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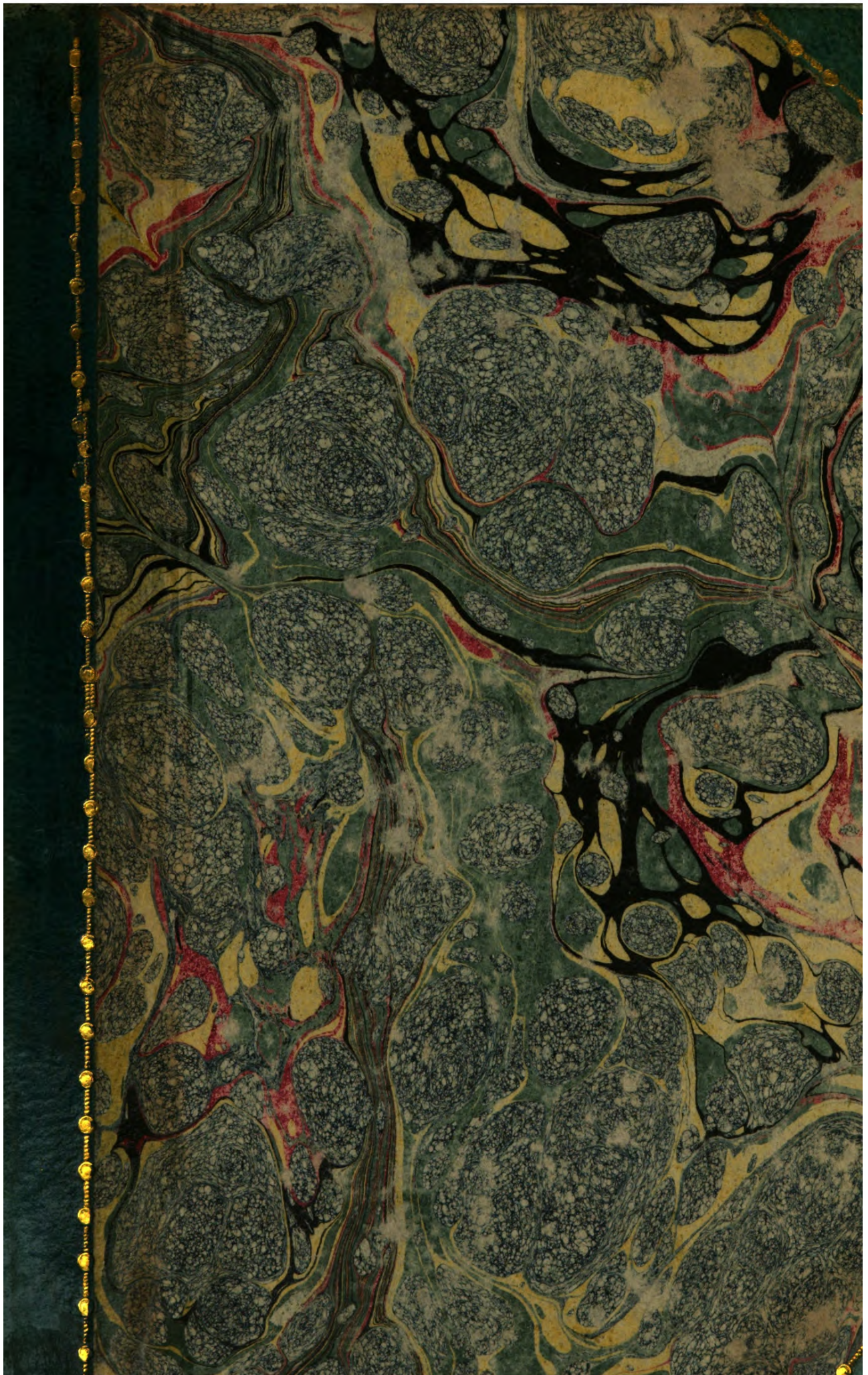
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Malone. B.

73.



1. Rep. 6. 6th by 2000 ft. by [Hides?] Lake by 2000 ft. July 1920
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Malone B.

73



MARIAMNE.

A

TRAGEDY.

Acted at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

Lincoln's - Inn - Fields.

Written by Mr. F E N T O N.

**** *Æstuat ingens*
Imo in corde pudor, mixtoque insania luctu,
Et furiis agitatus amor, & conscia virtus.

Virg.

L O N D O N

Printed for J. TONSON at *Shakespear's Head* over-
against *Katharine-Street* in the Strand. 1723.





To the Right Honourable

JOHN *Lord* **GOWER,**

Baron of **STITTENHAM.**

MY LORD,



O U R Lordship's
known candor and
humanity were ne-
ver more conspicu-
ous, than when you
condescended to promote the

A 2

in-

DEDICATION.

interest of the following Tragedy. An imperfect Essay! at first attempted only for a private amusement, and form'd on the model of the antient *Greek* Drama; but I was afterwards prevail'd upon by my friend Mr. *Southern's* importunity to bring it on the Stage. The uncommon success which it met with there, I have not the vanity to ascribe to any merit in the Play; but owe it purely to the general disposition of the Town, to give a kind reception to whatever comes recommended with your Lordship's protection. Let your goodness, my Lord, indulge

DEDICATION.

dulge the ambition I have that it should now appear in the world under your patronage; and allow me the honour of ever being with the most perfect esteem and gratitude,

MY LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most obliged and

most obedient Servant,

ELIJAH FENTON.



PROLOGUE

Written by a FRIEND.

SPOKEN BY

Mr. RYAN.

WHEN breathing statues mould'ring waste away,
And Tombs, unfaithful to their trust, decay;
The Muse recalls the suffering Good to fame,
Or wakes the prosp'rous villain into shame:
To the stern tyrant gives fictitious pow'r,
To reign the restless monarch of an hour.
Obedient to her call, this night appears
Great Herod, rising from a length of years:
A name enlarg'd with titles not his own,
Servile to mount, and savage on the throne:
Whose bold ambition trembling Jewry view'd,
In blood of half her royal race imbru'd.
But now reviving in the British scene,
He looks majestic with a milder mien:
His features soften'd with the deep distress
Of love, made greatly wretched by excess!
From lust of pow'r to jealous fury tost,
We shew the tyrant in the lover lost.
If no compassion, when his crimes are weigh'd,
To his ill-fated fondness must be paid;

Yet

PROLOGUE.

*Yet see, ye Fair! and see with pitying eyes
The bright afflicted Mariamne rise.*

*No fancy'd tale! our op'ning scenes disclose
Historic truth, and swell with real woes.*

*Awful in virtuous grief the Queen appears,
And strong the eloquence of royal tears.*

*Then, let her fate your kind attention raise,
Whose perfect charms were but her second praise :
Beauty and Virtue your protection claim,
Give tears to Beauty, and to Virtue fame.*



Persons

Persons Represented.

M E N.

<i>HEROD</i> the GREAT.	Mr. <i>Bobeme</i> .
<i>His young Son</i> .	
<i>PHERORAS</i> , the King's Brother.	Mr. <i>Walker</i> .
<i>SOHEMUS</i> , first Minister.	Mr. <i>Quin</i> .
<i>NARBAL</i> , a Lord of the Queen's Party.	Mr. <i>Diggs</i> .
<i>HAZEROTH</i> , a young Lord related to the Queen.	} Mr. <i>Ward</i> .
HIGH-PRIEST.	Mr. <i>Leigh</i> .
<i>SAMEAS</i> , the King's Cup-bearer.	Mr. <i>Egleton</i> .
<i>FLAMINIUS</i> , a Roman General.	Mr. <i>Ryan</i> .

W O M E N,

<i>MARIAMNE</i> .	Mrs. <i>Seymour</i> .
<i>SALOME</i> , the King's Sister.	Mrs. <i>Egleton</i> .
<i>ARSINOE</i> , chief Attendant on the Queen.	} Mrs. <i>Bullock</i> .

Guards, Messengers, Attendants.

S C E N E

*A Room of State in Herod's Palace at
Jerusalem.*

MA



MARIAMNE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

PHERORAS, NARBAL, SOHEMUS.

PHERORAS.



THE Morning in her richest purple rob'd,
Smiles with auspicious lustre on the day,
Which brings my royal brother back from *Rhodes*;
Confirm'd in empire by the general voice
Of *Cæsar* and the senate.

Narb. This blest day
In latest annals shall distinguish'd shine,
Sacred to majesty, and dear to love:
The same which saw the royal lovers march
In nuptial pomp, revolving now restores
Herod to *Mariamne* and his crown.

Sob. Fortune at length to merit grows a friend;
Or fate ordain'd the happiest stars to shed
Their influence on his birth; or sure since *Rome*,
With civil discord rent, so oft hath chang'd
Her own great lords, as bleeding conquest rais'd

B

Or

Or sunk the doubtful balance, we had shar'd
The same vicissitudes of restless pow'r.

Narb. Herod avow'd the dear respect he bore
To *Anthony*, and drop'd a generous tear
To grace his ruins.

Pher. Yes, and *Cæsar* sat
Pensive and silent; in his anxious breast
Perhaps revolving that of all his train,
Who proudly wanton in his mounted rays,
Gay flutt'ring insects of a summer-noon,
How few wou'd bear the wintry storms of fate!
At length he smiling rose, receiv'd the crown
From *Herod's* hand, and plac'd it on his brow,
Crying, Shine there! for *Cæsar* cannot find
A worthier head to wear thee.

Sob. From the grace
Of such a victor to receive a crown,
With such peculiar attributes of fame,
Confers more glory than a chronicle
Of scepter'd ancestors.

Pher. *Narbal*, your care
Will see due honours to the day discharg'd.
Let the shrill trumpet's cheerful note injoin
A general feast, and joy with loud acclaim
Through all the streets of *Solyma* resound.
Let steams of grateful incense cloud the sky,
Till the rich fragrance reach the utmost bounds
Of *Herod's* empire: let each smiling brow
Wear peaceful olive, whilst the virgin-choirs
Warbling his praise, his paths with flow'rs perfume,
Who guards *Judea* with the shield of *Rome*.

[Exit *Narb.*

SCENE



S C E N E II.

P H E R O R A S, S O H E M U S.

S O H E M U S.

MY Lord, the province you've assign'd agrees
 With *Narbal's* talents; none is better form'd
 To gild the pageant of a gawdy day:
 He's nobly born, and popularly vain;
 Rare tinsel-stuff t'adorn a room of state!
 But in the council, where the publick care——

Pher. In that high sphere you, *Sohemus*, alone
 Must ever shine; and may your wisdom raise
 Your master's fortune, to divide the globe
 With this new *Cæsar*; and no longer sway
 A short precarious sceptre, which must shake
 With each tempestuous gust that blows from *Rome*.

Sob. With blushes I must hear you call me, wife,
 When one impassion'd woman can destroy
 My surest plans, and with a sigh blown down
 The firmest fabrick of deliberate thought.
 Heav'ns! that a King consummate for a throne,
 So wise in council, and so great in arms;
 Shou'd after nine long years, remain a slave
 Because his wife is fair! What art thou, Beauty,
 Whose charm makes sense and valour grow as tame,
 As a blind turtle?

Pher. Is thy wisdom proof
 Against the blandishments of warm desire?
 It ill defends thee from *Arsinoe's* charms:
 The fullen sweetness of a down-cast eye,
 A feign'd unkindness, or a just reproach,
 Breath'd in a sigh, and soften'd with a tear,
 Wou'd make thy rigid marble melt, like snow

M A R I A M N E.

On the warm bosom of the youthful spring.

Sob. In thoughtless youth, gay nature gives the rein
To Love, and bids him urge the full career:
But *Herod* should restrain his head-strong course,
Now reason is mature.

Pber. He never can;
For *Mariamne* with superior charms
Triumphs o'er reason; in her look she bears
A paradise of ever-blooming sweets:
Fair as the first idea beauty prints
On the young lover's soul: a winning grace
Guides every gesture, and obsequious Love
Attends on all her steps; for, majesty
Streams from her eye to each beholder's heart,
And checks the transport which her charms inspire:
Who wou'd not live her slave! — Nor is her mind
Form'd with inferior elegance! — By her,
So absolute in every grace, we guess
What essence angels have.

Sob. Who can admire
The brightest angel when his hand unsheaths
The vengeful sword, or with dire pestilence
Unpeoples nations? If Death sits inthron'd
In the soft dimple of a damask cheek,
He thence can aim his silent dart as sure,
As from the wrinkle of a tyrant's frown;
And that's our case! Yet with a lover's eye
You view the gay malignance, that will blast
Both you and all your friends.

Pber. We sure may praise
The snake that glitters in her summer pride,
And yet beware the sting.

Sob. But low in dust
Crush the crown'd basilisk, or else she kills
Whate'er her eye commands.—You need, my lord,
No clearer light than this, by which to read
The purpose of my soul.

Pber.

Pher. Tho' 'tis obscure,
 It strikes like lightning that with fear confounds
 The pale night-wanderer, whilst it shews the path.
 You, *Sobemus*, have cause to think the Queen
 Charges the taking of her uncle's head
 To your advice; and gladly wou'd attone
 Her kindred blood with yours: revenge still glows,
 Though hid in treacherous embers, and you'll feel
 The dire effect, whene'er occasion breathes
 A gale to waken and foment the flame.
 But I, unpractis'd in th'intrigues of courts
 And disciplin'd in camps, will not supply
 Increase of fuel to these home-bred jars:
 I hope the King will see them soon suppress;
 Or care succeeding care will ever tread
 The circle of his crown.

Sob. If to pursue
 The safest measures to secure his throne,
 Shall irritate the Queen to make me fall
 A victim to her rage, the conscious pride
 Of having acted what the King ordain'd,

Enter a Messenger with a Letter to Pheroras.

Will yet support me. 'Tis not worth my care,
 Whether the trembling hand of age must shake
 From the frail glass my last remaining sand;
 Or fortune break the phial, ere the sum
 Of half my life is told.

Pher. 'Tis from the King:
 A most displeasing message for the Queen.

Sob. May I, my lord, partake?

Pher. The infant Prince
 Must live an hostage of the league at *Rome*:
Cæsar hath sent a minister of trust,
 With guards to wait him. This perhaps the King
 Hath kept conceal'd, that his return might calm
 Th'afflicted Queen, and soften the surprize.

Sob. Names he, my lord, the General to whose care
The Prince must be consign'd?

Pher. Rome cou'd not chuse
For that high charge a nobler delegate,
Than my *Flaminius*; for, a bolder hand
Ne'er flew her conquering eagles at their prey.
We in the *Parthian* wars together learn'd
The rudiments of arms; the summer sun
Hath seen our marches measur'd by his own;
In battle so intrepid, that he shew'd
An appetite of danger; oft I've heard
The weary veterans resting on their spears,
Swear by the gods and majesty of *Rome*,
They blush'd with indignation, to behold
The garland of the war, by partial fate
Transferr'd from theirs, to grace a stripling's brow—
But I with *Narbal* will prevail, t'impart
This most ungrateful order to the Queen. [*Exit Pher.*]



S C E N E III.

Salome enters to Sohemus.

S A L O M E.

I Hope, my lord, young *Hazeroth's* affront
Will not pass unresented.

Sob. I've dispatch'd
A message to the King: th'account I gave,
Imported nothing but severest truth;
Yet wittiest malice scarce cou'd feign a roll
Of keener calumnies.

Sal. He mention'd me!

Sob. Traduc'd you basely, by th'opprobrious name
Of *Idumean* spinster, in degree
The third descendant of an heathen slave,

Who

M A R I A M N E.

Who kept *Apollo's* temple.

Sal. The King's veins
Hold the same blood, whatever is the source;
And if the wretch survives that vile reproach,
The King's a slave indeed. What was your crime?

Sob. He said by my sole counsels were destroy'd,
All of the royal *Asmonean* race,
Whom justice made the victims of the state:
Whose injur'd discontented ghosts too long
Had cry'd, revenge! but should not cry in vain:
Then half unsheath'd his sabre.

Sal. That vain boy
Believes his near relation to the Queen,
Exempts his haughty youth from all restraint.
He's *Mariamne's* echo, and repeats
But half her menaces.

Sob. What time more fit
To put her threats in act, than when the King
Flies with redoubled ardor to her arms?
Passion improves with absence, and his heart
So soft, and passive to the pow'r of love,
Will then be vacant only to his Queen.
Fortune of late a glorious scene disclos'd,
But soon snatch'd back the visionary joy!
The blissful hour is past—Curst, doubly curst
Be this boy-emperor, who tamely spar'd
The warmest friend that *Anthony* could boast.
Had *Herod* perish'd by his vengeful sword,
I soon had sent (for so he left in charge)
His Queen, the worship'd idol of his soul,
T'attend him to the shades.—Clouds of despair
Now terminate our view!

Sal. Can you discern
No glimmering hope? Though dim, the distant ray
May serve to steer our course.

Sob. The King will send
His son for hostage to reside in *Rome*.

M A R I A M N E.

Sal. Were triple thunder vollied at the Queen,
It cou'd not rend her bleeding bosom more
Than such a message.

Sob. At this little spark,
Discord may light her ever-burning torch:
Th' imperious Queen perhaps will edge her tongue,
With keen resentments for her ruin'd race:
For 'tis th' infirmity of noblest minds,
When ruffled with an unexpected woe,
To speak what settled prudence wou'd conceal:
As the vex'd ocean working in a storm,
Oft brings to light the wrecks which long lay calm,
In the dark bosom of the secret deep.
From such reproach, his promis'd joy may change
To coldness and distrust, perhaps to hate;
And their high souls that now, like friendly stars,
Mingling their beams in mutual ardor shine,
In fiercest opposition then will thwart
Each others influence, and divide the court:
Then, Mischief, to thy work!——

Sal. In me you'll find
A sure assistant: Shall *Pheroras* join?

Sob. I'd fly him at the quarry, but I fear
He'd check if other game shou'd cross the flight:
He scorns dissimulation, nor perceives
That nature never meant simplicity
A grace to charm in courts: he serves the crown
With such a blind disinterested zeal,
He's even proud t' obey.

Sal. Let him enjoy
His cold-complexion'd principles, and fall
A traitor to himself.

Sob. O Princess, born
To bless the world with a long progeny
Of future heroes, and renew the strain
Of valour, which the softness of your sex
Unspirited at first! so great a soul
Deserves, and sure is destin'd to a throne!
But hark!

Sal.

M A R I A M N E.

Sal. The Queen's approaching; she repairs
To sacrifice.

Sob. 'Tis best we both retire.

[*Exeunt.*



S C E N E IV.

M A R I A M N E, A R S I N O E.

M A R I A M N E.

THE Princess and her friend were unprepar'd
To pay the decencies the day requires:
The most unpractis'd in the courtier's art,
And they who hate us most, might sure vouchsafe
A smooth unmeaning compliment at least.
But night-born treason is too tender ey'd,
To bear the blaze of dazzling majesty,
And seeks the guilty shade.

Ar. They're both depriv'd
Of your propitious smile; so dire a loss
Wou'd cloud the most serene.

Mar. That sullen gloom
Proceeds not from a conscience of their crimes,
Which sues by penitence for royal grace;
But argues high contempt: their brows display
A banner of defiance, and avow
Their trait'rous combination: but I'll quell
The tow'ring crest of their presumptuous hate,
Or perish in th' attempt. Henceforth forbear
All commerce with the Princess, and her train
For fear th' infection of example taint
Your sound allegiance.

Ar. If a single thought
Were tinctur'd with disloyalty, this hand
Shou'd pierce my heart to drive the rebel out.
Your strict command with pleasure I obey;

For

For at the sight of *Salomé*, my breast
 Shivers with chilling horror, and revolves
 The destiny which a *Chaldean* seer
 Of late foretold: The pious sage had pass'd
 Full sixty winters in a private cell;
 His locks were silver'd o'er with reverend white;
 And on his cheeks appear'd the pale effect
 Of studious abstinence: His custom was
 In his small hermitage t' outwatch the moon,
 To marshal in his schemes the host of heav'n;
 And from their ruling influence at the birth,
 Form'd his predictions. As the Princess pass'd,
 I ask'd him if his foresight cou'd discern
 The colour of her fate: he answer'd, black!
 'Tis black checquer'd with blood! deep in her breast
 I see the dagger doom'd by heaven's decree
 To cut her half-spun thread.

Mar. What pow'rful cause
 Urg'd you to hear a vain diviner tell
 His waking dreams? Perhaps you went to know
 What happy star presid'd o'er the love,
 Which *Sobemus* I hear address'd to you:
 If so, I'll be your oracle; forbear
 T' enquire the doubtful omens of the sky,
 And fix your faith on this unerring truth:
 If your ill-judging choice mis-lead your heart,
 To meet his passion with an equal flame;
 Henceforth for ever banish'd from my sight,
 In exile you shall end an odious life;
 Attended only in that friendless state
 By black remorse, which step by step pursues
 Th' ingrateful and the false.

Ar. I long have felt
 Th' afflicting hand of heav'n, without the guilt
 Of murmur or complaint; but to be thought
 False and ingrateful, is too much to bear.
 Chase that suspicion from your royal mind;
 Nor cast my blameless innocence a prey

To those, who envy your distinguish'd grace,
With which I've long been honour'd.

Mar. To receive
Private addresses from my deadliest foe,
A wretch, whose dark infernal arts have wrought
The ruin of my race, but ill repays
My condescending favour, which vouchsaf'd
To lose the stile of subject and of Queen,
In friendship's softer name.

Ar. While thus I kneel,
Imploring heav'n t' attest my spotless faith,
May I be fix'd a dreadful monument
Of perjur'd guilt, if e'er my bosom gave
Reception to his suit! Were he possess'd
Of all the sun surveys, and form'd to please
With every grace that captivates the soul;
And your command concurrent with his love,
Shou'd urge me to comply; that hard command,
And that alone, I dare to disobey.——
No, my dear *Roman*! nothing can deface
Thy image from thy virgin-widow's breast;
Th' inviolable band of strong desire
Shall ever join our souls!

Mar. Dismiss your fears,
And let them with my vanish'd doubt expire:
But, whence this transport of reviving woe?
Recite the series of your fate at large.

Ar. When *Anthony* and *Cæsar* found the globe
Too narrow, to suffice the boundless views
Of two such mighty spirits, my virgin-vow
Was plighted to a brave Patrician youth,
The friend of *Cæsar*: *Anthony* proscrib'd
The chiefs who sided with his potent foe;
And foremost in the tablet my lov'd lord
Was doom'd to slaughter: whilst with nuptial joy
His palace rung, crowded with friends who came
T' attend the bride's arrival, through the gates
A troop of cut-throats rushing in, surpriz'd
And dragg'd him to his fate!——

Mar.

Mar. In that distress
What cou'd you do, and whither did you fly?

Ar. At *Alexandria* then the fatal cause
Of *Anthony* engag'd my father's sword;
Thither I fled, and was receiv'd with grace
To *Cleopatra's* train: with her I came
To *Palestine*, where the detested fight
Of *Anthony* so rack'd me, and reviv'd
The sad remembrance of my murther'd lord,
I begg'd to be dismiss'd. You then receiv'd
The fugitive, whom fortune's rage hath made
Wretched indeed, but hath not pow'r to make
False or ingrateful.

Mar. Poor *Arfinoe*!
My favours shall deface the memory
Of past afflictions: on a soul secure
In native innocence, or grief or joy
Shou'd make no deeper prints than air retains;
Where fleet alike the vulture and the dove,
And leave no trace. Blind fortune that bestows
The perishable toys of wealth and pow'r,
At random oft resumes them, pleas'd to make
An hurricane of life: but the firm mind
Safe on exalted virtue reigns sedate,
Superior to the giddy whirls of fate.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the First Act.





MARIAMNE.

ACT II. SCENE I.

NARBAL, FLAMINIUS.

NARBAL.



THE Queen will see you, Sir; a just regard
To *Cæsar's* friendship is so sacred here,
That though on this high jubilee the
court
Suspends all state-affairs, the Queen
vouchsafes

T' admit your message to her royal ear.

Fla. Th' ambassadors of *Rome* never demand
Admission more than once; your King defers
His entry 'till the Queen shall execute
What *Cæsar's* will requires.

Nar. That cause alone
Wou'd urge our prompt compliance; for the King
Makes Love th' impatient register of time:
In his account each moment seems an age,
That keeps him from his *Mariamne's* arms;
Who well deserves such passion.

Fla. Distant fame
Hath pictur'd all her graces on my mind:
Perhaps you've heard of *Dellius*.

Nar. What! the friend
Of *Anthony*?

Fla. His qualities disgrace
The name of friend; but in his softer hours
He lik'd him for his elegance of taste
In luxury and love. I heard him tell,
How once when *Anthony* in amorous pomp,
With *Cleopatra* sail'd along the *Nile*,
To grieve the proud *Egyptian*, he produc'd
A miniature of *Marianne's* face.

Nar. And what said *Anthony*?

Fla. With vast surprize
He view'd each lineament, but yet forbore
To praise or blame it, which he knew the Queen
Wou'd soon interpret love; but softly sigh'd,
And slip't it in his bosom. Strait her cheeks
Glow'd with an angry blush, which faded soon,
And left them lilly-pale: breathless and faint
She then reclin'd her head, and from his breast
Snatch'd what she fear'd might lie too near his heart;
With amorous reluctance whilst he strove
To gain the ravish'd prize, she let it fall
(More by design than chance) into the *Nile*:
He springing up to catch it, half o'er-set
The gilded barge; and with a sterner brow,
And haughtier tone, than e'er she knew before,
He cry'd, your river is too well repaid,
For all the wealth you ow'd.——

[*A Messenger enters to Narbal.*

Mess. *Pheroras*, Sir,
Desires to see the *Roman General*.

Nar. Sir, I'll conduct you.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE



S C E N E II.

Enter Sohemus and the High-Priest.

SOHEMUS.

BUT the human mind,
 When 'tis divorc'd from matter, cannot pierce
 The distant cloud of dark futurity.
 You sleep not found, my lord! Old age depress'd
 With melancholly damps, oft dwindles down
 To second infancy, and then renews
 Its cradle-dreams; which superstitious fear
 Makes sacred with the venerable names
 Of vision, or of prophecy; devis'd
 To cheat the vulgar, and too oft employ'd
 To cover disaffection to the state.

H. Pr. I have, my lord, no craving appetites
 To glut with gain or titles; I've attain'd
 The highest name my order can receive.
 I bear no symptoms of a feav'rish soul,
 Which turbulent with guilt, aspires t'embroil
 The state with trait'rous fiction: You may think,
 I who commend my self, have brib'd a fool
 To be my herald; yet, a modest man,
 T'oppose the darts of calumny, may wear
 His innocence in sight; a safer shield
 Than adamant or gold.

Sob. Your innocence!
 Did you not talk of omens, which forbode
 Th' impending wrath of heav'n, to blast the day
 Which re-instates our monarch on his throne?

H. Pr. I did, my lord, and will affirm I saw—
 Laugh when you've heard me out.

Sob. Well, pray proceed!

16 *M A R I A M N E*

H. Pr. I walk'd this morning in my palmy grove,
 Where oft to contemplation I devote
 My earliest hours: the sun new-rising cheer'd
 The face of nature with a purple smile;
 My spirits ran as brisk careers of life,
 As ever in the careless prime of youth:
 When issuing sudden from the bowry shade,
 A beauteous form appear'd, and gliding slow,
 Approach'd me with a soft dejected air;
 Then cry'd, I liv'd the brother of your Queen;
 And gave a piteous groan!

Sob. *Aristobulus?*

H. Pr. The same, I knew him well.

Sob. Ha!—what?—what more?—

Why, he was drown'd, you know—Cou'd I prevent
 What heav'n fore-doom'd? My good lord, did he say
 That I was accessary? Why to me
 This message from the unapparent shades?
 Speak—speak— I'll hear it.

H. Pr. In his hand he wav'd
 An airy streamer, like a sable shroud,
 And thus went on: If dire designs prevail,
 Before yond' east displays another dawn,
 My sister must exchange her robes of state
 For such a weed as this; by wicked arts
 Betray'd, and in the summer of her days
 Cut off by bloody hands! with her will end
 The glories of our *Asmonæan* line!
 Tell what I say to *Sobemus* alone;
 Bid him desist.

Sob. I!—what?—

H. Pr. He said no more,
 But vanish'd from my view.

Sob. 'Tis best, my lord,
 To let such shadows fleet neglected by:
 They argue perturbation in the brain,
 Caus'd by black humours; a few hours will prove
 That mimic fancy mock'd your dazzl'd sight,

With

With images of air.

H. Pr. Whate'er they prove,
I feel my bosom lighter.

[*Exit H. Pr.*

Sob. Thou hast laid
A gauling weight on mine!



S C E N E III.

Salome enters to Sohemus:

SALOME.

HOW now, my Lord!
What means this pale confusion in your face!
What makes your hair stand bristling, and your eyes
With gloomy horror glare!

Sob. We cheat the world
With florid outside 'till we meet surprize;
Then conscience, working inward like a mole,
Crumbles the surface, and reveals the dirt
From which our actions spring.

Sal. My lord, recall
Your wandering reason.

Sob. 'Tis in vain to boast
That reason o'er the passions holds the rein,
When quite unman'd with such a tale——

Sal. What tale?
I met th' High Priest, hath he unfolded ought
That strikes with this amazement?

Sob. He reports
A message from the visionary shade
Of young *Aristobulus*; him! who claim'd
By lineal right the crown which *Herod* wears:
To disembroil the title, whilst he bath'd
I plung'd him 'till the stifling element
Had quench'd the lamp of life, and charg'd the crime

On faultless destiny!—What makes you smile?

Sal. To see a dotard's fiction, or his dream,
A legend, such as nurseries amuse
A froward child with, have as strong effect
As plain authentic truth! I've heard you prove
By clearest reason, that when death resolves
To its first principles the human frame;
That subtile vapour then, the boasted soul,
Mingles with common air.

Sob. 'Tis not the faith
Of such fantastick forms that quells me thus;
Sudden remorse for murder'd innocence
Wither'd my resolution.

Sal. But revenge
Reviving warmth and spirit will infuse,
And make the drooping branches flourish fair,
Renew'd in second spring. Here *Sameas* comes,
Whom art and nature exquisitely form
For glorious mischief; him we must secure.



S C E N E IV.

SALOME, SOHEMUS, SAMEAS.

SALOME.

SAMEAS, I'm pleas'd your merits are preferr'd
To bear the royal cup; *Pheroras* long
Pleaded in vain for *Mariamne's* grace.

Sam. If to her grace I ow'd this vital air,
I'd choak my self with generous disdain,
Rather than breathe it: from *Pheroras'* suit
I date my fortunes, and to him devote
Life, conscience, honour.

Sob. Gratitude is rare!
Most, after favours are conferr'd, profess

Deep sense of obligation; but when prov'd
In points of nicest moment, have recourse
To conscience, honour, and such trivial phrase,
T' excuse defect of duty to their friend:
But such a pure, resign'd, implicit zeal,
Excites my wonder, and transcends my praise.

Sam. *Pheroras* said, my lord, he'd recommend
To you my poor affairs.

Sob. Doubt not my care;
Read here thy lot. [*Pulls out his Tablets.*

Sam. Make *Sameas* chamberlain—
How can I e'er discharge so vast a debt
Of gratitude!

Sob. How? Should affairs require
Thy hand, it wou'd not shrink to cut a throat?

Sam. I've such a strong antipathy to blood
I ne'er could sacrifice: but my revenge
Works a more secret, and a safer way.
No poisonous herbs, which various climes produce,
No venom of the mine, nor reptile 'scapes
My curious observation: I extract
Their several essences, and know their pow'rs,
And times of operation.

Sob. To what use!—
Had I a dog to be dispatch'd—

Sam. My art
Delights in nobler quarry.

Sob. Is it stanch?

Sam. Point out the game, my lord, you'll find I dare
Do more, than most dare think.

Sob. Then swear—

Sal. Defer
T' impart your orders 'till the King's arriv'd;
And meet before the banquet.

Sam. What your will
Enjoins, my duty binds me to perform.

Sob. Proud Queen! the last decisive hour draws on,
Destin'd to crown our hope, and end our care:

Aided by this brave friend, whose soul is steel'd
 With dauntless resolution, though the ghosts
 Of all her race rise grinning from the tomb,
 And in their cause auxiliar furies join;
 Intrepid we'll pursue our bold career;
 Pitch the sure toils, and rouse the fated deer. [*Exeunt.*]



S C E N E V.

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

M A R I A M N E.

HIS offspring mortgag'd to redeem his crown!—
 The wild *Arabians* who delight in blood,
 Who live promiscuous, and without restraint
 Of laws or manners propagate their kind,
 With yerning passion yet preserve their young:
 Nature on their unpolish'd marble prints
 Much tenderer sentiments, than some can boast
 Who call them barbarous.

Nar. In the sons of Kings.

The country claims a right; and to preserve
 The quiet, and the glory of your realm,
 The King complies with *Cæsar*, and will send
 The dearest pledge to firm his royal faith.

Mar. Hard fate of greatness, if it thus excludes
 A mother's interest in the babe she bore!
 Kings to their country owe their dearest care
 In council or in arms; let that suffice:
 The choicest blessings of indulgent heav'n,
 Their children, are reserv'd a private right,
 To soften and support their publick toils.
 But, send the Prince to *Rome*! which still ferments
 With fierce intestine factions, ever known
 To sheath, but not to lay the sword aside:

I cannot bear it!—Now, the ball of pow'r,
Which hath been bandy'd long from side to side,
Is grasp'd by *Cæsar*: soon, superior force
May wrest it from his hand: who'll then adhere
To *Cæsar's* cause? Will *Herod*?—He, be sure,
Wou'd plan new measures to preserve the crown:
And his desertion, doubtless, wou'd provoke
Cæsar to punish in extreme revenge,
Th' offending father in the guiltless son.

Nar. The blood of *Julius* is aton'd; and *Rome*,
Like a tir'd lioness which long has stood
The hunter's spear, lies quiet in her den
To heal her wounds: *Cæsar* himself aspires,
With all his conquests, only to be styl'd
His country's father; and the senate bears
The same pacific temper.—But, suppose
Another *Brutus* rouze another war,
And *Fyber* shine again with civil arms:
Though *Herod* then should draw the sword, and turn
The point on *Cæsar*; yet, the sacred laws
Of empires, wou'd preserve the Prince's life
Inviolably safe.

Mar. But, were revenge
Employ'd (as sure it wou'd) t' expound those laws;
Then, what bold casuist would appear, t' oppose
The sense of *Cæsar's* legions? Wrong and right
In this bad age are measur'd by success:
The blackest crime from Fortune's golden light
Receives a beauteous gloss.—But, grant him safe,
As in the circle of his mother's arms:
Rome may pervert his infant age to kneel
Before her idol-shrines, and from our law
Apostatize to worship fabled gods:
And though I hold his life and safety dear,
Far dearer than my own, I'd see him cast
Amidst her amphitheatre a prey;
Mangled, and quiv'ring in the famish'd jaws
Of savages, much rather than behold

His body at her heathen altars bow'd,
In impious adoration.

Nar. Leave th' event

To heav'n's high care! The King must be obey'd.
If you contest the terms, to which his crown
And honour stand engag'd, the vain attempt
Might only serve to lessen that excess
Of dear affection, which he bears you now.
Then *Sobemus*, our prime state-engineer,
Might see his arts succeed beyond his hope,
T' achieve your fall, and make this beauteous pile
A heap of mighty ruin!

Mar. Cou'd you feel

The strong emotions of a mother's woe,
When ravish'd from her lov'd-one, who hath liv'd
Most in her sight, and ever in her soul:
Not all the wounds which Fortune is impow'r'd
T' inflict, nor instant death, wou'd move your mind
Amid his dangers to regard your own:
Ev'n life, that dear ennobling gift of heav'n,
Which in the order of creation, ranks
The palest glow-worm's animated ray,
Above the brightest star, with me will lose
Its boasted value when I lose my child.
With him I truly liv'd; his presence crown'd
The day with pleasure, and the night with peace.
Then, breath consum'd in sighs will not deserve
The name of life! These roofs shall only sound
With mournful accents, sad as murm'ring winds,
Which through the clefts of ruin'd cloisters roar.
Such musick best will please the mother's ear,
If in a distant land, her tender son
Must weep the rigor of a foreign lord,
With no kind friend to pity or revenge
The wrongs he there sustains!

Nar. I'll wait the Prince,

To guard his helpless age, and share his fate:
And for a pledge of constant faith, receive

(Though

(Though much unequal, yet of dearest price
To him who gives it!) for a pledge receive
Those precious legacies which that bright saint,
My dying wife bequeath'd me!—If the Prince
Shall feel th' effects of violence or fraud;
If e'er I cease with duteous care to shield
From guilt his manners, from reproach his fame;
Or fail to banish from his pensive breast
Each anxious thought, and cherish gentle joys;
Slay both my sons!

Mar. Then go, *Arfinoe*, go,——
Hither conduct the Prince.

[*Ar. Exit.*]



S C E N E VI.

MARIAMNE, NARBAL.

MARIAMNE.

OH happiness!
Thou gawdy bubble, which deludes the grasp,
Whene'er we strive to keep thee most secure.
Have I been fond of Fortune's faithless smile,
Cruel, disdainful, to deserve this doom?
Did e'er I suffer pride to bar my ear
Against the widow's cry? Did e'er I view
The weeping orphan's anguish, and withhold
The hand of liberal Mercy from their woes?
Or did I with uncharitable scorn
Ever upbraid the childless womb; or wish
The wrathful blast of heav'n t' attain the fruit
Of my most deadly foe?—Whence then to me
This undeserv'd distress? Why must I bear
So deep a wound in such a tender part?
More wretched than the meanest of my sex,
Who call me Queen! they lose the cares of life,

Amid the blessings of a dear increase;
A bliss deny'd to me!

Nar. When foreign foes
Are quell'd by *Cæsar*, and the provinces
Avow their homage to the laws of *Rome*,
And with consummate peace his arms are crown'd;
The Prince will be restor'd; and in exchange
Some of our noblest youth will be receiv'd
For hostages of friendship.

Mar. That exchange
Will come too late to bless my longing eyes:
They'll first be clos'd in death! a thousand ills
Rise in black views to my divining soul!

[*Arfinoe enters with the Prince.*]
And must I lose thee?—Oh!—thou sweetest pledge
Of heaven's indulgence to a mother's pray'r!
Must the sole comfort of my cares become
The cause of endless grief? alas! no more
Must I with tender transport clasp thee thus!
No more must these desiring eyes be fix'd
In silent joy, with gazing on thy charms!—
Arfinoe, oh! support me—I've a son
To think on only, and to pay a tear
For every wounding thought! O *Narbal*—now
Obey the King, by whom the dearer names
Of husband, and of father are forgot!
Obey the King! let the rude hand of pow'r
Tear from my breast the blossom of my joys—
Yet, let me bless him—All thy wants of me
May pitying Angels with their aid supply!
Waft all thy prayers to heav'n! which heav'n approve,
And crown with blessings of eternal love! [*Exeunt.*]

The End of the Second Act.



M A R I A M N E.

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

FLAMINIUS, NARBAL.

FLAMINIUS.



Unhappy Queen! 'till now I never griev'd
T' obey my emperor.

Nar. A while she stood
Transform'd by grief to marble, and ap-
pear'd

Her own pale monument ; but when she breath'd
The secret anguish of her wounded soul ;
So moving were the plaints ! they wou'd have sooth'd
The stooping falcon to suspend his flight,
And spare his morning prey : thus nature soon
Exhausted, spiritless, had need of art
To respite, or assuage her troubled thoughts :
Then her physicians with the opiate charm
Of gentle sleep, her fainting senses bound,
And hush'd the warring passions into peace.

Fla. Give me, ye gods, the harmony of war,
The trumpeter's clangor, and the clash of arms ;
That consort animates the glowing breast
To rush on death ; but when our ear is pierc'd

With

26 *M A R I A M N E.*

With the sad notes which mournful beauty yields;
Our manhood melts in sympathizing tears.

Nar. Heav'ns! Is it just that *Mariamne's* fate
Claims the sad tribute of a tender tear?
She! she! whose gentle goodness strives to chase
Afflictions from mankind. I've seen her weep,
When the fierce hounds have bay'd the panting stag,
'Till the big drops roll'd from his pleading eyes;
And none dar'd let the fatal javelin fly,
Before she left the field.



S C E N E II.

[*To them*] *Arsinoe enters with the Prince.*

ARSINOE.

TO you, my Lord, [*To Nar.*]
The Queen at length resigns this royal charge;
Judea's other hope! the dearest pledge
Of sacred faith that monarch can bestow.

Fla. Gods! — 'tis not possible! — they've only form'd
Those beauties in the same celestial mold —
Exact similitude of shape and air!

Nar. What may this mean, *Flaminius*?

Ar. Do I wake?

Or does deluding fancy lead me still
In new fantastick labyrinths of blis? —

Fla. The face, and harmony of voice the same!

Nar. You're lost in admiration and surprize:
Reveal the cause.

Fla. Oh, Sir, — I once was blest
With such a lovely object of my flame!
Beauty and goodness in her heav'nly form
Held equal empire; Oh! —

Nar.

Nar. What cruel fate
Sever'd your hearts, so tender and so true,
That still the wound bleeds fresh?

Fla. The violence
Of civil discord snatch'd her from my arms:
But the last pang of death alone hath pow'r
To tear the beauteous image from my breast!
She liv'd the grace of *Cleopatra's* court,
And shar'd her fall! — As her high merits claim'd
My earliest love, to her I'll pay my last:
My passion for the sex expir'd, and lies
In dear *Hortensia's* tomb!

Ar. *Hortensia* lives! [*She runs into his arms.*]
Lives only for *Flaminius* — Lives to crown
Such matchless constancy!

Fla. Hath fate rejoin'd
Our long-divided hearts! — 'Tis she! — I know
[*She shews her Ring.*]
That pledge of our espousals, where express'd,
The virgin-phœnix riseth from the flames:
Th' inscription was prophetick of thy fate,
Another and the same.

Ar. But ever thine! —
Will not this joy, as all my former, fleet
Like the light vapour of a morning dream? —

Fla. Rap'd from my self, my senses are oppress'd
With rushing ecstasies: Oh! I cou'd stand
And gaze for ever on thy heav'nly charms,
In speechless transport, which too big for words
Swells in my heaving heart!

Ar. How did you 'scape
Th' assassins whom *Anthony* employ'd
To take your head?

Fla. My *Phœdria*, by the crime
Of fortune born a slave (for sure his soul
Was of the noblest order) wou'd assume
My habit and my name; his features, age,
And stature, well befriending the deceit;

And

28 *M A R I A M N E.*

And thus disguis'd, his honest heart receiv'd
The wounds they meant for me.

Ar. O wondrous faith!

Fla. But now, for *Rome, Hortensia!*—

Nar. Madam, pay

The Queen a last farewell, in whom you found
The kindest mistress and the best of friends.

Ar. I will, my lord; and ——

Fla. Hark! the trumpet speaks

The King's approach, our signal to depart:
I now must leave thee, to secure the Prince,
As *Cæsar* gave command: but near the walls
My troops are tented in the western vale;
Where meditating on my blissful change,
I'll watch impatient for the purple dawn:
Thither you come?

Ar. Tho' grinning savages

Oppos'd my speed, I'd rush intrepid on.
From clime to clime, where-ever glory calls,
I'll wait my warriour; pleas'd with thee to pass
The frozen *Danube*, or the sun-burnt *Nile*:
And tho' my sex denies me to partake
The dangers of the field; with ardent vows
I'll beg each tutelary Pow'r, to spread
Protection round thee, in the cloud of war.
But if relentless to my pray'r they prove,
And thou art fated in the fight to fall,
I'll follow fast the soul of my desire,
And by the wound, that pierc'd my lord, expire.

[*Exeunt* *Arfinoe* on one side of the Stage,
the rest on the other.

SCENE



S C E N E III.

SALOME, SOHEMUS.

SALOME.

IN this high mantling tide of grief and rage,
Sure when the King arrives, her cold disdain
Will damp the glowing ardor of his soul.

Sob. Fear not a calm! The cloud will now collect
More vapours still, to give a nobler burst,
And make her ruin sure. When vulgar minds
Despond, they drop beneath the stroke of fate,
With no more tumult than autumnal leaves
Forfake the sapless bough: But majesty
With noise, and pompous horror rushes down;
As if the violence of nature tore
A planet from its orb.



S C E N E IV.

[*To them Pheroras enters.*]

PHERORAS.

THE pomp of Kings
At their triumphal entries, moving slow
To warlike symphonies, and clashing arms;
When from the field, with bloody laurels crown'd,
They come victorious, gives a mingled joy:
For Pity, when the Captive train appears,
Oft with a silent pensive gloom obscures
The lustre of the triumph. But no cloud

Sad

Saddens this festival: From the white tow'r
 I heard with rapture how the loyal tribes,
 In mighty confluence hail'd the King's return;
 So long! so loud! that floating on the sound,
 The bird of heaviest wing with ease had soar'd,
 Beyond the tow'ring eagle's utmost flight,
 Up-born by gales of joy.

[Flourish.]

Sob. My lord, the King!—



S C E N E V.

[Herod *passeth over the stage with attendants, &c. they all kneel.*]

P H E R O R A S.

O King for ever live! the dear defence,
 And grace of *Palestine*.

Sal. May this blest day
 Tincture with happiness, and bright renown,
 All your succeeding years!

Sob. And sure there's none,
 To whom this day can give sincerer joy,
 Than to your faithful *Sobemus*; who kneels
 To give this seal of delegated power
 Back to your royal hand.

Her. Let all who sigh
 In gloomy dungeons prest with gauling chains,
 Shake off their bondage; and conspire to tune
 The wholesome breath of heav'n to songs of praise.
 Tell them they owe their freedom to the Queen:
 Her temper is compassionate and kind,
 As guardian angels are: but I! constrain'd
 By the sad exigence of state, have torn
 Our tender off-spring from her fond embrace;
 And heap'd afflictions on the brightest head,

That

That ever wore a crown!

Pher. But your approach
Will sooth her grief, and soften the surprize.

Her. I! I! am the sole cause of all her grief:
Ambition rushing forward, hath disturb'd
My sweetest fountain of domestick blifs!
It promis'd scepters, but hath fill'd my grasp
With gilded thorns! wanting my Queen, the court
Appears as lonesome as the dreary waste,
Where pestilence and famine hand in hand
Have lately reign'd: but *Mariamne's* smiles
Diffusive of their good, around her cast
On all the shining circle beams of joy;
When from the wars she welcom'd my return,
With tears of tender transport in her eyes.
Such oft our meetings were; but, dismal change!
The fair offended seems to shun me now:
How shall I calm the tempest of her Soul! [*Exeunt.*]



S C E N E VI.

*The Scene opening discovers Mariamne asleep,
and Arsinoe attending; Herod enters, and
goes to the Queen; then comes with Arsinoe
to the fore part of the Stage.*

H E R O D.

I Kiss'd her softly, and she gave a sigh!
Tears make her cheek feel like a damask rose,
Wet with cold ev'ning dew,

Arf. Sleep ill performs
His gentle office when constrain'd by Art:
Her sudden starts, and broken murmurs shew
The discomposure of unpleasing dreams.

Her.

Her. Musick shall wake her: That hath pow'r to
charm

Pale sickness, and avert the stings of pain:
But ever on the mind the sure effects
Are most conspicuous, where the varied notes
Can raise or quell our passions, and becalm
In sweet oblivion the too wakeful sense
Of grief or love; and print a dimpled smile
On the green bloodless cheek of dumb Despair:
Such pow'rful strains bid Harmony resound:
Such as good spirits are suppos'd to sing
O'er fairs, while death dissolves the union-band,
And frees them from the fretful dream of life. [*Ex. Ar.*
Here will I watch the day-break of her eyes;
O! may they dart warm rays of cordial love,
And wake to peace and joy!

[*Soft musick is heard behind the Scenes: Arsinoe
returns to Herod, who stands looking on Mari-
anne: after the Musick is ceas'd she begins to
speak.*]

Mar. Good Angels guard me! ———
Murther attaints not me ———

Her. Ah, gentle soul! —

Mar. The man of blood is justly doom'd to bleed,
I ne'er shed any ——— When I was a child
I kill'd a linnet, but indeed I wept;
Heav'n visits not for that. ——— O! 'tis my lord! —
He's poison'd! dead! dead! — and each manly grace
Cover'd with purple spots ———

Her. These frightful dreams
With their fantastick imag'ry amaze
The mind, as much as the most hideous form
Of real horror.

Arf. Sir, she wakes.

Mar. The King!

Her.

M A R I A M N E. 33

Her. My dearest Queen!—The fairest and the best
That ever bore the name!

Mar. I'm chang'd of late,
Alas! much chang'd——

Her. No, thou art still the same;
The same bright shrine where virtue dwells, to charm
Those who contemn her most.

Mar. Cou'd I have charm'd
Ambition from your breast, I had not mourn'd
The dearest object of maternal love,
Torn from this bleeding heart; where he possess'd
So large a space, that fortune is too poor
With all her vast variety of joys,
To fill the gloomy void!—My life is spun
At least this day too long, which shews you chang'd,
And from a loving lord grown most unkind!

Her. Unkind! —Your fancy cannot form a wish,
But I shou'd crown it; and reproach my heart,
For having not prevented your request.
Was ever soul so sensible of love,
As mine hath been for you? and who but you
Cou'd e'er deserve such love? I never err'd,
Witness ye Heavens! and with your thunder rend
This heart if e'er it err'd! if e'er I stain'd
The purity of passion, or in thought
Wander'd from *Mariamne*.

Mar. In your breast
I cou'd have spar'd your son a little space;
But sure you lov'd him not!

Her. What! am I form'd
Like monumental marbles, and receive
The name of father from the sculptor's art,
And features of the rock? Am I so dead
To the sweet cares that fathers ought to feel?—
An old man's rapture when he first beholds
A new-born heir, when years of fruitless hope
Have led him childless to the verge of life;

Cannot surpass those dear paternal joys,
Which my fond bosom from my son receiv'd.

Mar. Yet you resign'd him for a prey to *Rome*,
With less reluctance!——

Her. *Cæsar* would allow
Of no alternate to preserve our crown.
Suppliant I long intreated him, to name
What other test of sacred faith he pleas'd;
But frowning with a victor's haughty air,
He pointed to a picture on the wall;
Whose silent eloquence too plainly spoke
His fix'd resolve against the suit I urg'd.

Mar. What Picture?

Her. *Perseus* led in chains through *Rome* :
Where the sad fate of *Macedon* appear'd
Prophetic of our own, shou'd we like her
Boast a false vigor, and provoke the rage
Of *Rome*, unequal to sustain her arms.
There fancy figur'd to my mournful eyes,
The wealth of *Palestine* in chargers pil'd :
Our shields and spears on moving trophies hung,
Ingloriously revers'd : and then succeed
Nobles, and matrons, with a virgin train,
In long procession through th'unpitying crowd :
But oh! what stings of grief and horror pierc'd
My agonizing heart, when there I view'd
A royal captive, far transcending all
In matchless beauty, and majestic woe,
Her form resembling thine! On her a throng
Of gay Patricians fix'd their wond'ring eyes,
Enamour'd; and with rival passion strove,
Who first shou'd prostrate to his brutal joys
Her unpolluted charms. Thy future doom
Thus pictur'd to my view, so wrap'd my soul
In clouds of deep despair, I strait comply'd
To give the filial pledge.

Mar. Just heav'n, exact
With strict account, from *Cæsar's* rigid heart

MARIAMNE.

35

A pang, for every pang that tortures mine!
 May public discord and domestic jars
 Make his short reign a stormy winter's day!
 And may his children with dishonest shame
 Redden his hoary cheek; and wound his soul
 With keener anguish than their mother bore
 Amid her fiercest throws!

Her. Leave him t'enjoy
 The destiny allotted, and restrain
 Your passionate complaints, which but foment
 A grief much greater than the cause requires.

Mar. Your strange insensibility foment
 My wonder more: what grief's more rational,
 Or what can equal mine, whose darling hope
 Is ravish'd in the tender dawn of life
 By savages? A miscreant haughty race!
 Who with hereditary hate pursue
 The name of monarch; and from us dissent
 In manners, habit, speech, religion, laws.
 There my poor infant, like a beauteous flow'r
 Transplanted to a cold unfriendly soil,
 Must droop neglected! What protecting hand
 Will there with tender delicacy guard
 His op'ning bloom? Ah, none! — He there must live
 A friendless exile; he! whose menial train
 Nobles were proud to grace, and all conspir'd
 To make his hours in downy circles dance,
 And sooth his soul to joy, must now indure —
 Alas! what not indure? —

Her. The *Roman* name
 Is far renown'd for all the softer arts
 Which polish life, and with ennobling grace
 Illustrate virtue. Wou'd you but attend,
 The voice of reason dictates to our choice,
 The deed which strong necessity constrains.
 What court but that of *Rome* cou'd form his mind
 By surest maxims, e're he mounts the throne,
 To guide the reins of empire? — Thus of old,

Philip from his dejected realm was sent,
 A tender hostage to the *Theban* state:
 Where founding his high virtue on the plan
 Of great *Epaminondas*, he reveng'd
 The wrongs of *Macedon*; and soon reduc'd
 More than a hundred potentates.

Mar. The deeds
 Of my heroick ancestors might fire
 My son, t'ascend the laurel'd heights of fame,
 Without a *Roman* guide. If he persues
 With equal steps the glorious paths they trod;
 Like them he'll awe the nations round, and reign
 Honour'd in peace, and terrible in war.
 Were he of growth in radiant steel to lead
 The files of war, against his country's foe;
 No soft emasculating tear shou'd stain
 The lustre of his arms: I'd gird the sword
 On the young warrior's thigh, and send him forth,
 Resolv'd to conquer in so just a cause,
 Or dauntless in her dear defence to fall.

Her. Why then regret you with this rage of grief,
 The happier triumphs of auspicious peace
 Which he bestows? For none but he had pow'r
 T'avert the furies of invasive war:
 For that sole pledge, *Judæa* smiles to see
 Soft quiet spreading wide her turtle-wings
 O'er all her bounds; and him we both must own
 The guardian of our crown.

Mar. The crown is bought
 Far, far too dear, with such a precious bribe!
 Preserv'd by mean submission to the frown
 Of alien states, what's he who wears it more
 Than a vain idol of imperial pow'r,
 Which moves subservient to the master-hand,
 No freedom left to will? Had *Cæsar* urg'd
 This haughty mandate, when the realm obey'd
 The founders of my *Asmonæan* race;
 They wou'd have plum'd his eagles on the field!

Her.

Her. I neither envy, nor defame the dead;
 Peace to their honour'd shades! Nor shou'd you praise
 Their actions, only in reproach to mine;
 That's too severe.—When they the sceptre sway'd,
Rome had not stretch'd the terror of her arms,
 From far *Euphrates* and the conquer'd east,
 To *Lusitania* and th' *Atlantic* main.
 If they reign'd now, their prudence wou'd inspire
 The same pacific counsels I pursue;
 Since her vast pow'r makes all resistance vain:
 Vain as the fury which a wintry storm
 Dischargeth on the sea, whose waves enjoy
 Th' impetuous ruin of the rushing clouds,
 And swell with prouder state.—Alas! thy breast
 Still heaves with sighs! Forbear!—My heart repays
 Each tear with drops of blood!—Provoke not heav'n,
 By violating with superfluous grief,
 The brightest image of it self impress
 On thy resembling graces.

Mar. Though my tears
 Equal'd the dew-drops of the weeping morn,
 My fate requires them all!—His infant charms
 Sweetly supply'd your absence, and beguil'd
 My widow'd hours, whene'er the voice of war
 Call'd you to distant camps! —

Her. If ev'ry star
 Contain'd a golden world, and bounteous heav'n
 Wou'd make me lord of all, I'd not forsake
 My *Mariamne*, to receive the boon.
 My absence never shall afflict thee more.
 The blaze of glory whose deluding light
 Mis-led me from thy arms, shall now be lost
 In love's superior flame: *Pheroras*, train'd
 In *Roman* camps, and perfected in arms,
 Shall have the conduct of our future wars.
 And now, thou dearest treasure of my soul!
 Prepare with every smiling grace t' adorn

The festival; and let victorious joy
Chase every black idea from thy mind :
For ever banish from thy gentle breast
All cares, except the pleasing cares of love!
Be this the prelude of eternal peace,
And mutual passion with our years increase! [*Exeunt.*]

End of the Third Act.



M A



M A R I A M N E.

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

S O H E M U S, S A L O M E.

S O H E M U S.

Restrain this flood of unavailing tears!
For if they flow for pity or remorse,
They flow in vain. In distant ages past
Pity dy'd young; of grief, they say, to see
An eagle wreak his malice on a wren.

If she were yet on earth, where cou'd she find
A nobler palace than a brother's breast?
But there you found her not; the more's the shame!
Since pity's fled to heav'n, we'll send remorse
To howl in hell; it has no business here! —
But if these tears flow from the nobler source
Of indignation, and the generous shame
Of injur'd merit; if they relish strong
The bitterness of soul from which they stream;
O, let increasing fury swell the tide,
Ev'n whilst we put in act our great revenge!
So weeps the storm, while the devouring waves
Close o'er the wrecks it made.

Sal. Had I not seen
His cheek discolour'd, when his passion foam'd;
And heard him thunder threats of instant death

To me, and all whose generous spirits scorn
To bear th' oppression of his haughty Queen;
I never had believ'd my self so lost
To his affection.

Sob. Lost! he lov'd you not;
Ambition is the mistress of his soul;
The Queen herself holds but the second place:
To please that mistress, he condemn'd to die
All the wife's kindred; now, to please the wife,
His own must bleed: greatness hath made him deaf
To nature's voice, ev'n while she pleads for you.

Sal. The wretch who in an earthquake sees the
ground
Heave like a swelling wave, before it gapes
To sink him to the centre, stands as safe,
As I so near the tyrant!

Sob. In his court,
On these sad terms at best you but enjoy
A prison of state. When rival princes laid
Their sceptres at your feet, the Queen prevail'd
To have each honourable suit refus'd.

Sal. Revenge no more shall grovel in the dark,
But fan with dragon-wings the face of day;
Oppose her course who can! It is resolv'd——

Sob. Once *Mariamne* was the destin'd prey;
But since her charms enthrall the King as fast,
As in the freshness of her bridal love,
They both shall die.

Sal. Yes, both; and all their friends
At once descending crowd the gates of night:
For self-defence will sanctify the deed:
And fame, th' officious herald of success,
Will blazon our renown; and though we fail,
'Tis great to dare.

Sob. When those proud cedars fall,
Their spreading ruin will destroy the shrubs
Which flourish in their shade.— And lo, the man!
Whom fate selects t' atchieve her high decree.

S C E N E



S C E N E II.

[To them Sameas enters.]

S A L O M E.

THIS diamond, *Sameas*, but prepares the way
For future favours. [Gives him a Jewel.]

Sam. Your auspicious smiles,
Madam, o'er-pay my service.

Sob. *Sameas* wait
A while in my apartment, and I come
T' instruct you further to deserve her grace.

[Exit *Sam.*]



S C E N E III.

S A L O M E.

THE diamond which I gave him is the Queen's;
Arfinoe lent it, for the jeweller
To model one for me.

Sob. It sure will prove
Of dearest value now: I was amaz'd
To see you give an earnest of such price,
To one whose genuine malice renders vice
Its own reward, and kills for killing fake.

Sal. The wretch is avaritious; we must feed
That appetite of wealth, which urg'd him first
To trade in death.

Sob. How urg'd?

Sal. Along the shore
He walk'd one ev'ning, when the clamorous rage
Of tempests wreck'd a ship: the crew were sunk,
The

42 *M A R I A M N E.*

The master only reach'd the neighb'ring strand,
 Born by a floating fragment; but so weak
 With combating the storm, his tongue had lost
 The faculty of speech, and yet for aid
 He faintly wav'd his hand, on which he wore
 A fatal jewel. *Sameas* quickly charm'd
 Both by its size and lustre, with a look
 Of pity, stoop'd to take him by the hand;
 Then cut the finger off to gain the ring,
 And plung'd him back to perish in the waves;
 Crying, go dive for more.—I've heard him boast
 Of this adventure.

Sob. He's a very fiend!
 If we succeed, he shall not live an hour,
 In mercy to our selves: his poisoning art
 In time wou'd taint the vital breath of spring;
 And spread contagion with each spicy gale.—

Mess. Lord *Hazeroth* releas'd, demands to see
 Your lordship.— [A Messenger enters.] [Exit.]

Sob. Me?

Sal. Receive him; I retire, [Exit Sal.]



S C E N E IV.

H A Z E R O T H, S O H E M U S.

H A Z E R O T H.

THE King, I thank his grace! vouchsafes me leave
 To breath a freer air, than what was judg'd
 Fit for my constitution; though the terms
 Of freedom are severe.

Sob. What terms, my lord?

Haz. To sue for reconcilment, and receive
 In sacred friendship that injurious hand,

Which

Which coop'd me, like a starling in a cage:
You know the man!

Sob. My lord, the man you mean
Bears such devotion to your high descent;
That 'tis the favourite passion of his soul,
To live your humblest servant ———

Haz. And his tongue
Distills court-honey, while his heart o'er-flows
With quintessence of gall!

Sob. That character,
My lord, with great submission I disown:
You hear the dictates of an honest heart,
That's warm in all your interests.

Haz. You confin'd
My person, like a felon's, to promote
My interest! statesmen have peculiar arts!
They're so mysterious, few can apprehend
The favours they confer!

Sob. The crime deserv'd
Severer penance than the King enjoin'd.

Haz. I thank your majesty!

Sob. I then, my lord,
Bore th' express image of the sov'reign pow'r;
And that's allow'd to dignify the coin,
However mean the metal. Me you brav'd,
With most unseemly licence; but th' affront
Wounded the King: and his prerogative
Reveng'd itself, not me.

Haz. Whene'er the spleen
And pride of Tools in office are chastis'd;
The King's affronted! ——— is the general cry,
From those who lord it in the *Sanhedrim*,
To him who drives the camels!

Sob. When, my lord,
Your shining merits meet their just reward;
Distinguish'd with some honourable post,
As soon they must; you'll own my doctrine sound.
Nothing but duty to preserve the crown

In its full lustre, 'till the King return'd,
 Cou'd urge me to exert an act of pow'r
 On you, my lord, whose qualities adorn
 Your royal lineage: but, the noblest fruits
 Have too much tartness, 'till the mellowing year
 Digests their eager juices.

Haz. Youth is apt
 T' incur such indiscretions, as the King
 Forgave in me, and you, my lord, forget:
 Our friendship here begins.

Sob. May death alone
 Dissolve the honour'd tie! [*Ex. Haz.*] O flattery!
 How soon thy smooth insinuating oil
 Supplies the toughest fool! [*Exit Soh.*]



S C E N E V.

MARIAMNE, ARSINOE.

MARIAMNE.

WITH less regret
 I can support your absence, since my son
 Will find so kind a guardian, to discharge
 The dear engagements that a mother owes:
 We differ but in name.

Ar. The prince shall be
 The tender object of my hourly care:
 Happy! that fate reserves it in my pow'r,
 T' express the sense my grateful heart retains
 Of royal favour.

Mar. Nature form'd our sex
 For soft endearing offices: she starts,
 When pity is depos'd, and cruel pride
 Usurps the vacant throne. Alas! you see
 How deep the darts of fortune wound the great,
 Though

Though clad in golden armour. Were you sway'd
By favours in reversion, which allure
Ev'n vulgar souls to succour the distress'd;
Int'rest wou'd tell you, that your darling son
May want a friend; and then, my tender plant
In the full verdure of his royal growth,
May recompense your kind protecting care,
And shield him from a storm.— Is the time fix'd
For your departure?

Ar. *Sobemus* intends

T' obtain the royal mandate, to delay
My journey with my lord: then all my joys,
Like the false colours of the show'ry bow,
Will fade in tears!

Mar. The politician's art
Must so revenge his disappointed love?
His spider-constitution wou'd dissolve
In its own venom, if he shou'd forbear
To spin it off in crafty dark intrigues;
Pernicious to my peace, and those I love.
Before the banquet, you shall quit the court;
Then let *Flaminius* vindicate his claim.
And by this prompt compliance with your lord,
Form all your future conduct; and affect
The pow'r to please, and not to give him pain:
For wedded love is founded on esteem,
Which the fair merits of the mind engage:
For those are charms that never can decay;
But time, which gives new whiteness to the swan,
Improves their lustre.

Ar. None of humane race
Wou'd live more happy, cou'd we but transcribe
The bright example of a royal pair:
If my *Flaminius* ever wou'd reward
My constant ardor, with an equal flame;
Engag'd by such endearing decencies,
As make the lamp of love in *Herod's* breast
To burn so bright, and never to consume.

Mar.

Mar. Beware of flatt'ry! 'tis a flow'ry weed,
Which oft offends the very idol-vice,
Whose shrine it would perfume.

Ar. But rigid truth
Turns praise to incense, which the nicest sense
Of virtue may receive. — In your soft chains
Your captive lord is led from joy to joy:
Days, months, and years, in circling raptures rowl,
And each advancing hour outshines the past.
None, none but he can such a treasure boast,
Rich in perfections, able to suffice
His avarice of love!

Mar. When hearts are join'd
In virtuous union, love's impartial beams
Gild the low cottage of the faithful swain
With equal warmth, as when he darts his fires
On canopies of state.

Ar. The danger's fled,
And now I may disclose a stronger proof
Of *Herod's* passion, than the long records
Of love contain.

Mar. What proof? — a dangerous proof,
Conceal'd from me!

Ar. When *Cæsar's* mounted beams
Prevail'd o'er *Anthony's* inferior star;
He thought the victor, in severe revenge,
Would take both life and crown: his life and crown
Were toys beneath his care; but oh! what pangs
He felt, reflecting that your death alone
Cou'd save your beauties to himself entire!
How vast a passion his, who could not bear
A rival in the grave!

Mar. How! Did the king
To the red hand of slaughter doom the breast
Of once-lov'd *Mariamne*? — Gave command
This breast shou'd bleed, where never dwelt a thought
Disloyal or unkind! — Had other lips
Breath'd forth this fatal truth, it would appear

The

The dictate of inventive spleen, disclos'd
To violate my peace: But you're sincere;
And knowing that, I know my self undone!

Ar. O, that I had been born like nature's mutes,
That swim the silent deep! — Believe me false;
Or else, with me, believe the King's decree
A test of wondrous love, and dear esteem!

Mar. Love, and esteem! —

Ar. Alas! rekindling rage
Glow on your cheek, and sparkles in your eyes:—
Think me perfidious, or distrust the pow'r,
And evidence of ev'ry faithful sense;
Rather than doubt your self the worship'd shrine
Of his fond soul, and treasure of his joys.

Mar. To dissipate my doubt, recite the whole,
Without evasions.

Ar. When he went to *Rhodes*,
He thus to *Sobemus* his charge address'd.
If I to *Cæsar's* rage a victim fall,
Let not my beauteous Queen survive, to grace
The victor's triumphs, or to crown his love:
Let me lie envy'd in the grave, possess'd
Of *Mariamne* there! a happier doom,
Than 'tis to live the world's imperial lord
Without my Queen, or rival'd in my love.

Mar. Whene'er did cruelty assume a look
So smooth and fair before? — To summon death,
And arm the Terror with a dart of love,
Against his Queen! his wife! whose ardent vows,
Incessant pray'r, and sacrifice, implor'd
Th'unutterable name, to make his head
White as the flow'ring almond, with increase
Of prosp'rous days, that ages yet unborn
Might bow before his throne, and bless his pow'r;
When I lie unlamented and forgot,
A little heap of dust: and this return! —
A sad return indeed!

Ar. Call it despair,
 And fear of losing what his soul adores.
 Our deeds receive their colour from the will;
 His tongue was cruel, but his heart was kind;
 And rigor was, at worst, the fallen child
 Of grief, and bore a fix'd, but melting eye:
 Or if a crime, the crime of boundless love.

Mar. Good heav'n! that base perfidious creature,
 man!—

With what dissembled agonies of grief
 He cried, farewell! and fainted in my arms;
 I credulously fond thought all sincere!

Ar. His grief was undissembled; but your charms
 Have wrought his love to rage.

Mar. If this poor stock
 Of artless beauty hath such fatal pow'r,
 When you, *Arsinoe*, have a daughter born,
 Beg all deformities of shape and face,
 T'insure her quiet from that monster, man!
 Who quitting reason, a celestial claim,
 To the sweet harmony of souls prefers
 A little white and red, the airy food
 Of bestial appetite: and for a cheek,
 Whose transient beauties hardly will outwear
 The wardrobe of a flow'r— [A Messenger enters.]

Mess. The king and court
 Intreat your majesty wou'd come, to grace
 The banquet.

Mar. No! I'm indispos'd—[Exit *Mess.*] Now fly,
Arsinoe, fly the meditated snare,
 Which *Sobemus* will spread: and may your love
 In the warm smile of fortune flourish fair,
 Fruitful of virtuous joys: but if the Pow'r
 Blast with malignant frowns the blooming sweets,
 Absolve your destiny of partial rage:
 Think on the wife, the mother, and the queen,
 Whose heart her hostile troops have long besieg'd:
 Think

Think with kind pity on the countless store
Of *Mariamne's* woes, and weep no more. [*Exeunt.*]



S C E N E VI.

Enter Salome alone.

S A L O M E.

I Thought my heart was arm'd with adamant
Against remorse; but nature fools me now;
A faint cold shiv'ring seizeth every limb.



S C E N E VII.

Enter Sohemus.

S A L O M E.

MY lord! O breathe some cordial to revive
My sick'ning expectation.

Sob. To defeat

Our purpose, fortune with malicious joy
Fav'ring the Queen, hath snatch'd her from the stroke
Of lifted thunder; but the bolt is hurl'd,
And on her head the ruin shall rebound.

Her stern refusal to partake the feast,
In foul suspicion will confirm the King;
Absolve us, and to her transfer the crime:
With hope attend th'event.

[*Exit. Soh.*]



S C E N E VIII.

Salome *alone.*

ON this great hour
 Shine all ye planets, whose malignant rays,
 Blast the fair prosp'rous growth of regal pow'r!
 Hark!—Death's in action; from the banquet sounds
 The musick of his triumphs, groans and cries.



S C E N E IX.

[*To her Pheroras enters.*]

P H E R O R A S.

Give me, good heav'n! to feed on wholesom herbs
 In camps, and drink the pure untainted spring;
 Since death in ambush lies in sparkling cups,
 And courtly viands!

Sal. Why, my lord, so pale?

What strange disorder ends the festival?

Pher. Sameas, the wretch whom I prefer'd to court,
 Design'd to poison all.

Sal. Avert it, heav'ns!

I hope he fail'd.

Pher. His felon-cheek ne'er chang'd
 It's colour, when he brought th'impoison'd bowl,
 With garlands crown'd, and gave it to the King:
 Who with the fondness of a lover cry'd,
 He'd not indulge his taste, because the Queen
 Refus'd to adorn the circle, so resign'd

To

To *Hazeroth* the pledge of royal grace,
 Sudden his lips grew livid, and discharg'd
 A purple foam, his labouring bosom swell'd;
 His eye-balls like malignant meteors glar'd,
 Unmov'd and gastly: as the venom spread,
 Frightful convulsions writh'd his tortur'd limbs;
 Then mad with anguish, rushing to the floor
 He groan'd his soul away.

Sal. All scap'd but he?

Phe. Had not the villain over-drug'd the wine,
 We all had perish'd.



S C E N E X.

*Herod enters on one side of the Stage, and
 Sohemus on the other.*

HEROD, to SOHEMUS.

WILL the Queen obey
 Our order, and attend us?

Sob. Sir, she comes.

With much reluctance. [*Mariamne enters.*]

Her. to Mar. Did the banquet want
 Variety, or elegance of art,
 T'engage you to partake? If all our court
 Had been alike abstemious, Death had miss'd
 A rich repast!

Mar. Death! — I can bear the sound:
 Ill fate is grown familiar to my ear!

Her. There let it meet your eye.

[*She goes to the door which he points to.*]

O'er the black crime
 How white a veil of innocence she throws!

Sob. Her eyes glance indignation, now she finds
 Th' invenom'd dart hath err'd.

Mar. Poor *Hazeroth*!

Thy freedom costs thee dear!

Her. You have been just,
In punishing the traytor's insolence;
Whom in excess of clemency I spar'd,
Because ally'd to you.

Mar. Murther'd by me! —
So let the tiger sheath his savage fangs,
And for the mangled fawn implead the roe! —
To build my frame the forming pow'r infus'd
Too mild a spirit, in too soft a mold,
For such barbarian deeds. — Who wears the sword
That flesh'd in slaughter, levell'd to the dust
The royal stem, whence that poor scion sprung?

[*Pointing toward Haz.*

Who doom'd to death the hoary majesty
Of good *Hircanus*? Whose insatiate rage
Murther'd my royal father, and his son?
Bid fame to late posterity report
That *Mariamne* did it: — She destroy'd
Her grandfire, father, uncle, brother, all
Her *Asmonean* race; and then constrain'd
Herod to wear the crown! —

Her. So grac'd, to fall
A nobler victim to her vast revenge!

Mar. Call your brib'd witnesses; they're useful paint
To varnish acts of arbitrary rage.

Her. Why comes not *Sameas*? [Exit *Soh.*

Oh! how blest am I,
If heav'n preserves that angel-form the seat
Of innocence and truth: but much I fear
Too plain conviction; for thy dream reveal'd
This meditated crime: I heard thee cry,
The King is poison'd. — But attend the proof.



SCENE



SCENE XI.

Sohemus enters with Sameas.

SOHEMUS, to SAMEAS.

THE diamond will confirm your evidence. [*Aside.*

Her. Sameas beware, and tremble to transgress
The bounds of truth: if one assertion fail
Of utmost evidence against the Queen;
Thou for a single fiction shalt descend
Quick to the heart of hell. Who gave the drugs
That poison'd *Hazeroth*?

Sam. Arsinoe said
She brought them from the Queen; and much extoll'd
Their pow'rful virtue to revive the flames
Of dying love.

Mar. Heav'n guard my innocence!

Her. Haste! call *Arfinoe*.——

Sob. Sir, she fled the court
In great disorder.

Her. How!

Sob. The *Roman* camp
Protects her guilt.

Her. A potion to revive
The flames of love! Did e'er my passion need
The wicked pow'r of art to make it glow? [*To Mar.*
O'er-whelm'd with blank confusion!——

Mar. Must a dream,
The transient image of a troubled thought,
Join'd with that villain's frontless perjury,
Be clear consummate proof, t' affirm a fact
Wou'd make fiends start, and stand in wild amaze
Abstracted from their hate! Can he produce
A promise of rewards, or present bribe

To fortify this proof?

Sam. *Arfinoe* gave

This precious token of your future grace. [*Shews a jewel*—

Her. Know you this diamond, forceress!

Mar. 'Tis the same

You gave me on your birth-day.

Her. To be made

The lure of death——O foul!

Mar. *Arfinoe's* false;

Send, intercept her flight: let her confront

His evidence; and if they both conspire

T'attaint my innocence——

Her. My guards!—secure [*To the Captain of the guard.*

That wicked woman with a double guard——

Seize her, I say! ——

Mar. Friend, tremble not t' obey

His orders, thou'rt a soldier.—— But, my lord!——

Think not these tears, the frailty of my sex,

Argue a sense of guilt, or servile hope

Of moving pity, to retard my doom:

I weep not for my self; nor wish to ward

The blow, whene'er misguided justice strikes:

But if I e'er was treasur'd in your heart;

For sure you lov'd me once——

Her. And lov'd too well!

May all who hate me love as much as I,

And then be thus requited!

Mar. When I'm dead,

O, let the stream of dear affection flow,

Redoubled on my son! to him transfer

The share I've lost.—— And never may the wrong

His mother bears, obstruct the sweet returns

Of filial duty, and paternal love!

But may my memory his soul inspire

To scorn inglorious life, when honour calls

Greatly to act, or suffer in her cause:

And think the debt which death is sure to claim,

A tribute due to virtue, and to fame. [*Exeunt.*

The End of the Fourth Act.



MARIAMNE.

ACT V. SCENE I.

HEROD, PHERORAS.

PHERORAS.



THE silent night hath pass'd her sable
noon;

In mercy to your realm, regard your
health,

Compose your self to sleep.

Her. Bid the wretch sleep,
Whose limbs extended on the rack, endure
The utmost stretch of pain: I suffer more!
More, my *Pheroras*, more! The balm of sleep
Can ne'er refresh these eyes, 'till the pale hand
Of death shall draw their curtains, and exclude
The busy buzzing swarm of stinging thoughts.
My bed, the scene of all my blissful hours,
Of all my tender, chaste, endearing joys,
Which now have wing'd their everlasting flight,
Is grown the den of horror and despair.
O *Mariamne!* ——— With my setting sun,
Ill fortune now projects a deeper shade:
I wish I were as I had never been;
Number'd among the dead!

E 4

Phe.

Phe. Sir, let her crime
Erase the faithful characters, which love
Imprinted on your heart.

Her. Alas! the pain
We feel, whene'er we dispossess the soul
Of that tormenting tyrant, far exceeds
The rigor of his rule.

Phe. With reason quell
That haughty passion; treat it as your slave: }
Resume the monarch!

Her. Where's the monarch now? —
The vulgar call us gods, and fondly think
That Kings are cast in more than mortal molds:
Alas! they little know that when the mind
Is cloy'd with pomp, our taste is pall'd to joy;
But grows more sensible of grief or pain.
The stupid peasant with as quick a sense,
Enjoys the fragrance of a rose, as I;
And his rough hand is proof against the thorn,
Which rankling in my tender skin, wou'd seem
A viper's tooth. O blissful poverty!
Nature, too partial! to thy lot assigns
Health, freedom, innocence, and dowy peace,
Her real goods: and only mocks the great
With empty pageantries! Had I been born
A cottager, my homely bowl had flow'd
Secure from pois'nous drugs; but now my wife! —
Let me, good heav'n! forget that guilty name,
Or madness will ensue —



S C E N E



S E C N E II.

[To them the HIGH-PRIEST enters.]

H E R O D.

AT this late hour,
 When only discontented spectres roam
 In moon-light walks; or yet more anxious men,
 With pangs of agonizing passion torn,
 Accuse their stars; and with their sorrows make
 The midnight echoes mourn: at this late hour,
 What discord breaks the virtuous harmony,
 Which wont to reign within thy pious breast?

H. Pr. O, that, my royal lord, that which will spread
 O'er *Palestine* the blackest veil of woe,
 That ever nation wore! Forgive my zeal,
 Which breaks through courtly forms, to execute
 The heav'nly office which my order claims.
 Peace is my province; and I prostrate beg
 By all your publick and domestic joys!
 By the dear offspring of your royal bed!
 By all that merits your regard, release
 Your injur'd Queen!

Her. Have you not heard her crime?
 Shall I resume a forceress to my breast,
 Who unprovok'd, with black infernal hate
 Attempted our perdition? No!—

H. Pr. My liege!
 Her gentle goodness ne'er cou'd break the band
 Of nature, and the stronger ties of love—

Her. Thirst for her husband's blood!— A lionsess
 Is kinder to her mate.

H. Pr. It cannot be:
 Some wretch hath sold his mercenary soul,

T'ac-

58 *M A R I A M N E.*

T' accuse her without cause.

Her. Is all our court
Combin'd in perjury? They all condemn
Her execrable deed.

H. Pr. Their tongues are tun'd
To what they think delights the royal ear;
In this confusion, shou'd a comet rise,
They'd cry, the Queen hath set the world o' fire!
Vouchsafe her audience, Sir; hear her defence
With cool impartial reason: error oft
Assumes the shape of truth, and the wild eye
Of passion rarely can at first discern
Th' impostor in disguise. Let not your heart,
Where late her beauteous image was inshrined,
Be now immur'd with marble from her pray'r!
Offended heav'n with pitying ear accepts
The sighs of penitents, and freelier grants
Access when soonest sought.

Her. Did she request
Admittance to me?

H. Pr. Yes; with such an air
Of grief ennobled with majestic grace;
With such undaunted fortitude of mind,
Soft'ned with pensive sweetness in her eyes,
That speaks her wrong'd: none but a soul as white
As new-born innocence, cou'd shine so clear
On the dim verge of death.—My gracious lord,
Forgive the frailties of forgetful age!
She took this ruby-bracelet from her arm,
Which on this anniverse she wont to wear;
In sweet remembrance of the nuptial morn,
When first you ty'd it on: Restore, she cry'd,
This pledge of fond affection to the King:
Tell him, howe'er unkind! I've yet deserv'd
To wear no other chain, than this of love;
Then wept a tender show'r. [*Herod takes the bracelet.*]

Her. The time hath been,
I'd not have seen my *Mariamne* drop

One precious tear, for all the radiant mines
The womb of earth contains: but now her heart
Is chang'd, and so must mine!— Yet if she craves
To see me now, give orders; let the guard
Conduct her to me. [*Exeunt Her. and Pher.*]

H. Pr. Now with speedy flight,
Descend celestial ministers of peace!
Who kindle virtuous ardors, and preside
O'er nuptial vows: aid with auspicious zeal,
The firm reunion of these royal hearts:
And never never from your charge remove,
'Till death's commission'd to divide their love. [*Exit.*]



S C E N E III.

Enter Sohemus and Salome.

S O H E M U S.

THUS far with fate to friend, and greatly fir'd
With bright ambition, we've pursu'd the path
To glory; and with swift and easy steps,
Approach the summit of imperial pow'r.

Sal. But shou'd the King's enfeebled soul relent,
And pardon *Mariamne*?

Sob. She'll disdain
To re-ascend the throne, or owe her life
To low submission: for the stubborn sense
Of genuine virtue in a royal mind,
Ne'er softens with affliction; but becomes
The more obdurate, when it once hath griev'd;
As metals after melting harder grow.

S C E N E



S C E N E. IV.

[To them Sameas enters.]

SALOME.

Sameas, thou best of friends! thy wish'd approach
By instinct I perceiv'd; thy influence spreads
Like rich perfumes; which, tho' invisible,
Refresh the sense.

Sam. Madam, I hop'd my art
Had well deserv'd a jewel of your own,
T' engage my service:—'twas too politic
To feign a favour but to serve your cause,
When the nice article of proof came on.

Sal. Contemn that worthless pebble; we're intent
On far more glorious views: whole provinces
Shall recompence thy love.

Sam. Rather consult
Our common safety; life is all I crave.

Sal. What may'st thou mean?

Sam. Th' High Priest hath won the King
To see the Queen to-night.

Sob. Impossible!

Sam. But now I met him speeding cross the court;
Round him a rabble of her menial slaves
Ran big with joy.

Sob. Confound his holy craft!——
Fortune at once rowls back the bounteous flow
Of hope, and leaves us gasping on the shore!——

[Salome *whispers* Sohemus.

I'll do it.

Sam. What, my lord?—— What must we do?—

Sob. Why, suffer greatly, since we cannot act!
Thy part remains to persevere, tho' racks

Strain

M A R I A M N E. 61

Strain every sinew smaller than the threads
Which form a spider's web.— Ne'er hope for grace;
'Tis vain!

Sam. I'll risque th' event, and go——
[*Sohemus stabs him.*

Sob. To hell!
To hell! poor timorous wretch, and tell the devil—

[*In the struggle Sameas wrests the dagger out of
Sohemus's hand; and in falling backward he
strikes it into Salome's bosom, and dies.*

Sob. Princess ador'd and lov'd! Oh!— speak!

Sal. Death! death!——

Save me, O *Sohemus*, from that black troop
Of grizly shapes, which in fantastic dance
Frisk round, and call me hence.—O, kind in vain!—
A fiery whirlwind bears me from thy arms
To seas of boiling sulphur; the blue waves
Receive me to their bosom.— Down! deep, deep!
[*She dies.*



S C E N E V.

Enter Herod and Pheroras, with attendants.

H E R O D.

WHAT hideous sound of shrieks and dying groans
Echo'd from hence, as if by violence
A soul had left her mansion unprepar'd.

Phe. Horrors! our sister dead!

Sob. That villain came [Pointing to Sameas's body.
In all the gestures of extreme despair;
Crying she brib'd him to accuse the Queen:
And having heard *Arfinoe* wou'd return
To null his evidence, rage and remorse

Urg'd

Urg'd him to plunge the dagger in her breast,
And then he pierc'd himself.

Her. O Salomé!

The jarring elements which compos'd thy frame,
Made thee aspiring, turbulent, and bold:
In others woe was thy supreme delight;
And most against my Queen thy malice aim'd
Her venom'd shafts: but now thy guilty blood
Will quench the flames, which thy infernal torch
Spread o'er the harvest of my nuptial joys.

*Sob. How blind, alas! to fate is the dim eye
Of dull mortality!*

Her. O Sobemus!

A thrilling horror freezeth every vein,
While I review the precipice of fate,
Where late I stood perplex'd: but one step more
Had plung'd me in th' abyss of endless woe,
A most consummate wretch!——But here she comes,
[*Mariamme enters in a mourning habit.*
Welcome as night with sweet refreshing shade,
And balmy dews, to the faint traveller;
Who journies o'er a waste of burning sands,
With painful steps and slow.——Remove the dead;
She hath no vengeful appetite to glut,
With such sad spectacles. [All go out except Herod.



S C E N E VI.

HEROD, MARIAMNE.

HEROD.

Approach, my Queen!
Thou dearest miracle of nature's hand,
Adorn'd with all perfections!

*Mar. Dare you trust
Your murd'ers near you?*

Her.

Her. Thy soft innocence
 Was form'd to kill with darts of keen desire;
 I beg those pleasing wounds: approach, my fair!
 Heav'ns! at the sight of that celestial face,
 Each savage passion from the soul retires;
 As wolves forsake the fold, when first the sun
 Flames o'er the eastern hills. Oh! thus, thus, thus,
 I'll clasp thee ever to my heaving breast:
 Thus on thy lips in glowing rapture seal,
 A firm eternal union of our souls ———

Mar. In vain! ——— They who dissolv'd the first,
 have pow'r
 To cancel this.

Her. Dismiss that groundless fear:
Sameas and *Salomé* are now no more;
 They've punish'd their own guilt, and the last breath
 Of faction spoke thy virtue greatly wrong'd.

Mar. But the same judge survives, whose credulous ear
 Drank all that perjur'd malice cou'd infuse.
 You, who condemn'd me for the blackest crime,
 On evidence too counterfeit and light
 To cheat an idiot's eye, betray'd a will
 Dispos'd to credit ev'ry feign'd report;
 Whene'er malignant passion shall provoke
 Other artificers of fraud, t' assault
 My life or honour.

Her. That unkind reproach
 Wou'd change to soft compassion, had you felt
 The stings of sorrow which transfix'd my soul,
 When first you were accus'd: I wou'd not bear
 Such agonies again, for all the crowns
 Which e'er ambition sigh'd for.

Mar. To your self
 You owe whate'er you suffer'd; and your pain
 Was but the fancied torture of a dream:
 But wounds of honour bleed for ever new;
 Their anguish is sincere! My fame must bear
 The blast of censure, and the letter'd spleen
 Of future story.

Her.

Her. No! thy fame will shine
More bright, emerging from this short eclipse:
The marks of envy give distinguish'd grace
To virtue; as indented scars adorn
The soldier's breast.

Mar. I wish my innocence
Wanted that mark of honour, which the tongue
Of malice will miscall the brand of guilt.

Her. The whitest ermin on her skin may bear
An accidental spot; yet none accuse
Her native purity, but call the stain
The crime of fortune. To the doubtful world,
My edict soon will vindicate thy fame:
Lodge that, and all thy cares, within my breast;
Where every gesture, word, and look inspire
The spirit of purest love!

Mar. For which I wear
This livery of death —— It suits the day
Which gave me to your arms.

Her. But now, disrob'd
Of those sad weeds, and every gloomy thought,
Smile like an angel breaking from a cloud.
While peace, and joy, and ever-young desire
Attend thee to my bed, each wedded pair
Shall make our bliss the measure of their vows!

Mar. Your bed!—the tiger shall as soon persuade
The hunted deer to harbour in his den.——

Her. Damp not my glowing passion with a thought
Of separation! Did our dates extend
To the same length the giant-race enjoy'd,
When nature yet was young, I then shou'd dread
The sad idea of our last divorce;
Tho' sure that many smiling centuries
Wou'd rowl 'twixt death and us!—O! did thy love
But equal mine, we'd each in other live
So join'd, that when fate strikes we both might fall!
I'd not survive thy doom.

Mar. Nor can I yours!——

Her. The words are what I wish, but ill explain'd
By that stern look and haughty voice.

Mar. Enquire
Of that domestic oracle your heart :
If that resolves not the mysterious sense,
Ask *Sobemus*.——

Her. Confusion!

Mar. Do you start?
With sudden rays of dawning truth amaz'd!
As fiends wou'd be, shou'd the meridian sun
Blaze on their black abodes.

Her. Can neither words,
Nor actions ought avail, but must disdain
Repay my generous passion? Is thy rage
Grown so implacable, no tender proofs
Are prevalent t' assuage it?

Mar. 'Twas a proof
Of tender love, to doom me to the sword
By such an order, as barbarian hate
Wou'd only dictate in the rage of war!
And with that engin of clandestine death
To arm the malice of my foe profess!——
On *Sobemus* you safely might rely,
To send me soon to mingle with your dust.

Her. O villain! perjurd villain! to betray
That charge on which depended all my peace!
On which his life depended!——Nothing less
Than the damn'd witchcraft of thy wicked charms,
Cou'd tempt him to the very cave of Death,
To wanton with his darts!——Tear him ye fiends!——
To that false cheek dissembling nature gave
The blush of virtue, for a veil to lust:
He breath'd that fatal secret to thy ear
In amorous murmurs, when the slave was grown
Frantic with ecstasy——

Mar. My fame defies
Th' envenom'd breath of slander; all my hours
Have kept severest virtue for their guard.

66 M A R I A M N E.

But I presage, offended heav'n prepares
 To punish that excess of virgin-love;
 By which betray'd, I gave my nuptial vow,
 Against the solemn sanction of our law:
 And to an alien's care transferr'd the charge
 Of pure religion; who, to flatter *Rome*,
 Neglects her altars, and her faith profanes.

Her. Guards!——Take her hence! [*Guards enter.*]

No foolish fond remorse
 Shall now delay my vengeance!——

[*The Guards lead off Mariamne.*]

Love farewell!——

Rather than doat on her polluted charms,
 My sword shall rip the passion from my heart.
 Adultery!——Ye violated heav'ns!
 Dart the red light'ning wing'd with tenfold rage,
 To blast th' adulterers! Why did ye forbear
 To rivet closer with hot thunder-bolts,
 The serpents twisted in the folds of lust!——



S C E N E VII.

[*Pheroras enters.*]

H E R O D.

Pheroras, Oh!—Ten thousand rebels arm,
 Grief, horror, shame, distraction!—they besiege
 The poor soul, wav'ring in the fort of life,
 And wishing to surrender! Thy kind sword
 Might end this insurrection: dar'st thou strike?

[*Points to his breast.*]

Pher. Heav'n shield from violence that sacred breast!
 Fear, guilt, despair, and moon-struck phrensy rush
 On voluntary death: the wise and brave,
 When the fierce storms of fortune round 'em roar,
 Combat the billows with redoubled force:

Then

Then, if they perish ere the port is gain'd,
 They sink with decent pride; and from the deep
 Honour retrieves them, bright as rising stars.
 Call reason to your aid, and with your friends
 Divide your care: doubt not but *Sobemus*—

Her. Thou nam'st the very scorpion which hath
 stung
 The centre of my heart.

Pher. Then make his blood
 Balm for the wound.

Her. The wound admits no cure!
 Nor reason, nor the healing hand of Time
 Can bring relief: But heav'n inspire my heart,
 Before it breaks, with new-devis'd revenge,
 Equal to that perfidious villain's crime! —
 Were his approaches frequent to the Queen,
 When I was absent?

Pher. No; he ever stood
 The distant object of her hate.

Her. With ease
 They might elude your eye; but *Salomé*,
 And *Sameas* sure were conscious of their crimes;
 For which he murder'd both; and she prepar'd
 The poisonous bowl for me. But from that slave,
 Tortures shall wring the truth I dread to know.
 Secure him for the rack: and let the Queen
 Drink the same fatal draught she drug'd for me;
 Instant, with her own deathful art destroy
 Th'artificer of death! — O *Marianne*! —
 Why would'st thou wrong my honour, and my love,
 And urge this direful doom? [Exit *Pheroras*.





S C E N E VIII.

[Flaminius enters to Herod.]

H E R O D.

MY Roman friend!
Your unexpected visit finds my court
In wild disorder.

Flam. Sir, the Queen's desire
To see the Prince, occasion'd my return
At this uncourtly hour.

Her. Few hours have pass'd,
Since you beheld me in triumphal state:
Now, like a meteor from a summer sky,
Ingloriously I'm fall'n!

Flam. Banish despair,
And all her gloomy train: doubt not but fate
In her large volume still for you reserves
A page, as full of glory as the past.

Her. Glory, *Flaminius!*—— Will an empty name,
A shining bubble, which the vulgar breath
Of thoughtless crowds can swell for whom they please;
E'er recompense the loss I must sustain?
My Queen! my wife! the jewel of my soul!

Flam. Mercy's the brightest ornament of pow'r;
And now most needful to preserve your peace.

Her. Justice must be my mercy: She must dye! —
She must! ——

Flam. But, Sir, 'tis safer much to sheath
The sword of justice, since the destin'd blow
Will chiefly wound your self. Without your Queen,
Your palace, though with gay retinue throng'd,
Will seem a savage desert. You must view
The mother blooming in your beauteous child,

Nor

Nor feel a father's joy! Each object here,
 Will rouse the sad remembrance of the bliss
 You once possess'd with her! How will you wish
 For that sweet converse, when the smiling hours
 Danc'd to the musick of her heav'nly voice,
 And the short years were lost in dear delight!
 But when her charms are silent, dismal change!
 Slow fullen time on raven-wings will fly
 Heavy and black! around you then you'll see
 Your son, your nobles, and domesticks chang'd:
 For each, as their peculiar grief shall urge,
 With pensive silence will upbraid the loss
 Of mother, Queen, or friend. But what's the loss
 Of mother, Queen, or friend, compar'd to yours?
 A wife! the best, the loveliest of her sex.
 And late the best-belov'd! in the full pride
 Of summer beauty, like a poisonous weed
 Torn from the earth, and by her husband's hand
 Unkindly cast to wither in the grave!

Her. My fate wou'd force from Rigor's flinty eye
 Ev'n tears of blood! [*He weeps.*]

Fla. O Sir! reflect, if thus
 The bare recital wounds your fancy now,
 A yet more dreadful pain may pierce your heart!
 Love may once more revive, vain hopeless love!
 When the dear object of your longing soul
 Lies mould'ring in the dust. If so, the wretch
 Who buried in a trance returns to life,
 And walks distracted o'er the rattling bones
 Of his dead fathers, in the dreary vault
 Less horror feels, than sad remorse will raise
 Within your breast!

Her. O *Mariamne* lost!
 To love for ever lost! to love and me!——
 I've liv'd Love's slave too long; but Jealousy,
 That yellow fiend! hath dip'd the torch in gall,
 And now 'twill light no more!——

Fla. If the Queen's false,
My Wife hath been officious to her crimes,
And shares in the pollution: let her plea
Be heard; and if she fails in her defence,
I'll slay her at your feet.

[*Flaminius goes out, and returns immediately
with Arsinoe.*]



S C E N E IX.

HEROD TO ARSINOE.

AS heav'nly peace
May sooth your anguish, when the fluttering soul
Prepares to wing her last eternal flight;
Assist my quiet, and resolve my doubts!
Was *Sobemus* admitted to the Queen,
Whilst I was gone to *Rhodes*?

Ar. Never, my Lord!

Her. Never?

Ar. His name's offensive to her ear:
And for his person! no antipathy
In nature can be stronger.

Her. So I thought;
But such fictitious arts too oft conceal
Criminal correspondence: they might write!
And doubtless did.

Ar. That commerce cou'd not 'scape
My notice, who by constant duty bound,
Waited so near the Queen.

Her. What if she saw?
Her interest then, and now her fear prevails
To seal the lips of truth.

Fla.

Fla. Sir, not the frown
Of majesty, nor brandish'd thunder awes
A *Roman* spirit, (such I hope she bears)
To make it start from the plain tracks of truth,
And deviate into falsehood.

Her. Can the Queen
Pierce to the close recesses of the soul?
Are thoughts there visible, like children's toys
Kept in a chrystal case? Does she retain
Dæmons, to sit secure from mortal fight,
In Princes cabinets to learn the summ
Of secret counsels? Told they this decree;
If *Cæsar*, to revenge the sacred faith
I held with *Anthony*, shou'd to the sword
Sentence my head, that her's shou'd likewise fall;
Left the proud successor who seiz'd my throne,
Shou'd triumph in my bed?—No! That resolve
A carnal fiend imparted; and she paid
His service with her honour!—

Ar. Royal Sir!
Her honour is unblemish'd; all the blame
Transfer to my officious zeal: I told
That fatal secret.

Her. How!—Did *Sobemus*
Impart that most important charge to you?

Ar. To me his vows of love were then address'd;
Which when disdain'd, with more persuasive force
To recommend his passion, he reveal'd
The dreadful mandate left in trust; and swore
That if you perish'd by the sword of *Rome*
My love alone was ransom for the life
Of my dear Royal mistress.*

Her. Fly! O fly!
Swift as a cherub to preserve his charge.
Reverse the doom of death.

[*Exit Ar.*]



S C E N E X.

[*To them Pheroras enters.*]

HEROD to PHERORAS.

I S *Sohemus*

Secur'd for torture?

Phe. Sir, he took th' alarm,
And fled for safety to the royal tow'r:
The portal forc'd, the soldiers found him fall'n
On his self-slaught'ring sword, stretcht on the ground
Welt'ring in blood; he speechless there expir'd,

Her. Too far confiding in that traytor's skill
In arts of rule, he so misus'd my pow'r,
That distant story may record my reign
From year to year, by many a cruel deed;
As the wild progress of a storm is trac'd
By marks of desolation.



S C E N E the Last.

[*Mariamne enters supported by the High-Priest
and Narbal; Arsinoe follows with the young
Prince.*]

HEROD.

H Eav'ns avert
The bodings of my soul! I fear the Queen——

H. Pr. Oh Sir! ——

Her. Hah! say'it thou? ——

H. Pr. A few moments more

Will

Will rank her with the dead!

Ar. E'er I arriv'd
The deadly draught was giv'n, which soon will end
The sense of all her woes.

Her. And all my joys!——
O call, call our physicians! now let art
Exert her saving pow'r, or ever prove
The minister of death!——

Mar. The venom's spread
Too far for art!

Her. O! wish to live, and heav'n
Will crown thy wish with life: heav'n will be just
To that bright innocence, which I have wrong'd!
Wrong'd with excess of love to fury wrought!——
O wretch, wretch, wretch!——

Mar. Death's welcome, now I hear
My innocence avow'd.

Her. I! I! whose life
Was bound with thine, by striving to secure
Thy beauties all my own, have kill'd the dove
I fondly grasp'd too close!—— O see! she's pale:
Take, take, ye pow'rs! my life to lengthen hers:
Chain me, ye furies! to your burning wheel!
Whip me ten thousand years with scorpions there,
To save her life!——

Mar. I pity and forgive
Your violence of passion, which hath wrought
The ruin of us both!

Her. I ill deserve
Thy pardon or thy pity—— Yet vouchsafe,
Thou fairest pattern of transcendent goodness!
Vouchsafe thy wretched lord a last embrace;
Whose soul is ready wing'd to wait on thine:
Oh!—— bless the dying penitent with peace,
The moments which remain!——

Mar. Good heav'n insure [*They embrace.*
Eternal peace to both!

Her. Thou shalt not dye!——

Thou

Thou art too young, too faultless, and too fair,
To fall a prey to death! —

Mar. The thick'ning shades
O'er-spread my swimming eyes — Where is my child?
Bring him, poor babe! to take a parting kiss! —
Farewel! — I'm now at peace! — [She dies.

H. Pr. In that soft sigh
The gentle spirit soar'd!

Ar. Oh! dead, dead, dead! —

Her. Then, Death! strike on; [He faints.
Fate, thou hast done thy worst! —

Phe. My royal brother! Oh! —

Nar. My gracious lord! —

H. Pr. Good heav'n! restore to wretched *Palestine*
Her sole support, and grace!

Her. What minister [Raising himself.
Of this dark realm art thou? — If 'tis thy post
To guide the dead through this disastrous gloom;
Lead to that mournful mansion, where the ghosts
Of those abide, whom fatal beauty sent
Untimely to the shades! — See! see! she soars! —
How bright a track she leaves along the sky;
And looks with pity down! — Oh see! she rests
On the soft fleece of yonder purple cloud,
Where angels fan her with their golden plumes:
Stay, *Mariamne*, stay! — [He sinks into their arms.

Phe. O! from his face
The blush of life retires.

Nar. His bosom heaves
With strong convulsive throws!

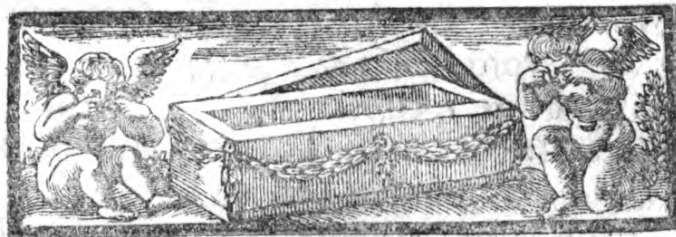
Fla. Raise him, my lords.

Her. Alas! forbear; ye but prolong the pains
Of lab'ring nature; let me sink to peace!
And may Oblivion cast her sable veil
O'er my sad story, and conceal the crimes
Of majesty mis-led! My urn, alas!
Can hope for no compassion: when the doom
Of my dear, lovely, virtuous Queen is told;

M A R I A M N E. 75

The tears will freeze on Pity's gentle check,
And not bedew my ashes!—To your care [To Fla.
Receive this royal orphan, and implore
Cæsar's protection to preserve his crown.
And when mature in manhood, he receives
A consort to his throne, may every grace
And every virtue join, to make her styl'd
The *Mariamne* of th' admiring age!
May sweet compliance, honour, dear esteem,
And mutual faith cement their mutual joys!
But ever may he shun too fond excess!
That soft seducing impotence of mind,
By which subdu'd, his wretched father fell!
Led by imperious Love a tortur'd slave,
To the sad refuge of an early grave! [He dies.

The End of the Fifth Act.



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EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY

Mrs. SEYMOUR.

THE Poet, in a whim extremely new,
Coupl'd me with a strange enamour'd Jew;
So violently fond! the loss of life
Was far less dreadful than to leave his wife:
Monster of love! he whisper'd in my ear,
I doat so much . . . I pr'ythee die, my dear!
Ladies, if such demands are made on beauty,
Defend us all from matrimonial duty!
One may support a living husband's folly;
But, let him feed the worms alone, for Molly —
And yet 'tis vain to reason, or to rail,
The tempter man was destin'd to prevail:
To hear him flatter, sigh, implore, protest,
A . . . je ne sçai quoi! . . . will flutter in the breast.

But

EPILOGUE.

*But o'er intrigues whatever planet reigns,
And fires to Bedlam-rage a lover's brains;
One honey-moon's sufficient to restore 'em
From wild impertinence, to cool decorum.
By this plain model had the play been wrought,
My Hebrew spark had acted as he ought;
With a keen appetite enjoy'd the feast,
And decently suffic'd, withdrawn to rest:
But, glutton-like, to grudge the world his Leaving,
Was wond'rous unpolite, to my conceiving!
Homer, who human nature nicely knew,
(Ye Critics, I read Greek . . . as well as you.)
In colours of a softer kind display'd
The husband civil, to the wife who stray'd.
Though Helen had elop'd, her gentle lord
Renew'd her forfeit claim to bed and board:
For which dear foible of the fair forgiv'n,
The Gods vouchsaf'd to send him Quick to heav'n:
And in no Spartan novel can I find,
The good man griev'd to leave his spouse behind.
In such gay lights when wedded life is shown,
What couple wou'd not wish the case their own?*

But,

EPILOGUE.

*But, Gallants, if you Herod's rule approve,
To give no quarter in the lists of love;
If jealous rage, or fond fantastic dreams,
Exalt your passion to such dire extremes:
Let each bright Mariamne chuse her man,
Then, kill us all . . . with kindness, if ye can.*

F I N I S.



