himself, ‘ it is my opinion, and I have already declared it, that the unity of action consists in unity of plot and unity of danger.’ Whoever consults this passage of Corneille will soon decide between Mr. de la Motte and me: and if the authority of this great man were not of itself sufficient to confute my adversary, have not I something still more convincing? namely, experience. In reading our best French tragedies, we shall always find the principal characters differently interested; but all these different interests tend towards that of the principal character, and thus constitute the unity of action. If, on the contrary, all these different interests do not tend towards the principal, if they are not lines drawn to one common centre, the interest

is then double, and what we call, the action, must be so likewise. Let us then, with the great Corneille, adhere to the three unities, in which we shall find all the other rules, that is to say, all other beauties, comprehended. Mr. de la Motte calls them the principles of fancy, and attempts to prove, that we may do without them in tragedy, because we do so in our operas; which, in my opinion, is as absurd, as to endeavour to correct a regular government by the example of an anarchy.

OF THE OPERA.

The opera is a spectacle as whimsical and absurd as grand and magnificent, where the eye and ear receive more satisfaction than the mind; where its subjection to music makes the most ridiculous faults even necessary; where we are forc'd to sing ballads at the destruction of a city, and dance round a tomb-stone; where we are presented with the palaces of Pluto, and the sun, gods, demons, magicians, signs and wonders, monsters, palaces built and pull'd down in the twinkling of an eye. We suffer these extravagancies, and are even fond of them, because there we are in the land of fairies; and provided we have but fine sights, good dancing and music, with a few interesting scenes, we are very well satisfied. It
would

would be as ridiculous to require the unities of time, place, and action in *Alceste*, as to introduce dances and devils in *Cinna* or *Rodogune*. Notwithstanding, however, that operas may dispense with these rules, those are still the best where they are least violated: in many, if I am not mistaken, they are re-established, so necessary and natural are they, and conducing so effectually to interest the spectator; how then can Mr. de la Motte reproach our nation with levity, for condemning in one entertainment the very things which we approve of in another? Every man must see the absurdity of it. I expect, and with reason, more perfection in a tragedy than an opera; because at a tragedy my attention is not divided; it is not on a saraband or a minuet that my pleasure depends, my mind is to be filled, my soul is to be delighted. I wonder how the author could contrive to bring together in one place, and one day, the several parts of an event, which my mind can scarce conceive without labour, and where my heart becomes by degrees more and more interested. The more difficult this simplicity appears to me, the more it charms me; and when I want to account for this pleasure, I find myself of Mr. Despreaux's opinion, who says,

Qu'en

Qu'en un lieu, qu'en un jour un seul fait accompli
Tienne jusqu' à la fin le théâtre rempli.*

I have besides, he will say, the authority of the great Corneille; and I have still more, I have his example, and the pleasure which his works give me, in proportion as he conforms more or less to this rule.

But Mr. de la Motte, not content with endeavouring to deprive the theatre of its established laws, would even take away its poetry also, and give us tragedies in prose.

OF VERSES IN PROSE.

This ingenious and prolific author, who has done nothing all his life but write verses, or prose occasioned by his verses, writes against his own art, and treats it with the same contempt as he did Homer, whom, notwithstanding, he took the pains to translate. Never did Virgil, Tasso, Despreaux, Racine, or Pope, think of writing against the harmony of verse; nor Lully against music, or Newton against the mathematics. We have sometimes seen men weak enough to think themselves above their profession, which is the sure way to fall beneath it; but we have never seen any who were so ridiculous as to depreciate it. There

* These lines are taken from Boileau's Art of Poetry.

‘ One place, one day, and one single action, should fill the stage from the beginning to the end of the representation.’

are but too many who despise poetry, because they know nothing of it. Paris is full of people, and even of men of sense, born with organs utterly insensible of all harmony, to whom music is nothing but noise, and poetry an ingenious folly. If these persons are told, that a man of merit, who has writ five or six volumes of verses, is of their opinion with regard to them, will they not think they have a right to look upon all other poets as fools, and this man as the only one who has recovered his senses? It is therefore necessary to answer him for the honour of the art, and I will venture to add, for the honour of a country, which owes part of its reputation, among strangers, to its perfection in that art.

Mr. de la Motte has asserted, that rhyme is a barbarous invention, of a very modern date. Notwithstanding this, every nation in the universe, except the ancient Greeks and Romans, have rhimed, and continue rhiming to this day. This return of the same sounds to the ear is so natural to all mankind, that we find rhyme practised among savages, as much as it is at Rome, Paris, London, and Madrid. Montagne has given us a translation into French of a song, written in American rhyme; and in one of Addison's Spectators we meet with a Lapland ode, the original
of

of which is also in rhyme, and which is full of fine sentiments. The Greeks,

———— quibus dedit ore rotundo.
Musa loqui —————

born in a happier climate, and blessed with more delicate organs than other nations, had a language, whose syllables, by their length or shortness, could exactly and properly express every movement of the soul, whether slow or rapid. From that variety of intonations resulted, both in their verse and prose, an harmonious sweetness, which the antient Romans caught and imitated, and which, since them, no other nation hath been able to attain. But poetry, however, which Mr. de la Motte is so angry with, be it rhyme or cadenc'd syllables, has always been, and always will continue to be, cultivated by all mankind.

Before the time of Herodotus, even history was always written in verse among the Greeks, who derived this custom from the antient Ægyptians, the wisest, best policy'd, and most learned nation then upon earth. The practice, indeed, was very consistent with reason: the chief end and design of history being then no more than to transmit the memory of a few great men to posterity, as examples for it: they never thought in those times of giving the history of a convent, or a petty town, in folio volumes:

volumes : they only wrote then what was worthy to be read, and fit to be got by heart ; and therefore availed themselves of the harmony of verse to assist the memory ; for this reason the first philosophers, legislators, founders of religious sects, and historians, were all poets.

It may be objected, that poetry, on such subjects, must be deficient, either in harmony or precision ; but as we know that Virgil united these excellencies, however seemingly incompatible, and that Despreaux and Racine have written like Virgil ; how can a man, who has read them all three, and knows they have been translated into almost every language in Europe, depreciate in this manner a talent, which has reflected so much honour even on himself ? I place Despreaux and Racine on a level with Virgil, with regard to the merit of versification ; because, if the author of the *Æneid* had been born at Paris, he would have wrote in rhyme as they did : and if these two illustrious Frenchmen had lived in the time of Augustus, they would have made the same use which Virgil did of the Latin measure. When M. de la Motte therefore calls versification a mechanical and ridiculous labour, he condemns not only all our own great poets, but all the poets of antiquity also. Virgil and Horace submitted to this mechanical labour,

as well as modern writers: a happy arrangement of dactyles and spondees was as much trouble to them, as our rhymes and hemistichs are to us, and the task, no doubt, must have been laborious, since we find the *Æneid*, after eleven years toil, was not even then brought to perfection.

Mr. de la Motte affirms, that, at least, a tragedy put into prose will lose no part of its strength or beauty. To prove this, he has himself profified the first scene of *Mithridates*, and nobody can bear to read it: he does not consider, that the true merit of verse is to be as natural and correct as prose: it is the surmounting this great difficulty, that gives every good judge such exquisite pleasure; but reduce them to prose, and there is no longer any merit or any satisfaction in them. But our neighbours, says he, never write tragedies in rhyme: true; but they are notwithstanding in verse, because harmony is agreeable to every nation. It only remains then to determine, whether our verses should be in rhyme or not. *Corneille* and *Racine* wrote in rhyme. If we are desirous of striking into a new path, it is not so much perhaps from our love of novelty, as because we find ourselves unable to keep up with these great men in the old one. The English and Italians may do without rhyme, as their language has more variety, and their poetry a
thousand

thousand more liberties than ours. The genius and power of every language is determined by the peculiar construction of its phrases, the number of its vowels and consonants, its inversions, its auxiliary verbs, &c. Elegance and perspicuity are the distinguishing characteristics of the French tongue; we allow no licence to our poetry, which is obliged, like our prose, to follow the precise order of our ideas; we are therefore under the absolute necessity of employing the repetition of the same sounds, to prevent our poetry being confounded with our prose. The following verses are well known.

Où me cacher? fuyons dans la nuit infernale.
 Mais que dis-je? mon pere y tient l'urne fatale:
 Le sort, dit on, l'a mise en ses sévères mains;
 Minos juge aux enfers les pales humains.

But if we read them thus,

Où me cacher? fuyons dans la nuit infernale.
 Mais que dis-je? mon pere y tient l'urne funeste:
 Le sort, dit on, l'a mise en ses severes mains;
 Minos juge aux enfers tous les pâles mortels.

How poetical soever this may be, will it give us the same pleasure when thus put out of rhyme? The English

gliff and Italians would fay, after the Greeks and Romans,

Pale mortals Minos in the shades doth judge ;

Or perhaps run the sense gracefully into the next verse. Add to this, that their manner of repeating verses expresses the long or short syllables, and thus preserves the harmony without the assistance of rhyme ; but why should we, who have none of these advantages, part from those few, which the nature of our language has bestowed upon us ?

M. de la Motte compares our poets, that is to say, Corneille, Racine and Despreaux, to the makers of acrosticks, and to a mountebank that draws millet through the eye of a needle ; and adds, that all these puerilities have no merit, but what arises from the difficulty that attends the performance of them. I acknowledge that bad verses are nothing more than this ; they only differ from bad prose in the rhyme, and rhyme alone can never constitute the merit of the poet, nor the pleasure of the reader. It is not the dactyles and spondees of Virgil and Homer that delight us ; it is the enchanting harmony, which arises from the perfection of this very difficult measure. He who endeavours to overcome a difficulty, merely to have the merit of overcoming it, is a fool ; but he
that

that can draw forth, even from these very obstacles, beauties, that will please universally, must be a wise and sensible man, and indeed almost singular. It is a very arduous task to make good pictures, good statues, good music, or good verses; and the names of those illustrious men, therefore, who have been able to perform this task, will remain, perhaps, much longer than the kingdoms where they were born.

I might take this opportunity of disputing with Mr. de la Motte with relation to some other points; but this might carry with it the air of a personal attack upon him, and lay me open to the suspicion of malignity, which I am as far from entertaining, as I am from adopting his sentiments. I had much rather avail myself of the many fine and judicious reflections scattered over his works, than engage in the refutation of some of them, which appeared to me more controvertible than others. I am satisfied with endeavouring to defend an art which I love, and which he himself ought to have defended.

I will only add a word (with leave of Mr. de la Faye) concerning the ode in favour of harmony, where that gentleman attacks Mr. de la Motte's system in some very fine verses, which are answered by him in prose. In the following stanzas Mr. de la Faye has collected almost all the arguments, which

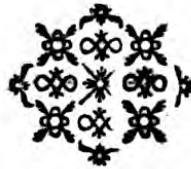
I have here made use of, with great force of imagination, and in charming poetry :

Rules seem severe, and yet are but the art
 To please, and sink still deeper in the heart ;
 By rigid laws restrain'd, the poet's mind
 Springs with more active force as more confin'd ;
 So waters press'd in narrow fountains, rise,
 Play in the air, and seem to touch the skies.

I never met with a comparison more just, more elegant, or better expressed. Mr. de la Motte, who should have answered these verses by imitating them, sets himself about examining, whether the pipes are the cause of the waters rising, or whether it is the height from whence it falls that determines the degree of its elevation. Besides (says he) ' where shall we find in verse, more than in prose, this extraordinary depth of thought, &c.'

I am afraid Mr. de la Motte is mistaken, considered in the light of a philosopher, because it is certain, that without that constraint of the water from the pipes, it would never rise at all, from whatever height it fell. But is he not still more mistaken as a poet? How came he not to perceive, that as the restriction of the measure of verses produces a harmony agreeable to the ear, so does that narrow receptacle which confines the water produce a jet-d'eau that is pleasing

pleasing to the sight. Is not the comparison equally just and beautiful? Mr. de la Faye, I own, has confuted la Motte in a much better manner than myself; he followed the example of the philosopher, who answered the sophist, that denied there was any such thing as motion, only by walking before him. Mr. de la Motte denies the harmony of verses; Mr. de la Faye sends him some verses full of harmony: this alone should teach me also to put an end to my prose.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OEDIPUS, King of Thebes.

JOCASTA, Queen of Thebes.

PHILOCTETES, Prince of Eubæa.

HIGH-PRIEST.

ARASPES, Confident of Oedipus.

EGINA, Confidente of Jocasta.

DIMAS, Friend of Philoctetes.

PHORBAS, an old Man of Thebes.

ICARUS, an old Man of Corinth.

CHORUS of THEBANS.

SCENE THEBES.

OEDIPUS.

O E D I P U S.
A
T R A G E D Y.

ACT I. SCENE I.

PHILOCTETES, DIMAS.

DIMAS.

IS it my friend, my Philoctetes? Whence
And wherefore com'st thou to dislemper'd Thebes
In search of death, to brave the wrath of heav'n?
For, know, the gods on this devoted land
Wreak their full vengeance: mortals dare not tread
The guilty soil, to death and horror long
Consign'd, and from the living world cut off:
Away; be gone.

PHILOCTETES.

It suits a wretch like me:
Leave me, my friend, to my unhappy fate;

C 2.

And

And only tell me, if the wrath divine
Hath, in its rapid progress, spar'd the queen.

DIMAS.

Jocasta lives; but round her throne still spreads
The dire contagion; ev'ry fatal moment
Deprives her of some faithful subject: death
Steals closer by degrees, and seems to threat
Her sacred life. But heav'n, we trust, will soon
Withdraw its vengeful arm: such scenes of blood
Will sure appease its rage.

PHILOCTETES.

What horrid crime
Cou'd bring down so severe a punishment?

DIMAS.

Since the king's death——

PHILOCTETES.

The king! ha! Laius——

DIMAS.

Dy'd

Some four years since.

PHILOCTETES.

Ha! Laius dead! indeed!

What sweet seducing hope awakes my soul?
Jocasta! will the gods at length be kind?

May

O E D I P U S.

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May Philoctetes still be thine? But say,
Dimas, how fell the king?

DIMAS.

'Tis four years since
For the last time towards Bæotia, led
By fate, you came; scarce had you bent your way
To Asia, e'er th' unhappy Laius fell
By some base hand.

PHILOCTETES.

Assassinated, say'st thou?

DIMAS.

This was the cause, the source of all our ills,
The ruin of this wretched country: shock'd
At the sad stroke, we wept the gen'ral loss,
When lo! the minister of wrath divine,
(Fatal to innocence, and fav'ring long
Unpunish'd guilt) a dreadful monster came,
(O Philoctetes, wou'd thou had'st been here!)
And ravag'd all our borders, horrid form!
Made for destruction by avenging heav'n,
With human voice, an eagle, woman, lion,
Unnat'ral mixture! rage with cunning join'd
United to destroy us: nought remain'd
To save but this alone; in phrase obscure

The monster had propos'd t' affrighted Thebes
 A strange ænigma, which who could unfold
 Shou'd save his country; if he fail'd, must dye.
 Reluctant we obey'd the hard decree.
 Instant the gen'ral voice aloud proclaim'd
 The kingdom his reward, who, by the gods
 Inspir'd, shou'd first unveil the mystery.
 The aged and the wise, by hope misled,
 With fruitless science brav'd the monster's rage;
 Vain knowledge all! all try'd, and trying fell,
 Till Oedipus, the heir to Corinth's throne,
 Endow'd with wisdom far above his years,
 Fearless, and led by fortune, came, beheld,
 Unfolded all, and took the great reward;
 Lives still, and reigns o'er Thebes; but reigns, alas!
 O'er dying subjects, and a desert land.
 Vainly we hoped to see the wayward fates
 Chain'd to his throne, and yielding to the hand
 Of Oedipus, our great deliverer.

A little time the gods propitious smil'd,
 And bless'd us with a gleam of transient peace;
 But barrenness and famine soon destroy'd
 Our airy hopes: ills heap'd on ills succeed,
 A dreadful plague unpeoples half the realms
 Of sickly Thebes, snatching the poor remains

Just

Just 'scap'd from famine and the grave: high heav'n
 Hath thus ordain'd, and such our hapless fate.
 But say, illustrious hero, whom the gods
 Have long approv'd, say, wherefore hast thou left
 The paths of glory, and the smiles of fortune,
 To seek the regions of affliction here?

PHILOCTETES.

I come to join my sorrows and my tears,
 For know the world with me hath lost its best
 And noblest friend: ne'er shall these eyes behold
 The offspring of the gods, like them unconquer'd,
 Earth's best support, the guardian deity
 Of innocence oppress'd: I mourn a friend,
 The world a father.

DIMAS.

Is Alcides dead?

PHILOCTETES.

These hands perform'd the melancholy office,
 Laid on his fun'ral pile the first of men;
 Th' all-conquering arrows, those dear dreadful gifts
 The son of Jove bequeath'd me, have I brought,
 With his cold ashes, here, where I will raise
 A tomb and altars to my valued friend.
 O! had he liv'd! had but indulgent heav'n,

In pity to mankind, prolong'd his days,
 Far from Jocaſta I had ſtill remain'd ;
 And, tho' I might have cheriſh'd ſtill my vain
 And hopeleſs paſſion, had not wander'd here,
 Or left Alcides for a woman's love.

D I M A S.

Oft have I pity'd thy unhappy flame,
 Caught in thy earlieſt youth, increaſing ſtill
 And growing with thy growth : Jocaſta, forc'd
 By a hard father to a hateful bed,
 Unwillingly partook the throne of Laius.
 Alas ! what tears thoſe fatal nuptials coſt,
 What ſorrows have they brought on wretched Thebes !
 How have I oft admir'd thy noble ſoul,
 Worthy of empire ! conqu'ror o'er thyſelf :
 There firſt the hero ſhone, repreſs'd his paſſion,
 And the firſt tyrant he ſubdued was love.

P H I L O C T E T E S.

There we muſt fly to conquer ; I confeſs it :
 Long time I ſtrove, I felt my weakneſs long ;
 At length reſolv'd to ſhun the fatal place,
 I took a laſt farewell of my Jocaſta.
 The world then trembled at Alcides' name,
 And on his valour did ſuſpend their fate ;
 I join'd the god-like man, partook his toils,

March'd

March'd by his side, and twin'd his laurel wreath
 Round my own brows : then my enlighten'd soul
 Against the passions arm'd, and rose superior.
 A great man's friendship is the gift of heav'n.
 In him I read my duty and my fate ;
 I bound myself to virtue and to him :
 My valour strengthen'd, and my heart improv'd,
 Not hardened, I became like my Alcides.
 What had I been without him ! a king's son,
 A common prince, the slave of ev'ry passion,
 Which Hercules hath taught me to subdue.

DIMAS.

Now then unmov'd thou can't behold Jocasta,
 And her new husband.

PHILOCTETES.

Ha ! another husband !
 Said'st thou, another ?

DIMAS.

Oedipus hath join'd
 To her's his future fate.

PHILOCTETES.

He is too happy ;
 But he is worthy : he who sav'd a kingdom
 Alone can merit her, and heav'n is just.

C 5

DIMAS.

DIMAS.

He comes, and with him his assembled people,
Lo! the high-priest attends: this way they bend,
To deprecate the wrath of angry heav'n.

PHILOCTETES.

It melts my soul; I weep for their misfortunes.
O Hercules, from thy eternal seat
Look down on thy afflicted country! hear
Thy fellow citizens! O hear thy friend,
Who joins his pray'rs, and be their guardian god!

S C E N E II.

HIGH-PRIEST, CHORUS.

FIRST PERSON OF THE CHORUS.

Ye blasting pow'rs, who waste this wretched empire,
And breath contagion, death, and horrors round us,
O quicken your slow wrath, be kind at last,
And urge our ling'ring fate.

SECOND PERSON OF THE CHORUS.

Strike, strike, ye gods;
Your victims are prepar'd; ye mountains, fall!
Crush us, ye heav'ns! O death, deliver us,
And we shall thank you for the boon.

HIGH

HIGH PRIEST.

No more :

Cease your loud complaints, the wretch's poor resource ;
 Yield to the pow'r supreme, who means to try
 His people by affliction ; with a word
 He can destroy, and with a word can save :
 He knows that death is here ; the cries of Thebes
 Have reach'd his throne. Behold ! the king ap-
 proaches,
 And heav'n by me declares its will divine ;
 The fates will soon to Oedipus unveil
 Their myst'ries all, and happier days succeed.

S C E N E III.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, HIGH PRIEST, EGINA,
 DIMAS, ARASPES, CHORUS.

OEDIPUS.

O ye, who to this hallow'd temple bring
 The mournful off'ring of your tears ; O what,
 What shall I say to my afflicted people ?
 Wou'd I cou'd turn the wrath of angry heav'n
 Against myself, and quench the deadly flame !
 But O ! in universal ills like these,
 Kings are but men, and only can partake
 The common danger. Say, thou minister

Of

Of the just gods, say, do they still refuse
 To hear the voice of misery; still relentless
 Will they behold us perish, are they deaf
 And silent still?

HIGH PRIEST.

King, people, listen all:

This night did I behold the flame of heav'n
 Descending on our altars; to my eyes
 The ghastly shade of Laius then appear'd,
 Indignant frown'd upon me, and thus spoke
 In fearful accents, terrible to hear:

“ The death of Laius is still unreveng'd,
 “ The murth'rer lives in Thebes, and doth infect
 “ The wholesome air with his malignant breath;
 “ He must be known, he must be punished,
 “ And on his fate depends the people's safety.”

OEDIPUS.

Justly ye suffer, Thebans, for this crime;
 Laius was once your lov'd and honour'd king,
 And your neglect hath from his manes drawn
 This vengeance on you. Such is oft the fate
 Of the best sov'reigns; whilst they live, respect
 Waits on their laws, their justice is admir'd,
 And they like gods are serv'd, like gods ador'd;

but

But after death they sink into oblivion.
No longer then your flatt'ring incense burns :
The servile mind of wretched man still bends
To int'rest ; and when virtue is departed,
'Tis soon forgotten : therefore doth the blood
Of murder'd Laius now cry out against you,
And sues for vengeance to offended heav'n.
'To sprinkle on his tomb the murth'rer's blood
Will better far than slaughter'd hecatombs
Appease his spirit : be it all our care
To seek the guilty wretch. Can none remember
Aught touching this sad deed ? Amidst your signs
And wonders, cou'd no footsteps e'er be trac'd
Of this unpunish'd crime ? They always told me
It was a Theban, who against his Prince
Uplifted his rebellious hand. For me [*To Jocasta.*
Who from thy hands receiv'd the crown, two years
After the death of Laius did I mount
The throne of Thebes, and never since that hour
Wou'd I recall the subject of thy tears,
But in respectful silence waited still ;
Still have thy dangers busy'd all my soul,
Nor left me time to think on aught but thee.

JOCASTA.

JOCASTA.

When fate, which had reserv'd me for thy arms,
 Depriv'd me of my late unhappy lord,
 Who, journeying o'er his kingdom's frontiers, fell
 By base assassins, Phorbas then alone
 Attended him, his lov'd and valued friend ;
 To whom the king, relying on his wisdom,
 Entrusted half his pow'r: he brought to Thebes
 The mangled corse: himself half dead with wounds,
 And bath'd in blood, fell at Jocasta's feet ;
 " Villains unknown (he cry'd) have slain the king ;
 " These eyes beheld it : I was dying too,
 " But heaven hath restor'd me to prolong
 " A wretched life." He said no more. My soul
 Distracted saw the melancholy truth
 Was still conceal'd; and therefore heav'n perhaps
 Conceal'd the murth'rer too ; perhaps accomplish'd
 Its own eternal will, and made us guilty,
 That it might punish. Soon the sphinx appear'd,
 And laid our country waste : then hapless Thebes,
 Attentive to her safety, cou'd not think
 On Laius' fate, whilst trembling for her own.

OEDIPUS.

Where is that faithful Phorbas? lives he still?

JOCASTA.

JOCASTA.

Alas! his zeal and service ill repaid,
 Too pow'rful to be lov'd, the jealous state
 His secret foe, nobles and people join'd
 To punish him for past felicity.
 The multitude accus'd him, ev'n demanded
 Of me his death: fore press'd on ev'ry side,
 I knew not how to pardon or condemn,
 But to a neighbouring castle I convey'd him,
 And hid the guiltless victim from their rage.
 There four long winters hath the poor old man,
 To future favorites a sad example,
 Without a murmur or complaint remain'd,
 And hopes from innocence alone release.

OEDIPUS.

It is enough, Jocasta. Fly, begone,

[To his servants.]

Open the prison, bring him hither strait,
 We will examine him before you all;
 Laius and Thebes shall be aveng'd together:
 Yes, we will hear and judge, will sound the depth
 Of this strange mystery. Ye gods of Thebes,
 Who hear our pray'rs, and know the murth'rer, now
 Reveal, and punish; and thou, Sun, with-hold

From



From his dark eyes thy blessed light! proscib'd,
 Abandon'd, let him wander o'er the earth
 A wretched miscreant, by his sons abhor'd,
 And to his mother horrible! depriv'd
 Of burial, let his body be the prey
 Of hungry vultures!

HIGH PRIEST.

In these execrations
 We all unite.

OEDIPUS.

Gods! let the guilty suffer,
 And they alone! or if the high decrees
 Of your eternal justice leave to me
 His punishment, at least indulgent grant,
 Where you command, the power to obey;
 If you pursue the guilty, O complete
 The glorious work, and make the victim known!

[To the people.]

Return, my people, to the temple; there
 Once more entreat the gods: perhaps your pray'rs
 May from their heav'nly mansions draw them down
 To dwell amongst us: if they lov'd the king,
 They will avenge his death, and kind to him

Who

Who errs unknowing, will direct this arm
For justice rais'd, and teach me where to strike.

The END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

JOCASTA, EGINA, ARASPES, CHORUS.

ARASPES.

BELIEVE me, 'tis too true, my royal mistress,
Your dying people, with one common voice,
Accuse the hapless Philoctetes: fate
Hath sent him back to save this wretched kingdom.

JOCASTA.

What do I hear, ye pow'rs?

EGINA.

'Tis wonderful.

JOCASTA.

Who? Philoctetes?

ARASPES.

Yes, it must be he:

To whom can we impute it but to him?
When last at Thebes, he seem'd to meditate
A deed like this; for much he hated Laius:

From

From Oedipus his trait'rous purpose scarce
Cou'd he conceal ; for soon unwary youth
Betrays itself : soon thro' the thin disguise
Of ill dissembled loyalty, we saw
The rancour of his heart. I know not what
Provok'd him, but too warm and open, ever
The slave of passion, he wou'd kindle oft
At the king's name, and often pour forth threats
Of vengeance : for some time he left the kingdom,
But fate soon brought the restless wand'rer back ;
And at that fatal time, which heav'n distinguish'd
By the detested shocking parricide,
He was at Thebes : e'er since that dreadful hour,
Suspicion justly falls on Philoetetes :
But the high name which he had gain'd in war,
His boasted title of earth's great avenger,
And his heroic deeds, have stopp'd the tongue
Of clamour, and suspended yet the stroke
Of our resentment. Now the time is come
When Thebes shall think no more of vain respect ;
His glory and his conquests plead no more ;
The hearts of an oppressed people groan ;
The gods require his blood, and must be heard.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

O queen ! have pity on a wretched people,
 Who love and honour thee, revere the gods,
 And follow their example ; yield up to us
 Their victim, and present our vows to heav'n ;
 For heav'n will hear them, if they come from thee.

JOCASTA.

O ! if my life can mitigate its wrath,
 I give it freely ; take the sacrifice ;
 Accept my blood ; but O ! demand no more.
 Thebans, be gone.

S C E N E II.

JOCASTA, EGINA.

EGINA.

How I lament thy fate !

JOCASTA.

Alas ! I envy those whom death has freed
 From all their cares : but what remains for me,
 What pain and torment to a virtuous heart !

EGINA.

'Tis terrible indeed : the clam'rous people,
 Warm'd with false zeal, will cry aloud for vengeance,
 And soon demand their victim. I forbear

T'accuse

T'accuse him; but if he at last shou'd prove
The murderer of thy unhappy Lord,
How it must shock thy soul!

JOCASTA.

Impossible!

Such guilt and baseness never dwelt in him.
O my Egina! since our bonds of love
Were disunited, nought has pierc'd my heart
Like this suspicion: this alone was wanting
To make Jocasta most completely wretched:
But I'll not bear to hear him thus accus'd;
I lov'd him, and he must be innocent.

EGINA.

That constant love.—

JOCASTA.

Nay, think not that my heart
Still nourishes a guilty passion for him;
I conquer'd that long since; yet, dear Egina,
How'er the soul may act which virtue guides,
Its secret motions, nature's children, still
Must force their way: they will not be subdu'd,
But in the folds and windings of the heart,
Lurk still, and rush upon us; hid in fires
We thought extinguish'd, from their ashes rise:

In the hard conflict, rigid virtue may
Resist the passions, but can ne'er destroy them.

EGINA.

How just, and yet how noble is thy grief!
Such sentiments!—

JOCASTA.

Jocasta is most wretched;
Thou know'st my mis'ries, and thou know'st my heart,
Egina: twice hath Hymen lit his torch
For me, and twice hath chang'd my slavery,
For such it was; the only man I lov'd,
Torn from my arms. Forgive me, ye just gods,
The sad remembrance of a conquer'd passion.
Egina, thou wert witness of our loves,
Those ties, alas! dissolv'd as soon as made:
Then Oedipus, my sovereign, fought and gain'd me,
Spite of myself. I took the diadem,
Begirt with sorrows. To forget the past
Became my duty then, and I obey'd.
Thou know'st I stifled ev'ry tender thought
Of my first love, disguis'd an aching heart,
Drank up my tears, and even from myself
Strove to conceal my griefs.

EGINA.

How cou'd you venture
The dang'rous trial of a second marriage?

JOCASTA.

JOCASTA.

Alas!

EGINA.

Will you forgive me? shall I speak?

JOCASTA.

Thou may'st.

EGINA.

The king, the conqueror subdu'd thee:
You gave your hand as a reward to him
Who sav'd your country.

JOCASTA.

Gracious gods!

EGINA.

Was he
Happier than Laius? Was your Philoctetes
Forgotten then, or did they share your heart?

JOCASTA.

Thebes, by a cruel monster then laid waste,
Had promis'd its deliverer my hand;
The conqu'ror of the sphinx was worthy of me.

EGINA.

You lov'd him then?

JOCASTA.

I felt some tenderness
For Oedipus; but O! 'twas far from love:

'Twas

'Twas not, Egina, that tumultuous passion,
Th' impetuous offspring of my ravish'd senses,
Not the fierce flame that burn'd for Philoëtetes ;
Who, by his fatal charms, subdu'd my reason,
And pour'd love's sweetest poison o'er my heart :
Friendship sincere was all I cou'd bestow
On Oedipus, for much I priz'd his virtue ;
And pleas'd, beheld him mount the throne of Thebes
Which he had sav'd ; but, whilst I follow'd him,
Ev'n at the altar, my affrighted soul,
Wherefore I knew not, was most strangely mov'd,
And I retir'd with horror to his arms.
To this a dreadful omen did succeed :
Methought, Egina, in the dead of night,
I saw the gulph of hell yawn wide before me ;
When lo ! the spirit of my murther'd Lord,
Bloody and pale, with threat'ning aspect stood,
And pointed to my son ; that son, Egina,
Which I to Laius bore, and to the gods
Offer'd, a cruel pious sacrifice.
They beckon'd me to follow them, and seem'd
To drag me with them to the horrid gloom
Of Tartarus : my troubled soul long kept
The sad idea, and must keep it ever.
Now Philoëtetes doubles ev'ry woe.

EGINA.

EGINA.

I heard a noise that way, and, see he comes.

JOCASTA.

'Tis he ; I tremble : but I will avoid him.

S C E N E III.

JOCASTA, PHILOCTETES.

PHILOCTETES.

Do not avoid me, do not fly, Jocasta,
 From Philoctetes ; turn, and look upon me :
 O ! speak to me, nor fear my jealous tears
 Shou'd interrupt the new-born happiness
 Of thy late nuptials : think not that I came
 To cast reproaches on thee, or with sighs
 To win thy lost affection : vulgar arts,
 Unworthy of us both ! the heart, Jocasta,
 That burn'd for thee, and if I may recall
 Thy plighted faith, was once not hateful to thee,
 Has learn'd, from thy example, not to feel
 Weakness like that.

JOCASTA.

I must approve thy conduct,
 And 'tis but fit I vindicate my own :
 I lov'd thee, Philoctetes ; but my fate

Tore

Tore me from thee, and gave me to another.
 Thou know'st what woes the horrid sphinx, by heav'n
 Appointed to afflict us, brought on Thebes :
 Too well thou know'st that Oedipus——

PHILOCTETES.

Is thine ;

I know it, and is worthy of the blessing :
 Young as he was, his wisdom sav'd thy country ;
 His virtues, his fair deeds, and what still more
 Exalted him, Jocasta's love, have rank'd
 Thy Oedipus among the first of men.
 Wherefore did cruel fortune, still resolv'd
 To punish Philoctetes, drive me hence,
 To seek vain trophies in a distant land ?
 O ! if the conqu'ror of the sphinx was doom'd
 To conquer thee, why was not I at Thebes ?
 I'd not have labour'd in the fruitless search
 Of idle myst'ries, wrapp'd in words of darkness ;
 This arm, to conquest long beneath thy smiles
 Accustom'd, should have drawn the vengeful sword,
 And laid the howling monster at thy feet.
 But O ! a happier arm has wrested from me
 That noblest triumph, and deserv'd Jocasta.

JOCASTA.

Alas ! thou know'st not yet what ills await thee.

PHILOCTETES.

Thee and Alcides I have lost already :
Is there aught more to fear ?

JOCASTA.

Thou dwell'st at Thebes,
The detestation of avenging gods ;
The baneful pestilence stalks forth amongst us ;
The blood of Laius cries aloud, and heav'n
Pursues us still : the murderer must bleed ;
He has been sought for ; some have dar'd to say
That he is found, and call him Philoctetes.

PHILOCTETES.

Astonishment ! the base suspicion shocks
My soul, and bids my tongue be silent ever
On the opprobrious theme : accus'd of murder !
Murth'ring thy husband ! thou can'st ne'er believe it.

JOCASTA.

O ! never ! 'twere injurious to thy honour
To combat such imposture, or refute
The vile aspersion : no, thou know'st my heart,
Thou had'st my love, and could'st not do a deed
Unworthy of it. Let them perish all,
These worthless Thebans, who deserve their fate
For thus suspecting thee : but, hence ! begone !

Our

Our vows are fruitless : heav'n reserves for thee
 Superior blessings. Thou wert born to serve
 The gods, whose wisdom wou'd not bury here
 Virtues like thine, or suffer love to rule
 A heart design'd for universal sway,
 And courage fit to save and bless mankind.
 Ill wou'd it suit the follower of Alcides
 To lose his moments in the fond concerns,
 The little cares of love. Thy hours are due
 To the unhappy and the injur'd : they
 Will all thy time, and all thy virtue claim.
 Already tyrants throng on ev'ry side ;
 Alcides dead, new monsters rise ; go, thou,
 And give the world another Hercules.
 Oedipus comes ; permit me to retire ;
 Not that I fear the weakness of my heart,
 But as Jocasta lov'd thee once, and he
 Is now my husband, I shou'd blush before you.

S C E N E IV.

OEDIPUS, PHILOCTETES, ARASPES.

OEDIPUS.

Say'st thou, Araspes, is he here, the prince,
 The noble Philoctetes ?

D 2

PHI-

PHILOCTETES.

Yes, 'tis he ;

Led by blind fortune to this hapless clime,
 Where angry heav'n hath made me suffer wrongs
 I am not us'd to bear. I know the crimes
 Laid to my charge ; but think not that I mean
 To justify myself : too well I know thee
 To think that Oedipus wou'd ever stoop
 To such low mean suspicions : no ! thy fame
 Is mix'd with mine, in the same steps of honour
 We trod together. Theseus, Hercules,
 And Philoctetes, pointed out to thee
 The paths of glory ; do not then disgrace
 Their names, and taint thy own, by calumny,
 But keep their bright examples still before thee.

OEDIPUS.

All that I wish is but to save my country,
 And if I can be useful to mankind,
 This is th' ambition I wou'd satisfy,
 And this the lesson which those heroes taught,
 Whom thou hast follow'd, and whom I admire.
 I meant not to accuse thee : had I chose
 The people's victim, it had been myself.
 I think it but the duty of a king

To

To perish for his country : 'tis an honour
 Too great for common men. Then had I sav'd
 Once more my Thebans, yielded up my life,
 And shelter'd thine : but 'twas not in my pow'r.
 The blood of guilt must flow, thou stand'st accused.
 Defend thyself : if thou art innocent,
 None shall rejoice so much as Oedipus ;
 Nor as a criminal shall then receive thee,
 But as my noble friend, as Philoctetes.

PHILOCTETES.

I thought myself, indeed, above suspicion :
 From many a base assassin has this arm,
 While Jove's dread thunder slept, reliev'd mankind.
 Whom we chastise, we seldom imitate.

OEDIPUS.

I do not think thou would'st disgrace thy name,
 And thy fair martial deeds, by such a crime.
 If Laius fell by thee, he fell with honour,
 I doubt it not, for I must do thee justice.

PHILOCTETES.

If I had slain him, I had only gain'd
 One added triumph. Kings, indeed, are gods
 To their own subjects, but to Hercules,
 Or me, they were no more than common men.

I have aveng'd the wrongs of mighty princes ;
 And, therefore, little, thou may'st think, shou'd fear
 T' attack the bravest.

OEDIPUS.

Heroes, like thyself,
 Are equal ev'n to kings, I know they are :
 But still remember, prince, whoe'er slew Laius,
 His head must answer for the woes of Thebes ;
 And thou.—

PHILOCTETES.

I slew him not ; let that suffice.
 If I had done the deed, I wou'd have own'd,
 Nay boasted of it. Hear me, Oedipus,
 Though vulgar souls, by vulgar methods, deign
 To vindicate their injur'd honour ; kings
 And heroes, when they speak, expect, no doubt,
 To be believ'd : perhaps thou dost suspect
 I murder'd Laius. It becomes not thee,
 Of all men, to accuse me : to thy hand
 Devolv'd his sceptre and his queen. Who reap'd
 The fruits of Laius's death, but Oedipus ?
 Who took the spoils ? Who fill'd his throne ? Not I :
 That object never tempted Philoctetes :

Alcides

Alcides never wou'd accept a crown :
 We knew no master, and desir'd no subjects :
 I have made kings, but never wish'd to be one.
 But 'tis beneath me to refute the falshood,
 For innocence is lessen'd by defence.

OEDIPUS.

Thy pride offends me, whilst thy virtue charms.
 If thou art guiltless, thou hast nought to fear
 From justice and the laws ; thy innocence
 Will shine with double splendor : dwell with us,
 And wait th' event.

PHILOCTETES.

My honour is concern'd,
 And therefore I shall stay ; nor hence depart
 Till I have ample vengeance for the wrongs
 Thy base suspicions cast on Philoctetes.

S C E N E V.

OEDIPUS, ARASPES.

OEDIPUS.

Araspes, I can never think him guilty :
 A heart like his, intrepid, brave, and fearless,
 Cou'd never stoop to mean disguise ; nor thoughts
 So noble e'er inspire the timid breast

Of falsehood : no ! such baseness is far from him :
 I even blush'd t'accuse him, and condemn'd
 My own injustice : hard and cruel fate
 Of royalty ! alas ! kings cannot read
 The hearts of men, and oft on innocence,
 Spite of ourselves unjust, inflict the pains
 Due to the guilty. How this Phorbas lingers !
 In him alone are all my hopes : the gods
 Refuse to hear or answer to our vows ;
 Their silence shews how much they are offended.

A R A S P E S.

Rely then on thyself : the gods, whose aid
 This priest hath promis'd, do not always dwell
 Within their temples ; tripods, caves, and cells,
 The brazen mouths that pour forth oracles,
 Which men had fram'd, by men may be inspir'd ;
 We must not rest our faith on priests alone ;
 Ev'n in the sanctuary traitors oft
 May lurk unseen, exert their pious arts
 T'enslave mankind, and bid the destinies
 Speak or be silent just as they command them.
 Search then, and find the truth, examine all ;
 Phorbas, and Philoctetes, and Jocasta.
 Trust to yourself ; let our own eyes determine ;
 Be they our tripods, oracles, and gods.

O E D I P U S.

OEDIPUS.

Within the temple, think'st thou, perfidy
 Like this can dwell: but if just heav'n at last
 Shou'd fix our fate, and Oedipus be call'd
 To execute its will, he will receive
 The precious trust, the safety of his country,
 Nor act unworthy of it. To the gods
 Once more I go, and with incessant pray'r
 Will try to sooth their anger: thou, mean time,
 If thou woud'st wish to serve me, hasten onward
 The ling'ring Phorbias; in our hapless state,
 I must enquire the truth of gods and men.

The END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

JOCASTA, EGINA.

JOCASTA.

YES, my Egina, I expect him here;
 'Tis the last time these eyes shall e'er behold
 The wretched Philoctetes.

EGINA.

Thou hast heard,
 My royal mistress, to what des'perate highth

The clam'rous people carry their resentment ;
 Our dying Thebans from his punishment
 Expect their safety. Old men, women, children,
 United by misfortunes, breath forth vengeance ;
 Pronounce him guilty, and cry out that heav'n
 Demands his blood : can'st thou resist the torrent,
 Defend, or save him ?

JOCASTA.

Yes : I will defend him ;
 Even though Thebes shou'd lift the murth'rous hand
 Against her queen, beneath her smoaking walls
 To crush Jocaſta, ne'er wou'd I betray
 Such injur'd innocence ; but ſtill I fear
 The tongue of ſlander : well thou know'ſt my heart
 Once ſigh'd for Philoctetes ; now, Egina,
 Will they not ſay I ſacrifice to him
 My fame, my gods, my country, and my huſband ?
 Will they not ſay Jocaſta loves him ſtill ?

EGINA.

Calm thy vain fears ; thy paſſion had no witneſs
 But me, and never——

JOCASTA.

Think'ſt thou that a princeſs
 Can e'er conceal her hatred or her love ?

O

O no! on ev'ry side the eager eyes
 Of courtiers look upon us: thro' the veil
 Of feign'd respect, with subtle treachery
 They search our hearts, and trace out ev'ry weakness.
 Nought can escape their sharp malignant sight;
 A little word, a sigh, or glance betrays us;
 Our very silence shall be made to speak
 Our thoughts; and when their busy artifice,
 Spite of ourselves, hath drawn the secret from us,
 Then their loud censures cast invidious light
 O'er all our actions, and th'instructed world
 Is quickly taught to eccho ev'ry weakness.

E G I N A.

But what hast thou to fear from calumny?
 What piercing eye can wound Jocasta's fame?
 Who knows thy love, will know thy conquest o'er it;
 Will know thy virtue still supported thee.

J O C A S T A.

It is that virtue which distresses me;
 I look, perhaps, with too severe an eye
 On my own weakness, and accuse myself
 Unjustly; but the image still remains
 Of Philoctetes, 'grav'd within my heart
 Too deep for time or virtue to efface it;

And

And much I doubt, if when I strive to save him,
 I act not less from justice than from love:
 My pity hath too much of tenderness;
 I tremble oft, and oft reproach myself
 For my fond care; I cou'd be more his friend,
 If he had been less dear to me.

EGINA.

But say,

Is it your will that he depart?

JOCASTA.

It is:

And O! if he would listen to Jocasta,
 Never return, never behold me more;
 Fly from this fatal, this distressful scene,
 And save my life and fame. But what detains him?
 Why hastes he not? Egina, fly—

S C E N E II.

PHILOCTETES, EGINA, JOCSATA.

JOCASTA.

He's here.

O Prince, my soul is on the rack; I blush
 To see the man whom duty bids me shun,
 Which says I should forget and not betray thee.

Doubtless

Doubtless thou know'st the dreadful fate that hangs
O'er thy devoted head.

PHILOCTETES.

The clam'rous people
Demand my life; but they have suffer'd much,
And therefore, tho' unjust, I pity them.

JOCASTA.

Yield not thyself a victim to their rage:
Away, begone; as yet thou art thyself
The master of thy fate; but this perhaps
Is the last minute that can give me pow'r
To save thee: far, O fly far from Jocasta;
And, in return for added life, I beg thee
But to forget 'twas I who thus preserv'd it.

PHILOCTETES.

I cou'd have wish'd, Jocasta, thou had'st shewn
More strength of mind, and less compassion for me;
Prefer'd with me my honour to my life,
And rather bade me dye than meanly quit
My station here: I yet am innocent,
But in obeying thee I should be guilty.
Of all the blessings heav'n bestowed upon me,
My honour and my fame alone remain
Untouch'd. O! do not rob me of a treasure

So

So precious to me ; do not make me thus
 Unworthy of Jocaſta. I have liv'd,
 Liv'd to fulfil the fate allotted to me ;
 Have paſs'd my ſacred word to Oedipus,
 And whatſoe'er ſuſpicions he may cheriſh,
 I am a ſtranger to the breach of honour.

J O C A S T A.

O Philoctetes, let me here intreat thee,
 By the juſt gods, by that ill-fated paſſion,
 Which once inspir'd thy breaſt, if aught remains
 Of tender friendſhip, if thou ſtill remember'ſt
 How much my happineſs on thine depended,
 Deign to prolong a glorious life, and days
 That ſhould have been united with Jocaſta's.

P H I L O C T E T E S.

To thee devoted I wou'd have them ſtill
 In equal tenor flow, and worthy of thee ;
 I've liv'd far from thee, and ſhall die content,
 If thy regard attends me to the tomb.
 Who knows but heav'n may yet reſuſe to ſee
 This bloody ſacrifice ; perhaps, in mercy
 It guided me to Thebes to ſave Jocaſta ;
 Shorten'd my days, perhaps, to lengthen thine.
 Happy event ! the blood of innocence
 May be accepted ; mine is not unworthy.

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, PHILOCTETES, EGINA,
ARASPES, with ATTENDANTS.

OEDIPUS.

Fear not the clamours of an idle crowd,
That rage tumultuous, and demand thy death:
Know, Philoctetes, I have calm'd their rage,
And will myself, if needful, be thy guard.
I judge not with the hasty multitude,
But wish to see thy innocence appear:
My doubtful mind, uncertain where to fix,
Nor dares or to condemn, or to acquit thee:
Heav'n can alone determine all, which hears
My ardent pray'r; at length it seems pleas'd,
And by its priest shall soon point out the victim.
The gods shall soon decide 'twixt Thebes and thee.

PHILOCTETES.

Great is thy love of truth, O king, but know
Justice extreme is height of injury;
We must not always hearken to the voice
Of rigour: honour is the first of laws,
Let us observe it. But thou seest me sunk
Beneath myself, answ'ring the slanderous tongues
Of base defamers, whom I shou'd despise.

O

O let not Oedipus unite with such
 To ruin my fair fame ! it is enough
 That I deny it ; 'tis enough to call
 My life before thee. Let Alcides come,
 And bring with him the monsters I destroy'd,
 The tyrants I subdued ; let these stand forth
 My witnesses, and let my enemies confute them.
 But ask your priest whether his gods condemn me ;
 I'll wait their sentence ; not because I fear it,
 But to preserve thy persecuted people.

S C E N E IV.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, HIGH PRIEST, ARASPES,
 PHILOCTETES, EGINA, ATTENDANTS,
 CHORUS.

OEDIPUS.

Will heav'n at last indulgent to our pray'rs
 Withdraw its vengeance ? By what murth'rous hand
 Was it offended ?

PHILOCTETES.

Speak, whose blood must flow
 For expiation ?

HIGH PRIEST.

Fatal gift of heav'n !
 Unhappy knowledge ! to what dangers oft

Doft

Dost thou betray the heart of curious man!
 O wou'd that fate, thus open to my view,
 Had o'er its secrets drawn th'eternal veil
 To hide them from my sight!

PHILOCTETES.

What evil bring'st thou?

OEDIPUS.

Com'st thou the minister of wrath divine?

PHILOCTETES.

Fear nothing.

OEDIPUS.

Do the gods demand my life?

HIGH PRIEST.

If thou giv'st credit to me, ask me not.

OEDIPUS.

Whatever be the fate which heav'n decrees,
 The safety of my country is concern'd,
 And I will know it.

PHILOCTETES.

Speak.

OEDIPUS.

Have pity on us,

Pity th' afflicted, pity ———

HIGH

HIGH PRIEST.

Oedipus

Deserves more, much more, pity than his people.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Oedipus loves them with paternal fondness;
To his we join our pray'rs. O! hear us thou
Interpreter of heav'n; now hear, and save!

SECOND PERSON OF THE CHORUS.

We dye, O! save us! turn aside the wrath
Of th' angry gods; name the perfidious monster!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Name him, and soon the parricide shall dye.

HIGH PRIEST.

Unhappy men! why will ye press me thus?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Speak but the word, he dies, and we are saved.

HIGH PRIEST.

O! ye will tremble but to hear his name,
When ye shall know what pangs he must endure.
The God, who speaks by me, in pity dooms him
To banishment alone; but dreadful ills
Await the murth'rer: driven to fell despair
His own rash hand shall to the wrath of heav'n
Add woes more deep and heavier punishment:

Ev'n

Ev'n you shall shudder at his fate, and own
Your safety purchas'd at a rate too dear.

OEDIPUS.

Obey then.

PHILOCTETES.

Speak.

OEDIPUS.

Still obstinate!

HIGH PRIEST.

Remember,

If I must speak, that thou did'st force me to it.

OEDIPUS.

Insuff'rable delay! I'll bear no more.

HIGH PRIEST.

Since thou wilt hear it then, 'tis—

OEDIPUS.

Ha! speak, who?

HIGH PRIEST.

'Tis—Oedipus.

OEDIPUS.

I?

HIGH PRIEST.

Thou, unhappy Prince,

Thou art the man.

SECOND

SECOND PERSON OF THE CHORUS.

Alas ! what do I hear !

JOCASTA.

Say, can it be, interpreter of heav'n? [*To Oedipus.*
 Thou, Oedipus, the murth'rer of my husband !
 To whom Jocasta yielded with herself
 The throne of Thebes : the oracle is false ;
 I know it is ; thy virtues must confute it.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

O ! heav'n, whose pow'r decrees the fate of mortals,
 O ! name another, or to death devote us !

PHILOCTETES.

[*Turning to Oedipus*]

Think not I mean to render ill for ill ;
 Or from this strange reverse of fortune take
 A mean advantage, to return the wrongs
 I suffer'd from thy people and from thee :
 No, Oedipus, I'll do thee noble justice,
 That justice thou denyd'st to Philoctetes.
 Spite of the gods, I think thee innocent,
 And here I offer thee my willing hand
 Against thy foes : I cannot hesitate

Which

Which I shou'd servey, a pontiff or a king.
 'Tis a priest's business, whosoe'er he be,
 By whatsoever deity inspir'd,
 To pray for, not to curse, his royal master.

OEDIPUS.

Transcendent virtue! execrable traitor!
 Here I behold a demi-god, and there
 A base impostor: see the glorious privilege
 Of altars; thanks to their protecting veil,
 With lips profane thou hast abused the pow'r,
 Giv'n thee by heaven, to arraign thy king;
 And yet thou think'st the sacred ministry
 Thou hast disgraced shall withhold my wrath:
 Traitor, thou should'st have perish'd at the altar
 Before those gods whose voice thou hast usurp'd.

HIGH PRIEST.

My life is in thy hands, and thou art now
 The master of my fate: seize then the time.
 Whilst yet thou art so, for to-day thy doom
 Will be pronounc'd. Tremble, unhappy Prince,
 Thy reign is past; a hand unseen suspends
 The fatal sword that glitters o'er thy head:
 Soon shall thy conscious soul with horror feel
 The weight of guilt; soon shalt thou quit the throne,
 Where now thou sit'st secure, to wander forth

A wretched exile in a distant land ;
 Of wholesome water and of sacred fire
 Depriv'd, shalt take thy solitary way,
 And to the caves and hollow rocks complain.
 Where'er thou goest, a vengeful God shall still
 Pursue thy steps ; still shalt thou call on death,
 But call in vain : heav'n, that beholds thy fate,
 Shall hide itself in darkness from thy sight ;
 To guilt and sorrow doom'd, thou shalt regret
 Thy life, and wish that thou had'st ne'er been born.

OEDIPUS.

Thus far I have constrain'd my wrath, and heard thee.
 Priest, if thy blood were worthy of my sword,
 Thy life shou'd answer for this insolence :
 But hence, begone, nor urge my temper further,
 Thou author of abominable falsehood.

HIGH PRIEST.

Thou call'st me hypocrite, and base impostor ;
 Thy father thought not so.

OEDIPUS.

Who? Polybus?

My father, said'st thou?

HIGH PRIEST.

Thou wilt know too soon
 Thy wretched fate : to day shall give thee birth ;

To

To day shall give thee death : unhappy man,
 Tell me who gave thee birth, or say with whom
 Thou liv'st, beset with sorrows and with crimes
 For thee alone reserv'd. O Corinth ! Phocis !
 Detested nuptials ! impious wretched race,
 Too like its parent stem ! whose deadly rage
 Shall fill the world with horror and amaze.
 Farewell.

S C E N E V.

OEDIPUS, PHILOCTETES, JOCASTA.

OEDIPUS.

His last words fix me to the earth
 Immoveable ; my passion is subsided ;
 I know not where I am : me thinks some god
 Descended from above to calm my rage ;
 Who to his priest imparted pow'r divine,
 And by his sacred voice pronounc'd my ruin.

PHILOCTETES.

If thou hadst nought t'oppose but king to king,
 I wou'd have fought for Oedipus ; but know
 That Priests are here more formidable foes,
 Because respected, fear'd and honour'd more.
 Supported by his oracles, the priest

Shall

Shall often make his sov'reign crouch beneath him ;
 Whilst his weak people, dragg'd in holy chains,
 Embrace the idol ; tread on sacred laws
 With pious zeal, and think they honour heav'n
 When they betray their master and their king :
 But above all, when int'rest, fruitful parent
 Of riot and licentiousness, increase
 Their impious rage, and back their insolence.

O E D I P U S.

Alas ! thy virtue doubles all my woes ;
 For great as my misfortunes is thy soul ;
 Beneath the weight of care that hangs upon me,
 Who strives to comfort can but more oppress.
 What voice is this which from my inmost soul
 Pours forth complaints ? What crime have I com-
 mitted ?
 Say, vengeful gods, is Oedipus so guilty ?

J O C A S T A.

Talk not of guilt, my lord, your dying people
 Demand a victim ; we must save our country ;
 Delay it not : I was the wife of Laius,
 And I alone shou'd perish : let me seek
 The wand'ring spirit of my murther'd lord
 On the infernal shore, and calm his rage :

Yes;

Yes, I will go : may the kind gods accept
 My life, and ask no other sacrifice !
 May thy Jocasta save her Oedipus !

OEDIPUS.

And woud'st thou dye ! are there not woes enough
 Heap'd on this head ? O ! cease, my lov'd Jocasta,
 This mournful language, I am sunk already
 Too deep in grief without new miseries,
 Without thy death to fill my cup of sorrow.
 Let us go in : I must clear up a doubt
 Too justly form'd, I fear : but follow me.

JOCASTA.

How could'st thou e'er, my lord——

OEDIPUS.

No more : come in,
 And there confirm my terrors, or remove them.

The END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA.

OEDIPUS.

JOCASTA, 'tis in vain : say what thou wilt,
 These terrible suspicions haunt me still ;
 The priest affrights me ; I acquit him now,
 And ev'n, in secret, am my own accuser.
 O ! I have ask'd myself some dreadful questions ;
 A thousand strange events, which from my mind
 Were long effac'd, now rush in crouds upon me,
 And harrow up my soul ; the past obstructs,
 The present but confounds me, and the future
 Is big with horrid truths ; on ev'ry side
 Guilt waits my footsteps.

JOCASTA.

Will not virtue guard thee ?
 Art thou not sure that thou art innocent ?

OEDIPUS.

W'ere oft more guilty than we think we are.

JOCASTA.

Disdain the madness of a talking priest,
 Nor thus excuse him with unmanly fears.

O E D I P U S.

OEDIPUS.

Now in the name of the unhappy king,
 And angry heav'n, let me intreat thee, say,
 When Laius undertook that fatal journey,
 Did guards attend him ?

JOCASTA.

I've already told thee,
 One follow'd him alone.

OEDIPUS.

And only one ?

JOCASTA.

Superior even to the rank he bore,
 He was a king, who, like thyself, disdain'd
 All irksome pomp, and never wou'd permit
 An idle train of slaves to march before him.
 Amidst his happy subjects fearless still,
 And still unguarded liv'd in peace and safety,
 And thought his people's love his best defence

OEDIPUS.

Thou best of kings, sent by indulgent heav'n
 To mortals here ; thou exemplary greatness !
 Cou'd ever Oedipus his barb'rous hand

Lift against thee? but if thou can'st, Jocasta,
Describe him to me.

JOCASTA.

Since thou wilt recall
The sad remembrance, hear what Laius was :
Spite of the frost which hoary age had spread
O'er his fair temples in declining age,
Which yet was vig'rous, his eyes sparkled still
With all the fire of youth, his wrinkled forehead
Beneath, his silver locks attracted awe
And rev'rence from mankind : if I may dare
To say it, Laius much resembled thee ;
With pleasure I behold in Oedipus
His virtues and his features thus united.
What have I said t'alarm thee thus ?——

OEDIPUS.

I see
Some strange misfortune will o'ertake me soon ;
The priest, I fear, was by the gods inspir'd,
And but too truly hath foretold my fate :
Cou'd I do this, and was it possible ?

JOCASTA.

Are then these holy instruments of heav'n
Infallible ? Their ministry indeed

Bind

Binds them to th'altar, they approach the gods,
 But they are mortals still ; and think'st thou then
 Truth is dependent on the flight of birds ?
 Think'st thou, expiring by the sacred knife,
 The groaning heifer shall for them alone
 Remove the veil of dark futurity ?
 Or the gay victims, crown'd with flow'ry garlands,
 Within their entrails bear the fates of men ?
 O no ! to search for truth by ways like these
 Is to usurp the rights of pow'r supreme ;
 These priests are not what the vile rabble think them,
 Their knowledge springs from our credulity.

O E D I P U S.

Wou'd it were so ! for then I might be happy.

J O C A S T A.

It is : alas ! my griefs bear witness to it.
 Once I was partial to them like thyself,
 But undeceiv'd at length lament my folly ;
 Heav'n hath chastis'd me for my easy faith
 In dark mysterious lying oracles,
 That robb'd me of my child ; I hate the base
 Deluders all ; had it not been for them,
 My son had still been living.

E 3

O E D I P U S.

OEDIPUS.

Ha! thy son!

How did'st thou lose him? By what oracles
Did the gods speak concerning him?

JOCASTA.

I'll tell thee

What from myself I wou'd have gladly hidden.
But t'was a false one; therefore be not mov'd.
Thou must have heard I had a son by Laius,
A mother's fond disquietude provok'd me
To ask his fate of the great oracle.
Alas! what madness 'tis to wrest from heav'n
Those secrets which it kindly wou'd conceal:
But I was a weak woman, and a mother.
Before the priests' feet I fell submissive,
And thus her answer was; for O! too well
I must remember what but to repeat
Now makes me tremble, but thou wilt forgive me:
' Thy son shall slay his father, sacrilegious,
' Incestuous, parricide.' Shall I go on?

OEDIPUS.

Well, very well——

JOCASTA.

In short, it then foretold me,
This son, this monster shou'd pollute my bed;

That

That I, his mother, shou'd embrace my son,
 Just recent from the murder of his father,
 That thus united by these dreadful ties,
 I shou'd bear children to this hapless child.
 You seem to be disorder'd at my story,
 And dread perhaps to hear the sad remainder.

OEDIPUS.

Proceed: what did you with the wretched infant,
 Object of wrath divine?

JOCASTA.

Believ'd the gods;
 Piously cruel, sacrific'd my child,
 And stifled all a mother's tendernefs:
 In vain the clamours of parental love
 Condemn'd the rigid laws of partial heav'n:
 Alas! I meant to save the tender victim
 From his hard fate that threatned future guilt,
 And doom'd him to involuntary crimes:
 I thought to triumph o'er the oracle,
 And in compassion gave him up to death.
 Cruel compassion, and destructive too!
 Deceitful darkness of a false prediction!
 What did I reap from my inhuman care,
 Did it prolong my wretched husband's life?

Alas ! cut off in full prosperity,
 He fell by th'unknown hands of base assassins,
 Not by his son, thus were they both torn from me :
 I lost my child, and cou'd not save his father.
 By my example taught, avoid my errors,
 Banish these idle fears, and calm thy soul.

OEDIPUS.

After the dreadful secret thou hast told me,
 It were not fit I shou'd conceal my own :
 Hear then my tale ; perchance when thou shalt know
 The sad relation, which they bear each other,
 Thou too wilt tremble : Born the nat'ral heir
 To Corinth's throne, from Corinth far remov'd,
 I look with horror on my native land :
 One day, that fatal day I well remember,
 For O ! 'tis ever present to my thoughts,
 And dreadful to my soul, my youthful hands
 For the first time their solemn gift prepar'd
 An off'ring to the gods, when lo ! the gates
 Throughout the temple on a sudden stood
 Self-open'd, and the pillars stream'd with blood ;
 The altars shook ; a hand invisible
 Threw back my off'rings, and in thunder thus
 A horrid voice address'd me : ' Come not here,
 ' Stain not the holy threshold with thy feet,

' The

' The gods have from the living cut thee off
 ' Indignant, nor will e'er accept thy gifts ;
 ' Go, take thy off'rings to the furies, seek
 ' The serpents that stand ready to devour thee ;
 ' These are thy gods, begone, and worship them.'
 Whilst terror seis'd me at these dreadful words,
 Again the voice alarm'd me, and foretold
 All those sad crimes which heav'n to thee denounc'd
 Against thy son ; said, I shou'd slay my father,
 O gods ! and be the husband of my mother.

JOCASTA.

Where am I ? what malicious dæmon join'd
 Our hands, to make us thus supremely wretched ?

OEDIPUS.

Reserve thy tears for something still more dreadful ;
 Now list and tremble : fearful of myself,
 Left I shou'd e'er fulfil the dire prediction,
 Or oppose heav'n, I left my native land,
 Broke from the arms of a distracted mother,
 Wander'd from place to place, disguis'd my birth,
 My family, and name, by one kind friend
 Attended ; yet, in my disastrous journey,
 The God who guided my sad footsteps oft
 Strengthen'd my arm, and crown'd me with success :
 But happier had it been for Oedipus,

If he had fall'n with glory in the field,
 And by his death prevented all his woes :
 I was reserv'd to be a parricide :
 The hand of heav'n, so long suspended o'er me,
 Hath from my eyes at length remov'd the veil
 Of Ignorance, and now I see it all :
 I do remember, in the fields of Phocis
 (Nor know I how I cou'd so long forget
 The great event) that in a narrow way
 I met two warriors in a splendid car :
 The path was strait, and we disputed it :
 An idle contest for us both ; but I
 Was young and haughty, from my earliest years
 Bred up to pride, that flow'd in with my blood ;
 An unknown stranger in a foreign land,
 I thought myself upon my father's throne,
 And whomsoe'er I chanc'd to meet esteem'd
 As my own vassals, born but to obey me :
 I rush'd upon them, and with furious arm
 Their rapid coursers stopp'd in full career ;
 Hurl'd from their chariot the intrepid pair,
 Forward advanc'd in rage, and both attack'd me :
 The combat was not long, for vict'ry soon
 Declar'd for Oedipus. Immortal powr's !
 Whether from hatred or from love I know not,

But

But surely on that day ye fought for me :
 I saw them both expiring at my feet,
 And one of them, I do remember well,
 Who seem'd in age well-stricken, as he lay
 Gasping on th'earth, look'd earnestly upon me,
 Held out his arms, and wou'd have spoke : I saw
 The tears flow plenteous from his half-clos'd eyes :
 Methought when I did wound him my shock'd soul,
 All conqu'ror as I was——you shake, Jocasta.

JOCASTA.

My lord, see Phorbas comes ; this way they lead him.

OEDIPUS.

Tis well : my doubts will then be satisfy'd.

S C E N E II.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, PHORBAS, ATTENDANTS.

OEDIPUS.

Come hither, thou unfortunate old man ;
 The sight of him alarms my conscious soul ;
 Confus'd remembrance tortures me ; I dread
 To look on, or to question him.

PHORBAS.

O queen,
 Is this the day appointed for my death ;

Haft

Hast thou decreed it? Never but to me
Wert thou unjust.

JOCASTA.

Fear not, but hear the king,
And answer him.

PHORBAS.

The king?

JOCASTA.

Thou stand'st before him.

PHORBAS.

Ye gods! is this the successor of Laius?

OEDIPUS.

Waste not the time thus idly, but inform me,
Thou wert the only witness of his death,
And wounded, so 'tis said, in his defence.

PHORBAS.

He's dead, and let his ashes rest in peace;
Embitter not my fate, nor thus insult
A faithful subject wounded by thy hand.

OEDIPUS.

I wound thee? I?

PHORBAS.

Now satiate thy revenge,
And put an end to this unhappy life;

The

The poor remains of blood which then escap'd thee
 Now thou may'st shed; and since thou must remember
 The fatal place where Laius———

OEDIPUS.

Spare the rest :

It is enough : I see it now : t'was I :
 Ye gods ! my eyes are open'd.

JOCASTA.

Can it be ?

OEDIPUS.

And art thou he whom my unhappy rage
 Attack'd at Daulis in the narrow path ?
 O yes it is, must be so : in vain myself
 Wou'd I deceive, all speaks too plain against me,
 I know thee but too well.

PHORBAS.

I saw him fall,
 My royal master fall beneath thy hand :
 Thou did'st the crime, and I have suffer'd for it :
 A prison was my fate, and thine a throne.

OEDIPUS.

Away : I soon shall do thee ample justice,
 Thee and myself ; leave then to me the care
 Of my own punishment : begone, and save me

At

At least the painful sight of innocence,
Which I have made unhappy.

S C E N E III.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA.

OEDIPUS.

O Jocasta !

For cruel fate forbids me ever more
To call thee by the tender name of wife ;
Thou see'st my crimes ; no longer bound to love ;
Strike now, and free thyself from the dread thought
Of being mine.

JOCASTA.

Alas !

OEDIPUS.

Take, take this sword,
The instrument of my unhappy rage ;
Receive, and use it for a noble purpose,
And plunge it in my breast.

JOCASTA.

What wou'd'st thou do !

O stop thy furious grief, be calm, and live.

OEDIPUS.

Canst thou have pity on a wretch like me ?
No, I must dye.

JOCASTA.

JOCASTA.

Thou must not : hear Jocasta,
O hear her pray'rs !

OEDIPUS.

I will not, must not hear thee.
I slew thy husband.

JOCASTA.

And thou gav'st me one.

OEDIPUS.

I did, but t'was by guilt.

JOCASTA.

Involuntary.

OEDIPUS.

No matter, still t'was guilt.

JOCASTA.

O heighth of woe !

OEDIPUS.

O fatal nuptials ! once such envied blifs !

JOCASTA.

Such be it still, for still thou art my husband.

OEDIPUS.

O no ! I am not ; this destructive hand
Hath broke the sacred tye, and deep involv'd

Thy

Thy kingdom in my ruin. O! avoid me,
 Fear the vindictive God who still pursues
 The wretched Oedipus; I fear myself,
 My timid virtue serves but to confound me;
 Perhaps my fate may reach ev'n thee, Jocasta;
 Pity thyself, pity the hapless victims
 That perish daily for my guilt; O strike,
 And save thy Oedipus from future crimes.

JOCASTA.

Do not accuse, do not condemn thyself;
 Thou art unhappy, but thou art not guilty:
 Thou did'st not know whose blood thy hand had shed
 In Daulis' fatal conflict; when remembrance
 Calls forth the melancholy deed, I must
 Weep for myself, but shou'd not punish thee.
 Live therefore——

OEDIPUS.

No; it is impossible:
 Farewell, Jocasta! whither must I go,
 O whither must I drag this hateful being?
 What clime accurs'd, or what disastrous shore
 Shall hide my crimes, and bury my despair?
 Still must I wander on from clime to clime,
 Or rise by murder to another throne?

Shall

Shall I to Corinth bend my way, where fate
Hath heavier crimes in store for Oedipus?
O Corinth! ne'er on thy detested borders——

S C E N E IV.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, DIMAS.

DIMAS.

My lord, this moment is arriv'd a stranger,
He says, from Corinth, and desires admittance.

OEDIPUS.

I'll go and meet him —— fare thee well, Jocasta:
But stop thy tears; no more shalt thou behold
The wretched Oedipus; it is determined:
My reign is past; thou hast no husband now,
I am no more a sov'reign, nor Jocasta's.
Oppress'd with ills I go, in search of climes,
Where far remov'd from thee and from my country,
I still may act as shall become a king,
Worthy of thee, and justify the tears
Thou shed'st for Oedipus: farewell! for ever.

The END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V. S C E N E I.

OEDIPUS, ARASPES, DIMAS, ATTENDANTS.

OEDIPUS.

WEEP not for me, my friends, nor thus regret
 Your sov'reign's fate : I wish for banishment ;
 To me 'tis pleasure ; for I know t'will make
 My people happy : you must lose your king,
 But shall preserve his country. When I first
 Came to the throne of Thebes, I serv'd it well ;
 And, as I mounted, now I shall descend
 In glory : honour shall attend my fall :
 I leave my country, kingdom, children, all :
 Then hear me now, hear my last parting words ;
 A king you must have ; let him be my choice ;
 Take Philoctetes : he is gen'rous, noble,
 Virtuous, and brave ; his father was a king,
 And he the friend of Hercules ; let him
 Succeed me : I must hence.—Go, search out Phorbas ;
 Bid him not fear, but come this moment hither,
 I must bequeath him something ; he deserves it :
 I'll take my farewell as a monarch ought.
 Go, bring the stranger to me—stay thou here.

S C E N E

S C E N E II.

OEDIPUS, ARASPES, ICARUS, ATTENDANTS.

OEDIPUS.

Ha! is it thou, my much-lov'd Icarus!
The faithful guardian of my infant years,
Fav'rite and friend of Polybus, my father,
What brought thee hither?

ICARUS.

Polybus is dead.

OEDIPUS.

Alas! my father!

ICARUS.

T'was what we expected;
For he had fill'd the measure of his days,
And dy'd in good old age; these eyes beheld it.

OEDIPUS.

Where are ye now, mistaken oracles!
That shook my timid virtue, and foretold
That I shou'd prove a guilty parricide?
My father's dead, ye meant but to deceive me;
These hands are not polluted with his blood:
The slave of error, I have wander'd long
In darkness, busy'd in a fruitless toil,

And

And to remove imaginary ills,
Have made my life a scene of real woes,
The offspring of my fond credulity.

How deep must be the colour of my fate
When miseries like this can bring relief!
Bliss spring from sorrow, and a father's death
Shall be accepted as the gift of heav'n!
But I must hence, and to his ashes pay
The tribute due:—ha! silent, and in tears!

ICARUS.

Ought I to speak? O heav'n!

OEDIPUS.

Ha! thou aught more

Of ill to tell me?

ICARUS.

For a moment grant me

Your private ear.

OEDIPUS.

Retire.—What can this mean?

[To the attendants.]

ICARUS.

Think not of Corinth: thither, if thou go'st,
Thy death is certain.

OEDIPUS.

Who shall banish me

From my own kingdom?

ICARUS.

ICARUS.

To the throne of Corinth

Another heir succeeds.

OEDIPUS.

Ye gods! is this

The last sad stroke which I am born to suffer,

Or will ye still pursue me? Fate, go on

And persecute, thou shalt not conquer me:

Let us away to my rebellious subjects,

I'll go to be their scourge, if not their king,

And find at least an honourable death.

But say, what stranger has usurp'd my throne?

ICARUS.

He is the son-in-law of Polybus,

Who on his head did place the diadem

In his last moments; the obedient people

Hail their new sov'reign.

OEDIPUS.

Has my father too

Betray'd me, sided with my faithless subjects,

And drove me from my throne?

ICARUS.

He did but justice,

For thou wert not his son.

OEDIPUS.

O E D I P U S

OEDIPUS.

Ha! Icarus!

ICARUS.

With terror and regret I must reveal
The dreadful secret, Corinth——

OEDIPUS.

Not his son!

ICARUS.

Thou art not. Polybus, oppress'd by conscience,
Dying declar'd it; to the royal blood
Of Corinth's kings he yielded up his throne:
I who alone enjoy'd his confidence,
And therefore dreaded the new sov'reign's pow'r,
Fled to implore thy aid.

OEDIPUS.

Who am I then,

If not the son of Polybus?

ICARUS.

The gods,

Who trusted to my hands thy infant years,
In shades of darkest night conceal thy birth;
I only know, that soon as born condemn'd
To death, and on a desert hill expos'd;
Thou but for me had'st perish'd.

OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS.

Thus, with life
 Began my sorrows, a detested object
 Ee'n from my cradle, and accurs'd by all.
 Where did'st thou light on me?

ICARUS.

On mount Citheron,

OEDIPUS.

Near Thebes?

ICARUS.

In that deserted place, a Theban,
 Who call'd himself thy father, left thee; there
 To perish: some kind God conducted me
 That way; I pity'd, took thee in my arms,
 Reviv'd, and cherish'd thee: to Corinth then
 Carry'd my little charge, and to the king
 Presented thee; who, mark thy wondrous fate!
 His child just dead, adopted thee his son,
 And by that stroke of policy confirm'd
 His tott'ring power: As son of Polybus
 Thou wert brought up by him who had preserv'd
 thee:
 The throne of Corinth never was thy right,
 But conscience robb'd thee of what chance bestow'd.

OEDIPUS.

Immortal pow'rs, who rule the fate of kings!

Am

Am I thus doom'd in one unhappy day
 To suffer such variety of woe !
 On a frail mortal shall your miracles
 Be thus exhausted ! But inform me, friend,
 This old man, from whose hands you took me, say,
 Hast thou beheld him since that fatal hour ?

ICARUS.

Never : perhaps he's dead, he who alone
 Cou'd tell thee the strange secret of thy birth ;
 But on my mind his image is engrav'd
 So deeply, I shou'd know him well.

OEDIPUS.

Alas !

Wretch that I am ! why shou'd I wish, to find him ?
 Rather, submissive to the will of heav'n
 Shou'd I keep close the veil that o'er my eyes
 Spreads its benignant shade : too well already
 I see my fate ; more knowledge wou'd but shew
 New horrors ; and yet, spite of all my woes,
 Urg'd on by fatal curiosity,
 I thirst for more : I cannot bear to rest
 In sad suspense : to doubt is to be wretched :
 I dread the torch that lights me to my ruin :
 I fear to know myself, yet cannot long
 Remain unknown.

SCENE

SCENE III.

OEDIPUS, ICARUS, PHORBAS.

OEDIPUS.

Ha! Phorbas! come this way.

ICARUS.

Surprising! sure the more I look, the more——
'Tis he, my lord, it must be he.

PHORBAS.

Forgive me [*To Icarus.*

If still that face unknown——

ICARUS.

Dost thou remember?

On mount Citheron——

PHORBAS.

How!

ICARUS.

The child you gave me,
The child to death——

PHORBAS.

What dost thou say? remember,
Remember what?

ICARUS.

Thou hast no cause to fear;

Be not alarm'd : thou may'st rejoice, that infant
Was——Oedipus.

PHORBAS.

The light'ning blast thee, wretch !
What hast thou said ?

ICARUS.

Doubt not, my lord, whate'er
[To Oedipus.]

This Theban says, he gave thee to my arms ;
Thy fate is known ; this old man is thy father.

OEDIPUS.

What complicated misery ! Alas ! *[To Phorbias.]*
If thour't indeed my father, will the gods
E'er suffer me to shed thy blood ?

PHORBAS.

O no !

For thou art not my son.

OEDIPUS.

And didst not thou
Expose me in my infancy ?

PHORBAS.

My lord,

Permit me to retire, and hide from thee
The dreadful truth.

OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS.

No, Phorbas; by the gods
I beg thee, tell me all.

PHORBAS.

Begone, avoid
Thy children, and thy queen.

OEDIPUS.

Now answer me,
For to resist is vain: that infant, doom'd
To death by thee, say, didst thou give it him.

[Pointing to Icarus.]

PHORBAS.

I did: and wou'd that day had been my last!

OEDIPUS.

And of what country was that child!

PHORBAS.

Of Thebes.

OEDIPUS.

And thou art not his father?

PHORBAS.

No: alas!

Sprung from a nobler, but more wretched race——

F 2

OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS.

Who was he then ?

PHORBAS.

My lord, what wou'd you do ?

[throwing himself at the feet of Oedipus.]

OEDIPUS.

Speak, speak, I say.

PHORBAS.

Jocasta was his mother.

ICARUS.

[Looking at Oedipus.]

Behold the fruit of all my gen'rous care !

PHORBAS.

What have we done ?

OEDIPUS.

I thought it must be so.

ICARUS.

My Lord——

OEDIPUS.

Away, begone, this moment leave me :
The dreadful gifts ye have bestow'd on me
Must have their recompense ; and ye have cause
To fear my wrath, for ye preserv'd my life.

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

O E D I P U S.

At length the dire prediction is fulfill'd,
 And Oedipus is now, tho' innocent,
 A base incestuous parricide : O virtue !
 Thou fatal empty name ; thou who didst guide
 My hapless days, thou hadst not pow'r to stop
 The current of my fate : alas ! I fell
 Into the snare by trying to avoid it :
 Heav'n led me on to guilt, and sunk a pit
 Beneath my sliding feet : I was the slave
 Of some unknown, some unrelenting pow'r,
 That us'd me for its instrument of vengeance :
 These are my crimes, remorseless cruel gods !
 Yours was the guilt, and ye have punish'd me.
 Where am I ? what dark shade thus from my eyes
 Covers the light of heav'n ? the walls are stain'd
 With blood ; the furies shake their torches at me ;
 The light'nings flash ; hell opens her wide gates :
 O Laius ! O my father ! art thou there ?
 I see the deadly wound these hands had made ;
 Revenge thee now on this abhorred monster,
 A monster who defil'd the bed of her
 Who bore him : lead me to the dark abode,

That I may strike fresh terror to the hearts
Of guilty beings by my punishment :
Lead on, I'll follow thee.

S C E N E V.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, EGINA, CHORUS.

JOCASTA.

O Oedipus,

Dispel my fears, thy dreadful cries alarm me.

OEDIPUS.

Open, thou earth, and swallow me!

JOCASTA.

Alas!

What sad misfortune moves thee thus?

OEDIPUS.

My crimes.

JOCASTA.

My lord! ———

OEDIPUS.

Away, Jocasta.

JOCASTA.

Cruel husband!

OEDIPUS.

O stop! what name is that? am I thy husband?

Do not say husband: we shall hate each other.

JOCASTA.

JOCASTA.

What say'st thou?

OEDIPUS.

'Tis enough : I have fulfill'd
My horrid fate : know, Laius was my father ;
I am thy son.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

O guilt!

SECOND PERSON OF THE CHORUS.

O dreadful day!

JOCASTA.

Egina, drag me from this horrid place!

EGINA.

Alas!

JOCASTA.

If thou hast pity on Jocasta,
If without horror thou can'st now approach me,
Assist me now, compassionate thy queen!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS.

Ye gods! and is it thus your vengeance ceases?
Take back your cruel gifts, t'were better far
That we had suffer'd still.

S C E N E

S C E N E VI.

JOCASTA, EGINA, HIGH-PRIEST, CHORUS.

HIGH-PRIEST.

Attend, ye people,

And know, a milder sun now beams upon you :

At length the baleful pestilence is fled,

The graves once more are clos'd, and death hath left

us ;

The God of heav'n and earth declares his goodness

In peals of thunder : hark !

[Thunder and lighting.]

JOCASTA.

What dreadful flashes !

Where am I ? heav'n ! what do I hear ! Barbarians—

HIGH-PRIEST.

'Tis done : the gods are satisfy'd : no more

Doth Laius from the tomb cry out for vengeance :

Jocasta, thou may'st live and reign ; the blood

Of Oedipus sufficeth.

CHORUS.

Gracious heav'n !

JOCASTA.

My son ! and must I call him husband too !

Dear dreadful names ! is he then dead ?

HIGH

HIGH PRIEST.

He lives,

But from the living and the dead cut off,
 Depriv'd of light : I saw him plunge this sword,
 Stain'd with his father's blood, into his eyes :
 'This fatal moment has to Thèbes restor'd
 Her safety : such are the decrees of heav'n ;
 Which, as it wills, decides the fate of mortals,
 All-pow'rful or to save or to destroy.
 Its wrath is all exhausted on thy son,
 And thou art pardon'd.

JOCASTA.

Punish then thyself.

[Stabs herself.]

Jocasta, thus reserv'd for horrid incest,
 Death is the only good remaining for me :
 Laius, receive my blood : I follow thee :
 I have liv'd virtuous, and shall dye with pleasure.

CHORUS.

Unhappy queen, and sad calamity !

JOCASTA.

Weep only for my son, who still survives.
 Priests, and you Thebans, who were once my subjects,
 Honour

Honour my ashes, and remember ever,
That midst the horrors which oppress'd me, still
I cou'd reproach the gods ; for heav'n alone
Was guilty of the crime, and not Jocasta.

END of the FIFTH and last ACT.

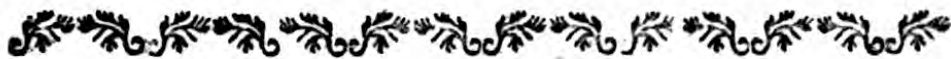




M A R I A M N E.

A

T R A G E D Y.



P R E F A C E.

I HAVE printed this piece not without fear and trembling; the number of performances which have met with applause on the stage, and contempt in the closet, give me but too much reason to apprehend the same fate with regard to my own. Two or three agreeable incidents, together with the art and management of the actors, might conciliate an audience in the representation; but a very different degree of merit is necessary to make it shine in the full glare of publication. Little will avail the regular conduct of it, and even, perhaps, as little the interesting nature of the subject. Every work that is written in verse, though it may be unexceptionable in all other respects, must of necessity disgust if every line is not full of strength and harmony; if there is not an elegance running through the whole; if the piece has not, in short, that inexpressible charm, which nothing but true genius can bestow upon it; that point of perfection which knowledge alone can never attain to, and concerning which we have argued so poorly, and to so little purpose, since the death of *Monf. Despréaux*.

It

It is a great mistake to imagine, that the verification of a dramatic performance is either the easiest or the least considerable part of it. Racine, who, of all men upon earth, after Virgil, best knew the art of verse, did not think it so: he employ'd two whole years in writing his Phædra. Pradon boasts of having compos'd his in less than three months. As the transient success of a tragedy depends, with regard to the representation, not on the stile, but on the incidents and the actors, the two Phædras seem'd at first to meet with an equal degree of applause; but the publication soon determin'd the real and intrinsic merit of each of them. Pradon, according to the usual practice of bad authors, came out with an insolent preface; accusing all those who had attack'd his piece as unfair and partial criticks; a trouble which he might as well have spared himself; for his tragedy, puff'd off as it was by himself and his party, soon sunk into that contempt which it deserves; and if it were not for the Phædra of Racine, the world wou'd not know at this day that Pradon had ever wrote one.

But whence then arises the vast difference between these two performances? the plot is nearly the same in both. Phædra dies, Theseus is absent in the two first
acts:

acts : he is suppos'd to be in the shades below with Pirithous. Hippolytus, his son, wants to leave Trezene, and to fly from Aricia, whom he is in love with : he declares his passion to Aricia, and listens to Phædra's with horror : he dies the same kind of death, and his governor relates the manner of it.

Add to this likewise, that the principal personages in both pieces, as they are in the same circumstances, say almost the same things : but this is the very place which distinguishes the great man from the bad poet ; when Racine and Pradon have the same sentiments, they differ most from each other : for a proof of this, let us take the declaration of Hippolytus to Aricia. Racine makes him talk thus :

I who so long defy'd the tyrant's pow'r,
 Smil'd at his chains, and made a mock of love :
 Myself on shore, I saw weak mortals wreck'd,
 And thought I safely might behold the storm
 At distance rage, which I cou'd never feel :
 And must I sink beneath the common lot ?
 I must : this haughty soul at length is conquer'd,
 And hangs on thee : for six long months despair
 And shame have rent my soul : where'er I go,

The

The wound still rankles : with myself long time
 In vain I struggled, reason'd, wept in vain :
 When absent seek thee, and when present shun :
 Thy image haunts me in the sylvan shade :
 The day-light's splendor and the evening's gloom
 All bring the lov'd Aricia to my eyes :
 All, all, unite to make this rebel thine.
 O ! I have lost myself : the bow unbent,
 And useless arrows lay neglected by me ;
 Thy lessons, Neptune, are no more remember'd :
 The woods re-echo to my sighs alone
 Responsive, and my idle courfers now
 Forget the voice of their Hippolytus.

Now observe how this Hippolytus expresses himself in.

Pradon.

Long time, too long, alas ! with lips profane,
 Laughing at love, did I adore Diana ;
 A solitary savage long I liv'd,
 And chafed the bears and lions in the forest ;
 But now more pressing cares employ my time,
 For since I saw thee I have left off hunting,
 Tho' once I took delight in it, but now
 I never go there but to think of you.

It

It is impossible to read and compare these two pieces without admiring one and laughing at the other; and yet there is the same ground of thoughts and sentiments in both: when we are to make the passions speak, all men have pretty nearly the same ideas; but the manner of expressing them, distinguishes the man of wit from him that has none; the man of genius from him who has nothing but wit; and the real poet from him who wou'd be a poet if he could.

To arrive at Racine's perfection in writing, a man must possess his genius, and withal must polish and correct his works as he did: how diffident then ought I to be, born as I am with such indifferent talents, and oppress'd by continual disorders, who have neither the gift of a fine imagination, nor time to correct laboriously the faults of my performances! I am sensible of and lament the imperfections of this piece, as well with regard to the conduct as the diction of it: I shou'd have mended them a little, if I cou'd have put off this edition for a little longer; but still I shou'd have left a great many behind. In every art there is a certain point beyond which we can never advance: we are shut up within the limits of our talents; we see perfection lying beyond us; and only make impotent endeavours to attain to it.

I shall not make a formal and regular critique on this piece, the reader will probably save me that trouble; but it may be necessary to say something concerning a general objection to the choice of my subject. As it is the nature of Frenchmen to lay hold with rapidity on the ridicule of things, in themselves the most serious, it has been said, that the subject of *Mariamne* is nothing but an old amorous brutal husband; whose wife, being out of humour with him, refuses him the return of conjugal duty: to which it has been added, that a family quarrel cou'd never make a good tragedy. I wou'd only beg these criticks to join with me in a few reflections on this strange kind of prejudice. •

The plots of tragedies are generally founded, either on the interests of a whole nation, or the private interests of the sovereign. Of the first kind are the *Iphigenia in Aulis*; where all Greece, met in full assembly, demands the blood of the son of *Agamemnon*; the *Horatii*, where the three combattants are to decide the fate of Rome; and the *Oedipus*, where the safety and prosperity of *Thebes* depends on the discovery of the murtherer of *Laius*. Of the latter kind are *Britannicus*, *Phædra*, *Mithridates*, &c. In these all the
interest

interest is confin'd to the hero of the piece and his family : all turns upon such passions as the vulgar feel equally with princes, the plot of them may be as proper for comedy as for tragedy : for, take away the names only, and *Mithridates* is no more than *an old fellow in love with a young girl : his two sons are in love with her at the same time : and he makes use of a very low artifice to discover which of his sons the lady is fond of. Phædra is a step-mother, who, egg'd on by her confidante, makes love to her son-in-law, who is unfortunately pre-engag'd. Nero is an impetuous young man, who falls precipitately in love, and immediately wants to be separated from his wife, and hides himself behind the tapestry to overhear the conversation of his mistress.* These are all of them subjects which *Moliere* might treat as well as *Racine* : nay, the whole plot of the *Miser* is exactly the same as that of *Mithridates* : *Harpagon* and the *king of Pontus* are two old fellows in love : each of them has a son for his rival ; both of them make use of the same artifice to discover the intrigue carry'd on between the son and the mistress ; and both pieces end in the marriage of the young man.

Moliere

Moliere and *Racine* met with equal success: one made the world laugh, amus'd, and entertain'd them; the other mov'd, terrify'd and made us weep. *Moliere* expos'd the folly of an old miser in love; *Racine* painted the weakness of a great man, and so contriv'd, as at the same time even to make that weakness respectable.

Were we to order *Vateau* and *le Brun*, each of them, to paint us a wedding; one wou'd give us the representation of a groupe of peasants in an arbour, full of vulgar joy and jollity, plac'd round a rustic table, where drunkenness, riot, debauchery, and immoderate laughter reign'd without controul: the other wou'd paint the marriage of *Peleus* and *Thetis*, the feast of the gods, with all their solemn and majestic celebration of it. Thus both of them wou'd reach the highest degree of perfection in their art, by means intirely different.

We may fairly apply every one of these examples to *Marianne*. The bad temper of a woman; the love of an old husband; the malicious tricks of a sister-in-law; are subjects in themselves inconsiderable, and seem

seem rather adapted to comedy : but at the same time a king, whom all the world have honour'd with the name of *Great*, passionately enamour'd with the finest woman in the universe ; the rage and fury of a monarch so famous for his virtues and his crimes, his past cruelty, and his present remorse ; that perpetual and rapid transition from love to hatred, and from hatred to love ; the ambition of his sister ; the intrigues of his ministers ; the distressful situation of a princess whose virtue and beauty have been so often celebrated and talk'd of to this day, who had seen her father and brother doom'd to death by her husband ; and to complete her misfortunes, saw herself belov'd by the murderer of her family. What a field is here ! what an opening for any genius but mine ! can we say this is a subject unfit for tragedy ? Here we may indeed averr, that, *according as things turn out, they change their names.*

DRAMATIS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

VARUS, a Roman Prætor, Governor of Syria.

HEROD, King of Palæstine.

MARIAMNE, Wife of Herod.

SALOME, Sister of Herod.

ALBINUS, Friend to Varus.

MAZAEL, } Herod's Ministers.
IDAMAS, }

NABAL, an old Officer under the Asmonæan Kings.

ELIZA, Confidante of Mariamne.

Herod's Guard, Attendants on Varus, Herod, and
Mariamne.

SCENE JERUSALEM.

MARIAMNE.

M A R I A M N E.

A

T R A G E D Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

SALOME, MAZAEI,

MAZAEI.

IT is enough : the pow'r of Salome,
By all acknowledg'd, and by all obey'd,
On its firm basis stands immoveable :
I fled to Azor, with the light'ning's speed,
Ev'n from Samaria's plain to Jordan's spring,
And quick return'd : my presence there indeed
Was needful, to cut off th'aspiring hopes
Of Israel's moody race : thy brother Herod,
So long detain'd at Rome, was almost grown
A stranger in his kingdom ; and the people,

Ever

Ever capricious, turbulent, and bold,
 Still to their kings unjust, aloud proclaim'd,
 That Herod was condemn'd to slavery
 By haughty Rome ; and Mariamne, rais'd
 To the high rank of her proud ancestors,
 Wou'd from the blood of our high-priests select
 A king, to rule o'er conquer'd Palæstine.
 With grief I see, she is by all ador'd ;
 Her name the dear delight of ev'ry tongue ;
 Israel reveres the race from whence she sprang,
 Ev'n to idolatry : her birth, her beauty,
 And, above all, her sorrows, melt the hearts
 Of the rude rabble, who, thou knowst, detest
 And rail at us. They call her their dear sov'reign,
 And seem to threaten thee with swift destruction.
 I saw the fickle multitudes alarm'd
 With idle tales like these, but soon I taught e'm
 Another lesson ; soon I made e'm tremble :
 Told e'm great Herod, fraught with double pow'r,
 And arm'd with vengeance, wou'd e'er long return :
 His name alone struck terror to their souls,
 They saw their folly then, and wept in silence.

SALOME.

Thou told'st them truth, for Herod comes, and soon
 Shall make rebellious Sion bend beneath him.

Antony's

Antony's favorite is Cæsar's friend ;
 Fortune attends him, at his chariot wheels
 Submissive chain'd : his subtle policy
 Is equal to his courage, and he rises
 With added strength and glory from his fall :
 The senate crown him.

M A Z A E L.

But when Mariamne
 Shall see her husband, where will be thy pow'r ?
 That haughty rival o'er the king had ever
 A fatal influence that supplanted thee ;
 And her proud spirit, still inflexible,
 And still revengeful, holds its enmity :
 Her safety must depend on thy destruction,
 And mutual inj'ries nourish mutual hate.
 Dost thou not dread her all-subduing charms,
 Those lordly tyrants o'er the vanquish'd Herod ?
 For five years past, e'er since their fatal marriage,
 Hath his strange passion for her still increas'd,
 By hatred fix'd, and nourish'd by disdain.
 Oft have we seen the haughty monarch kneel
 Before her feet, her eyes indignant turn'd
 In fury from him, whilst in vain he su'd
 For softer looks than she wou'd deign to give.
 How have we seen him rage, and sigh, and weep,

Abuse, and flatter, threaten and implore !
 Mean in his rage, and cruel in his love ;
 Abroad a hero, and a slave at home :
 He punish'd an ungrateful barb'ous race,
 And, recking with the father's blood, ador'd
 The daughter ; rais'd the dagger to her breast,
 Guided by thee, then dropp'd it at her feet.
 At Rome indeed, whilst from her sight remov'd,
 The chain was loosen'd ; but t'will re-unite
 When he returns, and shall again behold
 The fatal charms which he so long admir'd :
 Those pow'rful eyes are ever sure to please,
 And will resume their empire o'er his heart :
 Her foes will soon be humbled, and if she
 But gives the nod, must fall a sacrifice
 To her resentment. Let us guard against it,
 And court that pow'r which we can ne'er destroy :
 Respect well-feign'd may win her to our purpose.

S A L O M E.

No : there are better methods to remove
 Our fears of Mariamne.

M A Z A E L.

Ha ! what means ?

S A L O M E.

Perhaps e'vn now she dies.

M A Z A E L.

MAZAEI.

And wilt thou dare
To do a deed fo desp'rate? If the king —

SALOME.

The king affifts me in the work of vengeance,
And has confented : Zares is arriv'd
At Solyma ; my instrument of wrath
Waits for his victim : know, the time, the place,
The hand to execute, are ready all :
To-day it muft be done.

MAZAEI.

Haft thou then gain'd
At laft the vict'ry? Cou'd the king believe thee?
Spite of his paffion, will he yield up all,
And aét as thou command'ft?

SALOME.

Not fo : my pow'r
Is more confin'd : fcarce cou'd I urge to vengeance,
With all my arts, his long-reluctant foul,
But I avail'd me of his abfence from her :
Whilft Herod liv'd, expos'd to all her charms,
Thou know'ft I led a life of wretchednefs,
Of doubt and fear, uncertain of my fate ;
When, by a thoufand crooked paths, at laft

I found a passage to his heart, and thought
I had secur'd it, Mariamne came ;
And, when he saw her, all was lost again ;
My arts all baffled by a single glance :
Yes, the proud queen was mistress of my life,
And might have ta'en it : had she known the way
'To manage well her easy lover's fondness,
Herod had sign'd the mandate for another,
And not for Mariamne ; then the blow
I meant for her had fall'n on Salome :
But I have made her pride assist my vengeance,
And I have only now to point the dart,
Which her own hand hath fashion'd, to destroy her.

Thou may'st remember well the fatal time
That blasted all our hopes ; when, Antony
Subdued, Augustus took the reins of empire,
Each eastern monarch trembled on his throne :
Amongst the rest my hapless brother fear'd,
With his protector, he had lost his crown.
Resistance now was vain, and nought remain'd
But to address the conqu'ror of the world
In lowliest terms, and ask forgiveness of him.
Call back that dreadful day, when Herod, driv'n
Ev'n to despair, beheld proud Mariamne
Spurn at his offer'd love and kind farewell ;

Heard

Heard her with anguish heap reproaches on him ;
Call for a father's and a brother's blood,
Shed by her tyrant husband : Herod flew
To me, and told his griefs ; I seiz'd the moment
Propitious to my vengeance, and regain'd
A sister's pow'r o'er his distressful heart ;
Enflam'd his rage, and sharpen'd his despair ;
Dipp'd in fresh poison the envenom'd dart
That pierc'd his soul : then, desp'rate in his wrath,
Thou heard'st him swear t'exterminate the race
Of Hebrews, and destroy its poor remains ;
Condemn the mother, and cut off her sons
From their inheritance : but soon to rage
Succeeded love ; one look from her disarm'd
His vengeance. I, with double eagerness,
Press'd his departure, and at length prevail'd :
He left her ; from that hour I was successful ;
My frequent letters kept up his resentment,
And, absent from her, all his rage return'd :
He blush'd in secret for his weakness past,
And by degrees, as I remov'd the veil,
His eyes were open'd : Zares caught with me
The favourable hour, and painted her
In blackest colours ; told him of her pow'r,
Her int'rest, friends, and the seditious faction,

The partisans of th'Asmonæan race.
 But I did more, I rais'd his jealousy ;
 He trembled for his glory, and his life :
 Continual treasons had alarm'd his soul,
 And left it ever open to suspicion :
 Whate'er he fears, still ready to believe,
 He is not able to distinguish guilt
 From innocence : in short, I fix'd his soul,
 Guided his hand, and made him sign the mandate.

M A Z A E L.

'Twas nobly done : but what will Varus say,
 The haughty prætor, will he see unmov'd
 A deed so daring ? he's thy master here,
 And, unconfirm'd by Rome, thy pow'r is nothing.
 From Varus' hand thy brother must receive
 His crown ; nor can he act as sovereign here
 Till the proud prætor shall restore it to him.
 Will Varus, think'st thou, e'er permit a queen,
 Left to his care, to fall a sacrifice ?
 I know the Romans well, they ne'er forgive
 Such rude contempt of their authority.
 Thou wilt bring down the storm on Herod's head ;
 Their thunder's always ready ; those proud conqu'rors
 Are jealous of their rights, and take, thou know'st,
 Peculiar pleasure in the fall of kings.

S A L O M E.

S A L O M E.

Fear not for Herod, Cæsar is his friend,
And Varus knows it, therefore will respect him :
Perhaps this Roman means to manage all,
But be it as it may, my aim is vengeance ;
I'm on the verge of glory or of shame ;
To-morrow, nay, to-day may change the scene :
Who knows if e'er hereafter I shall find
An hour propitious to me, who can tell
If Herod will be steady to his purpose ?
I know his weakness, and I must prevent it,
Nor give him time to say, it shall not be.
When it is done, let Varus rage, and Rome
Pour forth her threats, it shall not damp my joys :
The Romans are not here my worst of foes ;
No, I have more to fear from Mariamne ;
I must subdue her rival pow'rs, or perish :
But Varus comes this way, we must avoid him :
Zares e'er now shou'd have been here : I'll hence
And meet him ; fare thee well.—If there be need,
My soldiers at the least alarm are ready,
And will defend us.

S C E N E II.

V A R U S, A L B I N U S, M A Z A E L,

A T T E N D A N T S o n V A R U S.

V A R U S:

Salome and Mazael—

They seem to shun us ; in their eyes I read
 Their terrors ; guilt hath reason to be fearful,
 And dread my presence.—Mazael, stay : go, tell
 Thy cruel master his designs are known ;
 His wicked instrument is now in chains,
 And shou'd have met the death he merited,
 But my regard for Herod bids me hope
 That he will soon behold the snare they laid.
 Punish the traitors, and revenge the cause
 Of injur'd virtue : if thou lov'st thy king,
 If thou regard'st his honour or his peace,
 Calm his wild rage, embitter not his soul
 With vile suspicions, and remember, slave,
 Rome is the scourge of villainy ; remember
 That Varus knows thee ; that he's master here,
 And that his eyes are open to detect thee.
 Away : let Mariamne be obey'd,
 And treated like a queen ; observe her well,
 And, if thy life be dear to thee, respect her.

M A Z A E L.

MAZAEI.

My Lord —

VARUS.

Begone : you know my last commands ;
Reply not, but obey them.

S C E N E III.

VARUS, ALBINUS.

VARUS.

Without thee,
And thy well-timed advice, thou seest, my friend,
The beauteous Mariamne had been lost.

ALBINUS.

Zares' return rais'd my suspicions of him ;
His most officious care t'avoid thy presence,
And troubled features, I must own, alarm'd me.

VARUS.

How much I owe thee for th' important service !
By thee she lives ; by thee my heart once more
Shall taste its noblest happiness, the best
And fairest treasure of the virtuous mind,
The happiness to succour the oppress'd.

ALBINUS.

Such gen'rous cares besit the soul of Varus ;
Thy arm was ever stretch'd to help the wretched ;

Still hast thou born Rome's thunder thro' the world,
 And only conquer'd but to bless mankind;
 Wou'd I might say thy pity dictates here,
 And not thy love!

VARUS.

Must love then be the cause?
 Who wou'd not cherish innocence like hers?
 What heart, howe'er indiff'rent, wou'd not plead
 So fair a cause? who wou'd not dye to save her?

ALBINUS.

Thus the deceitful passion hides itself
 In virtue's garb, and steals into the heart:
 Thy hapless flame—

VARUS.

Albinus, I confess it;
 The wretched Varus dotes on Mariamne:
 Thou see'st my naked heart, which fears not thee,
 Because thou art my friend: judge then, Albinus,
 How must her dangers have alarm'd my soul!
 Her safety and her welfare are my own;
 Death in its ugliest form were welcome to me,
 If it cou'd make my Mariamne happy.

ALBINUS.

How alter'd is the noble heart of Varus!
 Love has aveng'd himself of all thy slights;

No

No longer do I see the virtuous Roman,
Severe and unimpassion'd, 'midst the croud
Of rival beauties, who sollicit
His wand'ring eyes, regardless of their charms.

V A R U S.

To virtue then, thou knowst, and her alone,
I paid my vows : in vain corrupted Rome
Offer'd her venal beauties to my eyes ;
Their pride disgusted, and their arts displeas'd ;
False in their vows, and in their vengeance cruel :
I saw their shameless fronts all cover'd o'er
With foul dishonour : vanity, ambition,
Caprice, and folly, bore the name of love ;
Such conquests were unworthy of thy friend.
At length the pow'r I had so long contemn'd
Indignant saw me from his eastern throne,
And soon subdued ; it was my fate to rule
O'er Syria's melancholy plains : when heav'n
Had to Augustus giv'n the vanquish'd world,
And Herod, midst a croud of kneeling kings,
Fell at his feet, and sued for his protection,
Hither I came, and fatal to my peace
Was Palæstine, for there I first beheld her.
The melancholy theme of ev'ry tongue
Was Mariamne's woes ; all wept her fate,

Doom'd

Doom'd to the arms of an inhuman husband,
 Who slew the father of his lovely bride :
 Thou know'st what mis'ries she had suffer'd since,
 Her sorrows only equal'd by her virtue :
 Truth, ever banish'd from the courts of kings,
 Dwells on her lips, and all the art she knows
 Is but the gen'rous care to serve the wretched.
 Her duty is her law ; her innocence,
 Calm and serene, contemns the tyrant's pow'r,
 And pardons her oppressor ; ev'n sollicit
 My aid to save the man who wou'd destroy her.
 Her virtues, her misfortunes, and her charms
 United, are too pow'rful for my soul ;
 I love her, my Albinus ; but my love
 Is not a passion which one day creates,
 And in another is forgotten ; no :
 The heart she has subdu'd is not the slave
 Of loose desire, but by her virtue fir'd,
 Means to revenge but never to betray her.

ALBINUS.

But if the king, my lord, has gain'd from Rome
 Permission to return.

VARUS.

Ay, that I fear :

Alas ! myself did move the senate for him.

Perhaps

Perhaps already he returns to empire,
 And this abhorred mandate is his own ;
 The first sad proof of his authority :
 It may be fatal to him. Varus' pow'r
 May soon be lost, but O ! his love remains ;
 Yes, I will dye in Mariamne's cause ;
 The world shall weep her fate, and I revenge it.

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

SALOME, MAZAEI.

SALOME.

THOU see'st, we're ruin'd ; Mariamne triumphs,
 And Salome's undone : that ling'ring Zares,
 How tedious was his voyage, as if the sea
 Unwillingly transported him ! whilst Herod
 Flies with the winds to empire and to love :
 But sea and land, the elements, the heav'ns,
 All, all conspire with Varus, to destroy me.
 Ambition, thou hast plung'd me deep in woe ;
 Why did I listen to thy fatal voice ?
 I knew his foolish heart wou'd soon relent ;
 Ev'n now I fear he has revok'd the mandate,

And

And all the harvest of my toil is grief
 And danger, that still wait on high conditions
 Stripp'd of its pow'r: already fawning crouds
 Adore my rival, and insult my fall:
 My feeble glories, all eclips'd by her,
 Shall shine no more, for this new deity
 Must now be worshipp'd: but this is not all,
 My death, I know, must crown the triumph; she
 Can never reign whilst Salome survives;
 She will not spare a life so fatal to her.
 And yet, O shame, O infamous submission!
 My pride must stoop to vile dissimulation,
 To sooth her vanity with feign'd respect,
 And give her joy of—Salome's destruction.

M A Z A E L.

Despair not, Madam, arms may yet be found
 To conquer this proud queen: I ever fear'd
 Her pow'rful charms, and Herod's weakness for her;
 But if I may depend on Zares, still
 In the king's bosom dwells determin'd hate,
 And he has sworn that she shall die: the blow
 Is but suspended till he comes himself
 To execute his vengeance; but, mean time,
 Whether his heart be sharpen'd by resentment,

Or

Or mov'd by love, it is enough his hand
 Once sign'd the mandate : Mariamne soon
 Will swell the tempest, and eternal discord
 Shall rankle in their hearts : I know them well :
 Soon will she light again the torch of hatred,
 Revive his doubts, and work her own destruction :
 With new disdain will irritate his soul :
 Rely upon herself, and mark her ruin.

S A L O M E.

O ! 'tis uncertain ; I can never wait
 Such tardy vengeance ; I have surer means ;
 Danger has taught me wisdom : this loud rage,
 These violent transports of th'impassion'd Varus,
 If I observe aright, can never flow
 From generosity alone, and pity
 Is seldom known by marks like these : the queen
 Has charms, and Varus may have charms for her.
 I know the pow'r of Mariamne's beauty,
 Nor envy her the croud of gazing fools,
 Who throw their flatt'ring incense at her feet ;
 The dang'rous happiness may cost her dear :
 Whether she listens to the Roman's vows,
 Or with the conquest only means to sooth
 Her fickle pride, it is enough for me,
 If it preserves that pow'r I must not lose

O'er

O'er Herod's heart. Take care my faithful spies
 Perform their office ; let them be rewarded,
 And sell me precious secrets.—Ha ! she comes,
 Must I then see her ?

S C E N E. II.

MARIAMNE, ELIZA, SALOME, MAZAEI, NABAL.

SALOME.

Joy to Mariamne :

Herod returns, and Rome this day restores
 To me a brother, and to thee a husband.
 Thy cruel scorn had rais'd his just resentment,
 Which now subsides, and love has quench'd the flame
 Which love alone inspir'd : his triumphs past,
 His future glories, all the senate's rights
 Repos'd in him, the titles he has gain'd,
 All brought to lay at Mariamne's feet,
 Proclaim thy happiness : enjoy his heart ;
 Enjoy his empire ; I am pleas'd to see
 Thy virtues thus rewarded ; Salome
 Shall lend her aid to join your hands together.

MARIAMNE.

I neither look'd for, nor desir'd your friendship :
 I know you, madam, and shall do you justice ;

I know by what mean arts, and treach'rous falshood,
 Your pow'rless malice has pursu'd my life.
 Perhaps thou think'st my heart is like thy own,
 And therefore tremblest ; but thou know'st me not :
 Fear nothing, for thy crimes and punishment
 Are both beneath my notice : I have seen
 Thy base designs, and have forgiven them :
 I leave thee to thy conscience, if a heart
 Guilty as thine is capable of feeling.

S A L O M E.

I've not deserv'd this bitterness and wrath
 From Mariamne : to my honest zeal,
 My conduct, and my brother, I appeal
 From thy suspicions.

M A R I A M N E.

I've already told thee,
 All is forgotten, I am satisfy'd,
 And I can pardon, tho' I can't believe thee.

M A Z A E L.

Now, by the pow'r supreme, my royal mistress,
 Scarce cou'd my pains—

M A R I A M N E.

Stop, Mazaël, excuse
 Is added injury ; obey the king,

That

That is thy duty : sold to my oppressors,
 Thou art their instrument ; perform thy office,
 I shall not stoop to make complaints of thee.
 Thou, Salome, may'st hence, and tell the king

[*To Salome.*]

The secrets of my soul ; enflame his heart
 Once more with rage ; I shall not strive to calm it :
 Instruct your creatures to deal forth their slander,
 I've left their vile attempts unpunish'd still ;
 Content to use no arms against my foes,
 But blameless virtue, and a just disdain.

M A Z A E L.

What haughtiness !

S A L O M E.

*T will meet with its reward :
 It is the pride of art to punish folly.

S C E N E III.

M A R I A M N E, E L I S A, N A B A L.

E L I S A.

Why, my lov'd mistress, wou'd you thus provoke
 A foe who burns with ardor to destroy you ?
 Perhaps the rage of Herod is suspended
 But for a time, and yet may burst upon you.

Death

Death was departing, and thou call'st him back,
 When thou shoud'st strive to turn his dart aside :
 Thou hast no friend to guard or to defend thee ;
 Varus, thy kind protector, must obey
 The senate's orders, and to distant realms
 Convey its high commands : at his request,
 And by thy kind assistance, Herod gain'd
 His pow'r, and now the tyrant will return
 With double terror : thou hast furnish'd him
 With arms against thyself, and must depend
 On this proud master, to be dreaded more
 Because he loves, because his passion sown'd
 By thy disdain——

MARIAMNE.

My dear Elifa, fly,
 Bring Varus hither : thou art in the right ;
 I see it all ; but I have other cares ;
 My soul is fill'd with more important bus'ness :
 Let Varus come : Nabal, stay thou with me.

S C E N E IV.

MARIAMNE, NABAL.

MARIAMNE.

Thy virtues, thy experience, and thy zeal
 For Mariamne's welfare, have long since

Deserv'd

Deserv'd my confidence : thou know'st my heart,
 And all its purposes ; the woes I feel,
 And those I fear: thou saw'st my wretched mother,
 Driv'n to despair, with tears imploring me
 To share her flight : her mind, replete with terror,
 Sees ev'ry moment the impetuous Herod,
 Yet reeking with the blood of half her race,
 Assassinate her dearest Mariamne.

Still she intreats me, with my helpless children,
 To fly his wrath, and leave this hated clime ;
 The Roman vessels might transport us soon
 From Syria's borders to th' Italian shore ;
 From Varus I might hope some kind protection,
 And from Augustus ; fortune points the way
 For my escape, the only path of safety :
 And yet, from virtue or from weakness, which
 I know not, but my foolish heart recoils
 At flying from a husband's arms, and keeps,
 Spite of myself, my ling'ring footsteps here.

N A B A L.

Thy fears are groundless ; yet I must admire them,
 Because they flow from virtue : thy brave heart,
 That fears not death, yet trembles at the thought
 Ev'n of imaginary guilt : but cease.

Your

Your causeless doubts ; consider where you are ;
Open your eyes, and mark this fatal palace,
Wet with a father's and a brother's blood.
In vain the king denies the horrid deed ;
Cæsar in vain absolves him from the crime,
Whilst the whole east pronounce him guilty of it.
Think of thy mother's fears, thy injur'd sons,
Thy murder'd father, the king's cruelty,
Thy sister's hatred, and what scarce my tongue
Can mention without horror, tho' thy virtue
Regardless smiles, thy death this day determin'd.
If, undismay'd by such a scene of woe,
Thou art resolv'd to meet and brave thy fate,
O still remember, still defend thy children :
The king hath ta'en away their hopes of empire,
And well thou know'st what dreadful oracles
Long since alarm'd thy fears, when heav'n foretold,
That a strange hand shou'd one day join thy sons
To their unhappy father. A wild Arab,
Implacable and pitiless, already
Hath half fulfill'd the terrible prediction :
After a deed so horrid, may he not
Accomplish all the rest ? From Herod's rage
Nothing is sacred ; who can tell but now,

Ev'n

Ev'n now he comes to act his bloody purpose,
And blot out all our Asmonæan race?

'Tis time to guard against him, to prevent
His guilt, and stop his murth'rous hand ; to save
Those tender victims from a tyrant's sword,
And hide them from the sight of such examples.

Within thy palace from my earliest years
Brought up, and by thy ancestors belov'd,
Thou see'st me ready to partake thy fortunes
Where'er thou goe'st : away then ; break thy chains ;
Fly to the justice of a Roman senate ;
Implore them to adopt thy injur'd sons,
And shelter their distress : such innocence
And virtue will astonish great Augustus.
If just and happy is his reign, as fame
Reports, and conquer'd worlds in rapture bend
The knee before him, if he merits all
The honours he has gain'd, he must protect thee.

M A R I A M N E.

My doubts are vanish'd, and I yield to thee ;
To thy advice, and to a mother's tears ;
To my son's danger, to my own hard fate ;
Which dooms me yet perhaps to greater ills

Than

Than I have suffer'd. Go thou to my mother ;
 When night shall throw her sable mantle o'er
 This seat of guilt, let some one give me notice
 That all is ready ; since it must be done,
 I am prepar'd.

S C E N E V.

MARIAMNE, VARUS, ELISA.

VARUS.

I come, great queen, to know
 Your last commands ; which, as the law of heav'n,
 Shall be reverd : say, must this arm revenge thee ?
 Speak, and 'tis done : command, and I obey.

MARIAMNE.

Varus, I'm much indebted to thy goodness,
 And, but my sorrows plead their own excuse,
 Shou'd not be thus importunate ; I know
 Thou lov'st to help the wretched, therefore ask
 Thy gen'rous aid : whilst Herod's doubtful fate
 Hung in the ballance, and he knew not which
 Awaited him, a prison or a throne,
 I did sollicit Varus in his favour ;
 Spite of his cruelties, against my peace,
 Against my int'rest, I perform'd my duty.
 Now Mariamne for herself implores



Thy

Thy kind protection ; begs thee to preserve
From most inhuman laws, her hapless sons,
The poor remains of Syria's royal race.

Long since I shou'd have left these guilty walls,
And ask'd the senate for some safe retreat ;
But whilst the sword of war fill'd half the world
With blood and slaughter, t'was in vain to seek
For refuge in the scene of wild destruction :
Augustus now hath giv'n the nations peace,
And spread his bounties o'er the face of nature :
After the toils of hateful war, resolv'd

To make the world, which he had conquer'd, happy :
He sits supreme o'er tributary kings,
And takes the poor and injur'd to his care :
Who has so fair a title to his justice,
As my unhappy, my defenceless children ?
Brought by their weeping mother from afar
To ask his succour ; he will shelter them,
His gen'rous hand will wipe off all our tears.
I shall not ask him to revenge my cause,
Or punish my proud foes ; it is enough
If my lov'd children, form'd by his example,
And by his justice taught, true Romans soon,
Shall learn to rule of those who rule mankind.
A mother's comfort, and her children's safety,

Depend

Depend on thee: my woes will vanish all
 If thou wilt hear me; and thy noble heart
 Hath ever been the friend of injur'd virtue:
 To thee I owe my life: assist me now,
 Remove me, Varus, from this fatal palace;
 Grant my benighted steps a friendly guide
 To Zidon's ports, where now thy vessels lie.

Not answer me! what means that look of sorrow?
 Why art thou silent? O! too well I see
 Thou wilt not hear the voice of wretchedness.

V A R U S.

It is not so: I hear, and will obey thee:
 My guards shall follow thee to Rome: dispose
 Of them, of me; my heart, my life is thine.
 Flee from the Tyrant, break the fatal tie;
 'Tis punishment enough to be forsaken
 By Mariamne: ne'er shall he behold thee;
 Thanks to his own injustice; and I feel
 Too well there cannot be a fate more cruel.
 Forgive me, but the thought of losing thee
 Hath drawn the fatal secret from my breast;
 I own my crime: but, spite of all my weakness,
 Know, my respect is equal to my love:

Varus but wishes to protect thy virtue,
But to revenge thy injuries, and die.

M A R I A M N E.

I hoped the great preserver of my life
Wou'd prove the guardian of my honour too ;
And to his pity only thought I ow'd
His kind assistance : ne'er did I expect
That he, of all men, shou'd increase my sorrows ;
Or that, to crown the woes of Mariamne,
I shou'd be forc'd to tremble at thy goodness,
And blush for ev'ry favour I receiv'd :
Yet, think not, Varus, that thy passion, thus
Delear'd, shall rob thee of my gratitude :
My constant friendship shall be ever thine ;
I will forget thy love, but not thy virtues :
Thou hadst my praise and my esteem till now,
But longer converse may deprive thee of it ;
For thy sake therefore, Varus, I must leave thee.

S C E N E VI.

V A R U S, A L B I N U S.

A L B I N U S.

I fear your're troubled, Sir ; your colour changes.

V A R U S.

Albinus, I must own, my spirits droop ;
Pity, my friend, the weakness of a heart

That

That never lov'd before : alas ! I knew not
 How strong my fetters were, but now I feel,
 Nor can I break them : with what sweet demeanor,
 And lovely softness, did she chide my passion ;
 Calm and unruffled, how her tranquil prudence
 Taught me my duty, and enforc'd her own ;
 How I ador'd her ev'n when she repuls'd me !
 I've lost all hope, yet love her more than ever :
 Gods ! for what dreadful trial of my faith
 Am I reserv'd ?

A L B I N U S.

Wilt thou then aid her flight ?

V A R U S.

'Tis a sad office.

A L B I N U S.

Art thou pleas'd so well
 With her disdain, as thus to make thyself
 Unhappy, and promote thy own destruction ?
 What dost thou purpose ?

V A R U S.

Can I e'er forsake her ?
 Can I rebel against her laws ? my heart
 Were then unworthy of her. Hence my doubts,
 'Twas Mariamne spoke, and I obey :
 Quick let her leave the Tyrant ; let her seek

Augustus ; she has cause to fly, and Varus
 Has none to murmur or complain ; at least
 She leaves me the sweet pleasure to reflect,
 That I have liv'd and acted but for her ;
 Have broke her chains, have sav'd her precious life :
 Nay more : for I will sacrifice my love,
 Fly from those dang'rous charms that wou'd betray me,
 And imitate the virtue I adore.

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

VARUS, NABAL, ALBINUS, ATTENDANTS on VARUS.

N A B A L.

THE king, my lord, the happy Herod, comes
 Triumphant, and the Hebrews flock in crouds
 To meet him : Salome, alarm'd and fearful
 Of her declining interest, joins his train
 Of fawning courtiers, sooths his pride, and strives
 By ev'ry art to gain him to her purpose ;
 The priests attend, and strew their palms before him.
 With Herod comes the faithful Idamas,
 Deputed by his sov'reign to attend

The

The noble Varus; he will soon be here.
 Still hath he prov'd himself the constant friend
 Of Marianne, and by wholesome counsels
 Soften'd the rage of his impetuous master;
 The queen, still wav'ring and irresolute,
 Condemns herself; her rigid virtue fears
 To do what danger tells her must be done:
 She quits the palace, then returns; mean while
 Her anxious mother, falling at her feet,
 Bathes them in tears, points to her weeping children,
 And trembling begs her to depart: she stops,
 And doubts, and much I fear will stay too long:
 'Tis thou must hasten her; on thee alone
 Depends the safety of the noblest being
 Heav'n e'er gave birth to. O preserve her; save
 The race august sprung from a line of kings;
 Save Mariamne. Are your guards all ready?
 May I inform her of it?

V A R U S.

All's prepar'd:
 I gave them orders; she may go this moment.

N A B A L.

And wilt thou too permit a faithful servant
 To follow his lov'd mistress?

H 3

V A R U S.

V A R U S.

Go with her,
 Wait on her steps, and guard her as thy life :
 This hateful place deserves her not : may heav'n,
 In pity to her sorrows, smile upon her ;
 Light up a fairer sun to gild her journey,
 And bid the waves in smoother currents flow,
 Obedient to the sacred charge they bear !
 Thou, good old man, may'st follow and attend her ;
 Thou art too happy, but thou hast deserv'd it.

S C E N E II.

V A R U S, A L B I N U S, A T T E N D A N T S on V A R U S.

V A R U S.

Already Herod comes ; the trumpet's sound
 Speaks his return ; unwelcome sound to me !
 I dread his presence : cruel as he is,
 Instant his wrath may fall on Mariamne :
 Wou'd she had left for ever these sad seats
 Of guilt and horror ! wou'd I might partake
 Her flight ! but O ! the more I love, the more
 I must avoid her : t'were in me a crime
 To follow her ; and all that Varus can—
 But Idamas approaches.

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

VARUS, IDAMAS, ALBINUS, ATTENDANTS,
on VARUS.

IDAMAS.

Ee'r the king,

My royal master, comes, with gratitude
To pay thy bounties, and receive from thee
The holy sceptre, say, wilt thou permit me?—

VARUS.

No more : your king may spare this idle homage,
These practis'd arts of visionary friendship
Amongst the great, drawn forth with pompous splendor
But to amuse the gaping multitude,
And foreign to the heart : but say, at length
Rome has consented ; Herod is your king ;
Doth he deserve to reign ? Is the queen safe,
And will he spare the blood of innocence ?

IDAMAS.

May the just gods, who hate the perjur'd man,
Open his eyes, now blinded by imposture !
But who shall dive into his secret thoughts,
Or trace th' emotions of his troubled soul ?
Nought can we draw from him but sullen silence ;
Or if perchance the name of Mariamne

Escape his lips, he sighs, and raves ; this moment
 Gives secret orders, and the next revokes them :
 Herod detests the race from whence she sprang,
 And hates her more because he lov'd too well.
 Perfidious Zares, by thy order stopp'd,
 And by thy order free'd, th'artificer
 Of calumny and fraud, will serve the cause
 Of subtle Salome, whilst Mazael lends
 His secret aid : the jealous Herod listens
 To their suggestions ; they besiege him closely ;
 And their officious hatred still keeps truth
 At distance from him : this great conqueror,
 Who made so many potent monarchs tremble,
 This king, whose noble deeds ev'n Rome admir'd,
 Whose name yet fills all Asia with alarms,
 In his own house beholds his glories fade :
 Torn by suspicions, and o'erwhelm'd with grief ;
 Led by his sister, hated by his wife :
 I pity him, and fear for Mariamne.
 Say, wilt thou not protect her ?

V A R U S.

'Tis enough :
 Albinus, follow me, the queen's in danger :
 Away, for I must save the innocent.

I D A M A S.

IDAMAS:

Will you not wait then for the king ?

VARUS.

I know

I shou'd receive him here : it is my duty,
For so the senate wills : but other cares
Inspire me now, and other int'rests guide :
'Tis my first duty to protect the wretched.

[Exit Varus.

IDAMAS.

What storms do I foresee ? what new distress
Will soon o'ertake us ? Now, O Israel's God,
Change Herod's heart !

S C E N E IV.

HEROD, MAZAEL, IDAMAS, ATTENDANTS
on HEROD

HEROD.

Varus avoid me too !

What horrors meet me here on ev'ry side !
Good heav'n ! can Herod inspire nought but hatred
And terror to mankind ? Is ev'ry heart
Thus shut against me ? To myself disgustful,
My people, and my queen ; with grief oppress'd
I re-ascend my throne, and only come

H 5

To

To see the sorrows my own hand hath made.

O heav'n!

MAZAEI.

Be calm, my lord, let me intreat you.

HEROD.

Wretch that I am, what have I done!

MAZAEI.

Ha! weeping!

Shall Herod weep, the great th' illustrious king,

The dread of Parthia, and the friend of Rome,

For wisdom and for valour long renown'd!

O! think my lord, of those distinguish'd honours

Which Antony and victory bestow'd;

Think of thy fame, when seen by great Augustus,

He chose thee from a croud of conquer'd kings,

And mark'd thee for his friend: call back the time,

When great Jerusalem, by thee subdued,

Submitted to thy laws; by thee defended,

Once more she shines with all her antient lustre,

And sees her sov'reign crown'd with fair success:

Never was king in peace or war more happy.

HEROD.

There is no happiness on earth for me;

Fate points its poison'd arrows at my breast;

And, to complete my woes, I have deserv'd them.

IDAMAS.

I D A M A S.

Permit me, Sir, the freedom to observe,
 Your throne, by fears and jealousies surrounded,
 Wou'd stand more firmly on love's nobler basis :
 The king who makes his people's happiness
 Secures his own : thy soul, thus rack'd with tortures,
 Might trace the poison'd waters to their spring.
 O, my lord, suffer not malicious tongues
 To wound the peace and honour of thy life ;
 Nor servile flatt'ers to estrange the hearts
 Of those who long to serve their royal master :
 Israel shall then enamour'd with thy virtues—

H E R O D.

And think'st thou Herod might again be lov'd ?

M A Z A E L.

Zares, my lord, still faithful to his charge,
 Burns with the same unwearied zeal to serve thee :
 He comes from Salome, and begs admittance.

H E R O D.

What ! both for ever persecute me ! No !
 Let not that monster e'er appear before me ;
 I've heard too much already : hence, begone,
 And leave me to myself : what shall I do
 To calm my troubled soul ? Stay, Idamas,
 And, Mazaël, stay.

S C E N E

S C E N E V.

HEROD, MAZAEEL, IDAMAS.

HEROD.

Behold this dreadful monarch,
 This mighty king, who made the nations tremble;
 Who knew so well to conquer and to reign,
 To break his chains, and make the world admire
 His wisdom and his pow'r; behold him now,
 Alas! how little like his former self!

MAZAEEL.

All own thy greatness, and adore thy virtues.

IDAMAS.

One heart alone resists, and that perhaps
 May still be thine.

HEROD.

No: Herod's a Barbarian,
 Unworthy of his throne.

IDAMAS.

Thy grief is just,
 And if for Mariamne——

HEROD.

Fatal name!
 'Tis that condemns me; that reproaches still
 My tortur'd soul with cruelty and weakness.

MAZAEEL.

M A Z A E L.

My lord, your goodness but augments her hatred ;
She loaths your sight, and flies from your embraces.

H E R O D.

I courted hers.

M A Z A E L.

Indeed, my lord ?

H E R O D.

I did :

This sudden change, this grief that hangs upon me,
These shameful tears, do they not all declare
That Herod is return'd from Mariamne ?
With love and hatred mingled in my soul,
I left the croud of flatt'ers in my court,
And flew to her : but what was my reward ?
How did we meet ! in anger, frowns, and strife :
In her indignant eyes I read my fate,
And my injustice : she scarce deign'd to cast
A look upon me ; ev'n my tears avail'd not ;
They only serv'd to make her scorn me more.

M A Z A E L.

You see, my lord, her soul's implacable,
And never will be soften'd by indulgence ;
It but enflames her pride.

H E R O D.

HEROD.

I know she hates me ;
But I've deserv'd it, and I must forgive her :
She has but too much cause from one so guilty.

MAZAEI.

Guilty, my lord ? hast thou forgot her slights,
Contempt, and pride, and wrath, and fierce resent-
ment ;

Her father's plot, her own designs against you,
And all her race your mortal foes ? Hircanus
Had oft betray'd you ; th' Asmonæan league
Was firmly knit ; and by such dang'rous pow'rs,
That nothing but a master-stroke cou'd save——

HEROD.

No matter : that Hircanus was her father,
I shou'd have spar'd him ; but I only listen'd
To proud ambition, and the love of empire :
My cruel policy destroy'd her race ;
I kill'd the father, and proscrib'd his daughter :
I wanted but to hate and to oppress,
And heav'n, to punish me, hath made me love her.

IDAMAS.

To feel a passion for a worthy object
Is not a weakness in us, but a virtue,

Worthy

Worthy of ev'ry good which heav'n hath giv'n thee ;
Esteem thy love amongst its choicest blessings.

HEROD.

What hath my rashness done ! ye sacred manes,
Hircanus, Oh !

MAZ A E L.

Banish the sad remembrance,
And grant, kind heav'n, the queen too may forget
it !

HEROD.

Unhappy father ! more unhappy husband !
The inj'ries I have done my Mariamne
Make her more dear : O ! if her heart—her faith—
But I have stay'd too long : now, Idamas,
I'll make amends for all ; go, haste, and tell her,
My soul, obedient to her will, shall lay
My throne, my life, my glory at her feet :
Amongst her sons I'll chuse a successor.
She has accus'd my sister as the cause
Of her misfortunes, henceforth I disclaim her ;
A nearer tye demands the sacrifice,
And Salome must yield to Mariamne :
My queen shall rule with pow'r unlimited !

MAZ A E L.

MAZ A E L.

My lord, you will not——

HER O D.

Yes : I am refoly'd :

I know her now ; ſhe is the choiceſt gift
 Of bounteous heav'n ; as ſuch I ſhall revere her :
 What cannot love, the mighty conqu'ror, do ?
 To Mariamne I ſhall owe my virtue.
 In ſavage pomp, and barb'rous majeſty,
 Too long hath Aſia ſeen her ſov'reign rule
 Reſpected by his people ; fear'd, admir'd,
 Yet hated ſtill ; with crouds of worſhippers,
 But not one friend. My ſiſter, whom long time
 This fooliſh heart believ'd, hath ne'er conſulted
 My happineſs, my int'reſt, or my fame :
 For Salome, more cruel than myſelf,
 And more revengeful, dipp'd her hands in blood,
 And ruled my ſubjects with a rod of iron :
 Whilſt Mariamne felt for the unhappy,
 Forgot her own diſtreſs to pity theirs,
 And told me all their ſorrows : but 'tis paſt :
 Henceforth I will be juſt, but not ſevere ;
 I'll ſtrive to pleaſe her by promoting ſtill
 The public weal : Judah ſhall bleſs my reign,

For

For I am chang'd. From this auspicious hour,
 Far from my throne, shall ev'ry jealous fear
 Be now remov'd : I will dry up the tears
 Of the oppress'd, and reign o'er Palæstine,
 Not as a tyrant, but a citizen ;
 Gain ev'ry heart to merit Mariamne's.
 O seek her, tell her how my soul repents ;
 That my remorse is equal to my rashness.
 Run, fly, begone, and instantly return.
 What do I see ? my sister ? hence : O heav'n,
 Finish the woes of my unhappy life !

S C E N E VI.

HEROD, SALOME.

SALOME.

Well, Sir, you've seen your dear deceitful foe,
 And suffer'd more affronts ; I know you have.

HEROD.

Madam, permit me to inform you, this
 Is not a time to add to my misfortunes ;
 I wou'd remove them : my imperious temper
 Made me more fear'd indeed, but more unhappy :
 Too long already o'er this house of sorrow
 Hath vengeance pour'd her black and deadly poison :

The

The queen and you, thus at perpetual variance,
 Wou'd be a spring of endless mis'ry ; therefore,
 My sister, for our mutual happiness,
 For thy repose and mine, 'tis best to part ;
 Immediately, away : it must be so.

SALOME.

What do I hear ! O fatal enemy !

HEROD.

A king commands, a brother begs it of thee :
 O may he ne'er again be forc'd to give
 One cruel order, ne'er take vengeance more,
 Nourish suspicions, or shed guiltless blood !
 Thou shalt no longer make my life a burthen ;
 Complain of me, lament thyself, but go.

SALOME.

Alas ! my lord, I shall make no complaints ;
 Since I am doom'd to banishment by thee,
 It must be just, and fitting that I shou'd be ;
 For I have ever learn'd to make thy will
 My law : if thou command'st, I must obey ;
 I never shall resent the injury,
 Or call on nature and the ties of blood,
 Or to attest, or vindicate my wrongs ;
 The voice of nature's seldom heard by kings,

The

The ties of blood are much too weak to bind them ;
 I will not boast that tender friendship now
 Whose zeal offends thee ; much less wou'd I call
 To thy remembrance all my service past ;
 One look I see from Mariamne soon
 Effaces all : but can'st thou ever think
 She will forget th' attempt upon her life
 Which Herod made ? thee she must fear : thou there-
 fore
 Shou'd'st dread her more : thou know'st her vows, her
 thoughts
 Are bent against thee, and whose counsels now
 Shall stay her vengeance ? Where's the faithful heart
 Devoted to thee ? where's the watchful eye,
 Ever awake, to guard the life of Herod ?
 Who shall unravel all her subtle plots,
 Or who restrain her wrath ? Dost thou believe,
 When thou hast put thy life within her pow'r,
 That love will plead for thee ? O no ! such hate,
 Such scorn as her's, such desperate resentment——

HEROD.

Permit me, Salome, at least to doubt,
 At least delude me with the flatt'ring hopes
 I may regain her heart : in this alone
 I wish to be deceiv'd : shew some regard,

Some

Some kind compassion for a brother's weakness :
 I must believe, thou know'st I've too much reason,
 Thy hatred was a barrier to our love :
 Thy malice harden'd Mariamne's heart,
 And, but for thee, I had been less detested.

S A L O M E.

Coud'st thou but know, O! coud'st thou but conceive
 To what excess——

HEROD.

Sister, I'll hear no more :
 Let Mariamne threaten ; let her take
 This loathsome life, for I am weary of it ;
 So shall I perish by the hand I love.

S A L O M E.

It wou'd be cruel to deceive you longer
 By guilty silence, or conceal her crimes :
 I know the dang'rous hazard that I run
 By serving you ; but I must speak, tho' death
 Were my reward : poor, blind, deluded husband,
 Enslav'd by love for a vile worthless woman ;
 Know Mariamne now, and know thy shame :
 'Tis not her pride, her hatred, and disdain,
 Shou'd make thee loath her, but that—she is false ;
 She loves another.

HEROD.

HEROD.

Mariamne love

Another! barb'rous Sister! to suspect
 Her spotless virtue! Is it thus thou mean'st
 To murder Herod? Are these poison'd darts
 The best farewell that thou can'st leave thy brother?
 To light up discord, shame, and rage, and horror,
 In my distracted mind! Cou'd Mariamne ——
 But thou already hast too oft deceiv'd me;
 Too long have I giv'n credit to thy falsehood:
 Now heav'n has punish'd my credulity,
 But it has ever been my fate to love
 Those who abhor me. You are all my foes;
 All sworn to persecute the wretched Herod.

SALOME.

Far from thy sight then——

HEROD.

Stir not hence, I charge thee;
 Another is belov'd? Speak, tell me, who
 Must fall a sacrifice to Herod's vengeance?
 Pursue thy work, and make my woes complete.

SALOME.

Since I must speak——

HEROD.

HEROD.

Strike here: behold my heart :

Who has dishonour'd me? Whoe'er he be,
Thou, Salome, perhaps may'st answer for it,
For thou art guilty: thou hast undeceiv'd me:
Now at thy peril speak.

SALOME.

No matter.

HEROD.

Well——

SALOME.

'Tis——

S C E N E VII.

HEROD, SALOME, MAZAEEL.

MAZAEEL.

Bear not this indignity, my lord,
The queen is fled, accompany'd by Varus.

HEROD.

Varus, and Mariamne! gods! where am I?

MAZAEEL.

Varus, my lord, and all his troops have left
The palace, and a secret band is plac'd
About the walls to favour her retreat;
Your Mariamne will be lost for ever.

HEROD.

HEROD.

The charm is broke, and day shines full upon me :
 Come, Salome, acknowledge now thy brother,
 And know him by his wrath ; let us surprife
 The infidel : now judge if Herod still
 Acts like himself, and like himself revenges.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

S A L O M E , M A Z A E L .

M A Z A E L .

Never did fair appearance gild so well
 The specious covering of a happy falsehood :
 With what dexterity I play'd on him,
 And blended truth with artifice ! But why
 Art thou dejected ? art thou not restor'd
 To Herod's favor ? Mariamne lost,
 Beyond recov'ry lost ? Thou art reveng'd ;
 The king's distracted. I am shock'd myself
 When I behold the work of my own hands !
 Thou too hast seen the horrid spectacle,
 The trembling slaves all butcher'd by his hand.

The

The Queen half-dead, and fainting by their side,
 And Herod's arm uplifted as in act
 To murder her : the children bath'd in tears
 Fall at his feet, and offer their own lives
 To save their mother's : can'st thou wish for more,
 Or hast thou aught to fear ?

SALOME.

I fear the king,
 I fear those fatal charms which he adores ;
 That arm which oft uplifted falls as oft
 Inactive down ; that anger which soon kindled
 Is soon extinct ; which, doubtful still and blind,
 Exhausts its feeble pow'rs in sudden transports :
 My triumphs, Mazaël, are uncertain still ;
 Twice has my fate been chang'd this day, and twice
 To hatred love succeeded : if he sees
 The queen again, we are undone.

S C E N E. II.

HEROD, SALOME, MAZAEL, GUARDS.

MAZAEL,

He comes,
 And seems disturb'd : what horror in his aspect !

SALOME.

Say, Herod, hast thou taken ample vengeance ?

MAZAEL.

MAZÆL.

I hope my royal master will forgive
 His faithful servant, who thus dares to speak
 Touching the queen : but Varus is her safe-guard ;
 Prevent his dark designs, and save thyself :
 The haughty prætor, resolute and bold,
 Will make a merit of destroying thee.

HEROD.

Alas ! my sister, how have I been treated !
 Deceiv'd, betray'd ! help me to rail, to curse
 This dear ungrateful woman : now my heart
 Rests all its hopes on thy assisting friendship :
 Thou, Salome, wert made a sacrifice
 To my unhappy love for Mariamne ;
 I number'd thee amongst my worst of foes ;
 For her unkindness did I punish thee ;
 But thou hast seen my tenderness betray'd,
 And, e'er this day is past, we'll be reveng'd :
 Yes, she shall suffer for her fatal pow'r
 O'er Herod's heart, that sigh'd for her alone.
 O how have I ador'd, and how detested,
 The faithless Mariamne ! and thou, Varus,
 Shalt feel my wrath ; thou art a Roman, therefore
 Thy life is safe ; but I can punish thee
 In blood more precious, and a dearer self :

Thou shalt behold the object of thy love,
 Who has prefer'd thee to her hated lord,
 Thou shalt behold her soon expire in torment
 Before thy eyes : dost thou not think Augustus
 Will praise my just severity ?

SALOME.

No doubt

He will, my lord, and wou'd himself advise it.
 On the same altar where his friends adore him,
 He sheds the blood of foes : he teaches kings
 To rule and to be fear'd ; let Herod mark
 And follow his example ; thus alone
 Thy life can be secure : the queen must stand
 Condemn'd by all, and thou be justify'd.

MAZAEI.

But make good use of this important moment,
 Whilst Varus is yet absent, and his forces
 Far from our walls ; now seize her, and complete
 Thy easy vengeance.

SALOME.

Above all conceal
 From Israel's sons thy purpose and thy grief,
 And spare thyself the horror of a fight
 So dreadful ; fly from this unhappy place,

The

The witness of thy shame, that must recall
A thousand mournful images ; O hide
From ev'ry eye thy sorrows and thy tears.

HEROD.

No : I must see her ; face to face confound her ;
Force her to answer ; hear her poor excuses :
I'll make her tremble at th'approach of death,
And ask that pardon she shall ne'er obtain.

SALOME.

My lord, you will not see her ?

HEROD.

Fear me not ;

Her doom is fix'd : vainly she hopes that love
Will plead her cause ; my heart is shut against her :
Those eyes, which once were dang'rous to my peace,
Are harmless now ; her presence will but raise
My anger, not my love. Guards, bring her hither ;
I'll only see, and hear, and punish her.

Sister, I wou'd be private for a moment :

[To the attendants.

Send Mariamne here : you may retire *[To the guards.*

S C E N E III.

HEROD alone.

Art thou resolv'd to see her then ? O Herod,
 Can'st thou depend on thy own treach'rous heart ?
 Is not her guilt too plain, and have I not
 Been basely injur'd ? Why then seek for more ?
 What profit can this interview afford me ?
 I know her thoughts already, know she hates me ;
 Why lives she yet ? revenge, thou art too slow !
 Unworthy Herod, coward as thou art,
 Go, see her, pardon, sigh again, and court
 Your haughty tyrant. No : to-night she dyes :
 I've sworn it : th'Asmonæan blood shall flow ;
 I hate the race, and am abhorr'd by them.
 But see, she comes, heav'n ! what a mournful sight !

S C E N E IV.

MARIAMNE, HEROD, ELIZA, GUARDS.

ELIZA.

Rouse up your spirits, Madam, 'tis the king.

MARIAMNE.

Where am I ; whither do you lead me ? O
 'Tis death to look upon him.

HEROD.

HEROD.

How my soul
Shudders at sight of her!

MARIAMNE.

Eliza, help,
Support me, I grow faint.

ELIZA.

This way.

MARIAMNE.

What torment!

HEROD.

What shall I say to her? O heav'n!

MARIAMNE.

Well, Sir,

Your pleasure: wherefore am I order'd here?
Is it to yield thee up the poor remains
Of hated life, destructive to us both?
Take it; strike here; I'll thank thee for the blow;
The only gift I wou'd accept from thee.

HEROD.

Then thou shalt have it: but first speak, defend,
If possible, thy shameful flight, and tell me wherefore,
When Herod's heart, to thee alone indulgent,

So oft offended, yet as oft forgave thee,
 The partner of my empire and my glory,
 What could'st thou purpose by so black a crime ?

MARIAMNE.

Is that a question fit for thee to ask ?
 But 'tis not now a time for vain reproaches ;
 Yet sure, my lord, if wretched Mariamne,
 Far from these walls had sought some kind retreat,
 If she for once had dar'd to violate
 A husband's rights, and swerve from her obedience,
 Think of my royal ancestors ; remember
 My suff'rings past, my present danger ; think
 On these, my lord, and blame me if thou dar'st.

HEROD.

But when thy guilty passion for a traitor,
 For Varus——

MARIAMNE.

Stop thy bold licentious tongue :
 My life is thine ; but do not cover me
 With foul dishonour ; let me pass at least
 Without a blush unspotted to the grave :
 Do not forget the sacred tie that bound us,
 That join'd my honour and my fame with thine,

As

As such I have preserv'd them : look on me ;
 Strike here ; thour't welcome : but remember still
 I am thy wife ; pay some respect to me,
 And to thyself.

HEROD.

O ! it becomes thee well .
 To talk of sacred ties which thou hast broke :
 Perfidious woman ! wou'd not the proud scorn
 And hatred thou hast shewn alone condemn thee ?

MARIAMNE.

Since thou already hast decreed my fate,
 What wou'd avail my hatred or my love ?
 What right hast thou to Mariamne's heart,
 Which thou hast fill'd with sorrow, and despair,
 And anguish : thou who, for these five years past,
 Hast mark'd my days with bitterness and woe ;
 Thou fell destroyer of my guiltless parents,
 Where is my murder'd father ? cruel Herod !
 O ! if thy rage had sought no blood but mine,
 Heav'n be my witness, I had lov'd thee still,
 And blest thee in my latest hour : but O !
 Do not pursue me, Herod, after death ;
 Do not extend my woes beyond the grave,
 Preserve my children ; do not punish them,

Because they're mine, but act a father's part :
 Perhaps hereafter thou wilt know their mother ;
 Perhaps shalt one day pity, when too late,
 The heart, which, never but by thee suspected,
 Cou'd not disguise its griefs ; the heart which still
 Preserv'd its virtue, and, but for thyself,
 Had lov'd thee, Herod.

HEROD.

Ha ! what do I hear !
 What charm, what secret pow'r controuls my rage,
 And steals me from myself ? O Mariamne !

MARIAMNE.

O cruel Herod !

HEROD.

O my foolish heart !

MARIAMNE.

For pity's sake behold my wretchedness,
 And take this hated life.

HEROD.

My own is thine,
 For ever thine ; thou art my Mariamne :
 Banish thy fears ; O thou wer't sure to triumph
 When I beheld thee ; make no more excuses,
 Thou art, thou must be innocent : I now
 Must tremble in my turn, and ask forgiveness :

Wilt

Wilt thou not pardon him who pardon'd thee?
 Were our hearts made but to detest each other,
 To persecute ourselves? Let us at once
 End all our fears and all our pains together;
 Give me thy love, give me thy hand again.

MARIAMNE.

Can'st thou desire this hand? O heav'n, thou know'st
 Herod's is stain'd with blood.

HEROD.

It is: I slew
 Thy father, and my king; but wherefore did it?
 To reign with thee: and what was my reward?
 Thy hatred; a reward I well deserv'd:
 I have no right to murmur or complain;
 Thy father's death, and the injustice done
 To thy unhappy children, are the least
 Of Herod's guilt; it reach'd ev'n Mariamne,
 And for a moment I detested thee;
 Nay more, gave ear to foul suspicions of thee;
 'Twill be the height of virtue to forgive me;
 The more my crimes, the more thy soul will shew
 Its greatness: thou hast seen my weakness for thee,
 Take heed that thou abuse it not; for love
 And rage, thou know'st, by turns possess my soul;

O give it ease: thou turn'st aside thy eyes,
Speak, Mariamne.—

M A R I A M N E.

Such tumultuous transports
Can never spring, I fear, from true repentance:
Art thou sincere, and may I trust thee, Herod?

H E R O D.

Thou may'st: what is there which thou can'st not do
If thou wilt cease to hate me? 'twas thy scorn
That rais'd such furious tempests in my soul;
It was the loss of Mariamne's heart
That made me savage, barb'rous, and inhuman:
My tears shall wash away the mutual stain
Of both our faults: and here I swear—

S C E N E V.

H E R O D, M A R I A M N E, E L I Z A, a G U A R D.

G U A R D.

My lord,

The people are in arms; they have destroy'd
The scaffold rais'd by Salome's command,
And slain the officers of justice: Varus
Assumes the sov'reign pow'r, he comes this way,
And ev'ry moment we expect him here.

H E R O D.

HEROD.

Ha! can it be! thus at the very instant
When I was falling at thy feet, to raise
Thy minion—

MARIAMNE

O my Lord, can you believe—

HEROD.

Thou seek'st my life, and thou shalt have it, traitress;
But I will drag thee with me to the tomb,
Spite of thyself, we there shall be united.
A guard there, seize, and watch her.

S C E N E VI.

HEROD, MARIAMNE, SALOME, MAZAEI,
ELIZA, GUARDS.

SALOME.

O, my brother,
Venture not forth; for the rebellious Hebrews
Are rais'd against you, and demand your life;
Repeating still the name of Mariamne:
They come ev'n now to seize and take her from thee.

HEROD.

Away. I'll meet them unappall'd: but thou
Shalt answer for this insult: to thy care
I leave her, Salome, guard well thy charge.

M A R I-

MARIAMNE.

I fear not death, but call high heav'n to witness—

MAZAEI.

My Lord, the Romans are already here.

HEROD.

And must I leave the guilty wretch unpunish'd ?

No : she shall bleed : it must be so : alas !

In my sad state I can determine nothing ;

Death wou'd be welcome ; I'll away and meet it.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V. S C E N E I.

MARIAMNE, ELIZA, GUARDS.

MARIAMNE.

Soldiers, retire, and leave your queen at least
The mournful privilege to weep alone.

[The guards retire to a corner of the stage.]

Just heav'n ! is this at last my wretched fate ?

My noble blood, my title to a throne,

All that cou'd promise years of happiness,

And days of pleasure, turn'd to deadly poison,

Have

Have fill'd my cup with bitterness and woe.
O birth ! O youth ! and thou destructive beauty,
Whose dang'rous lustre but inflam'd my pride,
Flatt'ring delusion ! unsubstantial shade
Of fancy'd blifs, O how hast thou deceiv'd me !
Beneath my fatal throne for ever lurk'd
Anguish and care, digging the grave that now
Gapes to receive the dying Mariamne.
In Jordan's flood I saw my brother perish,
My father massacred by bloody Herod,
Who now has doom'd to death a guiltless wife :
My virtue still remain'd, and that the tongue
Of slander strives to wound : thou pow'r supreme !
Whose chastisements severe are but the proofs
Of innocence, I ask not for thy aid,
Nor for thy vengeance ; my great ancestors
Taught me to look on death unmerited
Without a fear : take then my guiltless blood,
But O ! defend my fame : command the tyrant
To spare my mem'ry ; let not clam'rous falsehood
Insult my ashes : virtue is reveng'd
When she's respected. But what new alarm,
What dreadful shrieks are these ? the palace rings
With loud confusion, and the din of arms :

I am perhaps the cause, they fight for me :
They force the doors ; ha ! what do I see ?

S C E N E II.

MARIAMNE, VARUS, ELIZA,
ALBINUS, SOLDIERS.

VARUS.

Away :

Hence ruffians ; you who hold your queen in bondage,
Vile Hebrews, hence : — you, Romans, do your office.

[Herod's guards go off, chain'd by Varus's soldiers.]

Now, Mariamne, thou art free ; thou see'st
The tyrant cou'd not bar my entrance here :
Mazael lies bath'd in his perfidious blood ;
At least my arm hath half aveng'd the cause
Of injur'd majesty : haste, Mariamne,
Seize the propitious moment, and secure
A shelter from the storm : let us begone.

MARIAMNE.

My lord, I cannot now accept thy bounty ;
After the vile reproach which Herod cast
On my fair fame, I shou'd indeed deserve it,
Were I imprudent to receive the aid
Thou proffer'st : I have much more cause to dread
Thy kindness now than his barbarity ;

'T woud

'T wou'd be disgraceful thus to owe my life
To Varus ; honour says ev'n this is guilt,
And death alone can expiate my offence.

VARUS.

What wou'd'st thou do ? alas ! unhappy princess,
A moment may destroy thee : the time presses ;
Still we're in arms, and Herod may succeed :
Dost thou not fear his rage and his despair ?

MARIAMNE.

No : I fear nought but shame ; and know my duty.

VARUS.

Am I then doom'd for ever to offend you ?
But I will do the work of vengeance for thee,
Spite of thyself : once more I'll to the field ;
And, if the Tyrant comes across me there,
This arm ——

MARIAMNE.

Stop, Varus ; I detest a triumph
So dearly bought : know, Sir, the life of Herod
Demands my care : his rights ——

VARUS.

Are forfeited

By his ingratitude.

M A R I.

M A R I A M N E.

MARIAMNE.

The sacred tye —

VARUS.

Is broken.

MARIAMNE.

Duty hath united us.

VARUS.

But guilt divorces; therefore do not stay me,
Revenge thyself, and save so many virtues.

MARIAMNE.

Thou woud'st disgrace them.

VARUS.

He wou'd take thy life.

MARIAMNE.

Yet his is sacred still to Mariamne.

VARUS.

He kill'd thy father.

MARIAMNE.

Varus, I know well

What Herod did, and what I ought to do.

Patient, I'll wait the fury of the storm,

Nor by his crimes wou'd justify my own.

VARUS.

O noble, brave, unconquerable heart!

Ye gods, how many virtues have conspir'd

To

To swell this tyrant's guilt ! O Mariamne !
 The more thou shalt disclaim my proffer'd service,
 The more am I resolv'd to disobey thee.
 Thy honour disapproves what mine commands ;
 But nought shall stop me, nought intimidate :
 I go to search the tyrant, and repair
 The hours I've lost in not revenging thee.

M A R I A M N E.

My lord ——

S C E N E III.

M A R I A M N E, E L I Z A, G U A R D S.

M A R I A M N E.

He's gone, and wou'd not hear me : heav'n
 Let not more blood be shed ; O spare my subjects ;
 Pour all thy wrath on me, and spare ev'n Herod !

S C E N E IV.

M A R I A M N E, E L I Z A, N A B A L, G U A R D S.

M A R I A M N E.

O Nabal, art thou here ? what hast thou done
 With my dear children ? where's my mother ?

N A B A L.

Safe :

The wrath of Herod reaches not to them :
 Thou art the only object of his fury,

Which

Which kindles at the hateful name of Varus :
 If he is conquer'd, Mariamne dies,
 The barb'rous Zares is already sent
 With secret orders hither ; thou may'st guess
 The purport, therefore now exert thy pow'r :
 The people love thee ; on their loyal zeal
 Thou may'st rely ; the sight of thee will raise
 Their drooping hearts ; let 'em behold thee : fly,
 My royal mistress, let us call the priests,
 All Judah's sons will rise to guard the race
 Of their lov'd kings : at length the hour is come,
 To conquer or to die : let me intreat thee —

M A R I A M N E.

True courage lies in knowing how to suffer,
 And not in stirring up rebellious crouds
 Against their sov'reign : I shou'd blush to think,
 That, anxious for itself, my fearful heart
 Had ever form'd a wish for his destruction,
 Or rais'd my hopes of safety on his death :
 No : heav'n this moment has inspir'd my breast
 With rage less guilty, and a nobler purpose :
 Herod suspects me, he shall know me now ;
 I'll rush into the battle ; strive to part
 The king and Varus ; cast myself before
 My husband's feet, and yield him up my life.

I fled this morning from that dreadful vengeance
 Which now I search for : banish'd by his crimes,
 His danger has recall'd me : honour bids,
 And I obey : I go to save his life
 Who thirsts for mine.

N A B A L.

Alas ! to what extremes —

M A R I A M N E.

I'm lost : 'tis Herod.

S C E N E V.

HEROD, MARIAMNE, ELIZA, NABAL,
 IDAMUS, GUARDS.

HEROD.

Did they see each other ?
 Now, faithless wretch, thou dy'ft.

M A R I A M N E.

Do not, my lord,
 'Tis the last boon that I shall crave ; O do not —

HEROD.

Begone — guards, follow her.

[Guards carry off Mariamne.]

N A B A L.

Eternal justice !

S C E N E

S C E N E VI.

HEROD, IDAMUS, GUARDS.

HEROD.

Let me not hear her nam'd : perfidious woman !
Well, my brave soldiers, are there yet more foes ?

IDAMAS.

The Romans are subdued ; the Hebrews bend
Once more submissive to the yoke ; and Varus,
Cover'd with wounds, to thy victorious arm
Gives up the field : O thou hast gain'd this day
Eternal glory ; but the prætor's blood,
Shed by thy hand, will draw on thee the vengeance
Of proud offended Rome : a crime like this—

HEROD.

And now for my revenge on Mariamne.
Unworthy of my love I cast her from me,
And from this moment shall begin to reign.
O ! I was blind, that fond destructive passion
Was Herod's only weakness : let her dye :
Let me forget her charms, and her remembrance
Be blotted now for ever from my soul.
Are all things ready for the execution ?

IDAMAS.

They are, my lord.

HEROD.

HEROD.

How quickly they obey me !
 Unhappy Herod ! must she perish then ?
 Did'st thou say, Idamas, 'twas ready all ?

IDAMAS.

The guards have seiz'd her person, and too soon
 Thy vengeance will be satisfied.

HEROD.

She courted
 Her own destruction, and oblig'd me to it :
 But she is gone : I'll think no more on't : Oh !
 I cou'd have liv'd and dy'd with Mariamne :
 To what hast thou compell'd me ?

S C E N E the last.

HEROD, IDAMAS, NABAL.

HEROD.

Nabal, ha !
 Whither so fast ? just heaven ! and in tears !
 How my soul shakes with dreadful apprehension.

NABAL.

My lord—

HEROD.

What woud'st thou say ?

N A B A L

N A B A L.

My feeble voice
Dies on my trembling lips.

H E R O D.

O Mariamne !

N A B A L.

Superfluous sorrow !

H E R O D.

Ha ! 'tis past then, is it ?

N A B A L.

She is no more.

H E R O D.

Ha ! dead ! great God !

N A B A L.

My lord,
Permit me, 'tis a debt I owe to thee,
Due to her mem'ry, to her virtues due,
To shew thee what a treasure thou hast lost,
The worth of that dear blood which thou hast shed :
Know, Herod, she was never faithless to thee ;
But, ev'n whilst Varus fought for her, refus'd
His offer'd hand, slighted his ardent vows,
And hazarded her life to succour thee.

H E R O D.

What do I hear ? O wretched Herod ! Nabal,
What hast thou told me ?

N A B A L.

N A B A L.

In that very moment,
 Ev'n when her gen'rous heart inspir'd her last
 And noblest act, thy cruel orders came,
 And she was led to death : thy barb'rous sister
 Urg'd on her fate.

H E R O D.

Inhuman Salome ;
 Why did my justice spare that cruel monster ?
 What punishments must be reserv'd for thee !
 But let thy blood and mine—Nabal, go on,
 And kill me with the melancholy tale.

N A B A L.

How shall I speak the rest ! the guard, thou know'ft,
 By thee directed, led her hence : she follow'd
 Without a murmur or reproach of thee ;
 Without affected pride, or real fear :
 On her fair front fate graceful majesty,
 Temper'd with softness ; modest innocence
 And heart-felt virtue sparkled in her eyes ;
 Her sorrows gave new lustre to her charms ;
 Priests, Hebrews, all, with tears and shrieks besought
 her :

The soldiers call'd for death, and wept the fate
 Of Mariamne—and of Herod too ;

For

For deep, they cry'd aloud, wou'd be thy grief,
And horror and remorse attend thee ever.

HEROD.

How ev'ry word strikes to my heart !

N A B A L.

She felt

For their distress, and as she pass'd along,
Spake comfort to them. To the fatal scaffold
At length she came ; there lifted up her hands,
Loaded with shameful chains, and thus she spake :
‘ Farewell, unhappy king ; Herod, farewell !
‘ Thy dying Mariamne weeps for thee,
‘ And thee alone ; may this be thy last act
‘ Of foul injustice ! may thy reign henceforth
‘ Be happy ! Take my people to thy care ;
‘ Protect my children ; love and cherish them ;
‘ And I shall dye content. She spake, and bent
Her beauteous body to the axe ; I saw,
And wept her fall,

HEROD.

Then Mariamne's dead ;
And Herod lives : thou dear, and honoured shade !
Ye poor remains of all that once was fair
And good, and virtuous, to the silent grave

Soon

Soon will I follow thee—Ye shall not stop me,
 Perfidious subjects: from my murth'rous hand,
 Why will ye wrest my sword? O Mariamne!
 Come now, and be reveng'd: tear forth this heart
 That bleeds for thee. I faint, I dye. [*He faints.*]

N A B A L.

His senses
 Are lost; his grief o'er pow'rs him.

H E R O D.

What thick clouds
 O'erspread my troubled soul! deep melancholy
 Weighs down my senses; why am I abandon'd,
 Left to my sorrows thus? No sister here;
 No Mariamne! How you stand and weep
 At distance from me! Dare you not approach me!
 All Judah flies before her wretched king.
 What have I done? why am I thus abhorr'd?
 Who will relieve me? who will sooth my grief?
 Fetch Mariamne to me.

N A B A L.

Mariamne,
 My lord!

H E R O D.

Ay, bring her; for I know the sight
 Of her will calm at once my agony:

When Mariamne's with me, my blest'd hours
 Are all serene, and life glides sweetly on :
 Me thinks her very name hath heal'd my woes,
 And lessen'd my affliction : let her come.

N A B A L.

My lord—

HEROD.

I'll see her.

N A B A L.

Sir, have you forgot

That Mariamne's dead ?

HEROD.

What say'st thou ?

N A B A L.

Grief

Transports him ; his mind's hurt ; he's not himself.

HEROD.

Ha ! Mariamne dead ! destructive reason,
 Why com'st thou now to tell me this sad truth ?
 Down with these hateful walls, this fatal palace,
 Stain'd with her blood, and let its ruins hide
 Th' accursed place where Mariamne perish'd !
 Is she then dead, and I her murderer !
 Punish this parricide, this horrid monster :
 Tear him in pieces you who weep her loss,
 My subjects ; and thou, heav'n, who hast her now,
 Send down thy vengeful light'nings, and destroy me.

END of the FIFTH and last ACT.



B R U T U S

A

T R A G E D Y.



K 2

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS tragedy was exhibited for the first time in 1730. It met with less success than any of our author's pieces in the representation, having been played only sixteen nights. It has notwithstanding been translated into more languages, and more admired by foreigners than most of his tragedies. The present edition of it differs greatly from the former.

A
DISCOURSE
ON
TRAGEDY:

In a LETTER to Lord BOLINGBROKE.

On rhyme. On the difficulty of French versification. Examples of it. Tragedies in prose. Rhime pleases the French even in comedy. Character of the English theatre. Faults of the French. The English Cato. Comparison of the Manlius of M. De la Fosse with the Venice preserv'd of Otway. Examen of Shakespear's Julius Cæsar. Horrible spectacles amongst the Greeks. The observation of decorum and the unities. Fifth act of Rodogune. The pomp and dignity of the tragic Scene. Advice of an excellent critic. On love.

My LORD.

I HAVE here dedicated a French work, represented at Paris, to an English patron; not because there are not in my own country many men of

distinguish'd parts and judgment, to whom I might have paid that compliment ; but because the tragedy of Brutus is as it were a native of England. Your lordship may remember, that when I retir'd to Wandsworth with my friend, Mr. Fakener, that worthy and virtuous citizen, I employ'd my leisure hours at his house in writing the first act of this piece in English prose, pretty nearly the same as it now stands in French verse. I mention'd it to your lordship several times, and we were both equally surpriz'd that no * Englishman had ever treated this subject, which seems peculiarly adapted to your theatre. You encouraged me to pursue a plan which wou'd admit of such noble sentiments ; permit me therefore, my lord, to inscribe this work to your lordship, tho' not written in your own tongue ; to you, my lord,

* In the first editions of this tragedy, no notice was taken of Lee's Brutus ; but the fact roundly asserted, that no Englishman had ever treated this subject: in the edition, however, now before us, Mr. Voltaire, or somebody for him, has subjoin'd the following note :

' There is a Brutus by an author whose name is Lee, but it is a piece intirely unknown, and never play'd.'

Mr. V. must have had very little acquaintance with the English stage, not to know that 'l'auteur nommé 'Lee, the author whose name was Lee,' is one of our favorite dramatic writers ; and though wild and extravagant, was possess'd of fine abilities.

Spirat tragicum satis & feliciter audet.

His Lucius Junius Brutus, though inferior in conduct to Voltaire's, has many fine and masterly strokes in it.

Docte

Docte sermones utriusque linguæ.

you, who are able to instruct me in French as well as English; you, who at least have taught me to give my own language that force and energy, which freedom of thought can alone inspire: for the vigorous sentiments of the heart pass insensibly into our expressions, and he who thinks nobly will always speak so.

I must own, my lord, on my return from England, where I had pass'd almost two years in the continual study of your language, I found myself at a loss when I set about a French tragedy. I was accusom'd almost to think in English, and perceiv'd that the French idioms did not present themselves to my imagination with that facility as they had formerly: it was like a rivulet, whose current had been turn'd another way; some time and pains were requisite to make it flow again in its proper channel. I began then to be convinc'd, that to succeed in any art, we must cultivate it all our lives.

What deterr'd me more than any thing from works of this kind, was the severe rules of our poetry, and the slavery of rhyme. I regretted that happy liberty which you enjoy of writing tragedy in blank verse;

of lengthning out, or shortning almost all your words ; of running one verse into another ; and, upon occasion, coining new expressions ; which are generally adopted, if they sound well, and are useful, and intelligible. An English poet, said I, is a freeman, who can subject his language to his genius ; whilst the Frenchman is a slave to rhyme, oblig'd sometimes to make four verses to express a sentiment, that an Englishman can give you in one. An Englishman says what he will ; a Frenchman only what he can. One runs along a large and open field, whilst the other walks in shackles, through a narrow and slippery road : but, in spite of all these reflections and complaints, we can never shake off the yoke of rhyme ; it is absolutely essential to French poetry. Our language will not admit of inversions ; nor our verses bear to be run one into another : our syllables can never produce a sensible harmony, by their long or short measures : our cæsura's, and a certain number of feet, wou'd not be sufficient to distinguish prose from verse ; rhyme is therefore indispensibly necessary : besides, that so many of our great masters, who have written in rhyme, such as Corneille, Racine, and Despreaux, have so accus-tom'd our ears to this kind of harmony, that we cou'd never bear any other ; and I once more therefore
 insist

insist upon it, that whoever can be absurd enough, to shake off a burthen which the great Corneille was oblig'd to carry, wou'd be look'd upon; and with great reason, not as a bold and enterprising genius, striking out into a new road, but as a weak and impotent writer, who had not strength to support himself in the old path.

Some have attempted to give us tragedies in prose; but it is a thing which, I believe, can never succeed. Those who already have much, are seldom contented with a little; and he will always be a very unwelcome guest to the public, who says, I come to lessen your pleasure. If, in the midst of Paul Veronese or Rubens's pictures, any one shou'd come and place his sketches with a pencil, wou'd he have any right to compare himself with those great artists? We are us'd at feasts to dancing and singing, wou'd it be enough on these occasions merely for us to walk and speak, only under the pretence that we walked and spoke well, and that it was more easy, and more natural?

It is most probable, that verse will always be made use of in tragedy, and rhyme in our own. It is even to this constraint of rhyme, and the extreme severity of our versification, that we are indebted for the most

excellent performances in our language. We require in our rhimes that they shou'd never prejudice the sentiment; that they shou'd never be trivial, nor labour'd; and are so rigorous as to expect the same purity, and the same exactness in verse, as in prose. We don't permit the least licence: we force our authors to carry all the chains without breaking one link, at the same time to appear entirely free, and never acknowledge any as poets who have not fulfill'd all these conditions.

Such are the reasons, why it is more easy to make a hundred verses in any other language, than four in French. The example of Abbè Regnier Desmarais, of the French academy, and also of the academy of La Crusca, is a sufficient proof of this. He translated Anacreon into Italian with great success; and yet his French verses, except a few of them, are but very indifferent. It was nearly the same with Menage. How many of our men of genius have made excellent Latin verses, and written others in their own language which were insupportable!

Many disputes have I had in England about our versification: what reproaches have I heard from the learned* Bishop of Rochester for this childish con-

* The celebrated Dr. Atterbury.

straint, which, he us'd to say, we ridiculously laid upon ourselves, out of mere wantonness and levity: but depend upon it, my lord, the more a stranger knows of our language, the sooner will he reconcile himself to that rhyme which is at first so formidable to him. It is not only necessary to our tragedies, but is even an ornament to our comedies themselves. A good thing in verse is more easily retain'd: the various pictures of human life will be always more striking in verse, (when a Frenchman says verse, he always means rhyme) and we have comedies in prose, by the celebrated Moliere, which we have been oblig'd to put into verse after his death, and which are never play'd but in their new drefs.

Not daring therefore, my lord, to hazard on the French theatre that kind of verse which is used in Italy and in England, I have endeavour'd at least to transplant into our scene some of the beauties of yours; at the same time I am sufficiently satisfy'd, that the English theatre is extremely defective. I have heard you say you have not one good tragedy; but to make you amends, in those wild pieces which you have, there are some admirable scenes. Hitherto there has been wanting, in all the tragic authors of your nation, that purity, that regular conduct, that decorum in the action

tion and stile, and all those strokes of art which have establish'd the reputation of the French theatre since the time of the great Corneille: though, at the same time, it must be acknowledg'd, that your most irregular pieces have very great merit with regard to the action.

We have in France some tragedies in high repute, which are rather conversations than the representation of an event. An Italian author, in a letter on the theatres, writes thus to me :* ‘ Un cretico del nostro Pastor Fido disse che quel componimento era un riassunto di bellissimi madrigali; credo, se vivesse, che direbbe delle tragedie Francese che sono un riassunto di belle elegie, e sontuosi epitalami.’

I am afraid there is but too much truth in what my Italian friend says; our excessive delicacy obliges us frequently to put into narration, what we wou'd gladly have brought before the eyes of the spectator: but we are afraid to hazard on the scene new spectacles, before a people accusom'd to turn into ridicule every thing which they are not used to.

* i.e. A critic on our Pastor Fido says, that work is nothing but a collection of the most beautiful madrigals: I believe, if he was now living, he wou'd say of the French tragedies, that they were a collection of fine elegies, and sounding epithalamiums.

The place where our comedies are acted, and the abuses which have crept into it, is another cause of that dryness which appears in some of our pieces. The benches on the stage, appropriated to the spectators, confine the scene, and make all action almost impracticable : and this is the reason why the decorations, so highly recommended by the ancients, are with us seldom well adapted to the piece : and above all, it prevents the actors from passing out of one apartment into the other in sight of the spectators ; as was the sensible practice of the Greeks and Romans, to preserve at once unity of place and probability.

How, for instance, cou'd we dare, on our theatre, to bring on the ghost of Pompey, or the genius of Brutus, amongst a croud of young fellows, who seldom look upon the most serious things but with a view to shew their wit by a *bon mot* on the occasion ? how could we produce before them the body of Marcus, and Cato, his father, crying out,

Who wou'd not be that youth ? what pity is it
 That we can die but once to serve our country !
 Why mourn you thus ? let not a private loss
 Afflict your hearts : 'tis Rome requires our tears ;
 The mistress of the world, the seat of empire,
 The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,
 That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth

And

And set the nations free. Rome is no more.

O liberty! O virtue! O my country!

This is what the late Mr. Addison took the liberty to do at London. This Cato was translated into Italian, and play'd in several parts of Italy: but if we were to hazard such a spectacle at Paris, you wou'd hear the parterre roaring out, and observe the women turning their heads away.

You can't imagine how far we carry this delicacy. The author of our tragedy of Manlius took his subject from the English piece, wrote by Otway, call'd, Venice preserv'd. The plot is taken from the history of the conspiracy of the marquis de Bedemar, written by the Abbé de St. Réal. Permit me to observe by the way, that this short piece of history is much superior both to Otway's piece, and our own Manlius. First, you may remark the prejudice that oblig'd the French author to disguise a known fact under Roman names, whilst the English writer made use of the real ones. The London theatre saw nothing ridiculous in a Spanish ambassador's being call'd Bedemar, or the conspirators Jaffier, Pierre, and Elliot: this alone in France wou'd have been sufficient to ruin the performance. But Otway assembles the conspirators; Renaud makes them all take their oaths; assigns to
each

each of them his post ; appoints the hour to begin the massacre ; and every now and then casts an eye of diffidence and suspicion on Jaffier, whom he mistrusts. He makes a pathetic address to them all, which is translated word for word from St. Real : “ Jamais repos si profonde ne preceda un trouble si grand,” &c.

But what has the French author done ? afraid to produce so many persons on the stage, he only relates by Renaud, under the name of Rutilus, an inconsiderable part of that speech which he tells us he had made to the conspirators. One may perceive by this circumstance alone, how superior the English scene is to the French, however faulty Otway's piece may be in every other respect.

With what pleasure have I seen at London your tragedy of Julius Cæsar, which for these hundred and fifty years past has been the delight of your nation ! not that I approve the barbarous irregularities which it abounds with : it only astonishes me, that there are not many more in a work written in an age of ignorance, by a man who did not even understand* Latin, and had no instructor but his own genius : and yet, amongst

* Mr. V. would find it difficult to prove that Shakespear did not understand Latin, and still more so to convince us that the age he lived in was an age of ignorance.

so many gross faults, with what rapture did I behold Brutus, holding in his hand a dagger, still wet with the blood of Cæsar, assemble the Roman people, and thus harangue them from the Tribunal :

‘ Romans, countrymen, and friends, if there be
 ‘ any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar’s, to
 ‘ him I say that Brutus’s love to Cæsar was no less
 ‘ than his. If then that friend demand, why Brutus
 ‘ rose against Cæsar, this is my answer: Not that I
 ‘ lov’d Cæsar less, but that I lov’d Rome more. Had
 ‘ you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves;
 ‘ than that Cæsar were dead, to live all free-men?
 ‘ As Cæsar lov’d me, I weep for him; as he was for-
 ‘ tunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour
 ‘ him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. Who’s
 ‘ here so base that wou’d be a bondman? if any, speak,
 ‘ for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that
 ‘ wou’d not be a Roman? if any, speak, for him have I
 ‘ offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his
 ‘ country? if any, speak, for him have I offended.

‘ *All.* None, Brutus, none.

‘ *Brutus.* Then none have I offended. Here
 ‘ comes his body, mourn’d by Mark Antony; who,
 ‘ though he had no hand in his death, shall receive
 ‘ the benefit of his dying, a place in the common-
 ‘ wealth;

wealth; as which of you shall not. With this I depart, that as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

All. Live, Brutus, live.'

After this scene Antony comes to excite the compassion of those very Romans whom Brutus had just before inspir'd with his own rigour and barbarity. Antony, by an artful discourse, leads back as it were insensibly these haughty spirits, and when he sees them soften'd a little, shews them the body of Cæsar; and making use of the most pathetic figures of rhetoric, excites them to sedition and revenge. The French, perhaps, wou'd never suffer on their stage a chorus compos'd of Roman Artisans and Plebeians; wou'd never permit the bleeding body of Cæsar to be expos'd in public; or the people to be excited to rebellion by an harangue from the tribunal: custom alone, who is the queen of this world, can change the taste of nations, and make the objects of our aversion pleasing and agreeable.

The Greeks produc'd spectacles on the stage that appear not less shocking and absurd to us. Hippolitus, bruis'd with his fall, comes on to count his wounds, and make hideous lamentations. Philoctetes falls into

a trance, occasion'd by the violence of his pains, and the black blood flows from his wound. Oedipus, cover'd with blood that drops from the remaining part of his eyes, which he had been just tearing out, complains both of gods and men. We hear the shrieks of Clytemnæstra, murder'd by her own son; and Electra cries out from the stage, 'strike, spare her not, she did not spare our father.' Prometheus is fasten'd to a rock, by nails drove into his arms and stomach. The furies answer the bloody ghost of Clytemnæstraby horrid and inarticulate noises. In short, many of the Greek tragedies are fill'd with terror of this kind, that is to the last degree extravagant. The Greek tragedians, in other respects superior to the English, were certainly wrong in often mistaking horror for terror; and the disgustful and incredible for the tragic and the marvellous. The art was in its infancy at Athens in the time of Æschylus, as at London in the time of Shakespear: but amidst all the faults, both of the Greek and English poets, we find singular beauties, and the true pathetic; and if any of my countrymen, who have no other knowledge of the manners and tragedies of their neighbours, but what they get from translations and hear-says, condemn them without restriction: they are, in my opinion, like so many
 blind

blind men, who shou'd assure us that a rose cou'd not have lively colours, because they felt the thorns at the end of their fingers: but if the Greeks and you have both pass'd the bounds of decorum, and the English more particularly abound in the frightful instead of the terrible, we, on the other hand, as overscrupulous as you have been rash, for fear of going too far, stop too short, and very often fail of reaching the tragic, for fear of going beyond it.

I am far from proposing, that the stage shou'd be a scene of blood-shed, as it is in Shakespear, and many of his successors, who, without his genius, have imitated his faults; but I dare believe, that there are some certain circumstances and situations, which at present appear shocking and disgustful to a French audience, that, if well conducted, represented with art, and above all soften'd by the charms of good verse, might give us a species of pleasure we are as yet unacquainted with, which notwithstanding may certainly be attain'd.

* Il n'est point de serpent ni de monstre odieux
Qui par l'art imité ne puisse plaire aux yeux.

* i. e. There is no serpent, or odious monster, but if well imitated by art, may be made agreeable to the eye.

The French lines are taken from Boileau's art of poetry.

At

At least I shou'd wish to be inform'd, why our Heroes and Heroines shou'd be permitted to kill themselves and nobody else : is the scene less bloody by the death of Athaliah, who stabs herself for her lover, than it wou'd be by the murder of Cæsar ? And if the sight of Cato's son, brought in dead before his father, gives that old Roman an opportunity of making an excellent speech on the occasion ; if this part of Cato was admir'd both in England and in Italy, even by the greatest partisans of French decorum ; if the most delicate of the fair sex were not in the least shock'd at it ; why may not the French bring themselves to it by use ? Is not nature the same in all mankind ?

All these laws of banishing murder from the stage ; of not suffering more than three persons to speak, &c. are such as, in my opinion, might admit of some exceptions amongst us, as they did amongst the Greeks. It is not with the rules of decorum, that are always a little arbitrary, as it is with the fundamental laws of the theatre, which are the three unities ; it would be a mark of weakness and sterility to extend an action beyond that degree of space and time which are suitable to it. Ask any man, who has crowd'd too many events into his piece, what is the reason of this fault, and, if he has sincerity enough, he will fairly confess, that
 he

he had not a sufficient share of genius to fill up his performance with a single action: and if he takes up two days, and places his scene in two different places, you may take it for granted, it is because he has not skill enough to confine his plan within the limits of three hours, or bring it into the walls of a palace, as probability requires he shou'd. But it is quite another thing with regard to hazarding a horrible spectacle on the stage; this wou'd not in the least shock probability: a boldness like this, far from implying any weakness in the author, wou'd, on the contrary, demand a great genius to give his verses true granduer in an action, which, without sublimity of stile, wou'd appear savage and disgusting.

This was what our great Corneille once attempted in his *Rodogune*. He brings upon the stage a mother, who, in the presence of an ambassador and the whole court, wants to poison her son and her daughter-in-law, after having kill'd her other son with her own hand. She presents them the poison'd cup, and on their refusing to taste it, occasion'd by their suspicions of her, drinks it herself, and dies by the poison which she had design'd for them. Strokes so terrible as these shou'd be very rare; it is not every one who shou'd dare

dare to strike them. Such novelties require great circumspection, and a masterly hand in the execution. The English themselves allow that Shakespear, for example, was the only poet who cou'd call up ghosts, and make them speak with success.

Within that circle none durst move but he.

The more majestic and full of terror a theatrical action is, the more insipid wou'd it become, if it were often repeated : in the same manner as details of battles, which, being in their own nature every thing that is terrible, become dry and tedious, by appearing often in history. The only piece of Racine, where there is any spectacle, is his master-piece, Athaliah : there we see a child on the throne, his nurse and the priests attending him, a queen who commands her soldiers to massacre him, and the Levites running to take up arms in his defence : the whole of this action is pathetic ; and yet, if the stile was not so too, it wou'd appear childish and ridiculous.

The more we strike the eye with splendid appearances, the stronger obligation do we lay ourselves under of supporting them by sublimity of diction ; otherwise the writer will only be consider'd as a decorator, and not as a tragic poet. It is near thirty years since the tragedy of Montezuma was represented at Paris ; the
scene

scene open'd with a spectacle intirely new: a palace in a magnificent but barbarous taste; Montezuma in a dress very singular and uncommon; at the end of the stage a number of his slaves, arm'd with bows and arrows according to the custom of their country; round the king were eight grandees of his court prostrate on the earth, with their faces to the ground; Montezuma begins the piece with these words:

Arise, your king permits you on this day
To look on, and to speak to him.

The spectacle charm'd the spectators, but nothing else gave the least pleasure throughout the whole tragedy.

With regard to myself I must own, it was not without fear that I introduc'd on our stage the Roman Senate in scarlet robes delivering their opinions. I recollected, that when I brought into my Oedipus a Chorus of Thebans, saying,

Strike, strike ye gods, O death deliver us,
And we will thank you for the boon——

The parterre, instead of being struck with the pathetic in this passage, only felt the absurdity, if any
such

such there were, of putting these verses into the mouth of raw actors, not much us'd to chorusses, and immediately set up a loud laugh. This prevented me from making the senators in Brutus speak, when Titus is accused before them, or heighthening the terror of the incident by expressing the astonishment and grief of these reverend fathers of their country, who, no doubt, ought to have signify'd their surprize in another manner than by dumb shew : but they did not do even so much as this.

The English are more fond of action than we are, and speak more to the eye : the French give more attention to elegance, harmony, and the charms of verse. It is certainly more difficult to write well, than to bring upon the stage, assassinations, wheels, mechanical powers, ghosts, and forcerers. The tragedy of Cato, which reflects so much honour on Mr. Addison, your successor in the ministry, I have heard you say, owes its great reputation to its fine poetry ; that is to say, to just and noble sentiments express'd in harmonious verses. It is these detach'd beauties that support poetical performances, and hand them down to posterity. It is only a peculiar manner of saying common things ; it is the art of embellishing
by

by diction what all men think and feel that constitutes the true poet. There are no refin'd or strain'd sentiments, no romantic adventures in the fourth book of Virgil; all is natural; and yet it is the highest effort of human genius. Mr. Racine is only superior to all those who have said the same things as himself, because he has said them better: and Corneille is never truly great, but when he expresses himself as well as he thinks. Let us remember this precept of Despreaux's.

* ' Et que tout ce qu'il dit, facile à retenir,
' De son ouvrage en vous laisse un long souvenir.

This is greatly wanting in many of our dramatic performances, which the art of an actor, or the figure and voice of an actress, have carry'd off with success on our stage. How many ill-written pieces have been acted oftener than *Cinna* and *Britannicus*! tho' nobody ever retain'd two lines of any of these poor pieces, and at the same time *Britannicus* and *Cinna* are got by heart. In vain did the *Regulus* of Pradon draw tears from the spectators by some moving incidents: the work itself, with all those that resemble it, are sunk in-

* *i. e.* ' Let every thing he says be easy to retain, that it may
' leave with you a long remembrance of the work.'
For the French lines see Boileau's art of poetry.

to contempt, whilst the authors pay themselves a thousand compliments in their prefaces to them.

Some judicious criticks will perhaps ask me, why I brought love into the tragedy of Junius Brutus; and why I have mingled that passion with the austere virtue of a Roman senate, and the political intrigues of an ambassador: our nation is reproach'd for enervating the scene by too much tenderness; and the English, at east for this last age, have deserv'd the same censure; or you have always follow'd a little our modes, and our vices: but will you permit me to give you my opinion on this head?

To exact love in every tragedy shews an effeminate taste: and intirely to proscribe and banish it from the theatre is equally unreasonable and ridiculous. The stage, either in tragedy or comedy, is a lively picture of the human passions: one perhaps represents the ambition of a prince, the other ridicules the vanity of a cit. Here you laugh at the coquettry and intrigues of a citizen's lady; there you weep the unhappy passion of Phædra: love amuses you in a romance, or charms you in the Dido of Virgil. Love in a tragedy is not more essentially a fault, than it is in the Æneid. In short, it is never blameble, but when it is brought in unseasonably, or treated inartificially.

The

The Greeks seldom ventur'd to bring this passion on the stage of Athens; first, because their tragedies generally turning on subjects of terror, the minds of the spectators were bias'd as it were in favour of that particular species; and, secondly, because the women at that time led a much more retired life than ours do, and consequently the language of love, not being as it is now the subject of every conversation, the poets had less inducement to treat a passion, which it is most difficult to paint on account of that very delicate management which it requires. Another reason, which I own weighs greatly with me, was, that they had no actresses, the women's parts being always play'd by men in masks. Love from their mouths wou'd perhaps have appear'd ridiculous.

At London and Paris it is quite another thing: where it must be acknowledg'd the authors wou'd have very ill understood their own interests, and must have known little of their audience, to have made their Oldfield's, Duclos, and Lecouvreaux talk of nothing but ambition and politics.

But the misfortune is, that love, with our heroes of the theatre, is seldom any thing more than gallantry: and with you it sometimes degenerates into lewd-

ness and debauchery. In our Alcibiades, a piece greatly follow'd but poorly written, and therefore at present in very little esteem, we admir'd for a long time these bad verses, which were repeated in a soft and persuasive tone by the Æsopus of the last age.

Fir'd with a real passion, when I saw
 The lovely fair, and falling at her feet,
 In her soft eyes, that sparkled with desire,
 Or with a timid lustre glanc'd upon me,
 Beheld the mutual flame that in her breast
 Responsive glow'd, what raptures fill'd my soul !
 From those blest minutes only have I learn'd
 That man may taste of perfect happiness.

In your Venice Preserv'd, old Renaut wants to debauch the wife of Jaffier ; she complains of it in terms rather indecent, and goes so far as to say he came to her, unbutton'd.

To render love worthy of the tragic scene, it ought to arise naturally from the business of the piece, and not be brought in by mere force, only to fill up a vacancy, as it generally does in your tragedies, and in ours, which are both of them too long : it shou'd be a passion intirely tragical, consider'd as a weakness, and
 oppos'd

oppos'd by remorse : it shou'd either lead to misfortunes or to crimes, to convince us how dangerous it is : or it shou'd be subdued by virtue, to shew us that it is not invincible. In all other cases, it is no more than the love of an eclogue, or a comedy.

You, my lord, must decide whether I have fulfill'd any of these conditions : but I hope that, above all, your friends will be so candid, as not to judge of the genius and taste of our nation by this discourse, or by the tragedy which I have sent you with it. I am, perhaps, one of those who cultivate the belles lettres in France with the least success, and if the sentiments which I have here submitted to your judgment are disapprov'd, I, and I only, deserve to be censur'd for them.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JUNIUS BRUTUS,
VALERIUS PUBLICOLA. } Consuls.

TITUS, Son of Brutus,

TULLIA, Daughter of Tarquin.

ALGINA, Confidant of Tullia.

ARUNS, Ambassador from Porsenna.

MESSALA, Friend of Titus.

PROCLUSUS, A military Tribune.

ALBINUS, Confidant of Aruns.

Senators. Lictors.

SCENE ROME.

BRUTUS.

B R U T U S.

A

T R A G E D Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

BRUTUS. The SENATE:

The scene represents part of the house appointed for the consuls on the Tarpeian mount: at a distance is seen the temple of the capitol. The senators are assembled between the temple and the house, before the altar of Mars: the two consuls, Brutus and Valerius Publicola preside: the senators ranged in a semi-circle; behind them the lictors with their fasces.

BRUTUS.

AT length, my noble friends, Rome's honour'd senate,
The scourge of tyrants, you who own no kings

L 4

But

But Numa's gods, your virtues, and your laws,
 Our foe begins to know us : this proud Tuscan,
 The fierce Porfenna, Tarquin's boasted friend,
 Pleas'd to protect a tyrant like himself ;
 He who o'er Tyber's banks hath spread his hosts,
 And bore his head so loftily, now speaks
 In lowlier terms, respects the senate's pow'r,
 And dreads the sons of freedom and of Rome :
 This day he comes, by his ambassador,
 To treat of peace, and Aruns, sent by him,
 Demands an audience : he attends ev'n now
 Your orders in the temple : you'll determine
 Or to refuse or to admit him to us.

VALERIUS PUBLICOLA.

Whate'er his errand be, let him be sent
 Back to his king ; imperial Rome shou'd never
 Treat with her foes till she has conquer'd them :
 Thy valiant son, th' avenger of his country,
 Has twice repuls'd Etruria's haughty monarch,
 And much we owe to his victorious arm :
 But this is not enough ; Rome, still besieg'd,
 Sees with a jealous eye the tyrant's friends :
 Let Tarquin yield to our decrees ; the laws
 Doom'd him to exile ; let him leave the realm,
 And purge the state of royal villainy ;

Perhaps

Perhaps we then may listen to his pray'rs.
But this new embassy, it seems, has caught
Your easy faith : can you not see that Tarquin,
Who cou'd not conquer, thinks he may deceive you.
I never lov'd these king's ambassadors,
The worst of foes beneath the mask of friendship ;
Who only bear an honourable title,
And come to cheat us with impunity ;
Arm'd with state-cunning, or elate with pride,
Commision'd to insult us, or betray.
Listen not, Rome, to their deluding tongues ;
Stranger to art, thy business is, to fight ;
Conquer the foes that murmur at thy glory ;
Punish the pride of kings, or fall thyself ;
Such be thy treaties.

BRUTUS.

Rome already knows
How much I prize her safety and her freedom ;
The same my spirit, and the same my purpose,
I differ in opinion from Valerius ;
And must confess, this first great homage paid
The citizens of Rome, to me is grateful.
I wou'd accustom the despotic pow'r
Of princes on an easy level first
To treat with our renowned common-weal,

Till heav'n shall crown our arms with victory,
 And make them subjects ; then, Publicola,
 As such we'll use them : mean time, Aruns comes,
 Doubtless to mark the state of Rome, to count
 Her treasures, and observe her growing pow'r,
 And therefore wou'd I have him be admitted ;
 Wou'd have him know us fully : a king's slave
 Shall look on men ; the novelty may please him :
 Let him at leisure cast his eyes o'er Rome,
 Let him behold her in your patriot breasts,
 You are her best defence ; let him revere
 The God who calls us hither ; let him see
 The senate, hear and tremble.

VALERIUS PUBLICOLA.

I submit ;

[The senators rise and come forward to give their votes.]

The gen'ral voice is yours : Rome and her Brutus
 Must be obey'd : for me, I disapprove it :
 Licitors, attend, and introduce him to us :
 Never may Rome repent of this !

[To Brutus.]

On thee

Our eyes are fix'd ; on Brutus, who first broke
 Our chains ; let freedom use a father's voice,
 And speak by thee.

S C E N E

S C E N E II.

THE SENATE, ARUNS, ALBINUS, ATTENDANTS.

[Aruns enters, preceded by two liētors, with Albinus, his friend; he passes by the consuls and senate, salutes them, and sits down on a seat prepar'd for him towards the front of the stage.]

ARUNS.

With pleasure I behold
 This great assembly, Rome's illustrious senate,
 And her sage consuls, fam'd for truth and justice,
 Which ne'er till now suffer'd reproach or blame :
 I know your deeds, and I admire your virtues ;
 Unlike the wild licentious multitude,
 The vulgar croud, whom party rage or joins
 Or disunites, who love and hate by turns,
 They know not why, taught in one changeful hour
 To boast or beg, to rail or to obey ;
 Whose rashness ———

BRUTUS.

Stop, and learn with more respect
 To treat the citizens of Rome ; for know,
 It is the senate's glory and her praise
 To represent that brave and virtuous people
 Whom thou hast thus reviled : for ourselves,

Let

Let us not hear the voice of flattery;
 It is the poison of Etrurian courts,
 But ne'er has tainted yet a Roman senate.
 On with thy Message.

A R U N S.

Little doth the pride
 Of Rome affect me; but I own I feel
 For her misfortunes, and wou'd plead her cause
 With filial love: you see the gath'ring storm
 Hangs o'er your heads, and threatens sure destruction:
 In vain hath Titus strove to save his country;
 With pity I behold that noble youth,
 Whose ardent courage-labours to support
 Expiring Rome, and make her fall more glorious:
 His vict'ries cost you dear; they thin your ramparts,
 And weaken your small force: no longer then
 Refuse a peace so needful to your safety.
 The senate bears a father's love to Rome,
 So does Porfenna to the hapless kings
 Whom you oppress: but tell me, you who judge
 Depending monarchs, you who thus determine
 The rights of all mankind, was it not here,
 Ev'n at these altars, at this capitol,
 You call'd the gods to witness your allegiance,
 And bound your faith to your acknowledg'd king,

To

To Tarquin? Say, what pow'r has broke the tie?
 Who snatch'd the diadem from Tarquin's head?
 Who can acquit you of your oaths?

BRUTUS.

Himself:

Talk not of ties dissolv'd by guilt, of gods
 Whom he renounc'd, or rights which he has lost;
 We paid him homage, bound ourselves by oath,
 Oaths of obedience, not of slavery:
 But since thou bid'st us call to our remembrance,
 The senate making vows for Tarquin's health,
 And kneeling at his feet, remember thou,
 That on this sacred spot, this altar here,
 Before the same attesting gods, that Tarquin
 Swore to be just; such was the mutual bond
 Of prince and people, and he gave us back
 The oath we made, when he forgot his own:
 Since to Rome's laws no more he pays obedience,
 Rome is no longer subject to his pow'r,
 And Tarquin is the rebel, not his people.

ARUNS.

But, grant it true, that pow'r unlimited,
 And absolute dominion, had mislead
 Th' unhappy monarch from the paths of duty,
 Is there a man from human error free?

Is

Is there a king without some human weakness ?
 Or if there were, have you a right to punish,
 You, who were born his subjects ; you, whose duty
 Is to obey ? The son doth never arm
 Against the fire, but with averted eyes
 Laments his errors, and reveres him still :
 And not less sacred are the rights of kings ;
 They are our fathers, and the gods alone
 Their judges : if in anger heav'n sometimes
 Doth send them down, why wou'd you therefore call
 For heavier chains, and judgments more severe ?
 Why violate the laws you wou'd defend,
 And only change your empire to destroy it ?

Taught by misfortune, best of monitors,
 Tarquin henceforth, more worthy of his throne,
 Will be more wise and just ; the legal bonds
 Of king and people now may be confirm'd
 By happiest union ; public liberty
 Shall flourish then beneath the awful shade
 Of regal pow'r.

B R U T U S.

Aruns, 'tis now too late :
 Each nation has its laws, by nature giv'n,
 Or chang'd by choice : Etruria, born to serve,
 Hath ever been the slave of kings or priests ;

Loves

Loves to obey, and, happy in her chains,
 Wou'd bind them on the necks of all mankind.
 Greece boasts her freedom ; soft Ionia bends
 Beneath a shameful bondage ; Rome had once
 Her kings, but they were never absolute :
 Her first great citizen was Romulus,
 With him his people shar'd the weight of empire ;
 Numa was govern'd by the laws he made ;
 Rome fell at last indeed beneath herself,
 When from Etruria she receiv'd her kings,
 Or from Porfenna ; tyranny and vice
 From your corrupted courts flow'd in upon us.
 Forgive us, gods, the crime of sparing Tarquin
 So many years ! at length his murth'rous hands,
 Dy'd with our blood, have broke the shameful chain
 Of our long slav'ry, and the Roman people
 Have through misfortune found the road to virtue :
 Tarquin restores the rights by Tarquin lost,
 A nd by his crimes has fix'd the public safety :
 We've taught the Tuscans how to shake off tyrants,
 And hope they'll profit by the fair example.

*[The consuls descend towards the altar,
 and the senate rises.]*

O Ma rs, thou god of battles, and of Rome !
 Thou who dost guard these sacred walls, and fight

For

For thy own people, on thy altar here
 Deign to accept our solemn oaths, for me
 And for the senate, for thy worthy sons :
 If in Rome's bosom there be found a traitor,
 Who weeps for banish'd kings, and seeks once more
 To be a slave, in torments shall he die ;
 His guilty ashes, scatter'd to the winds,
 Shall leave behind a more detested name,
 Ev'n than those tyrant kings which Rome abhors.

A R U N S.

[Stepping towards the altar.]

And on this altar, which you thus profane,
 I call that god to witness, in the name
 Of him whom you oppress, the injur'd Tarquin,
 And great Porfenna, his avenger, here
 I swear eternal war with you, O Romans !
 And your posterity—

[The senators are going off towards the capitol.]

A moment stop
 E'er you depart, O senators ! and hear
 What I have more to offer: Tarquin's daughter,
 Must she too fall a sacrifice to Rome ?
 With ignominious fetters will ye bind

Her

Her royal hands, to triumph o'er her father,
 Whose treasures you detain? Ungen'rous victors!
 As if the right of conquest gave them to you:
 Where are his riches? was it for the spoil
 You robb'd him of his throne? let Brutus speak,
 And own the plunder.

BRUTUS.

Little do'st thou know
 Of Rome, her manners, and her noble nature;
 But learn, mistaken man, her great protectors,
 The friends of truth and justice, are grown old
 In honest poverty; above the pride
 Of wealth, which they disdain; it is their boast
 To conquer kings, who love such tinsel greatness.
 Take back your gold, it is beneath our notice;
 And for the hateful tyrant's hapless daughter,
 Though I abhor the wretched race, yet know
 The senate has consign'd her to my care:
 She hath not tasted here the baneful cup
 Of flatt'ry, that sweet poison of a court,
 Or view'd the pomp and dang'rous luxury
 Of Tarquin's palace: little did her youth
 Profit by them; but all that to her age
 And sex was due, all her misfortunes claim'd,
 She hath receiv'd: let her return this day

To

To Tarquin ; Brutus yields her back with joy :
 Nought shou'd the tyrant have within these walls
 But Rome's fix'd hatred, and the wrath of heav'n:
 You have a day to carry off your treasures,
 That must suffice : mean time, the sacred rights
 Of hospitality await thee here ;
 Beneath my roof thou may'st remain in safety :
 The senate thus by me decrees : bear thou
 Our answer to Porsenna, and then tell
 Proud Tarquin, you have seen a Roman senate.

[Turning to the senators.]

Let us, my friends, adorn the capitol
 With laurel wreaths, that round the brows of Titus
 Have spread their noble shade ; the arrows too,
 And bloody ensigns, his victorious hand
 Hath wrested from the Tuscans : ever thus,
 From age to age, may the successful race
 Of Brutus still defend their much lov'd country :
 Thus, O ye gods, may you protect us ever ;
 Guide the son's arm, and bless the father's councils !

A R U N S.

B R U T U S.

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S C E N E III.

ARUNS, ALBINUS.

*[Suppos'd to have retir'd from the hall of audience
into an apartment of Brutus's house.]*

ARUNS.

Didst thou observe the fierce unbending spirit
Of this proud senate, which believes itself
Invincible? and so perhaps it might be,
Were Rome at leisure to confirm her sons
In valour and in wisdom: liberty,
That liberty, my friend, which all adore,
And I admire, tho' I wou'd wrest it from them,
Inspires the heart of man with nobler courage
Than nature gives, and warmth almost divine.
Beneath the Tarquin's yoke, a slavish court
Enfeebled their corrupted hearts, and spoil'd
Their active valour; whilst their tyrant kings,
Busy'd in conqu'ring their own subjects, left
Our happier Tuscans in the arms of peace;
But if the senate shou'd awake their virtues,
If Rome is free, Italia soon must fall:
These lions, whom their keepers made so gentle,
Will find their strength again, and rush upon us;
Let us then stop this rapid stream of woes,
Ey'n at its source, and free a sinking world

From

From slav'ry ; let us bind these haughty Romans
 Ev'n with the chains which they wou'd throw on us,
 And all mankind. —But will Messala come,
 May I expect him here ? and will he dare—

ALBINUS.

My Lord, he will attend you ; ev'ry minute
 We look for him ; and Titus is our friend.

ARUNS.

Have you conferr'd ; may I depend on him ?

ALBINUS.

Messala, if I err not, means to change
 His own estate, rather than that of Rome ;
 As firm and fearless as if honour guided,
 And patriot love inspir'd him ; ever secret,
 And master of himself ; no passions move,
 No rage disturbs him ; in his heighth of zeal
 Calm and unruffled.

ARUNS.

Such he seem'd to me
 When first I saw him at the court of Tarquin ;
 His letters since—but, see, he comes.

S C E N E. IV.

ARUNS, MESSALA, ALBINUS.

ARUNS.

Messala,

Thou gen'rous friend of an unhappy master,
 Will neither Tarquin's nor Porfenna's gold

Shake

Shake the firm faith of these rough senators ?
 Will neither fear, nor hope, nor pleasure bend
 Their stubborn hearts ? These fierce patrician chiefs,
 That judge mankind, are they without or vice
 Or passion ? is there aught that's mortal in them ?

MESSALA.

Their boasts are mighty, but their false pretence
 To justice, and the fierce austerity
 Of their proud hearts, are nothing but the thirst
 Of empire ; their pride treads on diadems ;
 Yet whilst they break one chain, they forge another.
 These great avengers of our liberty,
 Arm'd to defend it, are its worst oppressors :
 Beneath the name of patrons they assume
 The part of monarchs ; Rome but chang'd her fetters,
 And for one king hath found a hundred tyrants.

ARUNS.

Is there amongst your citizens a man
 Honest enough to hate such shameful bondage ?

MESSALA.

Few, very few, yet feel their miseries :
 Their spirits, still elate with this new change,
 Are mad with joy : the meanest wretch among them,
 Because he help'd to pull down monarchy,
 Assumes its pride, and thinks himself a king :

But

But I've already told you I have friends,
 Who with reluctance bend to this new yoke ;
 Who look with scorn on a deluded people,
 And stem the torrent with unshaken firmness ;
 Good men and true, whose hands and hearts were made
 To change the state of kingdoms, or destroy them.

ARUNS.

What may I hope from these brave Romans ? say,
 Will they serve Tarquin ?

MESSALA.

They'll do any thing ;
 Their lives are thine ; but think not, like blind vassals,
 They will obey a base ungrateful master :
 They boast no wild enthusiastic zeal,
 To fall the victims of despotic pow'r,
 Or madly rush on death to save a tyrant,
 Who will not know them. Tarquin promises
 Most nobly, but when he shall be their master,
 Perhaps he then may fear, perhaps forget them.
 I know the great too well : in their misfortunes
 No friends so warm ; but in prosperity,
 Ungrateful oft, they change to bitt'rest foes :
 We are the servile tools of their ambition ;
 When useless, thrown aside with proud disdain,
 Or broke without remorse when we grow dang'rous.

Our

Our friends expect conditions shall be made;
 On certain terms you may depend upon them :
 They only ask a brave and worthy leader
 To please their fickle taste ; a man well known,
 And well respected ; one who may have pow'r
 To force the king to keep his plighted faith
 If we succeed ; and if we fail, endued
 With manly courage to avenge our cause.

ARUNS.

You wrote me word the haughty Titus—

MESSALA.

Titus

Is Rome's support, the son of Brutus ; yet—

ARUNS.

How does he brook the senate's base reward
 For all his services ? he sav'd the city,
 And merited the consulship, which they,
 I find, refuse him.

MESSALA.

And he murmurs at it.

I know his proud and fiery soul is full
 Of the base inj'ry : for his noble deeds,
 Nought has he gain'd but a vain empty triumph ;
 A fleeting shadow of unreal bliss :
 I am no stranger to his throbbing heart,

And

And strength of passion ; in the paths of glory
 So lately enter'd, 'twere an easy task
 To turn his steps aside ; for fiery youth
 Is easily betray'd : and yet what bars
 To our design ! a consul, and a father ;
 His hate of kings ; Rome pleading for her safety ;
 The dread of shame, and all his triumphs past.
 But I have stole into his heart, and know
 The secret poison that enflames his soul :
 He fights for Tullia.

ARUNS.

Ha ! for Tullia ?

MESSALA.

Yes :

Scarce cou'd I draw the secret from his breast ;
 He blush'd himself at the discovery,
 Asham'd to own his love ; for midst the tumult
 Of jarring passions, still his zeal prevails
 For liberty.

ARUNS.

Thus on a single heart,
 And its unequal movements, must depend,
 Spite of myself, the fate of Rome : but hence,
 Albinus, and prepare for Tarquin's tent.

[Turning to Messala.

We'll to the princess : I have gain'd some knowledge,
 By

By long experience, of the human heart :
 I'll try to read her soul ; perhaps her hands
 May weave a net to catch this Roman senate.

END of the FIRST ACT.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

*The scene represents an apartment in the palace of the
 consuls.*

TITUS, MESSALA.

MESSALA.

No: 'tis unkind ; it hurts my tender-friendship :
 He who but half unveils his secrets, tells
 Too little or too much : dost thou suspect me ?

TITUS.

Do not reproach me ; my whole heart is thine.

MESSALA.

Thou who so lately didst with me detest
 The rig'rous senate, and pour forth thy complaints
 In anguish ; thou who on this faithful bosom
 Didst shed so many tears, could'st thou conceal
 Grievs far more bitter, the keen pangs of love ?

How cou'd ambition quench the rising flame,
 And blot out ev'ry tender sentiment ?
 Dost thou detest the hateful senate more
 Than thou lov'st Tullia ?

TITUS.

O ! I love with transport,
 And hate with fury ; ever in extreme ;
 It is the native weakness of my soul,
 Which much I strive to conquer, but in vain.

MESSALA.

But why thus rashly tear thy bleeding wounds ?
 Why weep thy inj'ries, yet disguise thy love ?

TITUS.

Spite of those inj'ries, spite of all my wrongs,
 Have I not shed my blood for this proud senate ?
 Thou know'st I have, and didst partake my glory ;
 With joy I told thee of my fair success ;
 It shew'd, methought, a nobleness of soul
 To fight for the ungrateful, and I felt
 The pride of conscious virtue : the misfortunes
 We have o'ercome with pleasure we impart,
 But few are anxious to reveal their shame.

MESSALA.

Where is the shame, the folly, or disgrace ?

And

And what shou'd Titus blush at ?

TITUS.

At myself:

At my fond foolish passion, that o'erpowrs
My duty.

MESSALA.

Are ambition then, and love,
Passions unworthy of a noble mind ?

TITUS.

Ambition, love, resentment, all possess
The soul of Titus, and by turns enflame it :
These consul kings despise my youth ; deny me
My valour's due reward, the price of blood
Shed in their cause : then, midst my sorrows, seize
All I hold dear, and snatch my Tullia from me.
Alas ! I had no hope, and yet my heart
Grows jealous now : the fire, long pent within,
Bursts forth with inextinguishable rage.
I thought it had been o'er ; she parted from me,
And I had almost gain'd the victory
O'er my rebellious passion : but my race
Of glory now is run, and heav'n has fixed
Its period here : Gods ! that the son of Brutus,
The foe of kings, shou'd ever be the slave
Of Tarquin's race ! nay, the ungrateful fair
Scorns to accept my conquer'd heart : I'm slighted ;

M 2

Disdain'd

Disdain'd on ev'ry side, and shame o'erwhelms me.

MESSALA.

May I with freedom speak to thee?

TITUS.

Thou may'st:

Thou know'st I ever have revered thy prudence;
Speak therefore, tell me all my faults, Messala.

MESSALA.

No: I approve thy love, and thy resentment:
Shall Titus authorise this tyrant senate,
These sons of arrogance? if thou must blush,
Blush for thy patience, Titus, not thy love.
Are these the poor rewards of all thy valour,
Thy constancy, and truth? a hopeless lover,
A weak and pow'rless citizen of Rome,
A poor state-victim, by the senate brav'd,
And scorn'd by Tullia: sure a heart like thine
Might find the means to be reveng'd on both.

TITUS.

Why wilt thou flatter my despairing soul?
Think'st thou I ever cou'd subdue her hate,
Or shake her virtue? 'tis impossible:
Thou see'st the fatal barriers to our love,
Which duty and our fathers place between us:

But

But must she go?

MESSALA..

This day, my lord.

TITUS.

Indeed!

But I will not complain: for heav'n is just
To her deservings; she was born to reign.

MESSALA.

Heav'n had perhaps reserv'd a fairer empire
For beauteous Tullia, but for this proud senate,
But for this cruel war, nay but for Titus:
Forgive me, sir, you know th' inheritance
She might have claim'd; her brother dead, the throne
Of Rome had been her portion — but I've gone
Too far — and yet, if with my life, O Titus,
I cou'd have serv'd thee, if my blood —

TITUS..

No more:

My duty calls, and that shall be obey'd:
Man may be free, if he resolves to be so:
I own, the dang'rous passion for a time
O'er pow'rd my reason; but a soldier's heart
Braves ev'ry danger: love owes all his pow'r
To our own weakness.

M 3

MESSALA.

MESSALA.

The ambassador
From Tuscany is here: this honour, fir ——

TITUS.

O fatal honour! what wou'd he with me?
He comes to snatch my Tullia from my fight;
Comes to complete the measure of my woes.

S C E N E II.

TITUS, ARUNS.

ARUNS.

After my long and fruitless toils to serve
The state of Rome, and her ungrateful senate,
Permit me here to pay the homage due
To gen'rous courage, and transcendent virtue;
Permit me to admire the gallant hero
Who sav'd his country on the brink of ruin:
Alas! thou hast deserv'd a faire rmeed,
A cause more noble, and another foe;
Thy valour merited a better fate:
Kings wou'd rejoice, and such I know there are,
To trust their empire with an arm like thine,
Who wou'd not dread the virtues they admire,
Like jealous Rome and her proud senate: O!
I cannot bear to see the noble Titus

Serving

Serving these haughty Tyrants ; who, the more
 You have oblig'd them, hate you more : to them
 Your merit's a reproach ; mean vulgar souls,
 Born to obey, they lift th' oppressive hand
 Against their great deliv'rer, and usurp
 Their sov'reign's rights ; from thee they shou'd receive
 Those orders which they give.

TITUS.

I thank you, Sir,
 For all your cares, your kind regard for Titus,
 And guess the cause : your subtle policy
 Wou'd wind me to your secret purposes,
 And arm my rage against the common-weal ;
 But think not to impose thus on my frankness ;
 My heart is open, and abhors design :
 The senate have misus'd me, and I hate 'em,
 I ought to hate 'em ; but I'll serve 'em still :
 When Rome engages in the common cause,
 No private quarrels taint the patriot breast ;
 Superior then to party strife, we rush
 United on against the gen'ral foe :
 Such are my thoughts, and such they ever will be ;
 Thou knowst me now : or call it virtue in me,
 Or call it partial fondness, what you please,
 But, born a Roman, I will die for Rome,

M 4

And

And love this hard unjust suspicious senate,
 More than the pomp and splendor of a court
 Beneath a master, for I am the son
 Of Brutus, and have grav'd upon my heart
 The love of freedom, and the hate of kings.

• A R U N S.

But does not Titus sooth his flatter'd heart
 With fancy'd bliss, and visionary charms ?
 I too my, lord, though born within the sway
 Of regal pow'r, am fond of liberty ;
 You languish for her, yet enjoy her not.
 Is there on earth, with all your boasted freedom,
 Aught more despotic than a common-weal ?
 Your laws are tyrants ; and their barb'rous rigour
 Deaf to the voice of merit, to applause,
 To family, and fame, throws down distinction ;
 The senate grind you, and the people scorn ;
 You must affright 'em, or they will enslave you :
 A citizen of Rome is ever jealous
 Or insolent ; he is your equal still,
 Or still your foe, because inferior to you :
 He cannot bear the lustre of high fortune ;
 Looks with an eye severe on ev'ry action ;
 In all the service you have done him, sees
 Nought but the inj'ry you have pow'r to do ;

And

And for the blood which you have shed for him,
You'll be repaid at last with——banishment.

A court, I own's a dang'rous element,
And has its storms, but not so frequent; smooth
Its current glides, its surface more serene:
That boasted native of another soil,
Fair liberty, here sheds her sweetest flow'rs:
A king can love, can recompense your service,
And mingles happiness with glory; there
Cherish'd beneath the shade of royal favor,
Long may'st thou flourish, only serve a master,
And be thyself the lord of all beside:
The vulgar, ever to their sov'reign's will
Obedient, still respect and honour those
Whom he protects, nay love his very faults:
We never tremble at a haughty senate,
Or her harsh laws: O! wou'd that, born as thou art,
To shine with equal lustre in a court
Or in a camp, thou wou'd'st but taste the charms
Of Tarquin's goodness! for he lov'd thee, Titus,
And wou'd have shar'd his fortunes with thee; then:
Had the proud senate, prostrate at thy feet——

TITUS:

I've seen the court of Tarquin, and despise it:
I know I might have cring'd for his protection,

M. 5.

Been:

Been his first slave, and tyrannis'd beneath him ;
 But, thanks to heav'n, I am not fall'n so low :
 I wou'd be great, but not by meanness rise
 To grandeur : no, it never was my fate
 To serve : I'll conquer kings, do thou obey them.

ARUNS.

I must approve thy constancy ; but think,
 My lord, how Tarquin, in thy infant years,
 Guided thy tender youth : he oft remembers
 The pleasing office, and but yesterday,
 Lamenting his lost son, and sad misfortunes,
 ' Titus, said he, was once my best support,
 ' He lov'd us all, and he alone deserv'd
 ' My kingdom and my daughter.'

TITUS.

Ha ! his daughter !

Ye gods ! my Tullia ! O unhappy vows !

ARUNS.

Ev'n now I carry her to Tarquin ; him
 Whom thou hast thus deserted, far from thee,
 And from her country, soon must Tullia go ;
 Liguria's king accepts of her in marriage :
 Mean-time thou, Titus, must obey the senate,
 Oppress her father, and destroy his kingdom :

And

And may these vaulted roofs, these tow'rs in flame,
 And this proud capitol in ashes laid,
 Like fun'ral torches, shine before your people,
 To light the Roman senate to its grave,
 Or serve to grace our happy Tullia's nuptials!

S C E N E III.

TITUS, MESSALA.

TITUS.

Messala, in what anguish hath he left me!
 Wou'd Tarquin then have giv'n her to my arms!
 O cruel fate! and might I thus—O no,
 Deceitful minister! thou cam'st to search
 My foolish heart; alas! he saw too well,
 Read in my eyes the dear destructive passion,
 He knows my weakness, and returns to Tarquin
 To smile at Titus, and insult his love:
 And might I then have wedded her, possess'd
 That lovely maid, and spent a life of bliss
 Within her arms, had heav'n allotted me
 So fair a fate! O I am doubly wretched.

MESSALA.

Thou might'st be happy; Aruns wou'd assist thee,
 Trust me, he wou'd, and second thy warm wishes.

TITUS.

TITUS.

No : I must bid adieu to my fond hopes ;
 Rome calls me to the capitol ; the people
 Who rais'd triumphal arches to my glory,
 And love me for my labours past, expect me,
 To take with them th'inviolable oath,
 The solemn pledge of sacred liberty.

MESSALA.

Go then, and serve your tyrants.

TITUS.

I will serve them ;

It is my duty, and I must fulfil it.

MESSALA.

And yet you sigh.

TITUS.

'Tis a hard victory.

MESSALA.

And bought too dearly.

TITUS,

Therefore 'tis more glorious.

Messala, do not leave me in affliction.

[Exit Titus.

MESSALA.

I'll follow him, to sharpen his resentment,
 And strike th'envenom'd dagger to his heart.

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

BRUTUS, MESSALA.

BRUTUS.

Messala, stop; I'd speak with you.

MESSALA.

With me ?

BRUTUS.

With you. A deadly poison late hath spread
 Its secret venom o'er my house : my son,
 Tiberius, is with jealous rage inflam'd
 Against his brother ; it appears too plain ;
 Whilst Titus burns with most unjust resentment
 Against the senate : the ambassador,
 That wily Tuscan, has observ'd their weakness,
 And doubtless profits by it : he has talk'd
 To both : I dread the tongues of subtil statesmen,
 Grown old in the chican'ry of a court :
 To-morrow he returns : a day's too much
 To give a traitor, and oft times is fatal :
 Go thou, Messala, tell him he must hence
 This day : I'll have it so.

MESSALA.

'Tis prudent, Sir,

And I obey you.

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

But this is not all :

My son, the noble Titus, loves thee well ;
 I know the pow'r that sacred friendship hath
 O'er minds like his ; a stranger to distrust
 Or diffidence, he yields his artless soul
 To thy experience ; and the more his heart
 Relies on thee, the more may I expect,
 That, able as thou art to guide his steps,
 Thou wilt not turn them from the paths of virtue,
 Or take advantage of his easy youth
 To taint his guiltless heart with fond ambition.

MESSALA.

That was ev'n now the subject of our converse ;
 He strives to imitate his godlike sire ;
 Rome's safety is the object of his care :
 Blindly he loves his country, and his father.

BRUTUS.

And so he ought ; but above all, the laws ;
 To them he shou'd be still a faithful slave ;
 Who breaks the laws, can never love his country.

MESSALA.

We know his patriot zeal, and both have seen it.

BRUTUS.

He did his duty.

MESSALA.

MESSALA.

Rome had done her's too,
If she had honour'd more so good a son.

BRUTUS.

Messala, no: it suited not his age
To take the consulship; he had not ev'n
The voice of Brutus: trust me, the success
Of his ambition wou'd have soon corrupted
His noble mind, and the rewards of virtue
Had then become hereditary: soon
Shou'd we have seen the base unworthy son
Of a brave father claim superior rank,
Unmerited, in sloth and luxury,
As our last Tarquin but too plainly prov'd.

How very seldom they deserve a crown
Who're born to wear it! O! preserve us, heav'n,
From such destructive vile abuse of pow'r,
The nurse of folly, and the grave of virtue!

If thou indeed dost love my son, (and much
I hope thou dost) shew him a fairer path
To glory; root out from his heart the pride
Of false ambition: he who serves the state
Is amply recompens'd: the son of Brutus
Shou'd shine a bright example to the world

Of

Of ev'ry virtue : he is Rome's support,
 As such I look upon him ; and the more
 He has already done to serve his country,
 The more I shall require of him hereafter.
 Know then by what I wish the love I bear him,
 Temper the heat of youth ; to flatter Titus
 Were death to him, and injury to Rome.

MESSALA.

My Lord, I am content to follow Titus,
 To imitate his valour, not instruct him :
 I have but little influence o'er your son ;
 But, if he deigns to listen to my counsels,
 Rome soon will see how much he loves her glory.

BRUTUS.

Go then, be careful not to sooth his errors ;
 For I hate tyrants much, but flatt'ers more.

[Exit Brutus.]

S C E N E V.

MESSALA alone.

There's not a tyrant more detestable,
 More cruel than thy own relentless soul ;
 But I shall tread perhaps beneath my feet
 The pride of all thy false insulting virtue :

Yes,

Yes, thou Colossus, rais'd thus high above us
 By a vile croud, the thunder is prepar'd,
 Soon shall it fall, and crush thee into ruin.

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

ARUNS, ALBINUS, MESSALA.

ARUNS. *[A letter in his hand.]*

AT length, my friend, a dawn of fair success
 Breaks in upon us; thou hast serv'd me nobly,
 And all is well: this letter, my Albinus,
 Decides the fate of Tarquin, and of Rome.
 But, tell me, have you fix'd th' important hour?
 Have you watch'd closely the Quirinal gate?
 If our conspirators to night should fail
 To yield the ramparts up, will your assault
 Be ready? Is the king well satisfy'd,
 Think'st thou, Albinus, we shall bring him back
 To Rome subjected, or to Rome in blood?

ALBINUS.

My Lord, by midnight all will be prepar'd;

Tarquin

Tarquin already reaps the promis'd harvest ;
 From you, once more, receives the diadem,
 And owns himself indebted more to Aruns
 Than to Porfenna.

ARUNS.

Or the envious gods,
 Foes to our hapless sov'reign, must destroy
 Our fair design, well worthy of their aid ;
 Or by to-morrow's dawn rebellious Rome
 Shall own a master ; Rome perhaps in ashes,
 Or bathing in her blood. But better is it
 A king shou'd rule o'er an unhappy people,
 Who are obedient, than in plenty's lap,
 O'er a proud nation, who are still perverse
 And obstinate, because they are too happy.
 Albinus, I attend the Princess here
 In secret — Stay, Messala.

S C E N E. II.

ARUNS, MESSALA.

ARUNS.

Touching Titus,
 What hast thou done ? cou'dst thou prevail on him
 To serve the cause of Tarquin ? cou'dst thou bind
 His haughty soul ?

MESSALA.

MESSALA.

No: I presum'd too far;
 He is inflexible: he loves his country,
 And has too much of Brutus in him; murmurs
 Against the senate, but still dotes on Tullia:
 Pride and ambition, love and jealousy,
 Open'd, I thought, a passage to his soul,
 And gave my arts some promise of success;
 But, strange infatuation! liberty
 Prevail'd o'er all: his love is desperate,
 Yet Rome is stronger ev'n than love: in vain
 I strove, by slow degrees, t' efface the horror
 Which Rome had taught his foolish heart to feel
 Ev'n at the name of king; in vain oppos'd
 His rooted prejudice; the very mention
 Of Tarquin fir'd his soul; he would not hear me,
 But broke off the discourse: I must have gone
 Too far, had I persisted.

ARUNS.

Then, Messala,
 There are no hopes of him.

MESSALA.

Much less reluctant
 I found his brother; one of Brutus' sons,
 At least is ours.

ARUNS.

ARUNS.

Already hast thou gain'd
Tiberius? by what lucky art, Messala ——

MESSALA.

His own ambition did it all : long time,
With jealous eye, hath he beheld the honours
Heap'd on his brother, that eclipse his own ;
The wreath of laurel, and the pomp of triumph,
The waving ensigns, with the people's love,
And Brutus' fondness, lavish'd all on Titus,
Like deepest inj'ries, sunk into his soul,
And help'd to fill the poison'd cup of énvý ;
Whilst Titus, void of malice or revenge,
Too much superior to be jealous of him,
Stretch'd forth his hand from his triumphal car,
As if he wish'd to give his brother part
Of all his glories : I embrac'd, with joy,
The lucky minute ; pointed out the paths
Of glory ; promis'd, in the name of Tarquin,
All the fair honours Rome cou'd give, the throne
Alone excepted : I perceiv'd him stagger,
And saw him bend, by slow degrees, before me :
He's yours, my Lord, and longs to speak with you.

ARUNS.

ARUNS.

Will he deliver the Quirinal gate,
Messala?

MESSALA.

Titus is commander there,
And he alone can give it us: already
His virtues have been fatal to our purpose;
He is the guardian deity of Rome:
Th' attack is dang'rous: without his support
Success were doubtful, with it all is certain.

ARUNS.

If he solicited the consulship,
Think'st thou he wou'd refuse the sov'reign pow'r,
The sure reversion of a throne with Tullia?

MESSALA.

T'were an affront to his exalted virtue
To offer him a throne.

ARUNS.

And Tullia with it?

MESSALA.

O he adores her; and ev'n loves her more,
Because he strives to hate; detests the father,
And rages for the daughter; dreads to speak,

Yet

Yet mourns in silence ; seeks her ev'ry where,
 Yet shuns her presence, and drinks up his tears
 In secret anguish : all the rage of love
 Possesses him ; sometimes in storms like these
 A lucky moment turns the wav'ring mind.
 Titus, I know, is turbulent and bold ;
 And, if we gain him, may, perhaps, go further
 Ev'n than we wish : who knows but fierce ambition
 May yet rekindle by the torch of love !
 His heart wou'd glow with pleasure, to behold
 The trembling senate prostrate at his feet.
 Yet, let me not deceive you with the hopes,
 That Titus ever will be ours ; once more,
 However, I shall try his stubborn virtue.

ARUNS.

If still he loves, I shall depend on him :
 One look of Tullia's, one sweet word from her,
 Will soften his reluctant heart much more,
 Than all the arts of Aruns or Messala :
 For, O, believe me, we must hope for nought
 From men, but thro' their weakness and their follies :
 Titus and Tullia must promote our cause ;
 The one's ambition, and the other's love :
 These, these, my friend, are the conspirators

That

That best will serve the king : from them I hope
Much more than from myself.

[Exit Messala.

S C E N E III.

TULLIA, ARUNS, ALGINA.

ARUNS.

This letter, Madam,
With orders to deliver it to your hands,
I have receiv'd from Tarquin.

TULLIA.

Gracious heav'n!
Preserve my father, and reverse his fate!

[She reads.

‘ The throne of Rome may from its ashes rise,
‘ And he who was the conqu'ror of his king
‘ Be his restorer : Titus is a hero,
‘ He must defend that scepter which I wish
‘ To share with him. Remember, O my Tullia,
‘ That Tarquin gave thee life ; remember too,
‘ My fate depends on thee ; thou may'st refuse
‘ Liguria's king : if Titus be thy choice,
‘ He's mine ; receive him for thy husband.’

Ha !

Read I aright ? Titus ! impossible !

Cou'd

Cou'd Tarquin, cou'd my father, still unmov'd
 In all his sorrows, thus at last relent?
 How cou'd he know, or whence —

[Turning to Messala.

Alas, my lord,

'Tis but to search the secrets of my heart
 You try me thus: pity a wretched princess,
 Nor spread your snares for helpless youth like mine.

ARUNS.

Madam, I only mean t'obey your father,
 And serve his honour'd daughter; for your secrets,
 In me it were presumption to remove
 The sacred veil which you have drawn before them;
 My duty only bids me say, that heav'n
 By you determines to restore our empire.

TULLIA.

And is it possible, that Tullia thus
 Shou'd be the friend of Tarquin, and the wife
 Of Titus?

ARUNS.

Doubt it not: that noble hero
 Already burns to serve the royal race:
 His gen'rous heart abhors the savage fierceness
 Of this new common-weal; his pride was hurt
 By their refusal of his just demand;

The

The work's half done, and thou must finish it.
 I have not look'd into his heart; but sure,
 If he knows Tullia well, he must adore her:
 Who cou'd behold, unmov'd, a diadem
 By thee presented, and with thee adorn'd?
 Speak to him then, for thou alone hast pow'r
 To triumph o'er this enemy of kings:
 No longer let the senate boast of Titus,
 Their best support, the guardian god of Rome;
 But be it Tullia's glory to possess
 The great defender of her father's cause,
 And crush his foes to ruin.

S C E N E IV.

TULLIA, ALGINA.

TULLIA.

Gracious heav'n!

How much I owe to thy propitious goodness!
 My tears have mov'd thee: all is chang'd; and now
 Thy justice, smiling on my passion, gives
 New strength and freedom to the glorious flame.
 Fly, my Algina, bring him hither: gods!
 Does he avoid me still, or knows he not
 His happiness? But stay, perhaps my hopes
 Are but delusions all: does Titus hate

The senate thus? alas! and must I owe
That to resentment which is due to love?

ALGINA.

I know the senate have offended him;
That he's ambitious; that he burns for Tullia.

TULLIA.

Then he'll do all to serve me: fly, Algina,
Away, begone. [Exit Algina.]

And yet this sudden change
Alarms me: O! what anguish racks my heart!
Now, love, do thou assist and guide my virtue!
My fame, my duty, reason, all command it.
And shall my father owe his crown to me,
Shall Tullia be the chain to bind their friendship;
And all Rome's happiness depend on mine?
O, when shall I impart to thee, my Titus,
The wond'rous change we little thought to see,
When shall I hear thy vows, and give thee mine,
Without a pain, a sorrow, or a fear?
My woes are past; now, Rome, I can forgive thee;
If Titus leaves thee, Rome, thou art a slave:
If he is mine, proud senate, thou'rt no more:
He loves me; tremble therefore, and obey.

SCENE

S C E N E V.

TITUS, TULLIA.

TITUS.

May I believe it? wilt thou deign once more
To look on this abhorred Roman, long
The object of thy hatred, and thy foe?

TULLIA.

The face of things, my lord, is strangely alter'd;
Fate now permits me——but first tell me, Titus,
Has Tullia still an int'rest in thy heart?

TITUS.

Alas! thou can'st not doubt thy fatal pow'r;
Thou know'st my love, my guilt, and my despair;
And hold'st a cruel empire o'er a life
Which I detest; exhaust your rage upon me;
My fate is in your hands.

TULLIA.

Know, mine depends
On thee.

TITUS.

On Titus? never can this trembling heart
Believe it: am I then no longer hated?
Speak on, my Tullia: O, what flatt'ring hope
Thus in a moment lifts me to the height
Of mortal bliss?

N 2

TULLIA.

TULLIA.

[Giving him the letter.]

Read this, and make thy self,
 Thy Tullia, and her father happy——Now
 May I not hope——but wherefore that stern brow
 And frowning aspect? gods!

TITUS.

Of all mankind

Titus is sure the most accurs'd: blind fate,
 Bent on my ruin, shew'd me happiness,
 Then snatch'd it from me: to complete my woes,
 It doom'd me to adore, and to destroy thee:
 I love thee, and have lost thee now for ever.

TULLIA.

How, Titus!

TITUS.

Yes; this fatal hour condemns me
 To shame and horror: to betray or Rome
 Or Tullia: all that's left to my sad choice
 Is guilt, or misery.

TULLIA.

What say'st thou, Titus?

When with this hand I offer thee a throne;
 Now when thou know'st my heart, for no longer
 Will I conceal my virtuous passion for thee;

When

When duty yields a sanction to our love ;
 Alas ! I thought this happy day wou'd prove
 The fairest of my life, and yet the moment
 When first my fearful heart, without a blush,
 Might own its passion, is the first that calls
 For my repentance. Dar'st thou talk to me
 Of guilt and misery ? Know, thus to serve
 Ungrateful men against their lawful prince,
 To scorn my proffer'd bounties, and oppress me,
 These are my mis'ries, Titus, these thy crimes.
 Mistaken youth, weigh in the even ballance
 What Rome refused, and what she offers thee :
 Or deal forth laws, or meanly stoop t'obey them :
 Be govern'd by a rabble, or a king ;
 By Rome, or me : direct him right, ye gods !

TITUS.

[Giving her back the letter.]

My choice is made.

TULLIA.

And fear'st thou to avow it ?

Be bold, and speak at once ; deserve my pardon,
 Or merit my revenge : what's thy resolve ?

TITUS.

'Tis to be worthy of thee, of myself,
 And of my country ; to be just, and faithful ;

'Tis to adore and imitate thy virtues ;
It is to lose, O Tullia, yet deserve thee.

TULLIA.

For ever then —

TITUS.

Forgive me, dearest Tullia ;
Pity my weakness, and forget my love :
Pity a heart foe to itself, a heart
A thousand times more wretched now than ev'n
When thou did'st hate me : O ! I cannot leave,
I cannot follow thee ; I cannot live
Or with thee or without thee ; but will die
Rather than see thee given to another.

TULLIA.

My heart's still thine, and I forgive thee, Titus.

TITUS.

If thou dost love me, Tullia, be a Roman ;
Be more than queen, and love the common-weal :
Bring with thee patriot zeal, the love of Rome,
And of her sacred laws, be that thy dowry :
Henceforth let Brutus be thy father, Rome
Thy mother, and her lov'd avenger, Titus,
Thy husband : thus shall Romans yield the palm
Of glory to a Tuscan maid, and owe

Their

Their freedom to the daughter of a king.

TULLIA.

And wou'st thou with me to betray ——

TITUS.

My soul,

Urg'd to despair, hath lost itself: O no!
Treason is horrible in ev'ry shape,
And most unworthy of thee: well I know
A father's rights; his pow'r is absolute,
And must not be disputed: well I know
That Titus loves thee, that he is distracted.

TULLIA.

Thou know'st what duty is, hear then the voice
Of Tullia's father.

TITUS.

And forget my own!
Forget my country!

TULLIA.

Can'st thou call it thine
Without thy Tullia?

TITUS.

We are foes by nature;
The laws have laid a cruel duty on us.

TULLIA.

Titus and Tullia foes! how cou'd that word
E'er pass thy lips!

N 4

TITUS.

TITUS.

Thou know'st my heart belies them.

TULLIA.

Dare then to serve, and if thou lov'st, revenge me.

S C E N E VI.

BRUTUS, ARUNS, TITUS, TULLIA, MESSALA,
ALBINUS, PROCULUS, LICTORS.

BRUTUS.

[Addressing himself to Tullia.]

Madam, the time is come for your departure ;
 Whilst public tumults shook the common-weal,
 And the wild tempest howl'd around us, Rome
 Cou'd not restore you to your household gods :
 Tarquin himself, in that disastrous hour,
 Too busy in the ruin of his people
 To think on Tullia, ne'er demanded thee.
 Forgive me if I call thus to remembrance
 Thy sorrows past : I robb'd thee of a father,
 And meet it is I prove a father to thee :
 Go, princess, and may justice ever guard
 The throne which heav'n hath call'd thee to possess !
 If thou dost hope obedience from thy subjects,
 Obey the laws, and tremble for thyself,
 When thou confid'rest all a sov'reign's duty :

And

And if the fatal pow'rs of flatt'ry e'er
 Shou'd from thy heart unloose the sacred bonds
 Of justice, think on Rome; remember Tarquin:
 Let his example be th' instructive lesson
 To future kings, and make the world more happy.

Aruns, the senate gives her to thy care;
 A father and a husband at your hands
 Expects her. Proculus attends you hence,
 Far as the sacred gate.

TITUS.

[*apart.*

Despair, and horror!

I will not suffer it — permit me, Sir,

[*Advancing towards Aruns.*

*Brutus and Tullia with their Attendants go out, leaving
 Aruns and Messala.*

Gods! I shall die with grief and shame: but soft,
 Aruns, I'd speak with you.

ARUNS.

My lord, the time
 Is short; I follow Brutus, and the princess;
 Remember, I can put off her departure
 But for an hour, and after that, my lord,
 'Twill be too late to talk with me; within
 We may confer on Tullia's fate, perhaps
 On yours.

[*Exit.*

N 5

S C E N E

S C E N E VII.

TITUS, MESSALA.

O cruel destiny ! to join
 And then divide us ! Were we made, alas !
 But to be foes ! My friend, I beg thee stop
 The tide of grief and rage.

MESSALA.

I weep to see
 So many virtues and so many charms
 Rewarded thus : a heart like her's deserv'd
 To have been thine, and thine alone.

TITUS.

O no !
 Titus and Tullia ne'er shall be united.

MESSALA.

Wherefore, my Lord ? what idle scruples rife
 To thwart your wishes ?

TITUS.

The ungen'rous laws
 She has impos'd upon me : cruel maid !
 Must I then serve the tyrants I had conquer'd,
 Must I betray the people I had fav'd ?
 Shall love, whose pow'r I had so long defy'd,
 At last subdue me thus ? Shall I expose
 My father to these proud despotic lords !

And

And such a father, such a fair example
 To all mankind, the guardian of his country,
 Whom long I follow'd in the paths of honour,
 And might perhaps ev'n one day have excell'd;
 Shall Titus fall from such exalted virtue
 To infamy and vice? detested thought!

MESSALA.

Thou art a Roman, rise to nobler views,
 And be a king; heav'n offers thee a throne:
 Empire and love, and glory, and revenge
 Await thee: this proud consul, this support
 Of falling Rome, this idol of the people,
 If fortune had not crown'd him with success,
 If Titus had not conquer'd for his father,
 Had been a Rebel: thou hast gain'd the name
 Of conqu'ror, now assume a nobler title;
 Now be thy country's friend, and give her peace:
 Restore the happy days, when, blest with freedom,
 Not unrestrain'd by pow'r, our ancestors
 Weigh'd in the even scale, and balanc'd well
 The prince's honours and the people's right:
 Rome's hate of kings is not immortal; soon
 Wou'd it be chang'd to love if Titus reign'd:
 For monarchy, so oft admir'd, so oft
 Detested by us, is the best or worst.

OF

Of human governments: a Tyrant king
Will make it dreadful, and a good, divine.

TITUS.

Messala, dost thou know me? Dost thou know
I hold thee for a traitor, and myself
Almost as guilty for conversing with thee.

MESSALA.

Know thou, the honour thou contemn'st shall soon
Be wrested from thee, and another hand
Perform thy office.

TITUS.

Ha! another! who?

MESSALA.

Thy brother.

TITUS.

Ay! my brother.

MESSALA.

He has giv'n

His faith to Tarquin.

TITUS.

Cou'd Tiberius e'er

Betray his country?

MESSALA.

He will serve his king,
And be a friend to Rome: in spite of thee,

Tarquin

Tarquin will give his daughter to the man
Who shall with warmest zeal defend her father.

TITUS.

Perfidious wretch ! thou hast misled my steps,
And left me hanging o'er the precipice ;
Left me the dreadful choice or to accuse
My brother, or partake his guilt ; but know,
Sooner thy blood ——

MESSALA.

My life is in thy pow'r,
Take it this moment ; I deserve to die
For striving to oblige you : shed the blood
Of friend, of mistress, and of brother ; lay
The breathless victims all before the senate,
And for thy virtues ask the consulship :
Or let me hence, and tell 'em all I know,
Accuse my fellow-traitors, and myself
Begin the sacrifice.

TITUS.

Messala, stop,
Or dread my desperate rage.

S C E N E

S C E N E V I I I.

TITUS, MESSALA, ALBINUS.

ALBINUS.

Th' ambaffador

Wou'd fee you now, my Lord ; he's with the princefs.

TITUS.

Yes, I will fly to Tullia : O ye gods
 Of Rome, ye guardians of my much-lov'd country !
 Pierce this corrupted this ungrateful heart :
 Had Titus never lov'd, he had been virtuous :
 And muft I fall a facrifice to thee,
 Detested fenate ! let us hence.

[Turning to Meffala.]

Thou feeft,

Meffala, this proud capitol replete
 With monuments of Titus' faith.

MESSALA.

'Tis fill'd

By a proud fenate.

TITUS.

Ay : I know it well :

But hark ! I hear the voice of angry heav'n,
 It fpeaks to me in thunder, and cries, ftop,
 Ungrateful Titus, thou betray'ft thy country :

No.

No, Rome, no, Brutus, I am still thy son:
 O'er Titus head the sun of glory still
 Hath shed his brightest rays; he never yet
 Disgrac'd his noble blood: your victim, gods,
 Is spotless yet; and if this fatal day
 Shall doom me to involuntary crimes,
 If I must yield to fate, let Titus die
 Whilst he is innocent, and save his country.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

TITUS, ARUNS, MESSALA.

TITUS.

Urge me no more: I've heard too much already:
 Shame and despair surround me, but begone,
 I am resolv'd: go, leave me to my sorrows,
 And to my virtue: reason pleads in vain,
 But Tullia's tears are eloquent indeed:
 One look from her will more unman my soul
 Than all your tyrant's threats: but never more
 Will I behold her; let her go: O heav'n!

A R U N S.

I staid but to oblige you, Sir, beyond
 The time which you so earnestly requested,
 And which we scarce cou'd gain.

TITUS.

TITUS.

Did I request it?

ARUNS.

You did, my lord, and I in secret hoped
A fairer fate wou'd crown your loves; but now
'Tis past; we must not think on't.

TITUS.

Cruel Aruns!

Thou hast beheld my shame, and my disgrace;
Thou hast seen Titus for a moment doubtful:
Thou artful witness of my folly, hence!
And tell thy royal masters all my weakness;
Tell the proud tyrants, that their conqueror,
The son of Brutus, wept before thy face;
But tell 'em too, that, spite of all my tears,
Spite of thy eloquence, and Tullia's charms,
I yet am free, a conqu'ror o'er myself:
That, still a Roman, I will never yield
To Tarquin's blood, but swear eternal war
Against the race of her whom I adore.

ARUNS.

Titus, I pity and excuse thy grief;
And, far from wishing to oppress thy heart
With added sorrows, mix my sighs with thine;

Only

Only remember, thou hast kill'd thy Tullia.
Farewell, my lord.

MESSALA.

O heav'n!

SCENE II.

TITUS, MESSALA.

TITUS.

She must not go:
On peril of my life I'll keep her here.

MESSALA.

You wou'd not —

TITUS.

No: Ill not betray my country:
Rome may divide her from me; but she ne'er
Can disunite our fate; I live, and breath
For Tullia only, and for her will die.
Messala, haste, have pity on my woes,
Gather our troops, assemble all our friends,
Spite of the senate I will stop her; say
She must remain a hostage here at Rome;
I'll do't Messala.

MESSALA.

To what desp'rate means
Doth passion urge you? What will it avail

To

To make this fond avowal of your love ?

TITUS.

Go to the senate, and appeal to them,
Try if thou can'st not soften the proud hearts
Of these imperious kings. Messala, tell 'em
The interest of Brutus, of the state ———
Alas ! I rave, 'tis idle, and all in vain.

MESSALA.

I see you're hurt, my lord, and I will serve you.
I go ———

TITUS.

I'll see her : speak to her, Messala,
She passes by this way, and I will take
My last farewell of her.

MESSALA,

You shall.

TITUS.

'Tis she

Now I am lost indeed.

S C E N E III.

TITUS, MESSALA, TULLIA, ALGINA.

ALGINA.

Madam, they wait.

TULLIA.

TULLIA.

Pity my hard, my cruel fate, Algina ;
 This base ungrateful man still wounds my heart ;
 And Brutus, like a vengeful god, appears
 To torture us : love, fear and grief, at once
 Distract my soul : let us begone.

TITUS,

O no !

Stay, Tullia, deign at least ——

TULLIA.

Barbarian, hence !

Think'ft thou with soothing words ——

TITUS.

Alas ! my Tullia,

I only know in this difaftous hour
 What duty bids me do, not what I wou'd :
 Reason no longer holds her empire here,
 For thou haft torn her from me, and usurp'ft
 The pow'r supreme o'er this distracted mind :
 Reign, tyrant, stretch thy cruel pow'r ; command
 Thy vaffal ; bid thy Titus rufh on guilt ;
 Dictate his crimes, and make him wretched : No ;
 Sooner than Titus fhall betray his country,
 Give up his friends, his fellow citizens,

Those

Those whom his valour sav'd to fire and slaughter,
 Sooner than leave his father to the sword
 Of Tarquin, know, proud woman ——

TULLIA.

Shield me, heav'n ?

Thou plead'st the cause of nature, and her voice
 Is dear to me as to thyself: thou, Titus,
 Taught'st me long since to tremble for a father;
 Brutus is mine: our blood united flows:
 Can'st thou require a fairer pledge than love
 And truth have giv'n thee: if I stay with thee,
 I am his daughter, and his hostage here.
 Can'st thou yet doubt? think'st thou in secret Brutus
 Wou'd not rejoice to see thee on a throne?
 He hath not plac'd indeed a diadem
 On his own brows, but is he not a king
 Beneath another name? and one year's reign
 Perhaps may bring —— but these are fruitless reasons.
 If thou no longer lov'st me — one word more,
 Farewell: I leave, and I adore thee, Titus:
 Thou weep'st, thou tremblest; yet a little time
 Is left for thee, speak, tell me, cruel man,
 What more can'st thou desire?

TITUS.

TITUS.

Thy hatred ; that
Alone remains to make me truly wretched.

TULLIA.

It is too much to bear thy causeless plaints ;
To hear thee talk of fancy'd injuries,
With idle dreams of visionary tyes :
Take back thy love, take back thy faithless vows,
Worse than thy base refusal : I despise them.
Think not I mean to search in Italy
The fatal grandeur which I sacrific'd
To Titus' love, and in another's arms
Lament the weakness which I felt for thee ;
My fate's determin'd : learn, proud Roman, thou
Whose savage virtue rises but t'oppress
A helpless woman, coward, when I ask
Thy aid, and only valiant to destroy me,
Fickle and wav'ring in thy faith, of me
Learn to fulfill thy vows ; thou shalt behold
A Woman, in thy eyes howe'er contemn'd,
Howe'er despis'd, unshaken in her purpose,
And by her firmness see how much she lov'd thee.
Titus, beneath these walls, the rev'rend feat
Of my great ancestors, which thou defend'st

Against

Against their rightful lord ; this fatal spot
 Where thou hast dar'd t'insult and to betray me ;
 Where first thy faithless vows deceiv'd me ; there,
 E'vn there, by all the gods who store up vengeance
 For perjur'd men, I swear to thee, O Titus,
 This arm, more just than thine, and more resolv'd,
 Shall punish soon my fond credulity,
 And wash out all my inj'ries in my blood :
 I go ——

TITUS.

No, Tullia, hear and then condemn me ;
 You shall be satisfy'd ; I fly to please you,
 Yet shudder at it : I am still more wretched,
 Because my guilty soul has no excuse,
 No poor delusion left. I have not ev'n
 The joy of self-deceit to sooth my sorrows :
 No, thou hast conquer'd, not betray'd me, Tullia ;
 I loath the fatal passion which I feel,
 And rush on vice, yet know and honour virtue.
 Hate me, avoid me, leave a guilty wretch
 Who dies for love, yet hates himself for loving ;
 Nor fears to mix his future fate with thine,
 Mid'st crimes, and horrors, perjury, and death.

TULLIA.

You know too well your influence o'er my heart ;

Mock

Mock my fond passion, and insult my love ;
 Yes, Titus, 'tis for thee alone I live,
 For thee wou'd die : yet, spite of all my love,
 And all my weakness, death were far more welcome
 Than the reluctant hand of cruel Titus,
 Who is ashamed to serve his royal master,
 And blushes to accept a kingdom from me.
 The dreadful hour of separation comes,
 Think on it, Titus, and remember well
 That Tullia loves, and offers thee a throne.
 Th' ambassador expects me ; fare thee well,
 Delib'rate and determine : an hour hence
 Again thou shalt behold me with my father :
 When I return to these detested walls
 Know, Titus, I'll return a queen, or perish.

TITUS,

Thou shalt not die : I go ——

TULLIA.

Stop, Titus, stop ;
 If thou should'st follow me, thy life's in danger,
 Thou'lt be suspected ; therefore stay : farewell ;
 Resolve to be my murth'rer, or my husband.

S C E N E

S C E N E IV.

TITUS alone.

O Tullia, thou hast conquer'd, Rome's enslav'd :
 Return to rule o'er her, and o'er my life,
 Devoted to thee : haste, I fly to crown thee,
 Or perish in th' attempt : the worst of crimes
 Were to abandon thee. Now, where's Messala ?
 My headstrong passion hath at length worn out
 His patient friendship ; mistress, Romans, friends,
 All in one fatal day, hath Titus lost.

S C E N E V.

TITUS, MESSALA.

TITUS.

O my Messala, help me in my love,
 And my revenge : away ; haste, follow me.

MESSALA.

Command, and I obey : my troops are ready
 At the Quirinal mount to give us up
 The gates, and all my gallant friends have sworn
 T'acknowledge Titus as the rightful heir
 Of Tarquin : lose no time ; propitious night
 Already offers her kind shade to veil
 Our great design.

TITUS

TITUS.

The hour approaches: Tullia
Will count each minute: Tarquin, after all,
Had my first oaths: away; the dye is cast.

*[The lower part of the stage opens and discovers
Brutus.]*

What do I see; my father!

S C E N E VI.

BRUTUS, TITUS, MESSALA, LICTORS.

BRUTUS.

Titus, haste,

Rome is in danger; thou art all our hope:
Secret instructions have been giv'n the senate
That Rome will be attack'd at dead of night,
And I have gain'd for my beloved Titus
The first command, in this extremity
Of public danger. Arm thyself, my son,
And fly, a second time, to save thy country;
Hazard thy life once more in the great cause
Of liberty; or victory or death
Must crown thy days, and I shall envy thee.

TITUS.

O heav'n!

VOL. I.

O

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

My son!

TITUS.

To other hands commit
The senate's favors, and the fate of Rome.

MESSALA.

What strange disorder has possess'd his soul!

BRUTUS.

Dost thou refuse the proffer'd glory?

TITUS.

I!

Shall I, my lord—

BRUTUS.

Ha! doth thy heart still burn
With proud resentment of thy fancy'd wrongs?
Is this a time, my son, for fond caprice?
Can he who sav'd his country be unhappy?
Immortal honour! will not that suffice
Without the consulship? The laws, thou know'st,
Refus'd it, Titus, to thy youth alone,
Not to thy merit: think no more of that:
Go; I have plac'd thee in the post of honour;
Let tyrants only feel thy indignation;
Give Rome thy life; ask nothing in return,

But

But be a hero ; be yet more, my son,
 A Roman : I am hast'ning to the end
 Of my short journey ; thy victorious hands
 Must close my eyes ; supported by thy virtues,
 My name shall never die ; I shall revive
 And live once more in Titus : but perhaps
 It is decreed that I must follow thee ;
 Old age is weak ; but I will see thee conquer,
 Or perish with thee, Rome's avenger still,
 Free, and without a master.

TITUS.

O Messala !

S C E N E VII.

BRUTUS, VALERIUS, TITUS, MESSALA.

VALERIUS.

My lord, let all retire.

BRUTUS.

Run, fly, my son—

[To Titus.

VALERIUS.

Rome is betray'd.

BRUTUS.

What do I hear ?

VALERIUS.

There's treason ;

We're sold, my lord, the author's yet unknown ;

O 2

But

But Tarquin's name is echo'd through our streets,
And worthless Romans talk of yielding to him.

BRUTUS.

Ha! wou'd the citizens of Rome be slaves!

VALERIUS.

Yes: the perfidious traitors fled from me;
I've sent in quest of them: much I suspect
Menas and Lælius, the base partizans
Of tyranny and kings, the secret foes
Of Rome, and ever glad to disunite
The senate and the people: if I err not,
Protected by Messala, who himself,
But for his friendship with the noble Titus,
I almost think, has join'd them.

BRUTUS.

We'll observe

Their steps with caution; more cannot be done:
The liberty and laws which we defend
Forbid that rigor which I fear is needful;
But to detain a Roman on suspicions,
Were to resemble those usurping tyrants
Whom we wou'd punish: let us to the people,
Awake the fearful, give the virtuous praise,
Astonish the perfidious: let the fathers

Of

Of Rome, and liberty revive the warmth
 Of Roman courage: who will not be bold
 When we appear? O rather give us death,
 Ye gods! than slav'ry: let the senate follow.

S C E N E VIII.

BRUTUS, VALERIUS, PROCULUS.

PROCULUS.

A slave, my lord, desires a private audience.

BRUTUS.

At this late hour of night!

PROCULUS.

He brings you news,

He says, of highest import.

BRUTUS.

Ha! perhaps

Rome's safety may depend on it: away:

[To Proculus.]

A moments loss might hazard all—go thou
 And seek my son: let the Quirinal gate
 Be his first care: and may the world confess,
 When they behold his glorious deeds, the race
 Of Brutus was decreed to conquer kings.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V. S C E N E I.

BRUTUS, SENATORS, PROCULUS, LICTORS,

VINDEK, a Slave.

BRUTUS.

A little more and Tarquin, arm'd with vengeance,
 This night had rush'd upon us; Rome had fall'n,
 And freedom sunk beneath the tyrant's pow'r :
 This subtle statesman, this ambassador,
 Had open'd wide the fatal precipice :
 Wou'd you believe it, ev'n the sons of Rome
 United to betray her : false Messala
 Urg'd on their furious zeal, and sold his country
 To this perfidious Aruns ; but kind heav'n,
 Still watchful o'er the fate of Rome, preserv'd us.

[*Pointing to Vindex.*]

This slave o'er heard it all ; his faithful councils
 Awak'd my fears, and fill'd my aged breast
 With double vigour : I had seiz'd Messala,
 And hoped by tortures to have wrested from him
 The names of his associates ; but, behold,
 Surrounded by my lictors, on a sudden
 He from his bosom drew a poniard forth,
 Design'd no doubt for other purposes,

And

And cry'd, if you wou'd know Messala's secrets,
 Look for them here, within this bleeding breast ;
 He who has courage to conspire against you,
 Can keep the council which he gives, and die :
 Then, as tumultuously they gather'd round him,
 Pierc'd his false heart, and like a Roman dy'd,
 Tho' he had liv'd unworthy of the name.

Already Aruns was beyond the walls
 Of Rome ; our guards pursued him to the camp,
 Stopp'd him with Tullia, and e'er long will bring
 The traitor here, when heav'n, I trust, will soon
 Unravel all their dark and deadly purpose.

Valerius will detect 'em : but remember
 Friends, Romans, countrymen, I charge you all,
 When ye shall know the names of these vile slaves,
 These parricides, nor pardon nor indulgence
 Be shewn to friends, to brothers, nay to children ;
 Think on their crimes alone, preserve your faith,
 For liberty and Rome demands their blood,
 And he who pardons guilt like theirs, partakes it.

[To the slaves.]

Thou, whose blind destiny and lowly birth
 Made thee a slave, who shoud'ft have been a Roman ;
 Thou, by whose gen'rous aid the senate lives,

And Rome is safe, receive that liberty
 Thou hast bestow'd ; henceforth let nobler thoughts
 Inspire thy soul ; be equal to my sons,
 The dread of tyrants, the delight of Rome.
 But whence this tumult ? Hark !

PROCLUSUS.

Th' ambassador
 Is seiz'd my lord, and they have brought him hither.

BRUTUS.

How will he dare ———

S C E N E II.

BRUTUS, SENATORS, ARUNS, LICTORS.

ARUNS.

How long, insulting Romans,
 Will you thus violate the sacred rights
 Of all mankind ? How long by faction led
 Thus in their ministers dishonour kings ?
 Your lictors have with insolence detain'd me :
 Is it my master you thus treat with scorn,
 Or Aruns ? Know, my rank respectable
 In ev'ry nation——

BRUTUS.

The more sacred that,
 More guilty thou : talk not of titles here.

ARUNS.

A R U N S.

A king's ambassador——

B R U T U S.

Thou art not one :

Thou art a traitor, with a noble name,
 Embolden'd by impunity : for know
 That, true ambassadors interpret laws,
 But never break them ; serve their king, but ne'er
 Dishonour him ; with them repos'd in safety.
 Lie the firm ties of faith t'wixt man and man ;
 And of their holy ministry the fruit
 Is grateful peace : they are the sacred bonds
 That knit the sov'reigns of the earth together ;
 And, as the friends of all, by all rever'd.

Ask thy own heart if thou art such ; thou dar'st not :
 But if thy master bade thee learn our laws,
 Our virtues, and our treasures, we will teach thee
 Now what Rome is, and what a Roman senate :
 Will teach thee that this people still respects
 The law of nations, which thou hast dishonour'd :
 The only punishment inflicted on thee,
 Shall be to see thy vile associates bleed,
 And tell thy king their folly and their fate.
 When thou return'st, before inform thy friends
 Of Rome's resentment, and thy own disgrace :
 Lictors, away with him.

Q 5

S C E N E

S C E N E III.

BRUTUS, VALERIUS, PROCULUS, SENATORS.

Well, my Valerius,
They're seiz'd, I hope, at least you know the traitors :
Ha ! wherefore is that melancholy gloom
Spread o'er thy face, presaging greater ills ?
Thou tremblest too.

VALERIUS.

Remember thou art Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Explain thyself.

VALERIUS.

I dare not speak it : take

[Gives him the tablets.]

These tablets, read, and know the guilty.

BRUTUS.

Ha !

My eyes deceive me ; sure it cannot be !
O heavy hour ! and most unhappy father !
My son ! Tiberius ! pardon me, my friends,
Unlook'd for mis'ry ! Have you seiz'd the traitor ?

VALERIUS.

My lord, with two of the conspirators,
He stood on his defence, and rather chose

To

To die than yield himself a pris'ner : close
 By them he fell all cover'd o'er with wounds :
 But O ! there still remains a tale more dreadful
 For thee, for Rome, and for us all.

BRUTUS.

What is it ?

VALERIUS.

Once more, my lord, look on that fatal scroll
 Which Proculus had wrested from Messala.

BRUTUS.

I tremble, but I will go on : ha ! Titus !

[He sinks into the arms of Proculus.]

VALERIUS.

Disarm'd I found him, wand'ring in despair
 And horror, as if conscious of a crime
 Which he abhorr'd.

BRUTUS.

Return, ye conscript fathers,
 Strait to the senate ; Brutus hath no place
 Amongst you now : go, pass your judgment on him ;
 Exterminate the guilty race of Brutus ;
 Punish the father in the blood of him
 Who was my child : I shall not follow you,
 Or to suspend or mitigate the wrath
 Of injur'd Rome.

S C E N E

S C E N E IV.

BRUTUS alone.

Great gods ! to your decrees

I yield submissive, to the great avengers
 Of Rome, and of her laws : by you inspir'd
 I rear'd the structure of fair liberty
 On justice and on truth ; and will you now
 O'erthrow it ? will you arm my children's hands
 Against your own work ? Was it not woe enough
 That fierce Tiberius, blind with furious zeal,
 Shou'd serve the tyrant, and betray his country ?
 But that my Titus too, the joy of Rome,
 Who, full of honour, but this very day
 Enjoy'd a triumph for his victories,
 Crown'd in the capitol by Brutus' hand,
 Titus, the hope of my declining years,
 The darling of mankind, that Titus ---- gods !

S C E N E V.

BRUTUS, VALERIUS, LICTORS, ATTENDANTS.

VALERIUS.

My lord, the senate have decreed, yourself
 Shou'd pass the sentence on your guilty son.

BRUTUS.

Myself !

VALERIUS.

VALERIUS.

It must be so.

BRUTUS.

Touching the rest,

Say, what have they determin'd ?

VALERIUS.

All condemn'd

To death ; ev'n now perhaps they are no more.

BRUTUS.

And have the senate left to my disposal

The life of Titus ?

VALERIUS.

They esteem this honour

Due to thy virtues.

BRUTUS.

O my country !

VALERIUS.

Must I return in answer to the senate ?

What

BRUTUS.

That Brutus knows the value of a favor

He fought not, but shall study to deserve.

But cou'd my son without resistance yield ?

Cou'd he —— forgive my doubts, but Titus ever

Was Rome's best guard, and still I feel I love him.

VALERIUS.

VALERIUS.

Tullia, my lord——

BRUTUS.

Well, what of her?

VALERIUS.

Confirm'd

Our just suspicions.

BRUTUS.

How!

VALERIUS.

Soon as she saw,

In her return, the dreadful preparation
 Of torture for th' offenders, at our feet
 She fell, and soon in agonies expir'd ;
 'The last poor victim of the hated race
 Of tyrants : doubtless 'twas for her, my lord,
 Rome was betray'd : I feel a father's grief,
 And weep for Brutus ; but in her last moments
 This way she turn'd her eyes, and call'd on Titus.

BRUTUS.

Just gods !

VALERIUS.

Thou art his judge, perform thy office,
 Or Strike, or spare ; acquit him, or condemn ;
 Rome will approve what Brutus shall determine.

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

Lictors, bring Titus hither.

VALERIUS.

I retire,

And trust thy virtue ; my astonish'd soul
Admires and pities thee : I go to tell
The senate, nought can equal Brutus' grief
But Brutus' firmness.

S C E N E VI.

BRUTUS, PROCULUS.

BRUTUS.

No: the more I think,
The less can I believe my son cou'd e'er
Conspire with traitors to betray his country :
No: he lov'd Rome too well ; too well he lov'd
His father : sure we cannot thus forget
Our duty and ourselves in one short day :
I cannot think my son was guilty still.

PROCULUS.

'Twas all conducted by Messala ; he
Perhaps design'd to shelter his own crimes
Beneath the name of Titus ; his accusers
Envy his glory, and wou'd fain obscure it.

BRUTUS.

O ! wou'd to heav'n it were so !

PROCULUS.

PROCULUS.

He's thy son,
 Thy only hope ; and innocent or guilty,
 The senate has to thee resign'd his fate :
 His life is safe whilst in the hands of Brutus ;
 Thou wilt preserve a great man for his country ;
 Thou art a father.

BRUTUS.

No : I am Rome's conful.

S C E N E VII.

BRUTUS, PROCULUS, TITUS at the further end of the
 stage, guarded by Lictors.

PROCULUS.

He comes.

TITUS.

[*advancing.*]

'Tis Brutus : O distressful fight !
 Open, thou earth, beneath my trembling steps !
 My lord, permit a son——

BRUTUS.

Rash boy, forbear :
 I was the father of two children once,
 And lov'd them both ; but one is lost : what say'st
 thou ?

Speak, Titus, have I yet a son ?

TITUS.

O no :
 Thou hast not, BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

Answer then thy judge, thou shame
To Brutus; say, did'st thou betray thy country,
Give up thy father to a tyrant's pow'r,
And break thy solemn vows? Did'st thou resolve
To do this, Titus?

TITUS.

I resolv'd on nothing.
Fill'd with a deadly poison that possess'd
My frantic mind, I did not know myself,
Nor do I yet; and my distemper'd soul,
In its wild rage, was for a moment guilty;
That moment cloath'd me with eternal shame,
And made me false to what I lov'd, my country:
'Tis past; and anguish and remorse succeed
T'avenge their wrongs, and scourge me for the crime.
Pronounce my sentence: Rome, that looks upon thee,
Wants an example, and demands my life:
By my deserved fate she may deter
Those of her sons, if any such there be,
Who might be tempted to a crime like mine.
In death at least thus shall I serve my country;
Thus shall my blood, which never till this hour
Was stain'd with guilt, still flow for liberty.

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

Unnat'ral mixture ! perfidy and courage ;
 Such horrid crimes with such exalted virtue !
 With all thy dear-bought laurels on thy brow,
 What pow'r malignant cou'd inspire thee thus
 With vile inconstancy ?

TITUS.

The thirst of vengeance,
 Ambition, hatred, madness ; all united —

BRUTUS.

Go on, unhappy youth.

TITUS.

One error more,
 And worse than all the rest ; one cruel flame ;
 That fir'd my guilt, and still perhaps augments it,
 Completed my destruction : to confess it
 Is double shame, to Rome of little service,
 And most unworthy of us both : I own it :
 But I have reach'd the summit of my guilt,
 And of my sorrows too : end with my life
 My crimes, and my despair, my shame and thine.

[*Kneeling.*

But if in battle I have ever trac'd

Thy

Thy glorious steps ; if I have follow'd thee,
 And serv'd my country ; if remorse and anguish
 Already have o'er paid my crimes ; O deign
 Within thy arms once more to hold a wretch
 Abandon'd and forlorn : O say, at least,
 My son, thy father hates thee not : that word
 Alone my fame and virtue shall restore,
 And save my mem'ry from the brand of shame.
 The world will say, when Titus dy'd, a look
 From you reliev'd him from his load of grief,
 And made him full amends for all his sorrows ;
 Spite of his guilt, that still esteem'd by thee,
 He bore thy blessing with him to the grave.

BRUTUS.

O Rome ! his pangs oppress me : O my country !
 Proculus, see they lead my son to death.

Rise, wretched Titus, thou wert once the hope
 Of my old age, my best support ; embrace
 Thy father who condemn'd thee : t'was his duty.
 Were he not Brutus, he had pardon'd thee ;
 Believe my tears that trickle down thy cheeks
 Whilst I am speaking to thee : O my Titus,
 Let nobler courage than thy father shews

Support

Support thee in thy death ; my son, farewell :
 Let no unmanly tears disgrace thy fall,
 But be a Roman still, and let thy country,
 That knows thy worth, admire while she destroys
 thee.

TITUS.

Farewell : I go to death ; in that at least
 Titus once more shall emulate his father.

S C E N E VIII.

BRUTUS, PROCULUS.

PROCULUS.

My lord, the senate, with sincerest grief,
 And shudd'ring at the dreadful stroke —

BRUTUS.

No more :

Ye know not Brutus who condole with him
 At such a time : Rome only is my care ;
 I feel but for my country : we must guard
 Against more danger : they're in arms again :
 Away : let Rome in this disastrous hour
 Supply the place of him whom I have lost.
 For her, and let me finish my sad days,
 As Titus shou'd have done, in Rome's defence.

S C E N E

S C E N E the L A S T.

BRUTUS, PROCULUS, a SENATOR.

SENATOR.

My lord ———

BRUTUS.

My son is dead?

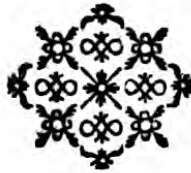
SENATOR.

'Tis so: these eyes—

BRUTUS.

Thank heav'n! Rome's free; and I am satisfy'd.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.



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