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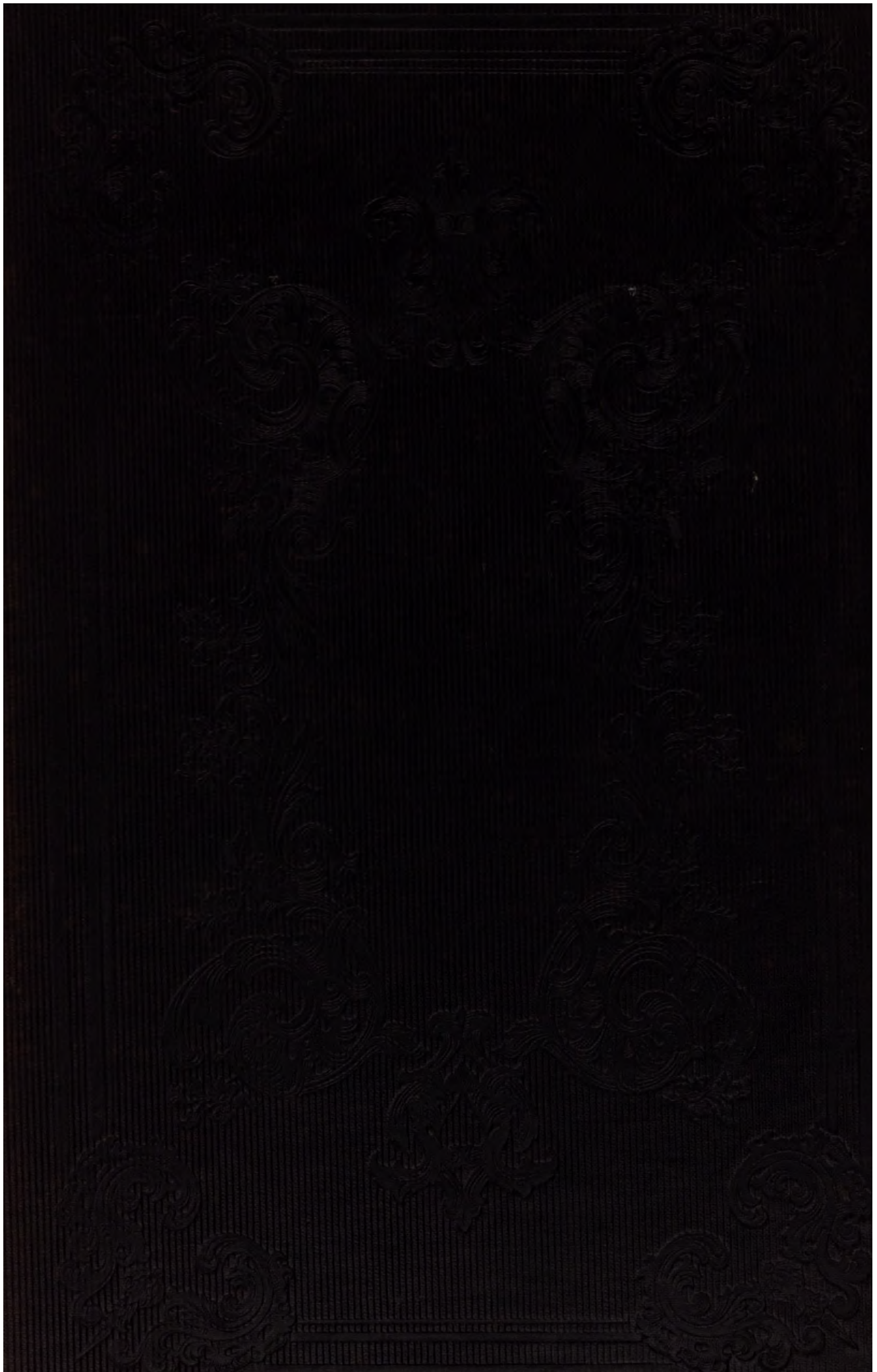
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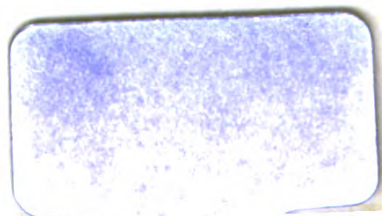


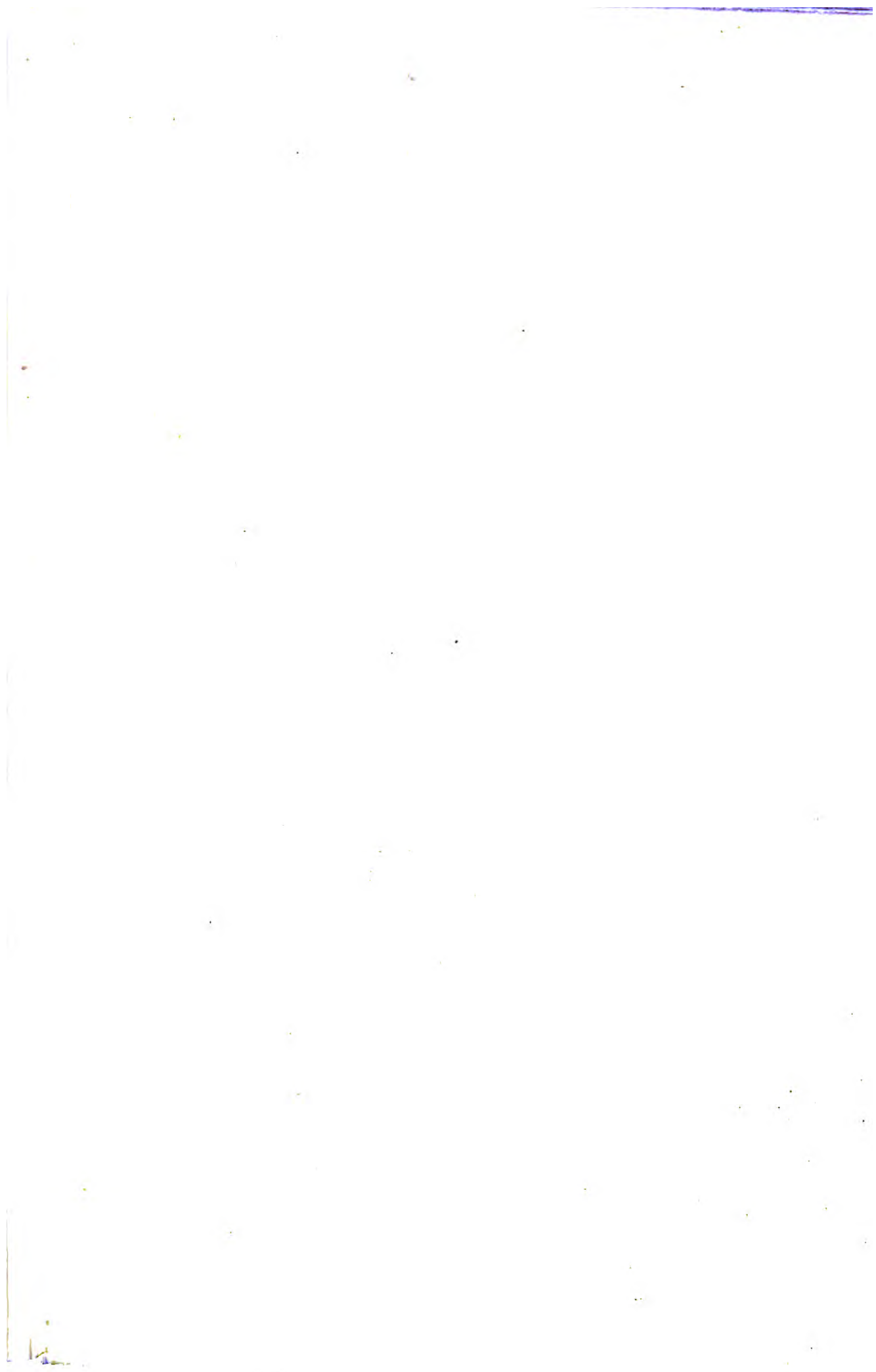


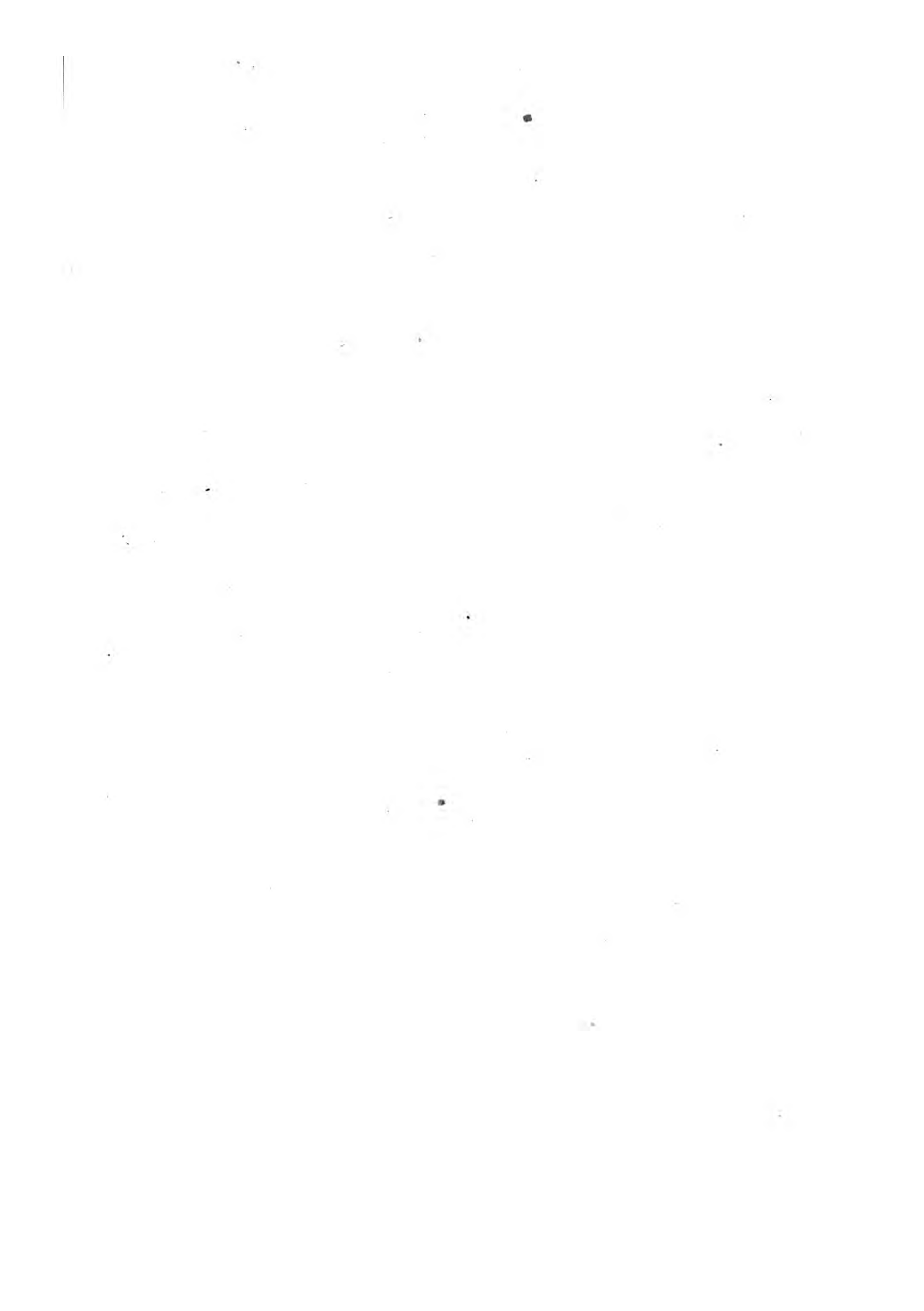
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THE
HUNGARIAN DAUGHTER.

A Dramatic Poem.

BY

GEORGE STEPHENS,

AUTHOR OF THE TRAGEDIES OF "THE VAMPIRE," "MONTEZUMA," "THE QUEEN
OF HUNGARY," AND (*unpublished*) "THE PATRIOT," &c. &c.



"WHEN HE MADE A DECREE FOR THE RAIN, AND A WAY FOR THE LIGHT-
NING OF THE THUNDER:

"THEN DID HE SEE IT, AND DECLARE IT; HE PREPARED IT, YEA, AND
SEARCHED IT OUT.

"AND UNTO MAN HE SAID, BEHOLD, THE FEAR OF THE LORD, THAT IS
WISDOM; AND TO DEPART FROM EVIL IS UNDERSTANDING."—*Job*.

LONDON:
C. MITCHELL, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.
MDCCCXLI.

1049.

LONDON :
WILLIAM STEVENS, PRINTER, BELL YARD,
TEMPLE BAR.

DEDICATION

TO R. H. HORNE, ESQ.

DEAR HORNE,

I MOST respectfully take leave, agreeably to your kind permission, to put this Dramatic Poem under your protection.

The humble offering of admiration and gratitude, may, perhaps, acquire a value in your eyes which it does not intrinsically possess.

Other able and influential judges have been pleased, at various times, to recognize my dramatic ability in as cordial terms as yourself, but you have hazarded your high critical reputation, and evidenced the sincerity of your suffrage, by your public signature.

Still, if you imagine that you should attribute this intrusion solely to the obligation under which you have laid me, your premises will have led you into error.

I must needs confess to a selfish inducement in prefixing your name to the publication before you.

Ambitious,

“When I am past and have outrun calamity,”

of being known to posterity, I can hit upon no procedure more calculated to ascertain this darling object of my life, than the dedicating “*The Hungarian Daughter*” to a dramatist, whose sterling works, however admired by his contemporaries, will, I sincerely believe, be studied with still deeper reverence and delight when their classic worth shall be consecrated by the hoar of ages.

Whether or not the present production shall serve, in any degree, to excuse your judgment of its author, I cannot but rejoice in the opportunity it affords me to acknowledge, in the face of the world, my heartfelt sense of the noble disinterestedness of the motives which prompted the flattering distinction of your notice.

I remain,

Dear Horne,

Obliged and sincerely,

G. S.

Bromley, Great Hadham, Herts.

1st January, 1841.

INTRODUCTORY PREFACE.

THE following performance abounds in complemental lines, passages, *resumés*, effusions of solitary musings, and even entire Scenes, which contribute to the illustration and developement of character, but do not cause any perceptible advancement of the plot. It will thence be seen, that "*The Hungarian Daughter*" cannot be intended for an acting play, . . . a species of composition subjecting the attention of the reader to a severer trial than does the Dramatic Poem, and which ought to be regarded, according to its artistic merit, as presenting, beyond all comparison, a more decisive test of the writer's poetical-dramatic genius.

The author has had lately returned upon his hands a Tragedy, in manuscript, entitled "*The Patriot*," the subject of which is identical with that of "*The Hungarian Daughter*;" but in the former the spirit of the poem is condensed, and the language compressed to meet the necessities of representation.

The said drama having been submitted early last summer to the experienced judgment of our distinguished Tragedian, that gentleman, with the greatest promptitude, wrote to the author as follows:—

"I was waiting for your instructions to present your play to Mr. Webster. Upon your letter of this morning I gave it to him, telling him my opinion of you and of the merits of the Tragedy."

That I am authorized in assuming the intimation of Mr. Macready to have been auspicious, will be gathered from the further passages which I shall take the liberty of citing from his correspondence. I only hope, under the extreme peculiarity of my position, that I shall not be thought to trench upon the bounds of propriety, in availing myself of the *imprimatur* of such an accomplished seer and artist for my Dramatic Poem.

“ I have read your Tragedy of ‘ *The Patriot*,’ and have been very considerably interested in it. My opinion is, that it would succeed in representation. I wait your orders, assuring you that I shall be sincerely happy in promoting your views, and that you may calculate on my best co-operation.” Again ; “ I had rather you would write to Mr. Webster, telling him that you wish to know his views about your Tragedy, of which you can say, *I have expressed myself most favourably*. It is far more likely, by such a mode, that he will enter with earnestness into a consideration of the play. Could you not be in town in your way from Hastings, and so have an interview with him ? I shall be unfeignedly happy in being the instrument of your victory over its (the Tragedy’s) fortune. I have said as much—and emphatically too—to Mr. Webster.”

“ It would, I reassure you, give me sincere and *very great* pleasure to be instrumental to your success on the scene, and in helping you to the place among our dramatists that your talents ought to obtain for you.”

“ I take a deep and cordial interest in your success, and lament that you have not achieved the triumph that your abilities certainly entitle you to. I can only add my opinion, that you are not true to your own genius, if,” &c. &c. &c.

My play was for awhile “detained in the obscure

sojourn" of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket; but in the course of time I received the following communication:—"I am desired by Mr. Webster to inform you *that there is really not the slightest chance of an opening for your Tragedy*, his arrangements for his future campaign being entirely completed. I am thus prompt, that you may be afforded facility in presenting it to another Theatre, where it might be an acquisition."

That I have not offered the returned manuscript to the one other house at which it may be produced, without the Manager being liable to be "informed against," and that consequently my Tragedy of "*The Patriot*" lies upon my hands, is owing to my entertaining a strong persuasion, from that acquired species of wisdom which has passed into an adage, that it would be to no purpose. Most of my rejected dramas (and such of them as afterwards issued from the press, were pronounced in divers quarters fully worthy of being "put upon the Stage") came recommended, in the first instance, through one intellectual channel or another for representation; but by a sort of *ex officio* hallucination, Managers, (though they must know that they precipitate the legitimate Drama unto ruin, while, in order of succession, they find themselves out of pocket,) are imbued with a suicidal notion that the public had rather be enticed by "the foreign aid of ornament," and the illusion of splendid accessories when at a disproportionate cost the production of some popular writer, transcribed perhaps from his observation of hard realities, is "adorned" upon the scene, than attend to witness the unpretending representation of a play, where all external adjuncts are subordinate to the interest which springs from the inward life of nature . . . from the poetical spirit within. To quote the most accomplished, profound, and acute critic,

that I have ever met with on the subject in hand (A. W. Schlegel); "From the vitiated taste in respect to the splendour of decorations and magnificence of the dresses, the arrangement of the Theatre has become a complicated and expensive business, whence it happens that the main requisites, good pieces, and good players, are considered as secondary matter."

Be that as it may, it is certain, that in the existing condition of the British theatre, a taste for stage writing should be regarded in the light of a chastisement, intended to act salutarily upon the sufferer; since, as respects all inferior objects, the painful consciousness of dramatic power is presumed to be its own reward, but, unlike virtue, it necessarily renders the individual obnoxious to a probation, which was wanting to give the climax to the patience of Job.

In thus expressing myself, I hope that I shall not be accused of merely adverting to my own *repeated* theatrical ventures, extending over a period of more than twenty years. However "heart-sick" I must naturally feel at never finding "*the slightest chance of an opening,*" I am sensible, that I am too deeply interested to be allowed to draw any conclusion from my long individual sad experience; but I may perhaps be permitted to signify my indignant sense of the unworthy treatment of my dramatic contemporaries; men, whom I respect as my superiors in our sublime art, and who, owing to the absurd and unjust privileges of the Patent Theatres, are precluded from producing, at the minor houses, dramas of the highest character (some of which have appeared in print, and many more probably remain in manuscript) before a public, who may nevertheless see lawfully every night upon debasing horrors, whose tendency is pernicious to the morals of the innocent and susceptible, and which

are revolting to the taste of the more refined and superior classes of society. Were I to affirm, that in my opinion the unacted drama of this country at the present day, is of higher order than that which finds its way unto the stage, such a declaration would be very likely ascribed to prejudice, but Mr. Serjeant Talfourd has most handsomely proclaimed the same truth; and from his competence, in every point of view, to set the question at rest, I should presume there can be no appeal.

στρεπταὶ μὲν τε φρένες ἔσθλων.

How much longer then will the play-going, or the play-loving people of London and its environs ignorantly submit to this most grievous privation? How much longer is a state of things so repugnant to the laws, customs, and liberties of the land, and so injurious to all parties, to be endured? How much longer is this incubus of a Patent Monopoly to be suffered to weigh upon the heart of genius, . . . a monopoly created in the very teeth of the act of the 21 James I. chap. 3, sect. 4, and which moreover, in the forcible words of a well-timed and judicious publication, "is only exercised to the destruction of the production it was meant to foster, and which is an outrage to common sense and justice so obvious, that if once fairly brought before the legislature it must be abolished?"*

A Literary Novice, in calculating the chances of getting his play performed, need not trouble himself to take into account the intrinsic merits of the work, or even its aptitude for theatrical purposes. "My dukedom to a beggarly denier," but the five act piece, composed under some literary *prestige* to order, be the same good, bad, or indifferent, would be brought out with the

* A Brief View of the English Drama, by F. G. Tomlins. C. Mitchell, London.

most lavish appointments and minute attention to stage effect, though it unfairly, I may say scandalously, jostled aside another Hamlet or Macbeth, supposing it were possible, under the existing embargo upon true dramatic genius, that such *chefs d'œuvre* could be written.

That circumstances may now and then occur which rather seem to invalidate this statement, I am of course aware, but the exceptions are so far between, that I apprehend they must be brought about in order to establish the rule.

Well then, excluded by a tripartite "understanding but no tongue" from the two or one Patent Theatre which may happen to be open, what redress, what compensation, what hope, "amidst all that shatters from his life its verdure," (to use the phrase of Sir E. L. Bulwer,) is left to the injured dramatist? Again, to quote Mr. Tomlins's searching "View of the English Drama," "Unlike other Authors or Artists, he has no market. He cannot go from Publisher to Publisher, or print for himself like the Novelist; for unacted plays will not sell, and, indeed, if constructed to act, are not well adapted for mere reading."

It may be added, that their appreciation, considering the actual dense condition of the public taste in regard to the style and conduct of the drama, will be just in the inverse ratio of their merit with mere readers; which designation comprises, and, "until people leave off raving about Shakspeare and the old dramatists, and *conscientiously study them*,"* will continue to comprise, nine out of ten of the purchasers of a devoted play. This lamentable state of ignorance, pampered and rendered inveterate by the wretched food provided by the monopolists, might almost excuse

* The Monthly Chronicle.

the dramatist, not only for avoiding the sublime and more recondite beauties of his art, but what were even worse, for knowingly resorting to them in wrong places, or with detriment to coherency of character and unity of action. Nay more, it furnishes him with a strong temptation to prostitute his high calling; to trick and minister to the modern admiration of pinchbeck verse and claptrap; and to descend to the capacities and sympathies of the million, by composing in an adulterate species of drama, which corresponds with all they have been taught of late to admire, and which he is conscious in proportion to its flash and glitter will redound to his profit and reputation. Indeed, I am not sure whether it would not be politic in the genuine dramatist were he to lower his genius in part, and for awhile, to the "empty noddles, the debased taste of the public,"* with the view of becoming popular, and of afterwards turning his reputation to account by reclaiming his auditors or readers, and elevating them to his own level.

"The Author," affirms the reader of Covent Garden Theatre, towards the close of his, not unfavourable, "remarks," upon my Tragedy of "*Gertrude and Beatrice*," "the Author has certainly dramatic genius, a quality so rare that it should be assiduously cultivated." But to what end I would ask? "*There is really not the slightest chance of an opening*" for an original sterling play by an untried hand; not because the public would not flock to welcome such a novelty, but, be it distinctly understood, because it is prejudged ere it be offered; because it will not be approved of. *Id Fatis videbatur!*

It will, perhaps, be pretended, whatever high rank the unacted Drama of the present day may take in a

* The Monthly Magazine.

poetic point of view, that the writers are deficient in one great requisite of their art, namely, a power of constructing a plot which shall be interesting when transferred from the closet to the stage. Against such a *petitio questionis* I must be allowed to protest. No individual, be his critical acumen ever so exquisite and expert from practice, is warranted in giving currency to this sort of dictum in respect to theatrical capabilities which have never been put to the proof. Dramatists cannot recognize any prophetic authority in the reader of their works to pass judgment upon their *quantum meruit* "in this regard;" and they have surely a right to be accounted innocent of failure, unless from the appointed tribunal a verdict of guilty be recorded. Besides such an allegation on the part of managers were to take advantage of their own wrong, which ought to be as inadmissible in morals as in law. Great genius is undoubtedly infallible, but then she can only work by art and not by witchcraft, and art depends on practice and experience. "To have no means of practice in an art," (remarks Mr. Horne in his elevating "Essay on Tragic Influence"), "which, perhaps, of all others, requires the most, is rather liable to place the mastery of skill at a very ethereal distance."

Not to rest my apology for modern dramatists upon the example and authority of Shakspeare, or of any other of those gigantic minds who illustrated on the stage the Elizabethan era, and who, *in the sense intended*, certainly showed themselves but indifferent artists, I beg leave, with all due respect, to join issue with the oppugners of the skill of my fellow dramatists. I maintain, that out of many contemporary specimens of the Tragic Muse (finer, by-the-by, although *hitherto* unacted, than any performances of which our language

for more than 150 years previously can boast), there are some, which, even viewed as works of art, are nearly unimpeachable. And in those instances where this cannot be exactly predicated, it is, I submit, highly probable that similar inartistic defects would, in the subsequent productions of men of ability, be obviated, provided that their earlier attempts had access to the stage; but while "*there is really not the slightest chance of an opening*" at the Patent Theatres, and all the others are only licensed "to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to" Newgate, to show the heroes of the Old Bailey "their own feature," the quadrupeds of the menagerie "their own image,"* by "what mighty magic" is it expected that composers in the high drama can acquire a knowledge of their art? The witnessing the representation of a single play of his own production (whether successful or not) must prove more instructive to the true dramatist, as to his future management of the more complex incident and dialogue, and enable him better to cope with certain other minor difficulties, than would the cultivation of his natural powers upon the composition of a dozen five-act pieces, under the system

* This "pitiful ambition to split the ears of the groundlings" has at length taken possession of the houses, which by patent should play the intellectual drama. It is with something like envy, in these days of *Concerts à la Musard*, of *Vivaria*, and of *Bestarii*, that we read how, in a more enlightened era, a complaint was made to the Crown, by certain bear-dancing exhibitors, of one Will Shakspeare, whose too attractive presentments, they averred, quite knocked up their bestial spectacles.

Mais les ondes de la prospérité ont toujours ici bas des retours.

Alas for the reacting surge! That identical innovating drama is, towards the middle of the 19th century, shelved in its turn at Drury, and is discountenanced or prohibited elsewhere. Fate has reversed her disk; the wild beasts are again in the ascendant!

of rejection which has prevailed by Patent for the last 180 years, . . . a system which has *proved* itself adapted to no other end than to destroy the high intellectual drama of the country, by stifling in its embryon all dramatic genius soever.

I am prepared to admit the necessity of a writer attaining a certain superiority in scenic design and arrangement, ere he can hope to marshal his intellectual forces with adequate effect ; but a rather important consideration here suggests itself, which I am inclined to think has not hitherto had its due influence with critics. The internal connectedness of a drama, fixing the mind of an audience upon one train of thought, should not be confounded with the masonry of its outward constructure. An inferior order of talent may discover artistic cleverness in the putting together, or building up, a mediocre composition, whether Tragedy, Comedy, Opera, or Farce, who, to say nothing of the workmanship, would find himself wholly baffled by the logical coherence essential in his whirlwind of passion, were he to attempt to raise an edifice of higher pretensions. In fact, it is just in proportion to the value and purity of the ore to be wrought that the difficulty of the minter is enhanced.

We ought not to have far to seek for a dramatic composition clear from all flaw, artistically considered. A brilliant may readily be obtained, even of the finest water, where it is of no great magnitude ; but the larger stones are seldom met with pure and perfect. *Non nisi regibus et iis admodum paucis cognitus.* They are liable, as their "*spread*" becomes more extensive, to crack and split asunder. Every additional carat in their (intellectual) dimensions makes it more rare and surprising not to find them a little "*off colour* ;" so that it is only with

a less marvel than we contemplate a miracle, that we take up *the* diamond of Brazil, or a speckless gem of Shakspeare.

But to drop metaphor. Sheridan must have had an easy labour, when he bethought him of placing the sword of Pizarro into the hands of Rolla in the nick of time for his hero to rescue the child of Alonzo, and so defeat the tyrant's malignity; but it is entirely another kind of architectural buttress which the synthetic reader of "Hamlet" recognizes in the language of the King to Laertes, in the 4th Act. Take a specimen of the almost unconscious mode in which the *mens divinator* of Shakspeare casts its forethought over the spirit and plan of his creations.

" He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 't would be a sight indeed,
If one could match you. This report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er to play with you.
Now out of this.—"

That dramatic instinct must indeed be of a sorry description, which having for its object a Cato, or a Norval, a Jane Shore, or The Fair Penitent, or any such-like pliant drawling characters, should find itself at a loss. But Rowe, or Addison, or Home, could no more preconcert the 3rd Act of Lear than they could dream of its execution, or than an operative mason could conceive or compass the cupola of St. Paul's.

It is when the Poet essays to write out his heart in bodying forth a dethroned, forlorn old man, like Lear, in such a situation as that where Edgar cries, "Frateretto

calls me : and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness," and the Fool demands "Prithee, Nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?" And Lear in reply exclaims, with intense sublimity, "A King, a King!"

It is in such harrowing scenes as that where the Duchess of Malfy says

"Farewell, Cariola!
I prithee look thou give my little boy
Some syrup for his cold ; and let the girl
Say her prayers ere she sleep.
Now what you please ;
What Death ?"

Or when Cosmo de' Medici in his sable robe approaches Passato, saying

"I walk with fortitude as with a friend,
But feel that one of us is false. Who's here ?
Sir, do not rise ; I know you very well,
You are a sculptor. I will sit by you !
Passato.—Not grief alone hath made your Highness gracious.
Cosmo.—I thank you. I am grateful for that truth ;
And I feel—Sir, I feel—much—very much.
You know my recent losses : though you are not
A Father or a Husband, as I think,
Yet you can enter into what I feel
In some degree.

Passato. Entirely, my Liege.

Cosmo. That is impossible !—Pardon me, Sir."

It is, I would remark, in the adaption of such sublime pathos, perhaps indispensable to the completion of the original design of the Poet, that his artistic skill, or rather instinct, is taxed to the uttermost, and where it almost necessarily comes halting at a distance. And, as I before had occasion to point out, it is just in proportion to the dramatist's high wrought grandeur of imagi-

nation, where the *passio vera* of humanity as it dashes aside the curtained future loses itself in thought, that he finds the requisition on his theatrical adroitness, as respects the reconciling a variety of minute materials, the adaptation of bold situation to character, the nice dovetailing of the incident, the avoidance of all circular and purposeless action, with the view of forming one homogeneous whole, to be the more tentative and probing. And it takes a still severer shape from the obligation likewise imposed upon him of being scenically effective.

It is, indeed, this scenic effectiveness, where the hand of art, usually aided by the meretricious appliance of splendid decoration, makes itself everywhere objective, (the grace and freedom of nature being thereby sadly overlaid,) that is demanded as the principal attraction of an acting play; while, according to the height of his inspiration, is the difficulty the genuine Poet must experience in modelling thereunto the inmost characteristics of his men and women, bringing out his story with a due regard to this necessity of the modern stage, and accommodating his design, by subtle strokes of inventive imagination, to the Procrustean standard of picturesque effect.

Although, therefore, it be admitted that certain unacted plays have, in some measure failed, as respects the *simplex duntaxat et unum*, still it is highly probable, were the Authors less incommoded with the essentials of dramatic power, or if the freedom of the stage had facilitated a short apprenticeship to their craft, that they would not, within a stone's throw of their goal, have wandered and lost sight of it.

It can, however, never be too often repeated, that it is no hard matter to reconcile the common-place ideas

of the ordinary play-composer with the representation of the stage.

“Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellæ.”

But, on the other hand, when the true passionate thinker (whether in prose or verse does not affect the argument) proposes to subject his inspired ideal to the boarded space which is illuminated with its row of lamps, “there is not,” as was well observed by a master Critic in the *Westminster Review*, “in all literature a task more difficult, and the accomplishment of which we ought more rarely to expect to see.”

Let me not be misunderstood. It is indispensable for the great Dramatist, if he would have his pieces interest upon the scene, to *possess*, in some degree, that artistic skill and distributive talent with which the mere playwright is *possessed*. The latter is wholly dependent upon his plot; so that the affections of the mind, instead of being brought into the *melée*, as “Greek joins Greek,” are lost sight of in the stirring events to which they are attached. He cannot avoid at every turn trusting to the scaffolding of his story for his striking effects; whereas, with the former, the plot will be subservient and subordinate to his mission of anatomizing the human heart, clearly developing his incidents, regulating his imagination, unfolding his main design, and by unity *ab intra* of feeling, sentiment, and of character, diffusing over his creation its appropriate atmosphere.

Still great allowance ought to be made, under existing obstacles of every kind, for the Dramatist, who may be considered as manifesting some insufficiency in respect to the mechanism of his art, since *absolute perfection herein hath never been hitherto attained*; and if he be truly inspired, the Poet will undoubtedly

achieve his purpose, albeit the Critic might be warranted in despising the looseness of his construction. The divinity "which stirs within him" shapes his ends, rough-hew them how he will. Besides, as Schlegel, who was the last man to tolerate any liberties with the leading idea which should hover over a work, nevertheless admits, "where the imagination has any share in a composition, it is far from being so necessary that all should be accurately connected by cause and effect, as when the whole is merely held together by the understanding."

The dramatic Author often appeals *exclusively*, and trusts for his defence to stage vivification; when the individualized abstractions which appeared mad or ludicrous in the perusal, and which presented a stumbling-block to the prosaic incredulity of the hypercritic, (because he had no standard in his own mind wherewith to estimate them,) will approve themselves true to nature. In like manner as they affected the Poet when they flashed upon his spiritual vision, will they move to tears or laughter on being made palpable to the material senses of large masses of his fellow men. Carried away by the legitimate impression of the performance, the spectators will be indifferent to attractions of an accessory nature, and will not visit very hardly a certain *gaucherie* or *maladroitness* in the action which takes their hearts by storm. They will feel too deeply interested in essentials to care for the *Coups de Théâtre* involved in situation; and as for the embellishments of scenery and decoration, "in the mean time that some necessary question of the play be then to be considered," they are mere works of supererogation; and, indeed, are worse than superfluous, if they be so injudiciously

obtruded as to jar with the illusion, and disturb the attention from the main requisites of the piece.

However, therefore, Managers uniformly delude themselves, the dramatic Poet, unless he indeed have lost sight of that "*narrowing intensity*" which the diction and the plot alike demand, or otherwise have utterly failed in grappling with certain exigencies of the stage, can always prognosticate more surely than any indifferent party the degree of success which will attend his play, if the finer traits be but adequately interpreted in representation; because he alone is conscious out of what depths, and how intensely, he was agitated during the throes of his passionate invention. As respects the common run of stage plays, the converse of the proposition may probably be true. There the article falls rightly within the competence and the province of mere experience. It is of the earth earthy, and can be weighed and sifted and brought to rule and measurement. But I am convinced there is no sure scale to test the *histrionic* value of the "fine frenzy" of the bard, save the personation, and the co-operative genius of a Macready or a Garrick. Between "the glancing combinations presented to the eye of fancy under the influence of passion," and the prospective demands of "cool-headed criticism," there is nothing in common: they are quantities incommensurable.

The dramatic Poet forecasts his effects, he predetermines the quality and extent of excitement, as soon as the forms of things unknown become embodied to his mental vision; but no individual besides can truly apprehend the brilliancy or faintness of his creative rays, until they shall strike from the refractive medium which alone they contemplated . . . until an audience either

recognizes or repudiates the truthfulness of his luminous power, and with sympathetic emotion acknowledges the interest of that concatenation of events, which in the stillness of his soul he hath devised.

But there can be no hope for the regeneration of the Stage, till we return back to the *laissez faire* . . . to the order of things which Elizabeth and her statesmen were too sagacious to interfere with. In those "time-bettering days" we find, that "in a population not a twentieth of the present there were not less than ten Theatres open at once, at all of which the high Drama could be, and was, performed." Is not this one fact sufficiently significant? As rare varieties are discovered by the horticulturist amongst whole beds of common flowers, raised with that hope and object, so may it not be attributed to the competition of no fewer than fourteen distinct companies of players in the metropolis, that England, at the close of the sixteenth century, obtained that illustrious congregation of Poets who gave birth to the only true Drama? . . . "A drama," says The Athenæum, "compared with whose productions, all others, antique as well as modern, are puny abortions."

Had the Stage, during that glorious period of little more than half a century, been shackled with an exclusive Patent, we should not have had to boast, at this day, of "a class of Poets that will outlast the world." How remarkable is the contrast subsequently! With the exception of a few modern Tragedies which cannot get represented, "the hundred and eighty years since the adoption of the odious monopoly has not produced a single play that will live out the present century." If this be not a conclusive argument for the freedom of the stage, I know not what would be received as such. To

quote "The Past and Present State of Dramatic Art and Literature,"* which should be read with attention by every one interested in the rise, decline, and prospects of the Shaksperian Drama, and what educated Englishman is not? "England has the honour of possessing a series of classics as original as they are excellent. But had there not been a ready mart for their works . . . had they not had the stimulus of competition, and the chance of success before them . . . no writers could have devoted themselves as they did to their works. Had there only been a possibility of two successful plays being produced in a season; had they been compelled to contend with the vagaries of monopolists; the rivalry of beasts; the interests of popular actors; had incompetent rank overborne them; had they had to wait seasons for the acceptance, or even perusal, of their Dramas; and to compose not only to the peculiarities of actors, but to the debased taste of an audience vitiated by scenery and show; they would not, they could not, have left us what they have."

"The true Drama is indestructible," to use the words of the masterly introduction to the last Edition of Schlegel's Lectures, "because it is based upon indestructible principles of human nature." It was first expounded through that Elizabethan inspiration of which Shakspeare was the Prophet, and Marlowe, Webster, Chapman, Decker, Jonson, Ford, Tourneur, Fletcher, Beaumont, Massinger, Marston, and a host of others, with a mission from Parnassus equally, or scarcely less, divine, were high Priests.

This Drama laid bare with subtle anatomy the depths of our human nature in its strengths and in its weak-

* Published by C. Mitchell, London.

nesses; but there is no denying it should be blended, at this time of day, with certain tactics of art, which have their foundation in the *communis sensus* of mankind. These tactics are meant to regulate the general design, scope, and application of passion; they should be manifested in the choosing a narrative propitious to the fidelity and *betrayal* of disposition, operated upon by some idiosyncrasy or master-spell; in lucidness of plot, arrangement and dependence of incidents, and the constant procession of the fable, drawing the action with scenic dexterity to the catastrophe; in discrimination, individuality, and identity of characterization, *usque ad imum*; in the husbanding of resources, in the economy of materials; in the projection of the leading idea, and the due proportioning of the interest; in the *ordonnance* of the figures, in the harmony of the colouring, and, in short, in the Author's mastery, not only *in* his subject . . . "in the heart of the mystery," and its organical development, but *over* the animating spirit, over all the means of execution, over the *νομος* itself which every where pervades it.

" Over that Art,
Which you say adds to nature, is an Art
That nature makes."

If the nation would revert to her lofty impassioned drama, without the *scoria* that deform the "rich stronde" of our old Literature, as if to indicate the vigorous engendering of the metals laying about in inexhaustible profusion, but, on the other hand, not unmindful of those nice minutiae . . . of that finish and keeping . . . which the proprieties of conventional life, the fastidiousness of modern taste, and, indeed, the vast progress of society in civilization and in science . . . science, the pioneer of imaginative genius through unexplored media

.. which these all require, .. there is nothing needed but for her to insist upon the repeal of certain Acts of Parliament, long since relaxed, and to every useful purpose fallen into desuetude. Thenceforward “the doors of all theatres would (*as every sane mind must naturally think they ought*) be legally thrown open to the reception of the best dramas they can obtain.” The two over-sized establishments where legitimate pieces can be regularly performed, *but are not*, might be devoted, as their large dimensions obviously recommend, to splendid Pantomime or striking Spectacle, whilst the superior and more enlightened species of entertainment ought to be presented from the boards of all other theatres whose stage is not so disproportionably wide and lofty as to confound in a vague maze the sight and hearing of three fourths of the auditors or spectators. When this reform shall be accomplished, and the abolition of the Patent Theatres shall be followed up by the founding of an Academy where Stage Professors might study the elements of their glorious art, the emancipation of theatrical writers will be secured, together with the intellectuality of our present audiences, whom the Patent Theatres have for many years taught, countenanced, and encouraged in the worst possible taste.

I have endeavoured, but certainly with poor success compared with what I should have wished, to give life and soul to the warlike Prelate (Georgius Præsul, as he was appropriately styled by his contemporaries), who will be found a conspicuous agent, both in the following Poem and in my unpublished Tragedy of “*The Patriot*.” I am indebted for the *vraisemblance* of my portrait to the biography of M. Bechet, Canon of Usez.*

* Histoire du Ministre du G. Martinusius : à Paris, 1715.

Cardinal Martinuzzi, towards the close of his eventful life, occupied a position in the eye of Europe, which was most interesting, and which strikes us when we look back upon it with an air of magnificence. His surpassing mental endowments seemed to have combined, by a rare conjunction, the most profound acquirement, with an unwearied, patient, and eagle-eyed energy of thought. His heart was the seat of all the finer charities of our nature. His genius, at once enthusiastic and full of judgment, might almost be deemed an emanation of the Superior Intellect. The assassination of this great Patriot will be accounted the opprobrium of diplomacy as long as the world shall last.

The English reader's knowledge of the history of the period will be probably derived from the pages of Robertson, Coxe, and Knolles. He may, therefore, be apt to conclude that I am unwarranted in substituting to a Daughter of Martinuzzi so conspicuous and exalted a station as that in which I have introduced Czerina. I have, however, good authority for my apparent disregard of the frontier line which separates historical truths from the traditions of the legendary or the fictions of the romancer.

See Michael Brutus *Epistola ad Berzeuiacum*, p. 236, and Franciscus Forgachius, who (l. i. pp. 35, 36, "*inter occultas Martinusii destinationes*,") has recorded the "*Arcana Consilia*" which make the foundation of "*The Hungarian Daughter*," and also of the Tragedy of "*The Patriot*."



CHARACTERS.



QUEEN CZERINA, *Supposed Daughter of QUEEN ISABELLA and
the late King John of Zapola.*

QUEEN DOWAGER ISABELLA, *Widow of King John, in love with
CASTALDO.*

Ladies, &c. &c.

CARDINAL MARTINUZZI, *Regent of Hungary and Transylvania.*

SIGISMUND, *his Ward.*

CASTALDO, *Marquis of Piadena, Ambassador of Ferdinand, the
Arch-Duke of Austria and King of Bohemia, in
love with CZERINA.*

COUNT TURASC.

SIR RUPERT, }
BONNEVAL, } *Fellow Travellers from Warsaw.*

AUSTRIAN GENERAL.

SECRETARY.

Nobles, Officers, Messengers, &c. &c.

SCENE ;—*Hermanstadt.*

TIME ;—*Middle of the Sixteenth Century.*

THE
HUNGARIAN DAUGHTER,

&c. &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

LIBRARY IN THE PALACE OF CARDINAL
MARTINUZZI.—*Dawn of Day*: MARTINUZZI
seated writing.

MARTINUZZI.

THE morning breaks ; the blue and vigorous air
Doth shake his wings ; the blithe immortal day,
Bounding to light the darkness of the earth,
On yonder ocean-shore is young again.
The orbs of heaven are closed in sleep ; I, too,
Have worn the toilsome night out with my
 lamps ;
And fain would hide me like the sickly stars
Who trick the lazy minutes until dark,
Beneath some wizard arch. But ah ! I may not,

B

The while I brooding sit with open eyes,
Companioned by majestic silence, and
The owl, my sister, wrap me up from time
In the dun air of some delicious cavern,
Where the arch-spider mocks me to the life,
And like myself grows great with evil travail.

Enter SECRETARY.

SECRETARY.

The light doth dawn, my Lord.

MARTINUZZI.

Put out the lamps.
Art sure 't was Rupert sought an audience with us?
I would thou hadst not denied him.

SECRETARY.

Good your Highness,
You bade me advertise him 't was your pleasure
To be alone.

MARTINUZZI.

I was disturbed : I should not
Have said that else. In Hermanstadt ! . . Well,
leave me.

SECRETARY.

And for the protocol ?

MARTINUZZI.

Right, Sir. 'T is the order
That the red glaive, according to old use,
Be borne aloft through Transylvania ;
And let each Herald at arms shout forth this war-
cry ;
"MY VOICE IS THE VOICE OF GOD ! THE RALLY-
ING POINT
COLOSWAR ! VASSALS, SPEED TO SAVE THE NA-
TION !"
Here, look to 't. And if Rupert . . no, 't was
nothing
Of consequence . . . but should he seek again
An audience with me . . . he must be admitted.

SECRETARY.

Your Eminence, I 'll not fail.

[*Exit* SECRETARY.]

MARTINUZZI.

Another morrow
Is pealing in the East : the sensible air
Hath caught the warning : red-lipp'd morn casts
back
Night's heavy curtains, while the golden sun,
Like a true prodigal, begins betimes

To waste his substance, and with thoughtless speed
Shakes day about, like perfume, from his hair.

I am a frown upon the scene! and yet

I cannot fly my soul, nor my soul me.

Hush! (*He pauses to listen.*) No.

I shall go forth into the crowd

Erect, as if no burning livid spot

Deformed me under the corroding beams

Of my ennobling purple, which doth still

Cleave to my loins like Nessus' poisoned shirt.

I'm worn with toil! (*Presses his hand to his
forehead*)

I never thought to do what I have done

Of good or evil since I was a boy.

Oh golden age!

'T was then, beguiled by Hope,

All sounds and sights of life's diurnal round

Enkindled omens to my thoughtful heart.

The solid globe grew animate and vocal,

On lake, in sacred grove, where never came

White moonbeam visiting by me unfelt

Through any careless bough; all tender flowers

Wept, while the young Air spoke sweet syllables;

Wood nymphs, their loose robes falling, bathed
their feet

'Mid crystal blossoms in the coral'd stream;

And beautiful the twilight from the East
Sank on the fisher's cove, by the rippling tide
Washed softly to his threshold ; Night sublime
Walked the pale rocks when the bewildered light
That rode upon the misty mountain air was
 mildest.

(Lost in reminiscence ; after a perturbed silence)

Bright shapes ! ye came no more since young
 Ambition

Gilded my low-roofed home, which Fortune truly
Hath made a habitation fit for Kings . .

Most meet for me who merit such a curse !

Banquet of Peace unbought, Streams not sus-
 pected,

Because transparent as the heart of truth,

Yellow-hair'd Morning, and the weeping Rose,

Ye Vespers sweet, and Matins, that from lips

Of holy men die faintly in the distance,

And oh ! ye Torrent-floods, Ice-brooks, and thou,

Dear annual Redbreast ! and the virgin Flower,

No purer than myself, whose delicate birth

The lispng wind of spring-time wots not of ;

How in my youth of wandering vacancy,

When the heart crowed in blissful foolishness,

And joyous time saw all things good and lovely . .

Whether the Winter chid his barking waves,
Or, with the silence curtained, Summer slept . .
How I did love ye !

(Rises with sudden anguish.)

Now !

Fame, pomp, and sceptred power, ye Furies old !
All freshness of the mind makes food for ye.
The air I breathe comes like the steam of tombs ;
The quilts I lie on are too sumptuous
For sleep ; the viands delicate overmuch,
And in digestion turn to aconite ;
The jewel'd chalice foams above the brim
With gall of asps ; all language is a lie ;
The wisdom I endure is terrible ;
The thought I bear is like the eternal agonies,
Methinks, I am inured for.
If this be glory ? Tush ! the heavenly bodies
Forego all rest but to be venerated,
Moving upon the centre of the orb
They benefit. I am myself the error !

(Sinks upon his knees.)

*Fiat voluntas tua ! Quia tu
Es clemens Jesu fortitudo mea,
Et clamor meus ad te veniat.*

Enter CASTALDO.

CASTALDO.

I break upon his solitude of prayer.
I would retire, but dread to move.

MARTINUZZI (*reverting his head*).

'T is Rupert!

No: Lord Castaldo. Ha! the state I rule
Leans on my word and sword.

(*Starting up.*) Oh fairly welcome!

I would not call this hand mine enemy
For the best jewel in King Ferdinand's crown.
To you, and to your royal master, peace!
What's to be done before we part?

CASTALDO.

Your Highness,

I am enforced to speak what Heaven knows
I have no joy in.

MARTINUZZI.

Welcome as before.

(*Aside.*) I guess his mission.

(*Aloud.*) Thou command'st my heart
Entirely, and will doubtless keep my honour
Bright as thine own.

CASTALDO (*aside*).

His courtesy strikes me dumb.
I'll not deliver it.

MARTINUZZI.

My Lord Castaldo,
I know your disposition is too gentle
For that your King would put on 't. How I love
To note youth's guilelessness sweep o'er your brow.
I honour, Sir, your shame. You have not called it
To sully your clear spirit, and make free
With your pure bosom like your dearest thoughts.

CASTALDO (*aside*).

I cannot tell him of this unjust act ;
That Austrian pennons float on gray Coloswar.

MARTINUZZI.

Let us admit the gentle gladsome breeze,
Partaker of our counsels. (*Opens the casement.*)

CASTALDO.

Dear my Lord,
You 're ill. Methinks a flush of gnawing fire
Dwells in your cheek and lips.

MARTINUZZI.

But not for long :
The calm and freshening air doth bear a balm

Unto my brow, harassed with toil, and lacking
The healing dews of slumber; yea, doth quicken
And stir the flagging spirit, which, in sooth,
Repose this by-gone night hath not renewed.
I will recover instantly . . . So . . . So . .
'T is over now. And how is Austria?
In health, I hope . . I trust?

CASTALDO.

The Arch-Duke still holds
That precious strength whereof you are too lavish,
Who suffer thus the light of Hungary
To dwindle. Now your Highness is to blame,
To task the nimble hours of night, and tire them
With service. Why not give the time to banquets,
Whilst the flushed throng weave the expressive
 dance,
And pealing voices charm the air, until
You think the spheres have downward stooped,
 to take
With tuneful motion God's attentive ear?

MARTINUZZI.

And swell the song like bards of old in vain?
Invest deep joy with a superfluous harmony?
The soul . . . my soul is more content to be
Thus weary, void of rest, than so delighted.

CASTALDO.

Then, dear my Lord, if I may make so bold,
Seek bliss connubial, which St. Stephen's code
Grants holy men in Hungary.*

MARTINUZZI (*after symptoms of anguish, aside*).

Great God!

Thou dost condense whole years in a moment's
pang.

(*Suddenly to Castaldo.*) How came this conversa-
tion? By what right

Wouldst thou extort the treasures of my soul?
My Lord, unfold your message.

CASTALDO.

Royal Ferdinand

Sends greeting to your Eminence, Lord Regent
Of Transylvania, and instates you here
With regal powers and title, which must vest
On your demise in the Lord Paramount.

MARTINUZZI (*calmly*).

Who claims to be Lord Paramount?

* See Decreta St. Step. ad Emerie Ducem, lib. II. and Decretum Colomanni Reg. Nep. Belæ in Oper. Tripartit.

CASTALDO.

My King

Prefers his right from his Wife.

MARTINUZZI (*with dignity*).

Report our answer.

Not the imperial sway the Arch-Duke aims at,
With the wealth his Brother filched from Mon-
tezume,

Would tempt such infamy. The Crown descends
To King John's Daughter. I am her Guardian,
And Regent here; and more, my Lord Ambassador,
I claim to be her General, and what that
Imports, methinks yet knolls in th' ear of the world.

CASTALDO (*with embarrassment*).

Then I have a further errand to announce
Unto your Eminence.

MARTINUZZI (*hastily interrupting*).

So, so, not now :

Another time for that. (*With great suavity.*)

Your private wish ?

I think you did not teach me how to serve you.

CASTALDO.

I am bound unto your Nobleness. I'm com-
missioned,

But dare not speak ; Another . . fitter time.
I humbly take my leave.

MARTINUZZI.

My Lord Castaldo,
I do inquire what boon you'd have me grant ?

CASTALDO.

The Queen of Hungary bade me . .

MARTINUZZI.

Well : go on :
Her Majesty ? . . Nay blanch not ! (*Aside.*) In
his looks
I read a world of changes.

CASTALDO (*aside*).

Ah ! he frowns.
A word would stop my breath for ever . .
I'm choking.

MARTINUZZI.

Now, by my faith ! you break your wishes
strangely.

CASTALDO.

Not for myself, though Heaven be on the issue,

Play I the suppliant. But I am commanded
To advise your Eminence of our attachment
By Queen Czerina.

MARTINUZZI.

Oh ! her nature 's bounteous
As are the stars, the winds, the flowers. Her
favours
Cherish inferior Spirits as the Sun
Showers quickening lustre : that 's a truth. But
which
Bright Star of all her galaxy doth sway
The fortunes of my Lord Ambassador ?

CASTALDO (*aside*).

I was resolved . . and now the feeble spirit
Of some degenerate coward must have frightened
My voice and courage.

MARTINUZZI.

Ah ! the Lady Bertha ?
Her hair is like the sunbeams, and thou hast
Played with the radiant tangles till thou art
blinded.

CASTALDO.

No ; not . . not thus. The peerless Queen
Czerina . .

MARTINUZZI (*aside*).

It cannot find belief in me. (*To Castaldo.*) Why
pause you ?

CASTALDO.

Her Highness is the object of my passion.

MARTINUZZI.

You said you loved the Lady Bertha.

CASTALDO.

Indeed, my Lord.

No,

MARTINUZZI.

Whom then ?

CASTALDO.

The Queen Czerina.

MARTINUZZI.

I'm thunderstruck !

CASTALDO.

If that your Eminence
Would deign . . .

MARTINUZZI.

Lord Marquis, thy presumptuous words
Relish with me like aconite. The Queen
Of Hungary! You might as easily think
To kiss the holy Moon, because forsooth
She wastes her glances on you.

CASTALDO.

My alliance
Unto my Sovereign.

MARTINUZZI.

'Sdeath! Alliance!
Were you akin to all Earth's potentates,
So much the worse: Tricks! Tricks! Devices!
Complots!
Ye dig like moles, but the Arch Cardinal
Hath countermined you both. Inform your King,
The august lady is betrothed already
To an Hungarian.

CASTALDO.

Without her knowledge,
Your Eminence, or consent ?

MARTINUZZI.

What's that to thee ?
I . . I, her guardian, have plighted her
Unto Sir Sigismund, my ward.

CASTALDO.

I hear
My passing bell ! Her heart

MARTINUZZI (*solemnly*).

Sir ! Princes owe
Unto their Country all their heart. They're not
Born for themselves, but their whole life . . nay,
death,
If needs be (understand me, pray), is a debt
To the Commonwealth they rule. Here break
we off.

CASTALDO.

Yes, I must go : I cannot argue this.

MARTINUZZI.

Stay, first, my Lord Ambassador . . . A word.

(*Solemnly.*) Farewell! but bear this with you;
Time nor Fate,
The Imperial arms, nor yet the sighs and tears
Of a green pageant puppet, can pluck out
My firm resolve to wed the Queen to Sigismund.
The world and all that's in it shall not alter,
Or shake the purpose of my soul one jot,
One tittle.

Enter ATTENDANT.

Well?

ATTENDANT.

The Gentleman, your Highness,
From Warsaw.

MARTINUZZI.

Tell him I . . . bid him attend me
In the saloon . . . no ; in my oratory.

[*Exit* ATTENDANT.

CASTALDO.

Like flowers that prank them in Heaven's glister-
ing dew,
I wear my love ; own it in every pore ;

A source of radiant life . . . sad, yet divine.

[*Exit* CASTALDO.]

MARTINUZZI.

Rupert ! the viper ! I must see him . . . make
Myself his slave who . . . I'll not think of it.
There is no scourge below like human hearts,
That at their own devices heave the gorge,
When error drinks the dregs of her own poison.

(*After a perturbed silence*),

Bright fruit ! Thou bliss proposed, but proved a
bane !

Which I erst plucked from the aspiring branch,
And in the leap hurt my ethereal soul ;
How fair thou wert unto the eye that saw,
But on the lip that tasted, bitter ashes.
It cannot last : be still !

Enter SECRETARY.

SECRETARY.

My noble Lord . . .

MARTINUZZI.

I come : I know. See that none trouble us
Till we have done our conference. . . Remember !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

AN APARTMENT IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

Enter QUEEN ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

This interview, methinks, will last for ever
With my Lord Cardinal. The boil of state !
He doth refuse my suit ; so I work out
My dearer purpose from Castaldo's anger.
For what were state and substance unto me,
Who bear within my breast an infinite flame
That draws the world into itself, and leaves
All aims beside as lifeless as the sea
O'er which winds wither in the stagnant air ?
I love ! and in that light the very hatred
Of years seems lost . . . But it can never be !
'T is but my soul eclipses in the passion
Which doth consume me. Ha ! he comes, the mild,
Pity-fraught object of my fondness . . . No,
That step, now slow, now hurried, is not his.

Enter CASTALDO.CASTALDO (*abstractedly*)

What a fierce conflict 's in my heart ! its idol

To shine the household Goddess of another !
A cruel fate hath dug my untimely grave.
Else, banished, severed, from the joy I dreamt of,
Mine after life will be a lingering scene
Beneath the ominous stars, and o'er my path
Dark clouds and gloom settle for evermore.

ISABELLA.

Castaldo ! Dear, my friend ! My best, kind Lord ?

CASTALDO (*aside*).

Czerina's Mother ! (*Aloud.*) Madam, I much
grieve,
The Regent hath possessed his favourite with
The hereditaments you asked for.

ISABELLA.

I am amazed !
Ay, more than hurt at my own failure ; though
Thou plead'st for one who, when she came from
Poland,
First raised that Gownsmen into a world's wonder,
And thou art repulsed ! Whom say you hath the
land ?

CASTALDO.

Sir Sigismund.

ISABELLA.

His unknown Ward, or Nephew,
Newly arrived, that hath no pedigree
To show, nor ensigns that he had a father.

CASTALDO.

Stranger in Hermanstadt ?

ISABELLA.

Indignity !

How subtler than the fox the nature is
Of this imperious Prelate ! Dear my Lord,
The purpose of his heart is like deep water,
Hard to be sounded, not to be drawn out.
Me, Isabella, Relict of King John,
The ingrate has despoiled of state and power,
And in the Kingdom of my Daughter turns me
To a Cipher.

CASTALDO.

But the Regency . .

ISABELLA.

High Heaven !

The thought on't racks me. I was left joint
Regent ;

But he, as if my claims were writ in sand,
Soon trod my honours down, scattering the dust
Before the whirlwind of his tyranny.
How weak are words to speak him to the height,
This briar unto the house of Zapola,
This all-in-all usurper! But I tire you?

CASTALDO.

I'm ill at ease.

ISABELLA (*tenderly*).

What ails my gentle Lord?
The Cardinal hath cast one suit, wilt thou
Another?

CASTALDO.

Pardon me, your Grace.

ISABELLA.

Thou art
My Grace and more, for here thou sit'st enthroned.
What sorrow hath made thee so incapable
Of hearing that thou wilt not understand?
I talk in vain to you; you do not mark me.

CASTALDO.

There is a chill upon my heart, your Highness.

Methinks I now could lay me down for ever
Upon this marble . . or beneath it.

ISABELLA.

Grief,
And those pale ensigns sad thoughts bring along,
Do not sit well upon a youthful brow.
What hath betided ?

CASTALDO.

I am ordered hence.

ISABELLA.

From Hermanstadt ?

CASTALDO (*despondingly*).

From Hermanstadt . . from Heaven !

ISABELLA (*aside*).

Ha ! is it thus ? then weak delay no more
Hold in the impetuous yearning of my heart,
Which points me unto what will make me blest.

(*Aloud.*)

Wrench up thy senses to the highest, my Lord.

(*Shouts without.*)

CASTALDO.

What sounds are these ?

ISABELLA.

The troops are marching hence.

CASTALDO.

Methought I heard a dreadful clap of thunder
Break from the serried ranks.

ISABELLA.

What if you did ?
Though the Earth's centre creak, yet listen not ;
While I, in voice more low than the soft breeze
That creeps at midnight through the sleeping
boughs,
And wakes them into motion, do acknowledge
Myself abased, a very slave in thought,
The slave of love.

CASTALDO.

Thou glorious Lady ?

ISABELLA.

Say,
Wilt thou plead for me, and lend all your sighs
To blow my passion home ?

CASTALDO.

Your Highness' presence
Would woo more movingly than Angel's tongue.

ISABELLA.

I will stand by and blush while thou shalt whisper
My shame and love-sick penance. Teach him how
I, that through pride rejected Kings, have lost,
Since I beheld him, sweet sleep, rest, and peace
Of mind; yet am more pleased, though thus bereft,
With thinking of him than enjoying these.
Tell him all this, his triumph and my fall ;
Then loose a smile, and seal upon my hand
His truth, and I shall hope thou hast prevailed.

CASTALDO.

With my best eloquence, I 'll make known your
will ;
Whom shall I seek ?

ISABELLA (*hotly*).

Love rides upon a thought,
And stays not dully to inquire the way,
But right o'erleaps all fence unto the goal.
(*A pause.*) Are your lips glued ? A smile will
make no noise.

What ignorance ! So ! Well ! . . I'll to breakfast
straight.

My Lord, thou see'st this palm ? No fire is in it :
Its soft touch brings no fever : 't will not scorch thee.

CASTALDO.

A fair and dear one.

ISABELLA (*bitterly*).

Nay, worms' food : no more :
The fief of every crawling thing that mars
The daintiness it tires on. They'll fall to,
Nor rate its worth (being blind, you know !) so high.
(*After a pause.*)
Why, how clear-sighted art thou !

CASTALDO.

It requires
Small eyesight to discern the beauteous tint
In which the charm of that pure skin is painted.

ISABELLA.

Now bless thy copious wits ! Certes thy brain
Is star-bewildered like the skies, or else
Mine must be struck, and I have more need of
blessing. (*She weeps.*)

CASTALDO.

What should I think ?

ISABELLA.

Just as you list. If not,
That I am degraded, Sir. Go publish it ;
Tell thou didst see the tears of Isabella ;
And left her heartless. Peace ! There 's not a soul
Will trust thee.

CASTALDO.

I am confounded !

ISABELLA (*with hauteur*).

What I blush
To grant, forbear to hint at ; yet this comment
Take with thee, and pass by in silence. That
At which you guess is a shadow, and flies from me.
Our conference closed, I feel already cured.
Thy tunic 's of Asbestos ; it hath chilled me.
Thou 'st changed my mood : my beads of love are
told,
Wherefore I have filled their place with glowing
scorn.
No more : Proceed we to our several duties,
Nor dare to boast abroad my brief defeat,
But all this business reckon as a dream.

(*She turns away.*)

CASTALDO.

What fatal comet crossed my natal star
To darken all my life for ever after?
Most gracious Queen, adieu!

ISABELLA (*without reverting her head*).

My Lord, your servant.

[*Exit* CASTALDO.]

My nature is not changed, though there's a calm
Inexplicable stillness in my bosom,
As if another soul had passed into
This frame. Pierced heart! where are thy pangs . . .
the rage

Proper to thy stung pride and cause of passion?
Thou bear'st a devil within: He's of my council;
Albeit I dare scarce trust him with a thought,
Stronger than death, and cruel as the grave.
My faculties, cold and hard as flints, are apt,
Soon from my languid soul to strike such fury
As the disdain of that proud boy shall guerdon
With wreak and vengeance . . . Oh! the end's
not yet. [Exit.

SCENE III.

AN ANTE-ROOM, OR LOBBY, IN THE PALACE
OF MARTINUZZI.

Enter BONNEVAL.

BONNEVAL.

An hour is past, and Rupert still in parley.
He dreams not that I carry secrets 'bout me,
Which must be borne with caution and in cloud.
The time runs on, and comes he not indeed,
Our tutelary Angel, eke our lodger?
Whom should I not bring safe back to my spouse,
I'm like to lose my ears and thrift together; . .
A fine jest that, i' faith. Ha! who are these?

Enter LORD TURASC, *meeting* NOBLEMEN, *and*
OFFICERS.

NOBLE.

My Lord Turasc, our Regent was not wont
To be the last at moments such as these.

TURASC.

He dallies with the time.

OFFICER.

Ere this the troops
Are half-way to Coloswar.

TURASC.

Ay, your steeds
Champ on the bit, and, striking up the ground,
Cast from their mouths the flaky foam, and neigh
To ye reproachfully for instant service,
As if on fire that victory, so close
At hand, is yet not ours. My gallant Lords,
Be ruled by me ; speed forth. His Eminence
Will doubtless reach you quickly.

[*Exeunt* NOBLES and OFFICERS.

(*Sees* BONNEVAL.)

Who art thou ?

BONNEVAL.

A fellow of no mention, please your Lordship.

TURASC.

Thou loiterest, friend, about the court ; whence
comest ?

BONNEVAL.

From Warsaw lately on a pilgrimage.

TURASC.

Your name, Sir ?

BONNEVAL.

Bonneval.

TURASC.

Your business ?

BONNEVAL.

'T is that I 'd like myself to know, my Lord,

TURASC.

You came not hither unaccompanied ?

BONNEVAL (*aside*).

This is not in my part. I would my wife
Stood in my shoes, for she could answer Ay,
Or Nay, or any thing unto the purpose.

TURASC.

Ha You havework on hand.

BONNEVAL.

That which no way
Engageth me, and yet I lie.

TURASC.

You palter.

BONNEVAL.

Sir, I but do as I am taught, and know
Not the affair that calls me to your City.
'Tis none of mine I take it, . . yet it is.

TURASC.

This is intolerable.

BONNEVAL.

It concerns not me
In my own singular capacity ;
But as I claim an interest in my wife,
As body corporate and half myself.

TURASC.

You follow her instructions in this matter ?

BONNEVAL.

This matter? every matter ; I 'm an ass else.
Dost think I have been yoked to her these ten
years,
And trust my own five wits ? I know my duties,
And aye stand ready, Sir, to tender 'em.

TURASC.

You make me wonder.

D

BONNEVAL.

You are inexperienced ;
And therefore doubt these mystical marriage
tactics.

But I, you see, have notions.

TURASC.

Then your wedlock
It was who sped you hither. On what errand ?

BONNEVAL.

Do you think she let me know : I 'm not officious
But 't is my duty, and I 'm bound in conscience
To effect my best to please her, and I will, Sir. .
(*Noise and voices within.*)

TURASC.

Loud words, and high !

(*Voice within.*)

Not gold I need.

TURASC.

'T is strange !

BONNEVAL.

That voice was Rupert's. Would I were away !

MARTINUZZI (*within*).

Idiot and slave !

TURASC.

The Regent hies this way.

BONNEVAL.

And with him Rupert comes.

TURASC (*apart*).

Sir Rupert? Page

To pale Princess Matilda long ago.

She died, and . . . Presto !

[*Exit* TURASC : BONNEVAL *retires*
up the Stage.

Enter RUPERT, *followed by* MARTINUZZI, *magnificently accoutred*; *Military ensigns adorning his Episcopal dress.*

MARTINUZZI.

Do not make me mad.

RUPERT.

Beware, my Lord ! I feel my great importance.
If you deny me sway, I'll help myself
Out of your fortunes . . . or your fame.

MARTINUZZI.

Dost dare,
Sir, for thy miserable life?

RUPERT.

Those papers!

MARTINUZZI.

Dost threaten, Caitiff?

BONNEVAL (*aside*).

They 'll be found upon me.

RUPERT.

I am not unfriended.

BONNEVAL (*aside*).

He refers to me.

RUPERT.

Ah! Let me pass, my Lord.

MARTINUZZI.

What ho! my guard there!
At your life's peril! (*Showing a poniard.*)

RUPERT (*drawing his sword*).

Cardinal ! give passage,
Or I'll denounce thee.

MARTINUZZI.

Silence !

RUPERT.

Traitor Prelate !

MARTINUZZI.

Hell ! and eternal shame !

RUPERT (*in a loud voice, crossing the Stage*).

I will be free.

Or Queen Czerina's hand, or thou shalt perish !

[*Rushes by MARTINUZZI and exit.*

MARTINUZZI (*following him*).

Ha ! Earthquakes quiver in my flesh ! Sir, stay !

RUPERT (*within*).

Do not destroy yourself.

MARTINUZZI (*within*).

I swear I will not

By this! Avaunt! I am all made up of fire;
Devil! you stumble: Ah! you're hurt: you are
silent!

BONNEVAL.

He has struck him dumb for ever. Hapless
Rupert!

Enter TURASC.

TURASC.

Merciful Heaven! (*Crosses the Stage and exit.*)

BONNEVAL.

My marrow's melting: all his steel is freckled
With the red-spotted leprosy. Behold!
My friend is borne away by Lord Turasc.
If I am seen within this butcher's shambles,
He'll hack my carcass just as he has Rupert's;
And in the caul and on the kidneys I
Shall tallow like an ox. He comes: I'll run for't.
[*Exit BONNEVAL.*

Re-enter MARTINUZZI.

MARTINUZZI.

Be still, my beating heart! and Nature, thou
Support life's springs! Hold hard, extend your
strength,

Ye slackening fibres ! Do not fail me now,
My soul, in this extremity ! Not when
The Patriot sword is drawn, let me retreat !
Perish my hopes . . my life : let my fame go,
If it needs must. I will be all my Country's.

Enter SIGISMUND.

SIGISMUND.

My Lord, you seem disturbed.

MARTINUZZI.

A thought : no more.
'T will pass. Dear Sigismund, the mind, being
human,
Will turn, despite itself, to painful hopes,
Birth-strangled, one by one, in memory.
Our inner being needs strict discipline,
Till, in the world beyond, our tempers act
Obedient to our will . . and God's . . . and God's !
(*Aside.*) I cannot trust myself, nor my voice either.
(*After a pause.*)
Thou art armed, my son ? You follow not these
wars.

SIGISMUND.

Ha ! Wherefore ? Nay ! . .

MARTINUZZI.

Dear Sigismund, be patient.

Seek warmer trenches than where bullets play,
And softer sieges. Say you climb as near
Czerina's solitude as you may come.

When she shall reach her hand, it lies in her
To mount you to the throne. Which of us started,
Or which did mock the other? 'Tis my study
To advance thee to these pregnant hopes of state.
You are great, and must grow greater still, and
greater.

Methinks thou art already King . . Thou lookest it!
Czerina . . ay, her Majesty . . will see it.

Or if she's blind, what matters it? My eyes
Must serve; and I do see it, feel it . . know it.

(He turns away in agitation; then, after a pause,)

What, moody still, dear Sigismund?

SIGISMUND.

Your Grace,

I hope, will pardon me if I remind you
Of your late promise?

MARTINUZZI.

Of my promise?

(Stopping short, as if he heard something.) Hush!

Was that a step?

SIGISMUND.

Your Eminence declared,
That how and whence I am derived I should
Be told in Hermanstadt. I yearn to know
The parent whose existence, three days since,
I gathered from your holy lips. (*He stops short.*)

But ah !

I talk to the air : you heed me not.

MARTINUZZI.

Dear youth,

Be satisfied. On my return I 'll see
Your marriage solemnized ; when, on my word,
I 'll make the revelation I engaged for.
(*Apart, agitated.*) Now then he comes. (*Listening
again, as if he heard something.*)

SIGISMUND (*looking with surprise*).

Although I know no cause,
My limbs do shake in sympathy.

MARTINUZZI (*with trepidation*).

Be still !

SIGISMUND.

What is 't, your Eminence ?

MARTINUZZI (*with solemn energy*).

'T is life or death.

Enter TURASC.

MARTINUZZI (*approaching TURASC, and looking wistfully at him*).

Well ?

TURASC.

But a shallow scratch ; he is not hurt
To mortal danger.

MARTINUZZI.

Oh ! the hand was on him . . .
That of the God of Chance . . . o'er-ruled the
event !

There's something I would say, Turasc ! your ear.
Keep Rupert in strict ward, nor let him bear
His wounds abroad : they are suspicious, and
Would stir the injured sense to jealous fears,
Pouring distressful beams and horrid danger
Into the broad eyes of the watchful day,
Which should be lulled with modest offerings,
And soothed into a sleep by twilight charms.
Wilt keep him bound ?

TURASC.

Ay, faster than the Titan,
Your Eminence, was tied to Caucasus.

MARTINUZZI.

He's bold of voice. Restrain him, else his tongue,
With edge more sharp than Actius' razor, may
Suborn the common credence to such tales
As arch the hearer's brow, and fix his eyes
In fearful ecstasy. I hate, I tell ye,
When slander takes the credulous ear. She hath
Enough to do in Hermanstadt without
His help. Be he confined!

TURASC.

He shall be watched.
(*Aside.*) I'll seize that Bonneval; his fedary
doubtless.

Enter OFFICER.

OFFICER.

Your Highness' arms.

MARTINUZZI.

My art and I are yet companions.
This falchion fits my grasp as when I struck

And clave the insolent German to the girdle.
 Have we forgot our prowess, that these dogs,
 Whom yelping we chastised with iron rods,
 Again set foot upon our golden soil?
 Is victory a harlot, that they deem
 She will play false where once she hath embraced?
 Since I have got the Goddess by the hand
 I'll not let go my hold but with my breath.
 The Transylvanian boar again is roused
 To scare these mongrel hounds back to their
 kennel.

And for their Master . . . by his treachery
 He leagues high Heaven with us. Officer,
 See that the Austrian envoy be imprisoned.

[*Exit* OFFICER.]

Turasc, I hope to thrive, but the event . .
 The stamp that mortals censure by . . of what
 I purpose is with Providence. However,
 My soul's an augury to itself, and finds
 Inspiring auspices, for we have a cause
 Has so much rightfulness in the eye of Heaven
 It does not need a prayer. Without a fear
 I leave our capital, but judge it meet
 Her Majesty's bounds meanwhile be circum-
 scribed.

TURASC.

I'll take her Highness to my special charge.

MARTINUZZI.

My ward, your friend, hath access : none besides.
Come Sigismund and see me mount. Nay droop
not ;

She shall be yours or nothing. Come : your arm.

[Exeunt.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

ROYAL PALACE. APARTMENT OF CZERINA.

(CZERINA seated alone.)

CZERINA.

When I am dead . . which will be soon I feel,
If I much longer on my throne remain,
I shall abhor the name of Martinuzzi,
Which while with all my heart I strive to do,
Something forbids, as though it were a sin.

Enter BONNEVAL precipitately, as if pursued.

BONNEVAL.

I am pursued . . I know too much . . and have
Brought up my neck to a fair end, I fear.
I feel a noose under my ears already.
Ha! whither have my terrors hurried me?
May I wear antlers! if there be a soul,
Except some airy shadows, and they 're silent,
Left in this mansion: not a guard on duty:
The doors fly open at a touch: all 's mute,

As though the plague had tainted every room,
Corner and secret angle of the place.
Whom have we here ? The Lady of the house ;
I 'll fly to her protection.

(CZERINA *rising and coming forward.*)

CZERINA.

Sir, what art thou,
That with so little reverence doth press
Upon our solitude ?

BONNEVAL.

I am a stranger,
Pursued by human bloodhounds, having done,
I swear by your sweet mercy, that 's the altar
I would take hold of, nothing criminal.

CZERINA.

Whence art thou ?

BONNEVAL.

Last from Warsaw, if it please you.

CZERINA.

My Uncle's Capital. Journeyed'st thou alone ?

BONNEVAL.

Why he who bore me company, rest his soul !
I cannot come at, or he 'd be my bail.

CZERINA.

Whom speak'st thou of ?

BONNEVAL.

Our Patron, rather Angel . .

(I may commend him, since he 's far away)
Mine and my spouse's . . she indeed adored him ;
The liberal Godsire of our little ones,
Rupert, and Betsy at her mother's breast.
He was so taken with our family,
That he had taken half the house we live in,
Put me to nothing, paid my weekly bills,
Rent, and church dues, and found my table for me,
The wines and cates and cheer wherewith to
board him.

He took all trouble off my hands and spirits ;
And he it was : . . but hark, they are on my track ;
By Martinuzzi's myrmidons I 'm beset.

CZERINA.

Why then I pity thee, and know thee guiltless.
Witness my wrongs, and his o'erbearing temper.

BONNEVAL.

How quick she jumps to her conclusion ! Just
For all the world like Madame B., God bless her !

CZERINA.

Pass through that door, and close it : trust to me.

[*Exit* BONNEVAL.

He is harmless I 'll be sworn : he looks it : more,
The Regent frightens him. Turasc ! his business
Speaks in his eye. The man has done no wrong
Of moment.

Enter TURASC and Guard.

TURASC.

May your Majesty vouchsafe
We seek a villain whom we tracked thus far.

CZERINA.

We have seen no person such as you describe,
My Lord, within these precincts.

TURASC.

Strange ! I have somewhat
In charge unto your Grace.

E

CZERINA.

From Martinuzzi ?

What is amiss ?

TURASC.

I crave your pardon ;

It is the Regent's pleasure you confine

Yourself unto your chamber in his absence.

CZERINA.

Imperative in sooth ! You put us to

Impatient thoughts ; howe'er you may depart,

And you are richly paid, without rebuke.

TURASC.

At your royal pleasure.

[*Exit TURASC and Guard.*

CZERINA.

Sure all this time I'm but a Queen in thought,

Restrained by careful kinsfolk for my good.

I style this house my palace ; 't is a prison.

Whilst every hind in Transylvania

Lives in Heaven's sunshine, or in 's humble shed

Is free as the unchecked air to go or stay,

No hireling in command to watch him where
With fugitive feet he trips the scorned earth,
To look abroad by his own eyes to love.
Good faith! I bear the precious blood of kings,
Would I were lowlier! . . . I shall be shortly,
And that reminds me . . . Ho! Come forth!

Re-enter BONNEVAL.

CZERINA.

I have,

It may be, saved thy life, and in return
Wilt aid me and a noble gentleman
In journeying hence to Poland? here is earnest
We can and will reward thy courtesy.

BONNEVAL.

What a beseeching air! just like my wife.
The sex! The trick on 't's born with 'em. They
 sway
By right of nature. He who doth rebel
Against their will and wit strives 'gainst the wind,
The fire and ocean. I'll not try it. Besides
What could fall out more luckily for me?
She knows the obliquities, and city turnings.
Ay marry, I'll go with ye.

CZERINA.

That 's his step.

I 'll thank you to ensconce yourself once more.
Anon, having cased myself in manly habit,
I 'll free you.

[*Exit* BONNEVAL.

Enter CASTALDO.

CASTALDO (*apart*).

How beautiful ! and must I in some desert,
Where o'er misshapen rocks and precipices
Twilight and chaos hold a double reign,
Pine far away from this my natural sunshine ?
Snatch my soul hence, when I could bask till eve,
And then again 't were easy to behold
No other day. I shall grow blind with gazing.

CZERINA (*lost in abstraction*).

Yes, we will fly.

CASTALDO.

Oh nothing half so blest
Did ever last where evil dwells so long.
Hast thou no heavenly feeling of thyself ?
I 'll not believe it.

CZERINA.

Martinuzzi !

CASTALDO.

Princess !

CZERINA.

I have things to tell you ; cruel things that have
Cost me some tears ; and thou shalt lend thy
counsel
Until I do forget my grief to listen.

CASTALDO.

Our griefs are mutual as our loves, which sprung
Up in our hearts at once.

CZERINA.

They are twins ; yet trust me
I am too proud, my Lord, to wail for pastime,
And sigh at noontide hours to chill young hopes
And pleasures. Do I love to mar the beauty
Of the rich world, and shadow forms the sun
Makes gay and golden ?

CASTALDO.

No, your Guardian
Acts thus. But what hast thou deserved of sorrow
That it usurps so much on your soft nature ?

CZERINA.

What have I done to him whose arrogant acts
Are pain and doubt to me ? Whose tyranny
I feel in every nerve, yet dare resent not :
Whose rod I kiss from some strange sentiment
Of reverential awe ; and when he stabs
With dreadful deeds ; . . treason . . imprisonment ;
And words more keen, which must be just I think,
Yet know not wherefore, when he plucks the
thought

I dare not speak from its dark sanctuary,
And casts it right before me, I am ready
To promise full submission.

CASTALDO (*wildly.*)

If thou wilt
Trample upon my heart, which at a word
I will lay bare before thee, do !

CZERINA.

I will not.

CASTALDO (*bitterly.*)

Fortune is skittish, since she hath no eyes
To see on whom she lavishes . . .

CZERINA (*with voice of surprise*).

My Lord !

CASTALDO.

Hadst thou been blind my heart had not been
broken.

CZERINA (*coldly*).

I know no more of this than that 't is evil.

CASTALDO (*with violence*).

From me thou hast yet to learn how absolutely
I was, and am thy slave, but . . .

CZERINA.

Prithee cease !

CASTALDO.

If when I could not mould my passion's form
Thou thought'st I loved my life, my good name
better . . .

CZERINA (*interrupting*).

How ? Your good name Castaldo ? Your dear
Fame ?

If so it were. But Oh! the fears you cherish
 So choke the spreading leaves that shelter them,
 Affection cannot branch or put forth blossoms.
 Despair's a sorry weed for a manly heart;
 Pray you friend, root it out. I will assist you
 With my best help. Now list!

Castaldo, we

Forego our state, nor longer live enslaved
 By our own sceptre. What's a Queen in bonds?
 A wingless insect on the world's highway,
 Trod on by every Fate.

CASTALDO.

Princess, what mean you?

CZERINA.

I am aware how he'd compel affection,
 No warranty for it save that I am Queen,
 As there were magic in the senseless word,
 Albeit my Crown's a bubble, which with a breath
 I blow into the winds. Behold! 't is gone!
 The manacles of form that bound my blood
 Are burst! I am free! No race, no land to tie me!
 Now wilt thou wed me, Love?

CASTALDO.

Oh, would it were so!

CZERINA.

It is so, Sir. Have I not spoken it?
I'll abdicate, which means I'll breathe fresh air
In any other kingdom but mine own.
Wilt aid me to my Uncle's home in Poland?

CASTALDO.

I'll be thy guard, and by thy peerless self
I swear . . .

CZERINA.

I fear, my Lord, when we go hence
You will forget my royal blood, and hopes.

CASTALDO.

Never. My heart's thy throne! and thou shalt
reign
For ever there, and every throb thy subject!
I'll watch thee where the skies rain lovelier light
Than through the lowering clouds of Erdely.
I am all wings; when shall we haste to build
An Eden nought but Heaven can rival?

CZERINA.

Now!

I have prepared all things for instant flight.

(CASTALDO *kneels, and taking the hand of*
CZERINA, *presses it to his lips.*)

CASTALDO.

Ecstatic sounds! my heart! It bursts, my Queen:
But 't is with joy! Let this touch seal the
pledge
Of loyalty and faith till death.

Enter QUEEN ISABELLA *from behind—(she*
starts back).

ISABELLA (*apart*).

Ha! Ha! These forms are air . . mere counterfeits
Of my imaginous heart, as are the whirling
Wainscot and trembling floor. I am not sure
Of aught . . but that I am wronged. Ye viprous
twain!

Swift whirlwinds snatch ye both to fire, as endless
And infinite as Hell! . . . May it embrace ye!
And burn . . burn limbs, and sinews, souls, until
It wither ye both up . . both . . . in its arms.

CZERINA.

But love me, and e'en what you will: I've steeds
Caparison'd always at the City Port,
They'll bear us both from bonds. A Polander
Who will become our Guide is now at hand.
After a short despatch expect me here.

CASTALDO (*with a deep sigh*).

I have a life too much.

CZERINA (*with a smile*).

Keep it for me!

[*Exit* CZERINA.]

ISABELLA (*aside*).

The City Port! . . . my passion shall outstrip ye!

[*Exit* ISABELLA.]

CASTALDO.

This is not happiness, 't is too tumultuous,
For every other motion of my blood
Jars like a discord. Oh! I am unskilled
To tune this broken music to a harmony,
Suiting my state of hope, or e'en compose
My spirits to a calm; but they are touched
(So Sibyls are), as if a wayward child

Should find his eyes parched with the thirst of
tears,

And his breast labouring with the trick of grief
At promised sweetmeats. What sedition 's this,
That doth depose me from self sovereignty?
So that instead of joy and acclamations
At having achieved so excellent a creature,
Fear with a Prophet's robe doth mantle o'er
My Soul. My thoughts triumphant, hung with
black,
Droop round about my heart like pennons plumed.

Enter TURASC, attended.

CASTALDO.

Who are these? Your office?

TURASC.

To attach thee, Lord,
In the Regent's name, whose pleasure 't is, that
you,
Till he determine further, be imprisoned.

CASTALDO.

What bird did whisper this to my sad soul,
And antedate my doom?

(*To TURASC.*) Imprison me !
You dare not touch my person. I stand here
The representative of Austria :
Doubtless that title's sacred ?

TURASC.

Tut ! you speak
Too proudly. But shall now obey th' arrest
Spite of ten thousand armed Ambassadors.

CASTALDO (*aside*).

Can Ferdinand's inroad have got wind !

TURASC.

Oh Sir !

The staff you wot of planted on our soil
Whose ensign waves defiance, yet may fall,
When the old thorn that fluctuates at its side,
Mocking its grandeur, will the whirlwind's ear
Fill with the news of Austria's well-earned shame
From hoar Coloswar's height.

CASTALDO.

Good Heavens ! 't is known.

TURASC.

And therefore must be foiled ; for Treachery,

Whose summer skin shines with the blush of truth
Till he appears as beautiful as faith,
If once detected 'mid his slough, will find
He has cast it from him for a monument.
A sacred title that of Ambassador!
My Lord, your sword.

CASTALDO (*apart*).

At such a time! Distraction!
(*Aloud*). My sword? Receive it whoso' will . . .
And yet.

TURASC.

That is my duty. Treacherous to the last!
(TURASC *advances to take CASTALDO'S*
sword: He resists: a short struggle:
CASTALDO is disarmed and seized.)

TURASC.

Bear him away! . . . Ambassador indeed!
[*Exeunt.*]

Enter BONNEVAL.

BONNEVAL.

Not here? she's rarified to air: If I

Were once beyond the frontier ! But my wife !
Woe fall the day she bade me never turn
To her or Warsaw more without Sir Rupert.
Next to myself she loved our lodger, who
Methinks, kind soul, was jealous for me of her.
Well ! that 's all over ! Of his horrid end
(How knowing women are !) presentiments
Forestall'd the truth : wherefore she did con-
sign
To me these secrets (*shows papers*) of the dear
departed,
For Dowager Isabella, long ago
Her foster sister ; . . which were no safe charge
Now to fulfil, I doubt.

Enter CZERINA in a Page's habit.

CZERINA.

My shape may pass,
And . . where 's Castaldo ? Gone ? Ah whither ?
Soft !
Did he mistake my purpose ? Lo ! Our Guide !
Was not the Marquis here when thou camest in ?

BONNEVAL (*aside*).

She is transformed. A dapper wench enough !

(*To CZERINA.*) Not that I know of : (*aside*) Marquis ? hem ! I see it.

“ The noble gentleman ” that ought appear
But cannot : reason good, there ’s no such man.
I am the veritable party here.
And hadst thou then, Oh, Madame B. ! no presage
For all thine intellectual nose, of this ?

CZERINA.

Terrors press down my soul. I ’m lost ! Castaldo
Waits for me near the gate : It must be so,
Or there ’s no other life but death for me.
Then I will have it so, and there my thoughts
Fix constantly. He is at the City Port,
Whither this knave shall bear me company.

Enter SIGISMUND.

SIGISMUND.

You serve her Majesty ? You ’ll please to tell her,
I, the Lord Sigismund, crave in humble duty
To lay my heart before her.

BONNEVAL (*aside*).

I perceive
Our Marquis no quick fiction : Here ’s the man !

CZERINA.

My Lord, the Queen is ill at ease, and cannot
Be now disturbed.

SIGISMUND.

I prithee mediate for me.
I bear from Martinuzzi

CZERINA.

Martinuzzi !
Who does not bear from him in Hermanstadt ?
Is it I, or you ? Is it her Majesty ?

SIGISMUND.

Her Grace is privileged by her place supreme ;
And her authority spreads every where
Over this land its bulk.

CZERINA.

My Lord, you 're bitter
Upon your Sovereign Lady. In the shadow
Of his colossal greatness, she 's extinguished.
There 's not a follower of the Court but knows
He turns her into nothing . . her whose Sire
Made of this Priest the prime of all the land.
She must, forsooth, eat, drink, and pray, and move.

And drop to sleep just in no other sort
 Than he dictates. She must give way, and tremble,
 Act with his power, and speak but with his voice,
 Be clothed thus, and thus far venture forth ;
 She must have all her pleasures shaped, as if
 She were a peasant's child, and not a Princess.

SIGISMUND.

Your speech takes too great license, which her
 Highness
 Would curb, Sir, did she hear you.

CZERINA.

Sir, the Queen

Would no more rein this tongue of mine than she
 Would hold her own ; albeit without her wrongs
 There is no tongue hath power to picture them.
 Return to him that sent you, and acquaint him,
 Her Grace at length hath gathered up her strength
 And resolution. She 'll be gaoled no longer ;
 Nor trammelled, thwarted, checked, controlled in
 all things.

It were not for her health, nor his soul's peace
 These doings should last. His purple garb that
 speaks
 His spiritual profession is a cloak

Under whose folds, my Lord, he tenders objects,
That heavenly eyes would shrink from.

SIGISMUND.

Sir, your zeal
Were of more service to your Royal Mistress
Allayed by some discretion. Speak you truth,
I'm sorry for her Highness from my heart ;
But I will not deliver what you have uttered,
For your own sake.

CZERINA.

It is the same, my Lord.

SIGISMUND.

I may not see her Grace ? Your servant, Sir.

CZERINA.

The like unto your Lordship.

[*Exit* SIGISMUND.

Wilt thou, stranger.

As thou hast said, attend me fairly onward ?

BONNEVAL.

That will I, Lady.

CZERINA.

Past thy hopes, I 'm bounteous.
Haste to my wishes and deliverance !

[*Exit* CZERINA.]

BONNEVAL.

And to mine also, I 'd be sorry else.

[*Exit* BONNEVAL.]

SCENE II.

A GRAND HALL IN MARTINUZZI'S PALACE.

Enter TURASC, meeting a Messenger.

TURASC.

Ha ! from the Army ? Well, your tidings ?

MESSENGER.

Glorious.

Our Regent is at hand.

TURASC.

Then he hath fought ?

MESSENGER.

And will again ; but whom he vanquished, never.
When came there such surprise before in war
To quench the souls of hostile fighting men
As this bold enterprise of Martinuzzi ?

TURASC.

He is here !

Enter Officers, Retinue, &c.; after them
MARTINUZZI and SIGISMUND.

MARTINUZZI (*speaking as he enters*).

Perverse, my Son. Now by the blessed cross !
She is much to blame.

SIGISMUND.

I'd been to blame did I
Invade the leisure of her solitude
Against her will.

MARTINUZZI.

You flog your wits in vain
To find excuses, when I bade her yield
You pliant audience. I am vexed at heart.
Discourteous Lady !

SIGISMUND.

Love's boon, good my Lord,
Like heavenly joys can never be constrained ;
'T is free grace all.

MARTINUZZI.

Tut ! There's an apter text
How Heaven (God pardon me !) is ta'en by force.

SIGISMUND (*aside*).

He shakes my faith in him. What if this man,
Seeming so perfect and so like a God,
Were all that page expressed? What should he
know
With loathing consciousness his secret soul
Encrusted round with spots, that at the touch
Ithuriel with which I 'll presently tent him
Will startle as they glisten.

Enter Officer, who addresses himself to TURASC.

MARTINUZZI (*apart*).

Would not see him!
Resist my wish in this? My clear bright Heavens
Court the eye to read their beauteous promise
In earnest of a day so gay and proud
As spring eternal were to walk the world.
Can any dark cloud with her watery wings
Surprise such glories? Yes; this little streak,
Unmarked of all, that specks my horizon, may
Gender the storm and veil that thunderbolt
Which, ere my Sun attain his western bed,
Will ruin my flattering day.
It may . . . but may be soon diffused in air.
These vain imaginings creep o'er my heart,
And leave an ice beneath 'em.

(*After a pause.*) I will look to 't
At once, and be resolved.

TURASC (*as MARTINUZZI is leaving*).

My Noble Lord,
A General from Buda with instructions
For Lord Castaldo.

MARTINUZZI (*absently*).

Pray be seated, Sir.
For Lord Castaldo! (*In a low voice to TURASC.*)
Knows he of our triumph?

TURASC.

As I think no: Impossible, your Grace.

MARTINUZZI.

Where is the Marquis?

TURASC.

He is now in prison,
According to your Eminence's commands.

MARTINUZZI.

'T is well: be thou his conduct to our presence.
[*Exit TURASC.*]

(*Apart.*) Not see him : in her wilful mood . . in
hers

Shall a new struggle rise, when I supposed
That nought remained to frustrate my design ?

(*To the AUSTRIAN GENERAL.*) My Lord, you
are welcome unto Hermanstadt.

The Marquis Piadena will be here

Anon, when we will hear what friendly greetings
From warlike Ferdinand you are charged withal.

(*Apart.*) Have I laid out my life in vain ? that
now,

When I would touch the sunny pinnacle,

And with a swing seat me in peace for ever,

With puny girlish ignorance, Czerina,

Instead of aidance, should uplift her hand

To stay my last great bound to compass fortune ;

Nor offer up herself in passiveness

To my dispose, but prove th' avenging Angel

Proper unto myself.

Enter TURASC with CASTALDO.

TURASC.

The Lord Castaldo.

SIGISMUND (*approaching MARTINUZZI, who appears lost in thought*).

The Austrian Envoy waits your Eminence pleasure.

MARTINUZZI.

Most true! (*Ascends and seats himself on the chair of state.*)

(*To CASTALDO.*) My Noble Lord, I'm grieved to find

By some unthought of accident your person . . .
Maugre the Sacred Office which you hold
From Ferdinand in the Court of Hermanstadt,
I mean your Embassy, (*aside, scoffingly,*) (*Thucydides*

Held Envoy but a synonyme for Spy) . . .

Hath been attached, as if we heeded not

Rights international, but madly set

The wonted process by of law and honour.

I say, I am grieved, my Lord Ambassador,

For this offence, and so far as consists

In such a case . . . (*pauses.*)

(*Aside, scoffingly.*) Methinks I have said as much
As asks the grace of pardon.

CASTALDO.

Since, great Prince,

Your officer dealt unadvisedly,
As ransom for his error, I am willing
That your disclaimer pass.

MARTINUZZI.

Your courtesy
Is royal, my Lord, and breathes as freely
As graces from your King. (*Aside.*) Ay or his oaths,
Which are as free as words to little purpose.

TURASC (*aside*).

There is a clap sequent to this fair flourish,
Like thunder for thine ears, vain shuffling coxcomb!

MARTINUZZI.

If I remember right, my Lord, you bear
Weighty commission from your Court for me ;
Which with your leave before these noble Chief-
tains
I am now prepared to answer.

CASTALDO.

Good your Highness,
My Sovereign, and not my own presumption
Speaks from my mouth.

MARTINUZZI.

My Lord, pray spare all preface.

CASTALDO.

The Arch-Duke of Austria, Bohemia's King
Sends health to Martinuzzi, and if he
Reject this grand preliminary Article . . .

MARTINUZZI (*to Nobles*).

That I should reign in Transylvania,
Holding in fief my sceptre of the German!
Trafficking rights which are not mine to treat of.
Right well concerted, Sirs! A fine device,
Considering I am that I am, and Regent.
(*To CASTALDO.*) Well, what's behind. The
insult stands in front.

CASTALDO.

In case of this rejection the Arch-Duke . . . (*pauses.*)

MARTINUZZI.

Then what intends he?

CASTALDO.

To march hitherward,
And in the capital of Transylvania
Depose your Highness from all sovereignty.

MARTINUZZI.

Doth Ferdinand dream that strong power like a
penthouse

Screens him from censure, that, no war proclaimed,
Yourself in Hermanstadt Ambassador,
He threatens such aggression? Doth he hold
Intelligence with Heaven, that he is
Assured of victory? Or is his gripe
Of fire, that he would burn this land up . . sweep
Before his chariot like chaff our strength,
Prostrated with a kingdom's devastation?
He'll rend the face of peace, unless How
long

Have we to weigh this matter? (*A pause.*)

(*To SIGISMUND.*) See, my Son,
The sightless Earth which cannot return glances
Hath more, and steadier attraction for
The Representative of Austria
Than ever the bewildered summer gnat
Finds in a torch. (*To CASTALDO.*) Most like you
Gentleman,
My Lord Ambassador, in this conjuncture
Can answer for you.

AUSTRIAN GENERAL (*to CASTALDO with a dispatch*).

From the Arch-Duke, my Lord.

(CASTALDO *slowly opens the dispatch* : MARTINUZZI *looks at him intently.*)

MARTINUZZI.

Pale as the marble covering thrown aside,
And scared as he were peering in some tomb
To confront horrible death . . So looks Castaldo.
(*To CASTALDO.*) My Noble Lord, how run your
last instructions ?

CASTALDO.

I must endure his gaze the while I speak.
The Arch-Duke hath put his troops in motion, and
Already with such sudden speed hath marched,
That Hermanstadt must fall. On one condition,
Which to reject were to invoke extremes,
He will yet withdraw from Transylvania.

MARTINUZZI.

And what 's this requisition ?

CASTALDO (*handing the paper to the AUSTRIAN GENERAL.*)

Read it you.

AUSTRIAN GENERAL.

If our Ambassador receive forthwith
Lady Czerina's hand, we vouch our word . .

MARTINUZZI (*breaking in*).

No more. He vouches! Hear it! Ferdinand
vouches!

Blow it about, ye opposite winds of Heaven,
Till the loud chorus of derision shake
The world with laughter! Ere you spoke your
mission,
Your King had *felt* my answer.

(*After a pause with enthusiasm.*) Golden land!

Bower of young Virgins! Aerie of valour!
Thou spear and target! Rainbow among nations!
And thou too City like a plume! Thou Cedar!
Thou Gem in Europe's dress! Created Babe
Above the Earth, dropped gently through the Air,
And laid to nurse upon the Mountains! Thou!
Mine own! My Native Land! My Erdely!
What! shall I bind thee, for a marigold
To wear about my temples at noon-day,
Over to Austria? who is base and thinks it?
Yield thee to Ferdinand? Remember Buda!
Stands there the house in Hungary unstripped,
To feed your master's avarice? What would ye?
Well, ye shall search; *ye did!* and just like
lightning,
Withering whate'er ye looked on. Palaces

Burned, and gave light to ye. I speak of Buda,
 Whose inarticulate columns know it all . . .
 The shrieks, and deaths, and agony ! Huge piles
 Like this, and King John's lofty dwelling-place
 Are conscious of it : Holy Stephen's temple
 Looked down upon it : Duna's stream shrunk back :
 The astonished air flew to the extremest Heaven,
 And told of shrieks, and deaths, and agony !
 And think'st thou after this We have no fine instinct,
 When sounds of wings do hover on the wind,
 That forestalls knowledge of the vulture's swoop ?
 Think'st thou in Hermanstadt shall be repeated
 The tragedy of Buda ? Not while manhood
 Remains to me to act the deeds this brain
 Knows how to think, and vindicate with power
 Or policy the freedom of the land,
 O'er which by Heaven's favour, and the laws
 I'm Ruler. Lord Castaldo, I have met
 Your master in his hour of pride, and, standing
 In the great hand of God, have struck his arms
 Prostrate as steppes of Hungary, and powerless . . .
 Advance our captive Eagles ! . . .
 (*Ensigns are brought in.*) Powerless as
 Those trophies of a Patriot's vengeance. Lo !
 The slaving conqueror down his slippery path
 Rolls headlong from the people he'd enslave ;

And Freedom clad like the destroying angel
Shrieks to all quarters of pale Heaven his fall.
Behold your sword, which we retain : yourself
May walk at large in Hermanstadt, contemned
And frustrate ; for by treaty with the Sultan
We follow up our triumph, nor surcease
Whilst Ferdinand holds a foot of ground in
Hungary.

The signs of Victory advance towards Buda ;
Whither I shortly follow. That is my answer !
I 'll hear no word.

(CASTALDO *and* AUSTRIAN GENERAL *are hurried*
out.)

(MARTINUZZI *descends from his throne.*)

(*To* SIGISMUND.) Yon Envoy's tone is sunk.
His Master's next dispatch will be worth reading.
But you have a thought behind . . I read your
mind.

SIGISMUND.

What ? dost thou ? Gracious Sir, pray pardon me.

MARTINUZZI.

Freely. You make me smile. Ha ! what is this ?

SIGISMUND.

Oh! Good your Eminence, dare I speak that
thought?

MARTINUZZI

Am I a tyrant that you doubt it?

SIGISMUND.

“Tyrant,”

Your Eminence?

MARTINUZZI.

You iterate the word

As if I were that thing it signified.

You do me wrong. My son, dost thou still pause?

I say you wrong me Sigismund . . . you hear?

By Heavens! . . . What subject of these realms
hath cause

To dread me, save the guilty?

SIGISMUND.

On my life

I think not one.

MARTINUZZI.

Am I a tyrant, then?

I bid you still to tell me.

SIGISMUND.

Good my Lord,

What under Heaven is mine without your Grace?
What dear and precious that 's not held from you?
My breeding, rank i' the state, you have already
Freely possessed me with ; but there 's a tie
Stronger than gratitude on all my powers ;
My loyalty to Heaven and to my Queen,
Which makes me but the mouthpiece of the Court
When I admit you Tyrant.

MARTINUZZI.

How ! To whom ?

SIGISMUND.

Unto thy *Sov'ran*, my Lord Cardinal,
Who is confined, mew'd up, and hourly awed
By thy stern, unrelaxing vigilance.

MARTINUZZI.

Just God! .. I meant not thus ... thank you my son.

(MARTINUZZI *moves away.*)

(*Apart, walking about agitated.*)

Now by my faith ! this idle calumny

That the Court teems with, irks me. I will wed
her

Straight, and be free to yield her kingdom up ;
Sceptre and power I gladly will resign :

'T will silence 'em. The Court !

(*As he is leaving—aloud.*) Break up the Court !

(*Aside.*) She weds for this . . . I 'll speak to Rupert
first. [Exit MARTINUZZI.

[*Exeunt Chieftains, Officers, &c.*

(SIGISMUND and TURASC come forward.)

SIGISMUND.

His Eminence is ruffled.

TURASC.

It appears so ;

The cause is slight.

SIGISMUND.

There is no art, my friend,
To prove the mind of man. The cause seems
slight,

So doth the inner wheel to which the engine
Owes all its motion.

TURASC.

Why methinks, my Lord,
Thy promised Bride hath made thee what thou
could'st
Not make thyself.

SIGISMUND.

And what is that ?

TURASC.

Why serious.

SIGISMUND.

Nay you traduce me.

TURASC.

So I don't, by Heaven !
I've known thee . . . let me count : some dozen
years
Have flown since first along with Friar Francis
We ranged the woodlands and sequestered nooks,
That, sheltered by the topless Crapacs, lay
Like infancy upon some giant's knee.
My uncle's reverend form dilates before me !
He taught us how to trace the wild boar's print
Along the green Savanna ; how to make
The golden-feathered eagle quit her home,

And bathe her wings in the supernal day-stream ;
To snare the fleet and delicate leveret ;
To tame the wolf-dog, and hunt down the bear ;
How to distinguish birds of precious dyes ;
And above all to shun the glossy charm
Of the green reptile. Those were happy days,
Sir.

SIGISMUND.

Give me thy noble hand, dear friend. That life
Were to be boy eternal ! . . . Then ! thou art
My senior by some few summers, and
What 's good in me I owe to imitation.

TURASC.

Nay, Sir, to nature.

SIGISMUND.

Since thou left us, Turasc,
Thy Uncle and myself in lonely regions,
To abide in Hermanstadt, hast been as free
From stained thoughts which never dreamt of evil
As in those times we roused us ere Hyperion,
And showed us early risers to the Moon,
And met the young Aurora face to face,
With jocund hearts clear as our countenances ?

TURASC.

Must I choose ;
 Give me my elbow room with God next Heaven,
 Upon some cliff Mortality ne'er scaled
 Before me, and obscurity around,
 Rather than brook the universal eye
 Of Man to quell my feelings. Let me sit,
 Unseen of any, 'neath some parent oak
 Whose soothing leaves deepen tranquillity,
 And steep my drooping spirit in brave thoughts,
 And pour into my heart rich fruits of love,
 More golden far than Jove's immortal son
 Ravished from the Hesperian Paradise.
 Troth, in comparison with such a life
 There is no world within these battlements
 That's better than a sty for things constrained.

SIGISMUND.

You think you can breathe freer in deep groves,
 Or where primeval Nature on her throne
 Reigns over giant rocks, than in the glare
 Of flourishing Capitals?

TURASC.

Do you remember
 How I'd stand opposite the evening Sun

Coiled like a sparkling serpent on our lake
'Mid all his cresting clouds and flashing hues ?
He never sets so bravely to my thinking
In Hermanstadt. But most of all I love
Till my brain reel, to hang o'er torrents, dashing
To spoil the emerald spot by quiet fountains,
While the o'er-sheeted silver turns surprised
And trembling like a bashful bride away.
Thereabouts Nature spied the gentle Breeze
Gathering the blossoms that lament by night,
And grew enamoured. From their fierce embrace
Sprang starry Liberty, her Mother's pride,
At random elegant, and a votary
To soft desires, undreamt of by herself.

SIGISMUND.

I think that Liberty doth most affect
The unpathed waters.

TURASC.

She 's a Mountain Nymph.
Born amid rocks and nursed on sunny banks,
She bears the brown blush on her wanton cheek.
Child of the winds, inured to bold adventure,
She herds with untamed spirits in the desert,
Loves to outstrip the wild steed in his course,

Or track the Lion to his den, and make him
 Leave roaring when in rage, and stoop to her.
 But if she wander from her liberal clime
 To domes where Man in lowly wise is bound,
 The quivered Nymph disdains the thrall, and, swift
 As shooting star, from arts and arms she darts
 Unto her everlasting home with Nature.

SIGISMUND.

Well all my life, 'mid the Carpathians,
 I have shook hands with buxom Liberty.

TURASC.

Ay, and with reckless License, but thou art
 changed.

Thou wert a libertine-boy as free as light ;
 As bright as rivers gushing from their head ;
 As gay as the wild wind wherein flowers lose
 Their pudency . . as vagrant and uncertain ;
 As quick as thought ; as sudden as desires ;
 As rash and sparkling as the flickering blaze
 That kills in sport ; as changeful as the minutes ;
 As full of fancies uncontrollable
 As raging fluxes of the wild Sea-Ocean ;
 As idle as the drowsy winter morn ;
 What but a loving whimsy could so change thee ?

Thou goest abroad into the streets an hour
Before the dew hath risen with the lark,
Stalk'st like a Ghost, and not so sensible either,
Thou think'st the while ! . . . a folly ghosts would
scorn :

Thine instincts now run slow like streams at fault,
That settle, putrefy, and choke with mud :
Cold love like death hath touched thee.

SIGISMUND.

Cold love? Oh!

You must mistake.

TURASC.

What, though thy Mistress' bosom
Doth carry whiteness, 't is not snow you doubt?

SIGISMUND.

Thou hast a wicked wit whene'er thou wilt.

TURASC.

And thou hast none but morals, good my Lord,
They 've made you mad : Such is the end of
wisdom.

SIGISMUND.

'T will be thy end no doubt, thy brain 's so busy.

SCENE III.

MARTINUZZI'S ORATORY.

(MARTINUZZI *discovered seated.*)

MARTINUZZI.

She is confined, forsooth, mew'd up, and awed !
So these Court oracles give out : Who knows ?
It were a likely thing ! I may be "tyrant,"
Nevertheless.

The very effort which I made to drown
My bitter consciousness, and dissipate
The terrible sense of injury . . to relieve
Feelings o'erwrought by deeds of opposite sem-
blance,

May have bowed back the o'er-bent mind beyoñd
Its rectitude . . . Alas, the fallacies
That lurk within this riddle and web of sin
To snare our reason ! 'T was my ignorance,
That which first made man mortal . . holds him
here,

Fixed like the centre, darkling . . wrought upon me.

Wisdom hath no celestial panoply,
But whilst she thinks she lies at closest ward
Opens herself to unsuspected danger.
From conscience that's our light we seek direction,
Until by ever staring on the sun,
We're smitten into darkness.

Then my soul,
Where is the place of understanding? Shall we
Bid rend the sphere of Heaven to inform us;
Or doth the order of all circumstance
Lie in the deeps, which, if the moon suspend
Her weight of surges, lading them away,
May give to more than subtle Alaric
An insight of themselves. We see but dimly
Like old Tiresias in enigmas. Well,
Like him one day, when we perforce have entered
The famous Nations of the dead, our sight
May sharpen . . . where? (*Stamps.*) Discover!
Break from Hell,
Thou hollow-wombed mass! For me, too late!

(*After a pause.*) 'Tis our diseased affections blind
us, or

Bearing about more Oracles at home
Than Afric and her prodigies, 't were folly

To seek self-knowledge from abroad. We have
 For visual ray o'erwatched or quenched in dark-
 ness

Our own collyrium . . . DEPART FROM EVIL!
 Put from before our eyes the stumbling block
 Of our iniquity, so may we purge
 The films that hang upon our sight, and strike
 From beams more sacred than the sun at noon,
 An apter light to guide our acts within us.

I've weighed this thought before. Well soon
 perhaps! . . .

The sooner for this marriage! . . . I'll retire
 Within some Cloister from the eyes of the Court;
 Where I in peace may offer up my remnant
 Of holy meditations unto Heaven.

(He rises.) (After standing awhile in silence.)

Methinks I am near my haven. Long I've dallied
 Amid the gulfs of state, which enterprise
 That yokes the wind, furrows with chariots,
 Darkening the welkin with fierce foam like dust.
 Through storm and tempest have I tilting rode,
 And never failed. 'T is time to turn aside
 My strong career; and seek the pilotage

Of pious faith to waft and guide me home,
Or my proud bark is shipwrecked within port.
'T were wise ! . . Whose step is that ? How lost
I am !
I bade Sir Rupert wait upon me here.

Enter RUPERT.

RUPERT.

I was commanded to attend your Highness.

MARTINUZZI.

How is your hurt ? Have you those letters ?
No ?
Ah ! I forgot ; you told me you had left them
At Warsaw, where you lodged. That 's not so
well.

RUPERT.

What 's not so well, my Lord ?

MARTINUZZI.

That you should lodge
In Warsaw. I will help you, my good Rupert,
To an honourable appointment in the state.

RUPERT.

Good sooth, I lodge much to my taste in Warsaw.
The Poland Dames are fair, and I have ties
That . . . As to wintering here, your Eminence,
'T is far too shrewd an atmosphere, unless
One swayed a sceptre, which intent I find
I must relinquish, since you will announce
To Sigismund his rights in Hungary.

MARTINUZZI.

Therefore have I reclaimed him from Friar Francis,
To wed the Queen Czerina.

RUPERT.

But thou wilt not
Unfold

MARTINUZZI.

My honour 's at the stake, Sir Rupert ;
Which to redeem, at least with Sigismund,
I must produce my proofs, and in his ears
Disclose each passage as 't is known to Him
Who sees our thoughts as clearly as our faces.

RUPERT (*aside*).

I am methinks stunned with astonishment.

This headstrong movement like a sudden torrent
Bears me upon its current and unshapes
The glittering edifice I had fondly raised ;
Like mounds of snow that while they thaw and
vanish
Become a portion of the element
By which they are subverted. Therefore I
Must curb me somewhat of my purposed scope ;
Albeit 't is only policy to hold
The self-same tone as heretofore.

MARTINUZZI.

I had hoped
We had done with this for ever. But speak
reason
I'll give you audience o'er again ; although
After your insolent outbreak it might bring
My wisdom into question. Sir, what would you ?

RUPERT.

'T is eighteen years ago, your royal spouse
The fair Princess Matilda . . .

MARTINUZZI (*interrupting*).

In her service
Thou, who wert page unto her Grace, didst wear

Thy dear integrity and common nature
Like a soiled robe to rags. Why wilt uplift
The gravestone from my heart? Why still invoke
Sad memories like spectres to appal me?
Well, Sir. You have leave to speak.

RUPERT.

My Lord, we have been
Friends.

MARTINUZZI.

Friends! I know it . . . Nay we are so still,
Are we not?

RUPERT.

Faith! I have yet to learn.

MARTINUZZI.

What next?

RUPERT.

My Lord . . .

MARTINUZZI.

Pray wait; you closed the outer chamber?

RUPERT.

It is secure.

MARTINUZZI.

Look to the Ante-room!

Make sure of no society but thoughts.

Our breaths should steal on lonely hours, and die

In deepest pits where loathliest vapours hang.

Enter the Ante-room and make all fast.

[*Exit* RUPERT.]

If I had compassed this it had been just,

These terrors which still shake me like an earth-
quake

The viper comes . . . My child! I suffer on

For thy sake partly.

(*Re-enter* RUPERT.)

You have barred yon entrance?

RUPERT.

That barrier is closed.

MARTINUZZI.

What is to be?

RUPERT.

You feel my services?

MARTINUZZI.

They are your silence,

Which is your interest, and duty likewise.

RUPERT.

Duty?

MARTINUZZI.

Because you owe your fortunes, all
To me. Your duty is your Gratitude.

RUPERT.

And yours?

MARTINUZZI (*suppressing his anger*).

No more. You know I am your friend.

RUPERT (*significantly*).

I know!

MARTINUZZI.

Ay, wretch!! . . . What matters for a word?

RUPERT.

These homilies accord with your vocation.
'T is for my interest your principles
Were other, better, than to make it needful
You should yourself observe them. By conni-
ving
At my old Mother's plot, which, by the bye,

Methought at first you meant to blow i' the air,
I got a purchase But I said as much
Before.

MARTINUZZI.

Without a blush as now you do.

RUPERT.

I looked about ('t is natural you know)
For a clear lamp to light me through the world ;
Since mine grew dim and failing, and did quake
At every breeze ; when by my mother's help,
And luck to boot, I found it ; it hath served me
Faithfully, though I asked no leave. Behold !
My paths are plainer than the Sun's. I have
Planned too successfully to fear reproach
From any. When 't is flung from lips like thine,
Excuse me if I say I cannot feel it.

MARTINUZZI (*in a calm voice, but stifled emotion*).

Well.

RUPERT.

I learned to look upon my fault as venial,
When peering in your still repositories,
(Those letters to the Princess, good my Lord,)

I thought to scan the Patriot and the Statesman,
But lit upon the Traitor.

MARTINUZZI (*calmly*).

Thou art brave !

RUPERT.

Seemeth that private union unto thee
A small thing ? It were well were that the least.

MARTINUZZI (*with anger*).

Ah, slave ! sometimes men know not what they do
When they launch words, that like the Scorpion's
arrow
Smite their own breasts.

RUPERT.

There is a thought, my Lord,
Can reach thee nearer, since the heart was mocked
Of this fond country with a lying hope.
Thou foe to unpolluted royalty,
And mighty in thy fame ! Is this not true,
Thy daughter, in whose birth your royal Lady
Perished, now reaches at the seat of Kings ?

MARTINUZZI.

Torment me on, yet more, more yet, and spare not.

RUPERT.

If this be no imposture, why your Highness
Clasps Isabel the person of her injury,
And cherishes the offspring of the man
Who cozened her ?

MARTINUZZI.

You know that I am guiltless.

RUPERT.

I' faith ! Not I . . I only know the facts.
That under falsehood you have hid yourself,
Making a covenant with punishment.
Yea and with Justice are you at agreement,
That his fell scourge shall not come unto you.

MARTINUZZI.

Prithee no more on 't, or do talk less loud.

RUPERT.

There's no soul by to hear us.

MARTINUZZI.

One doth hear !
Look to it Rupert. In thine heart thou art
conscious

Of my integrity, since thou didst creep,
Armed with a light as hateful as thy name.
Into the secret corners of my soul,
And didst count one by one my thoughts before
thee,

As thou hast since told out the accursed Coins
With which for this I have requited thee.
It had been mercy to have cut thy way
Direct into my heart with a quick steel,
So I had perished once, and felt not death
Dropping for ever from thy perjured lips.
Thou named'st the Princess. God! Need I re-
mind you,

When she was laid upon the bed wherein
Too soon she melted from my arms unto
The soft'st embrace of clear eternity,
Her Midwife . . . Sir, thy Parent even dared
To force her Cabinets, and to profane
The temple of her thoughts. With felon strength
She rent the lips of caskets, dread like those
Which lock the end of all our loves and lives.
Damned Thief! She straightwise stole our secret
thence ;

And, self-instructed, ascertained that I,
George Martinuzzi, was the Sire o'er whom
She was enabled by the Princess' lapse

To hold a storm-cloud. Yea, upon that day,
Fatal to Hungary ! bitter reminiscence !
When she effected that exchange of horror,
She lived to boast of her iniquitous deed,
Taxed me with being privy to the crime
Which sealed my Country's ruin and my shame.
Ghastly amazement seized me, but at length,
" *Abhorred wretch !*" I cried, as in a vice
I held her struggling, "*Be thou cursed for ever !
When dreamt thou this? Now thou shalt perish !*

Is 't not

*False? Swear it and be great : is she a Traitor,
Who is my Soul? Vile woman ! answer me.
Who doth avouch it? Ah ! who dares? Oh death !
She leagued against her brother and the State ?
Lady Matilda? Speak ! and to the point.
Disgorge the blistering venom of the truth
Before the utter frenzy of my Soul
Urge me to slay thee for thus blighting us."*

So I hallooed my misery in her ear ;
And she, the Beldam, trembled as I told her
That she had undone me, pierced me through and
through.

'T was true ! I never shook it off : it clings
Fast to me : I shall bear unto the grave

A secret wretchedness within my breast ;
'T is here, and here !

RUPERT.

But the Princess, my Lord ?

MARTINUZZI.

I passed into her chamber, where she lay
Fading to pieces, with her senses lapped
In rest, scarce less profound than of the tomb.
I crept unto the couch, and held her hand
With gripe so hard that it brought back her soul.
Then her glazed eye met mine, and in one glance
Read all. With cold and sudden damp she
shook,
Heart-struck. Her head sunk down upon her
breast :
I not the less ; “ *Love, tell me all,*” I shrieked,
“ *Whisper it . . . Softly ! I shall die for shame.*
Am I a wretch ? We are quite alone ! Is 't true ?”

RUPERT.

And she ?

MARTINUZZI.

Her soul was splitted at my speech ;

How should her heart not break ?

*“ I was about
To die in peace, but now ! and yet good night ! ”*

Scarce thus she plain'd, and 'neath my stern regard
Withered.

Almost as breathless, just as cold,
And far more desolate, I gazed in silence,
Beside that death and trembling bridal bed,
Upon the Corse ; and we were quite alone . . .
My wife immortal, but far off from Heaven,
Nailed to the Earth with grief, stood Martinuzzi.

(MARTINUZZI *staggers backwards and sinks into
a chair, but almost immediately rises.*)

And now you have conjured from the voiceless
grave
The phantom of that hour ; what would you have ?
If you will ask, in pity to us both
Be tender of this kingdom's interests,
And spare my honour : or at least be sane.
To seek to espouse the Queen of Hungary
Did show thee drunk, or nigh to death delirious.
You must excuse me that ; but what remains
That you can challenge as a service from me,
When you restore those scrolls so basely pilfered,
Methinks attends your naming. Sir, your wish ?

RUPERT.

Oh my heart swells with 't. High upon a rock
Laved by the Dniester in its lucid course
To the Black Sea, there stands conspicuous
A Castle fortified, encompassed round
By mighty hills, and deem'd impregnable
To all assaults ; the which commands the country
For leagues and leagues about.

MARTINUZZI.

You point at Halitz.

RUPERT.

There is a child named after me . . the son
Of the house where I sojourn in Warsaw. Him
Gift with the patent of that royal chateau.

MARTINUZZI.

Royal ! Why ay, Mount Halitz is a kingdom,
Annexed to Hungary.

RUPERT.

I know it well :
I'd have that boy enthroned. 'T is thine to grant ;
For thou hast missives from his Holiness,
Gifting thyself, or whom thou wilt nominate,

With the fair territory. Now, my Lord,
Thy daughter reigns in Hermanstadt, why not
The son of Bonneval on Halitz Mount ?

MARTINUZZI.

I'll think upon it. (*Apart.*) Does he mean it ? Oh !
My heart won't break. The truth of this were
fiercest.

As retribution meet it must be borne. (*Moves
away.*)

RUPERT (*scornfully*).

What doth he read with such irregular glance ?
Can he perceive his destiny in the winds ?

MARTINUZZI (*apart*).

"Tyrant !" too true ! I am a Tyrant : Down
(*strikes his breast*)

My wretched captive here ! I thought you grown
As dead a lump of flesh, as rigid as
Adamant or marble, or the solid bone
To which I felt you harden. How is this
Ye hurl up insurrection ? I will bind you,
Fierce legion that thou art, as God rules Hell.
Thou shalt not beat a drum within my breast
To fright my nerves to cowardice ; nor rise

Like throbs of fire and crowd into a storm.
 Lift up and chafe ! you but bewray your weakness
 In passionate foam ; and whilst against my ribs
 Your waves to shivers dash, I, like a rock,
 Stand fast through tempest.

Strange ! my spirits mount ;

I am relieved again, and I breathe freely :
 My blood retreats into a calm, and there
 Peace broods.

(*To RUPERT.*) I am not apt for this to-day.
 Did you say anything ?

RUPERT.

Your Eminence

Gifting the boy I mentioned with Mount Halitz,
 The scrolls you wot of I 'll restore to you,
 Nor trouble you hereafter.

MARTINUZZI.

Well, Sir Rupert,

Count on your wish. Hie thee away to Warsaw ;
 Bring me these letters, which when you restore
 Into my keeping, I 'll endow the boy
 With royalty for life, to hold of me,
 While you keep troth. A breath, and I dethrone
 him.

RUPERT (*aside*).

And he, the child I love, shall be a King !
I 've no ambition for myself a jot,
I hate the care on 't ; but for him !

(*To MARTINUZZI.*) My Lord,
When is 't you will that I should leave ?

MARTINUZZI.

To-morrow.

RUPERT.

I will depart at dawn, your Eminence.

MARTINUZZI.

I thought I had a word to say . . 't is gone.
The papers ! Fare thee well . . and soon return.

(*RUPERT makes an obeisance, and Exit.*)

MARTINUZZI (*after a pause*).

And such magnificent bribe ! and all for what ?
Because my soul, which I will open freely
To Sigismund, is cloven to its depths
With terror of this shallow world, from knowledge
How evil thoughts change all that is most virtuous
To their own essence. Therefore I bear with him ;
For only he in the wide world doth guess

That I in awe do minister like a slave
 Unto the shadow of a shade, and bow
 In unrepentant pains before the eclipse
 Which in my tristful soul I feel in times
 Far off will fling its mantle round my fame.
 And this it is which tears me night and day,
 As lightning rends the storm-cloud ere it burst ;
 This dooms me still to be amerced of hope
 For guile not mine, and taste that consciousness
 Of subterfuge my inward heart disclaims,
 Yet dares not right itself, for fear my star,
 That cross this night of life shines in the zenith,
 Fall streaming from his sphere, and leave my
 honour

Curtained and lessening through space and time,
 When I have entered the diviner gloom,
 Where lurks no falseness ; where no sad distrust
 Distils our hearts to jelly ; where no Conscience
 Mouldeth strange fancies to corrode our peace ;
 No Anguish drinketh up our spirits like water,
 Or Terrors as the wind pursue our souls,
 Ploughing deep furrows on our brows like
 wisdom ;

Where Mutability, who takes his stand
 Upon the rays that, gilded by the Sun,
 Begem the icicles, where lonely Care,

And Insecurity whose eyes do fail,
Where Storm, Ambition, wakeful Weariness,
Wrath, Envy travail not; with whose blind depths
Only God's eye is level, and where nothing
Reigns but what is not . . . save on every side
Freedom, and Silence, and eternal Sleep.

Well, Time and Chance as yet under the Sun
To give account to Heaven with are my portion.
Be busy then, my soul ! Let me confer
With her forthwith . . . I'll seek my Royal
Daughter. [Exit.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

QUEEN ISABELLA'S APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

ISABELLA (*seated*).

This long suspense is horrible ! and my heart
Outstrips the minutes. At the City gate ?
My emissaries have had time to measure
The distance three times told. And they 're not
back !

They creep, when I would have them airy spirits.
If these, my adders, 'scape me ? Ho ! who waits ?

Enter ATTENDANT.

Now is my guard returned ?

ATTENDANT.

Behold, your Highness !

Enter two or three with CZERINA *and* BONNEVAL.

ISABELLA (*aside*).

Were they too late ? I do not see Castaldo.

(ISABELLA *rises and advances to CZERINA.*)

(*To CZERINA.*) Young Sir, did you observe my
Royal Daughter?

In courtesy direct me if you can
Which way she went. I heard she had eloped,
And was with you beyond the City port.
Pray God her Kingdom have not lost her Highness!
Come show your face, your graceless, milk-white
face.

What mute? Hands folded? Eyes fixed on the
earth?

Thou art gone pale with shame.

CZERINA.

With consternation . .

Hereafter I shall blush.

ISABELLA.

Thou dost dissemble

Death on thy cheek.

CZERINA.

Would it were Death indeed!

ISABELLA.

Are you the Queen of Hungary? Now Heaven

Enter ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

His Eminence
Desires an Audience of her Majesty
In her own chamber.

CZERINA.

Say I attend him there.

[*Exit ATTENDANT.*

BONNEVAL.

Her Majesty ! Then I have seen something yet.

CZERINA.

What dew is this upon my forehead that
Plays booty, when my flight need not be known,
Keep I my counsel ? So Castaldo 's true,
That 's one good sure . . . Yet I am full of fears.
Thou Cardinal ! Most strangely terrible
To me, but as I live I hate thee not ;
For though, alas ! thou art hard as adamant,
Thou also hast its strange attractive power.
A similar spell plays round the form of one
I dread to meet, yet would not lose for worlds.
Courage my Soul ! I 'll front him now.

(*To ISABELLA.*) Your pardon.

[*Exit CZERINA.*

ISABELLA.

Give me more air : I have a fever on me.
What doth that varlet ?

BONNEVAL.

Most magnificent
Of thy peculiar sex !

ISABELLA.

Dost thou not know us ?

BONNEVAL.

Who I, forsooth ? How should I so by instinct ?
You are not a proclamation, as I take it,
Which every fool is bound to know at 's peril.

ATTENDANT.

You speak unto her Highness Isabella.

BONNEVAL (*eagerly*).

Whom say you ?

ATTENDANT.

The Queen-Mother Isabella.

BONNEVAL (*eagerly*).

The King of Poland's Sister ? King John's
Widow ?

ISABELLA.

What prates the saucy groom? Thou speak'st
my title.

BONNEVAL (*breathlessly*).

Let me discharge my trust. Now God be praised
for it!

Rupert, thou art avenged: I keep my promise
Unto my wife, whose terrors proved true prophets.
That reeking steel to wit! . . . The papers, take
them.

(BONNEVAL *draws a packet from his doublet,*
and delivers it to ISABELLA.)

ISABELLA.

This is indeed addressed to me.

BONNEVAL.

Your Grace,

It is my spouse's delicate superscription,
Who, when a little toothless infant, Lady,
Lay with thyself at her own mother's breast;
But 't is so long since, thou may'st have forgot it.

Ere I set out the other day from Warsaw,

She, who 'd before contrived (the Lord knows
how !)

To satisfy her eyes of their contents,
Took from our lodger's secret cabinet,
(Trusting or ere he lacked 'em to replace 'em,
That is on my return, before he missed 'em,)
Papers of precious trust that slept within.
She gave them me, in case (as she foreboded,
Having some inkling of his danger here,)
Our boarder should be foully dealt with ; when
I was to lay 'em at your Grace's feet,
With her remembrance of twice twenty years.
Bear witness be they treason I have not read
them.

ISABELLA.

Your lodger's name ?

BONNEVAL.

I never heard him christened,
But Rupert people called him.

ISABELLA.

Ye prompt fears !
Revealings of my soul that left the proofs
Halting behind, you 'll yet be justified.

(*ISABELLA breaks open the packet.*)

What have we here ? Ha ! letters !
Sure I should know the hand . . this hand and
seal ?

(*Unfolds a letter.*) Yes, signed by . . by Matilda ?
by the King

My husband's Sister. What can it contain ?

(*She glances her eyes over it.*)

Secret espousals with . . with whom ? with him !
Their Offspring changed ! that offspring HER !
Oh Thunder !

Another letter ! . . this from . . from

(*With violent gesture.*) Great God !
What flood is this thou hast let into my heart ?
I see it all ! . . I guessed as much ; my loathing
For years was prophet to the mighty secret.
Cozened ! . . Abused ! . . Gulled fool ! ha ! ha !
ha ! ha !

What sand-blind ignorance ! But ne'er came
truth

So pleasing to mankind. I take delight,
The while my heart grows cold and sinews shrink,
To stand in the danger of the basilisk ;

For, though my breast shakes and my hair stands
stiff,
My eyes forestall the creature's venomous glance.
I would not change this fever of felicity
For all the pleasures of ten thousand ages.

BONNEVAL.

Your Grace belike knew Rupert, so admired
By Madam B. ! I 'll tell you of his murder.

ISABELLA.

Murder ! Close after me : I will requite you.
Follow me : Vengeance ! I must read these
proofs
Of treason, and . . They've haunted me before,
Or something like them. Murder, didst thou say ?
Murder hath sometimes echoes.

Hand ! be proud !

Thou bearest the doom of Hungary's purple Tyrant.

[Exit, followed by BONNEVAL and Attendants.]

SCENE II.

APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

Enter MARTINUZZI and ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

Her Majesty will straight be with your Eminence.

[*Exit* ATTENDANT.]

MARTINUZZI.

I feel as I had dug up Circe's root,
And Fate, that Spartan bloodhound, that ne'er
quits
Until her tooth be fleshed, dog'd me to death.
In my prescient fears,
Although I stand secure, I am as one
That falls. I must precipitate this match,
I've from the first resolved on, and so pin
My fortune to my sleeve through weal and woe.
The case demands prompt action.

Lo ! She comes,

The first in all the land, . . at least I'm sure
The loveliest. Now heart be firm ; and cast,

By reason of thine affliction, far behind
All ties of blood, and quench compunction in thee.
I know her nature well. On that blanched lip
Sits a sad awful smile ; a quietness
Disposes every feature which I doubt
Doth veil a world of purpose. That slow step,
That contemplative mien ! Well : well : I've
strung
My feelings to endurance, . . yet I wish . . .
I wish her cheek were not so pale : dear child !
The Queen of Hungary !

Enter CZERINA.

Royal Lady, I
Bring you great news. Another such a conquest,
For victory is not the word . . Why we have
Dealt with their guns, and baggage, lives, materiel,
At will, these curs ! . . . Another such a battle,
With Sultan Solyman's help to boot, we'll have
you,
Ay by my hat ! in triumph home to Buda ;
There to be crowned together with your husband.

Sounds this so mournful, that you turn my bays
To cypress with your tremblings ? Or, in sooth,
Bear'st thou the Austrian sceptre ?

CZERINA (*faintly*).

Good my Lord,
We are proud you won : I 'm glad to see you well.

MARTINUZZI.

I 'll kiss away that print upon your cheek,
A truant tear hath left. (*Kisses her.*) So all is
cleared.

Your Majesty had well be proud, for trust me
You have the bravest troops ! And I do think
The truest hearts in Christendom for subjects.
Through all your realm there is not one disloyal ;
Not one . . . that 's much ! Ay, to be proud is well ;
You should be thankful too.

CZERINA.

I hope I am,]

Your Eminence.

MARTINUZZI.

Hem ! I hope so also ; and
Without exception and proviso, Lady.

CZERINA.

That 's as it happens.

MARTINUZZI.

Why you would not pause
To drain your heart's blood for your kingdom's
weal ?

You would not pay a debt unwillingly ?
You would not play at fast and loose with duty ?
Hath gratitude bounds ?

CZERINA.

I've learned so much of you.
When Solyman in return for his alliance
Asked you to cede the Banat of Temeswar,
Proudly you made response, "*that Hungary
Could not be grateful with her freedom, nor
Her Regent with his honour.*"

Nor will I
Lightly dispense with either.

MARTINUZZI.

They're not called for.
Your Majesty's wit's too quick and sharp, and
 thrusts
Beyond the point.

CZERINA.

'T is my impatience, Sir,
God help me ! Not my wit. Honour and Freedom !

Wer't not dishonour to bestow this hand
But with this heart? And for my apprehension,
'T were blind not dull did I forget I am
Shut from the world. I'd be a farmhouse thrall,
And change my crown for cap, my robes for russet,
And rule my subjects of the dairy rather
Than Queen on this condition.

MARTINUZZI.

Since your Grace
Will traffic with me for a word or two,
I'd ask on what condition?

CZERINA.

That my blood
Royal should be so chafed and constantly
As 't is by you, my Lord.

MARTINUZZI.

Your royal blood!
It burns your brow: would it were cooler, Lady!
I think it is too hot.

CZERINA.

Be it the lightning
'T is not for thee to track its course, but shun it.
And since you carry it so proudly know,

My Lord, I'll do henceforward just what likes
me,

Pursue my pleasures in what shape I fancy ;
Call 'em my humour, spleen, or will, I 'll act them.

MARTINUZZI.

So : have you said ?

CZERINA.

As for that forced contract,
Think not but if you drive the hazard on
Worse will come of it.

MARTINUZZI.

Hath your Highness ended ?

CZERINA.

When I find breath. I've but another word.
You 've heard our regal will, Lord Cardinal ;
You 'll not let memory cheat you of the hint ;
And so we take our leave.

MARTINUZZI (*going up to her sternly, grasping her by the
wrist, and speaking in a severe voice*).

Refrain thy foot !

CZERINA.

I'll not : I pray you set me free : I cannot
Brook to be overruled. Am I not Queen ?
No more : how dare you ?

MARTINUZZI.

This to me ?

CZERINA.

Why not ?

MARTINUZZI.

“ Why not,” my Liege ? suppose I say mine order
Gives to my will the impress of divine,
Or that thine orphan'd years require the curb ?
Suppose I say because of all my toil
For Hungary, or for your great defence
In this my victory, when, your bulwark, I
Wrestled and took in death that you may live ?
I might . . and none could doubt my plea were
just, . .

Thou, least of all ! But oh ! I need not thus.
I bid thee but recal my anxious care
From infancy to fit thee for thy throne :
I bid thee think how once, when all besides
Shunn'd your infectious chamber, I alone

Played there the hireling, helped your healing
draught
To your parched lips ; and afterwards through
nights
Have sat, and watched, and prayed, whilst you
were sleeping.
Thou hast seen my face all shrunk and pale with
grief
Until you rose again. Oh ! I did tend you
Like . . like your nurse, my Daughter. What
shall now
Estrangement come betwixt my heart and thine,
That from thy cradle grew before me still ?
And canst thou level taunts 'gainst thy confessor ?

CZERINA.

No, not 'gainst thee. Mercy ! The absolute
charm
Thou hast to make me weep for bitter words,
Wrung from my lips by thine own tyranny !
Forgive me : Let us talk of something . . some-
thing
Shall be to purpose, but I cannot wed
Sir Sigismund : No indeed.

MARTINUZZI.

This day is wasted

Down to the dregs. The fountains of the light
Spring silently and slowly, and the tide
Of beamy noon hath fled up to the arch.
I must be gone : Hours fly not by our wisdom,
Nor lag for our resolves. Affairs of State,
Of Hungary . . of Europe, tarry for me,
And like myself are held suspense the while.
Power hath no spell to clip the wings of Time,
To accommodate his speed to our caprice.
He knoweth his appointed way, and like
Our native fowl doth flutter from the world
While men are sleeping ; but the hopes of men
Asleep are sterile as the wilderness,
O'er which the mighty bird hath ta'en his flight.

(Going : He turns back.)

Farewell then till . . until . . . You said, I think,
Touching the matter of your marriage, that
You would subdue your pride to my great scope,
And do my will exactly . . . Did you not ?

CZERINA.

I said, your kinsman never

MARTINUZZI (*interrupting*).

I remember,
You said, that you would marry him forthwith.
(*Aside.*) Remorselessness is duty . . . yea is mercy.
All now is in the glow ; . . . within a week
I doubt it may be malleable no longer.
(*Aloud.*) You said to-morrow ? Ha ! You said
it was
Enough : It was your Guardian's counsel . . .

MINE :

The Regent's fixed resolve : To-morrow be it.

CZERINA.

I never thought the words you speak to me.

MARTINUZZI.

Come : I have stopped the restless wheel of
Time
To wish you joy of this auspicious union,
That gives a King to Hungary.

CZERINA.

In Hungary

A female Sovereign is a King already ;
So when I wear the Crown that I was born to,

138 THE HUNGARIAN DAUGHTER, [ACT III.

I 'll choose a husband for myself . . not Kingdom.
The Queen hath sent for me.

MARTINUZZI (*in a softened tone*).

Thy Mother? . . say.

CZERINA.

Thou knowest.

MARTINUZZI (*sternly*).

Well: I bid thee go not.

(*In a softened voice.*) Mother!

CZERINA (*aside*).

He reads my inmost soul more clearly than
Myself. There runs a tremulous chord through
his voice
Doth fill me with strange awe: . . 't is ever thus.

MARTINUZZI.

Just like thy Mother's beam thy golden tresses.

CZERINA.

My Mother's hair is black, my Lord.

MARTINUZZI (*with deep pathos*).

Was: Was! . . .

I wander for a moment : there : sit down.
We spoke of Sigismund ; a nobler man
Never drew air than he . . . (*peremptorily*) I swear
your husband.

CZERINA.

I'll hear no more of this. And who art thou ?
I pray ye, my Lord Cardinal, be content.
Gaze not on me : let go thy terrible grasp !
Pray have you further business ? Understand
I'll not endure you should command my mind
Against its true election. Now you have
Our answer.

MARTINUZZI (*with solemn earnestness*).

Be for ever silent, rather
Than speak the language I abhor. Take heed !
Never to me with such authority
Proclaim thy rebel will. It is a crime
As foul as Parricide to blast my hopes,
To shrivel up the freshness of my heart
With such accursed lightning as thou dartest
From thy unrighteous eye.

CZERINA (*in a faint voice*)

You terrify me.

MARTINUZZI (*peremptorily*).

Be dumb all breath ! or by Omnipotence !
 I will, against my nature, clasp thee where
 Thou playest the fool upon the dizzy pinnacle
 Of pride and honour, which, like unto some
 Cloud-kissing spire, we stand on ; oh ! no word,
 Lest you plunge headlong down into the gulf.
 We are lifted to the brink ; our fate already
 Reels with her glorious burden ; at our feet
 A grave of infamy unfathomable
 Yawns ready to receive, and shiver both
 To atoms ; not a thought ! be confident,
 You tempt a wrath will grasp your greatness
 thus,
 Hot as Gehenna. Ah ! be still as night :
 Stir not unless in supplication : show me
 The palpitating bosom, the pale lip,
 The quaking hand, the mercy-seeking eye,
 Or by my holy faith ! my power to crush
 I will put forth at full ; and thou not live,
 So proud and beautiful : There is a word . . .
 Fool ! I can make thee nothing but a laugh.

CZERINA.

In pity spare me now : May I depart ?

MARTINUZZI (*with startling sternness*).

Depart not ! If I utter sounds, kneel down
And strive to catch them. Be assured, proud
Girl,

The syllables that gush down through my lips
Are precious as a dew unto thy Soul ;
Where though they pelt like hail-stones, do not
vie

With that devoted people, who of old
Shot arrows back when they did hear the thunder,
But lodge them in the core of beating life.

Be greedy in thy droughty heart of my words
As the parched earth of moisture ; look beyond !
Past the rent shroudings of the murky cloud,
Where what I cannot hide, despite my angers,
Like sunny brightness peers, . . there fix thine
eyes !

(*With sudden emotion.*)

Why, why is this ? Dull thing ! Art not to me
As dear as mine own blood, and I to thee
A hold as certain as the sheltering rock
Unto the wild-sea blossom ? To my heart !
There grapple, cling, and smile throughout the
storm.

That 's well : So : so : Thou 'lt do my bidding, ay ?

CZERINA (*trembling*).

Forbear in pity. . Yes, thou art most dear . .
Yet no less terrible !

MARTINUZZI.

Then never more,
Czerina, with that wicked brow of smooth
Imperiousness, nor that fire-darting eye,
Whose beams are death's artillery unto me,
Lip, curled in scorn or passion, call to judgment.
A thought, a breath of Martinuzzi.

CZERINA (*trembling*).

Spare me.

MARTINUZZI.

To-morrow I'll be proud to see thee wed ;
The life of Hungary depends upon it.

CZERINA.

To-morrow !

MARTINUZZI.

The people are grown tired to see the Crown
Under the shadow of his hand whose brow
The precious Jewel was not made to fit.

CZERINA.

To-morrow !

MARTINUZZI.

Fastidious thing ! 'T is certain I was born
To rule without thee : Does that fragile frame,
That fine and feminine piece of Nature, promise
Another Atlas, fit to heave the Heaven
Of Empire ? I am thought to be ambitious.
Misjudging world ! I 've great ambition truly,
To dream beneath the broad Imperial tree
I planted, and did nourish with the sweat
Of mine own forehead ! Thou shalt reap the fruit
In triumph, with thy husband Sigismund.

CZERINA.

The Queen, my Mother, Sir ?

MARTINUZZI.

Few Women know

What in the world is its true policy ;
The Widow of King John the least of all.
So in the State and Senate-house I leave
No room for thee or Isabella. Time
There was when Women sat in parliament,
And from their carved and ivory stalls full many
A gallant got a hint how nobly robes,
All blushing like confusion, graced their persons.
No more of that ; 't is not for thy discourse.
I hear a busy step. Light us again,

Dear Lady, and relume those orbs. To-morrow
We celebrate your nuptials. I'll return.

CZERINA (*kneeling*).

I prithee leave me, Being of strange power!

MARTINUZZI (*reverting his head as he retires*).

Expect me to return :

(*He pauses, then again approaching CZERINA, he
adds in a voice of deep feeling,*)

A better peace
Dwell with thee, Queen of Hungary! . . . Bless
thee, Child! [Exit MARTINUZZI.

CZERINA (*without rising from the ground*).

Shall I not die this night before this hated
Bridal? What marry Sigismund, and love
Castaldo? I can bear to die, but 't were
Too much to die of that Man's Majesty.
I'm faint (*Rises*) with dread. He comes! Ah,
not again
So soon. I thought I heard his tread along
The Corridor. Hist! Ah! No, it was my heart.
Mercy! . . . A voice! . . . To meet him! . . . I will not.
If thou be any other, speak! . . . Who's there?

Enter CASTALDO.

CASTALDO.

'T is I: What hath betided?

CZERINA.

Ha, Castaldo!

Pity me love, I am so faint and fearful.

To-morrow . . . Do I live to tell it you . . .

I 'm sinking! . . .

CASTALDO.

Heavens! Czerina, thou art pale
As any corpse. Thine eyes are full of tears.

CZERINA.

That well may be: They 're blossoms of despair.
The Regent; he hath struck me through my
heart:

You know not how I am hurt: Oh God! to-
morrow.

CASTALDO.

What of to-morrow?

L

CZERINA (*faintly*).

Do breathe heat into me :
Lay thy warm breath unto my bloodless lips.
I stagger ! I . . I must

CASTALDO.

In mercy what ?

CZERINA.

Wed.

CASTALDO.

Wed ! Oh Heavens ! whom ?

CZERINA (*as she faints in his arms*).

Are these thy arms ?

CASTALDO.

Mine ! only mine ! Art thou some lustrous
spectre ?

I never saw the dead before : How wan !
If I could catch the beautiful disease,
Would we not walk like loving spirits together ?
Oh, I talk wildly when my arms and lips
Should labour life into thee. Thou art in truth
The finest nature of excelling dust,

And nothing is in this sublime serenity
But human woe. I'll have her swoon no more.
It is some treachery of Martinuzzi,
Her guardian, who hates her; that is clear . . .
As he does me. What wast? "He struck her
through."

Who waits?

Ye slaves! Your kingdom is in peril.
Dead are ye as your mistress? Hither! Help!
The Queen! Some one has struck her heart!

What ho!

[*Exit* CASTALDO, bearing CZERINA
in his arms.

SCENE III.

APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

QUEEN ISABELLA *seated at a table, perusing papers.*

ISABELLA.

If I proclaim these wrongs, the tyrant's power,
His sacred function, popular attributes,
Will overbear my testimony, and
So blind the eyes of men that these true witnesses
(Pointing to the papers.)
Be deemed the forgetive shapes of hate. He
stands,
My enemy, at such a hopeless height
That injury's shaft wants plume to mount so far ;
Secure 'gainst danger, even aspersions cannot
Touch him with soil.

Hem ! Let me think on 't better.
My busy brain, King John's last testament,
With Ferdinand's help to boot, should work my
way

To sway this kingdom. But the Cardinal
Yet lives! I'll train him to my lure. E'en now
He lies within my check, yet knows it not.
He keeps this night a festival in 's house,
To celebrate his triumph and these nuptials.
Thither I'll wend, and look the traitor dead.

I've some conclusions else, as to my Son
I'd fain resolve. The infants were exchanged,
And my babe borne from Buda. Ah! but whi-
ther?

That Rupert who could best explain is slain,
If I believe the Pole, by Martinuzzi.
There, where my eyes would fix and my heart
anchor,
These scrolls stop short. Though stolen at his
birth,
His life may have been spared. If not . . . Great
Heavens!
Be my revenge to me a child!

I'll hold
This Churchman in my play before I kill.
He comes! whom I ordain my tool to work
with . . .
The engine of my vengeance. Noble Lord!

Enter CASTALDO in a hurried manner.

CASTALDO.

Upon my knee . . .

ISABELLA.

How now?

CASTALDO.

I do implore
Your intercession, Madam. Queen Czerina . . .

ISABELLA.

And canst thou choose no name to conjure with
But hers? . . . Well, well: unburthen thee.

CASTALDO.

To-morrow,
She weds Sir Sigismund.

ISABELLA (*with coldness*).

So I have heard.

CASTALDO.

Against her will; without or law or warrant.

But you were speaking, Sir, about . . . About . . .
What's this? Pray tell me.

CASTALDO.

Of my passion, Lady.

ISABELLA.

Passion! I see: Passion! 'T has many senses;
And plays in each the abortive casuist.
A startling paradox is passion, Sir.
Wormwood and honey! brief as mortal thought!
Eternal as the everlasting word!
Passion! For whom?

CASTALDO.

Thy daughter.

ISABELLA.

Ha! what's she?

I'm deadly sick.
(*After a pause.*) I've heard men laud your meek-
ness,
Thine, who dost dare so much!

CASTALDO.

What have I done?

ISABELLA.

Done ! Told to me ? . . Why nothing, Sir, in the
world,
Just nothing.

CASTALDO.

What hath passed ?

ISABELLA (*solemnly*).

Past ? Good my Lord,
Locked from the world in doomsday's stony womb
All bygonés are at rest. Then pray mistake not.
When 'fore my inward eye the mountainous shames
That do entomb the corporal past upheave,
Mortality's earthquake's come ! supreme MY will ;
But I have read of women . . Yea believe
It were more wise to start the sleeping panther,
And stare into her eye, than try our sex thus.
But I . . I bear no malice.

CASTALDO.

'T was your daughter . . .

ISABELLA (*interrupting*).

You've spoken it. She swears she will not wed,
And waxes eloquent, and . . . how else was it ?
What was 't she said ?

CASTALDO.

More than she said she looked.

ISABELLA.

What looked she then? I care not what: my Lord,
I want to answer you . . . and her, not hear ye.

CASTALDO.

She prays your Grace would interpose between
Her and her Guardian, to avert an union,
Inferring horrid death.

ISABELLA.

Did the theme slide
So glibly from her tongue? 'T were fine, i' faith!
What death?

CASTALDO.

E' en so.

ISABELLA.

How easy of belief
Fond lovers are! Can I annul the doom
Forethought by Destiny and Martinuzzi?
Who shall turn back the hand stretched out of
either?

CASTALDO.

I muse, that being her Mother thou art so cold.

ISABELLA.

Cold!

CASTALDO.

Ay, lift up thy voice against this match.

ISABELLA.

That man will brook no arguments. His word,
Scorning control, o'erbearing opposition,
Dreadful as thunder, shakes, in spite of heaven,
This cantle of the world called Erdely.

(After a pause.) He wills that Sigismund weds
her; . . then he weds her.

CASTALDO.

I'll perish first.

ISABELLA.

The coward's cure. What, travel
You know not whither in the air or fire,
Leaving the earth clear for thy rival's bliss!
Give up the game before the die be thrown?
Perish? and much would Martinuzzi care!

CASTALDO (*despondingly*).

My life is told.

ISABELLA.

But ere her tears be told
Upon thy tomb, despite thy dust she 'll wed.

CASTALDO.

You are right! And maugre too my conscious spirit,
Writhing and impotent. I am racked to think on 't!
Those lips be gently touched! Those eyes dart
favours!

What should be done?

ISABELLA.

Why if indeed the lightning
Would rive his trunk, and not the senseless oak
But like the Cyclops, Heaven permits the slave
Who is most subtle laugh his power to scorn.

CASTALDO.

I know no subtle slave: Oh cast a beam
To light my heart, that stumbles in a mist
Over your meaning.

ISABELLA.

The Air can choke his breath, yet he still strides,



Like graven image that may not be moved,
The prostrate land : His sins like vapours serve
To stupify high Heaven, till Justice sleeps.

CASTALDO.

His ! *His!* Whom dost thou speak of?

(*After a pause.*) Thou art mute.

Methinks the deadly silence of thy soul
Is fraught with horror, wild as is a madhouse
With din of creatures raving. Look not so !
There are a thousand Furies in that smile :
What 's in thy thought ?

ISABELLA (*coming closer, and looking steadfastly upon him*).

Ask me not what I think,
But what, did my soul animate Castaldo,
Castaldo would accomplish ? Ha ! dost guess ?

CASTALDO (*shuddering*).

Thy countenance
Is the dim mirror of my deepest mind,
It shows a gulf of horror . . . turn away !
The dark reflection tortures me.

ISABELLA.

Were I

So soon to be despoiled of such a treasure
As thou wilt be . . . (*Stops abruptly.*) That
poniard . . .
(*Pauses, and looks significantly.*)

CASTALDO.

In my heart?

ISABELLA.

Thy heart, pale Lord, wouldst make it weep for
nothing?
Sheath it where God and Nature prompt your
hand!
Strike . . . (*Pauses —.*)

CASTALDO (*faintly*).

Whom?

ISABELLA.

The Cardinal is but mortal sure.

CASTALDO.

Be dumb! I would not hear the offence again,
And yet the sound remains. Dost feel no pain . .
Now God forgive you! . . . at the fiend's thought?

ISABELLA.

Why bite thy nether lip, my Lord, and purse
Thy forehead so? What vapourish fantasy
Is wrapped up in thy visage? Wake! for shame!

CASTALDO.

I did not think it had been so hard to brook
A human face. That cloven foot, how came it?
'T is that hath made thee hideous.

ISABELLA.

Sir, my glass

Ne'er told me so; but I'll remove the offence.
I reckoned that your love had deeper root
Than to be rent up by a summer gust.
Well: As you list. Good day. (*Going.*)

CASTALDO (*gasping*).

A moment! I am mad to tell you so,
But yet I will . . . will think of it . . . of that
Thou namedst to me.

ISABELLA.

Thou should'st act . . . should'st hurl
Death on thy foe . . . this night! or on the morrow . . .

CASTALDO (*abstractedly*).

To kill a man ! . . paddle one's hands in blood !

ISABELLA.

Madness !

CASTALDO (*wildly*).

Not yet . . not yet !

ISABELLA.

My noble Lord,
I leave you. Ponder in your heart what 's passed,
Then if you love ! (*Aside.*) He is in a trance of
anguish,
The apter for the business I forecast.
The Father of that changeling slain, and by
Her lover ! 'T were too great a thing, too deep
A malice ; and would overpeer revenge !
Yet wild Medea wrought the Pelian race
To slaughter their own Sire . . . Work well my
charms. [*Exit* ISABELLA.

CASTALDO (*after standing as if stupified*).

Good day, your Grace. What has been going on ?
Some dream hath worn me out, and drops of dew

Steep me all o'er. Ha ! I remember now.
Madness ! to-morrow ! No alternative ?
I do recoil from my own bodiless thoughts
That flit like blinding motes beneath my brain.
What was 't she said ? . . To have the Cardinal
Put out of pain ? Pah ! like a dog ! And I
Who am to quench his life am babbling in
My sleep about his burial . . If 't be so,
Would I could never wake to do the deed
That 's fastened on me.

Enter MESSENGER.

(CASTALDO, *startled, turns round, exclaiming,*)

Ha ! Thou didst not hear ?
From whence come these ?

MESSENGER.

From Austria, to you,
My Lord Castaldo.

CASTALDO.

Give them me . .

(MESSENGER *delivers despatches.*) Withdraw.

[*Exit* MESSENGER.]

(CASTALDO *breaks the seal, and reads.*)

FERDINAND'S SIGN MANUAL . . . private!

(*Glances over the despatch, reading audibly here and there.*)

“ *Martinuzzi,*

*Whom we hereby do sentence capitally,
Hath grown too powerful for our kingdom's weal,
Which withers 'neath that Churchman's baleful
rod.*

*Ever successful, never out of action;
In league with Solyman, he threatens Buda.
His projects of ambition will determine
Only with life, which therefore see cut off;
And for this service, faithfully performed,
Look to receive the hand of Queen Czerina.”*

Subscribed by FERDINAND himself! He hath
stampt

His broad state seal upon this fearful doom.
Reasons of loyalty and patriotism
Do sanctify the deed; and my revenge
With justice is enlarged. A nobler motive,
A more august Avenger prompt me now
To do what else I might abhor. Then wherefore
Meltest thou, Piadena? Dost thou ask

Justification, higher, loftier ?

Oh heart ! Such pleas I feel were urged in vain,
But for this marriage.

Heaven, that lookest on,
Rain thy broad deluge first ! All teeming Earth,
Disgorge thy poisons till the attainted air
Offend the sense ! Thou miscreative Hell,
Let loose calamity !

(*After a pause.*) What must be done ?
Shall Isabella see this warrant ? . . . Yes.

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

APARTMENT IN THE PALACE OF MARTINUZZI.

Enter MARTINUZZI *and* TURASC.

TURASC.

With drink, my Lord.

MARTINUZZI.

This should have been foreseen.

TURASC.

He babbles wildly, and the brain, whose secrets
Tortures might fail to ope, breaks loose with wine.

MARTINUZZI.

Turasc, your hand. Thou art a man to cherish.
Should from yond' cloud a voice think to persuade
me

To any other trust, I'd not believe it.

TURASC.

My Lord . . .

MARTINUZZI.

Your thoughts and words do not spring
blindly,
Like Ocean billows, now conjoined, now severed ;
But blossom into fruit. Upon thy deeds
I'd risk my life, my soul . . . thy *kernel*'s sound.

TURASC.

Your words are honour.

MARTINUZZI.

They're not lightly uttered.
(*After a pause.*) To-morrow Rupert hence de-
parts . . What would he ?

TURASC.

He'll join your revelry to-night, he says.

MARTINUZZI.

He is a trouble unto my eyes, and yet
While he remains in Hermanstadt I cannot
Endure him from my sight. (*Aside.*) If Isabella
Should see and recognize . . I will not risk it.
(*To TURASC.*) I would not have him leave his
chamber : mark me.

Should he essay it, Turasc, and intrude
His presence at our festival, command him
Retire. What said he ?

TURASC.

That your Eminence
Knew how to mould life's chances to your bent ;
And more he hinted at.

MARTINUZZI.

He is a wretch
Whose highest excellence is that infirmity
Which draws a veil betwixt us and self-knowledge.
His virtue is his ignorance. (*Aside.*) He hath . .
And 't is a blessed relief . . enlarged my spirits
Since he forbears to press his insolent suit.
All my mad dreams are drowned in this high dowry
Of Halitz he hath extorted . . . for the present.
And who hath survived the past makes much I
ween
Of the sure present, . . he forereads the future.
Well, I by wedding Sigismund to Czerina
Put far away the evil day. Who knows,
But like the Sun that labours through a tempest
I shall repair my peace of mind ? . .

(*Aloud.*) Count Turasc,

Bring Rupert hither.

[*Exit* TURASC.]

I “know how to mould
By use life’s chances to my bent,” did he say?
(*With enthusiasm.*) It is my genius! . . . And my
bent’s my country!

(*He pauses, lost in thought: then having crossed
the stage,*)

Betwixt our school days and the prime of life
A hundred thousand objects lie in wait,
The hatch and brood of opportunity.
There is a method in these things. I’ve seen
A spawn with specks in standing plashes: each
Dilates, the head, the tail; the reptile quickens;
The fins with slow progression disappear,
While limbs supply their place; wherewith at last,
By gradual scale accomplished in the marsh,
The perfect creature leaps upon the sward.
Thus by degrees we grow out of our knowledge,
Both mind and stature, till in tract of time
Our human nature up to spirit works,
And grace consummates all. Meanwhile the world
Feigning strange shadows of the truth, set down,
Each one as Patriot, Tyrant, or what not,
After his seeming, doing injury
Oftener than justice in their mole-eyed maze;

And thus I stand on earth again : Sir
Rupert !

Re-enter TURASC with RUPERT.

I have sent for you. Sir Rupert, 't is my will
You keep your room, and not intrude yourself
Upon to-night's gay scene. You wot well wherefore.

RUPERT.

Keep lent, yet feel this heat like blood, because
Thou would 'st not trust the air if thou could'st
help it,
With what's between us ? By the Bacchus in me ! . .

MARTINUZZI (*interrupting*).

Beware, Sir Rupert, of forgetfulness.
The drained goblet is a mirror often
Wherein all men may look except ourselves.

RUPERT.

You and I, Cardinal . . .

MARTINUZZI (*breaking in*).

Caitiff, you and I !
Keep within bounds.

RUPERT.

Oh cry you mercy ! I
Have so perforce. But fear not I will harm thee,
Or undo that boy to make you find repentance.

MARTINUZZI (*indignantly*).

Harm me ? vile worm ! Think not 't is in thy will
To outlast the thought. Fear thee ? whose life
I spared
When in your rage you ran upon my sword.
I then forebore thee, as Turasc will witness ;
But if

RUPERT (*aside*).

He awes my throat. (*Aloud.*) I'll
yield myself
To close keep willingly.

MARTINUZZI.

Thou hadst best. Turasc,
Take him to guard to-night. If he break bounds
Use force. (*Significantly.*) You wear a sword.

TURASC.

I shall remember ;
And do my office strictly.

MARTINUZZI (*apart*).

Ebon Night
Will shortly lose its name, and mingle with
The dawn that ushers me to my content.
Some gentle Spirit walks upon my blood
And makes me light at heart. Methinks all woe
Hath passed or will have soon. I'm in the
vein
To greet my guests. I'm full of peace all over.
[*Exit* MARTINUZZI.

RUPERT (*aside*).

For all he says, I have a mask within ;
And like a chrysalis will presently,
Beneath the glancing beams of ladies' looks,
Put on delight and life.

TURASC.

I shall be glad
When you think fit to leave your image with me,
And seek your lodging.

RUPERT.

Why were my idea
Society more welcome than myself?

TURASC.

Because more readily banished, for I count it
Time thrown away that 's spent with either of you.

RUPERT.

'T is pity you are troubled with an office
Which drives o'er your content the thankless duty
To wait upon me still. By your leave, my Lord,
I would unknown witness your sports to-night.

TURASC.

Dare you propose it?

RUPERT.

Come, I 'll bear the blame.
My disposition doth affect soft joys,
And the name of Sybarite : Let who will practise
Gain and grow that way rich, or high employ
And that way great, my chief felicity
Is love : I reckon wealth in the wake of pleasure,
And grandeur passion's lackey, and so prize 'em.
I 'll join your rout.

TURASC.

I will advise the Regent.

You forfeit all his bounty, all that ranks
Thee higher than deserving men, by this.

RUPERT.

Bounty? And do I not a service for it
Deserves his gratitude?

TURASC.

It shows not well
That in your sleep or drink you hint at matters
Touching his Grace.

RUPERT.

The world is full of shows!
Diadems and Monks and Maids. They take the
eye
That cannot penetrate beyond the bark
Of things: What pity they are but appearers!
Brilliant bubbles!
Issues of soap and breath, slippery and void.
There's one you wot of proves it.

TURASC.

Now by Heaven!

RUPERT.

May I . . .

TURASC.

I've said. Hie you unto your chamber ;
Or by my sword ! that's apt to take acquaintance
Of your hot blood, I will return to show
The height of my displeasure. If I do,
Look for no less than death.

[*Exit* TURASC.]

RUPERT.

That's a disguise
Indeed to grin, and play the antic in ;
But I have one more to my mind, in which
I will join your celebration of these Nuptials,
Startling the modest ear of night with joy
For what I thought inferred my future wreck.

(*He seats himself.*)

When wind and tide seem adverse, and the helm
Powerless to guide, and all our anchorage loose,
I see there is an under current still
That works us round . . . So some barks make
the Port.

Yet it exceedeth reason's reach his Highness
Should be so ready with this Royal boon,

When that my keeping silence bars no longer
 Lord Sigismund of succession . . . he will reign.
 Methinks my hold upon his Eminence
 Ought to relax, instead whereof 't is clear
 He fears me still. My Mother (rest her soul !)
 Together with myself *at first* were pinioned ;
 And that the rigour of the law would follow
 We surely deemed. When lo ! without a word
 The law was slacked, and we were set at large,
 Untried, unpunished. Judgment went not forth,
 By Martinuzzi's orders. How was this ?
 Authority, whose front we trembled at,
 Became our dull accomplice. Thereupon
 I struggled in the visions of the day,
 And even in sleep, with the assured conviction
 That Justice was abused, Power erred like others,
 But had a license in it and remission,
 For all its lapses. I began to carry it
 As we had changed persons with the Cardinal.
 Which he at first bore with a reasoning air
 Of mild remonstrance, but strove ere long
 To frown me down, who not the less persisted ;
 Scorning the craft would play with a false die
 Before a cunning gamester. Soon I held
 The tone of one man with his equal : Then
 I put on something of superior sanctity,

And dropped a word or two of what my duty
Demanded of me, till I found the way
To coin his nerves for Gold . . and Gold is Love,
Ease, Power, what is it not? But one thing
passes

Always my skill to fathom. *Why at first . . .*
Jove! Here's Count Turasc with his weapon
out:

If he find me here!

[Starts up and Exit hurriedly.]

SCENE II.

A SUITE OF GRAND APARTMENTS, *lighted up magnificently with Lamps, and filled with NOBLES and LADIES in Masks and without: Several pass and re-pass through the wide folding doors thrown open: Music: A Dance of Masks.*

Enter SIGISMUND masked, and TURASC masked, severally.

TURASC.

Ho ! my Lord Sigismund ?

SIGISMUND.

Turasc ?

TURASC.

The same :

May 't please you recollect me ?

SIGISMUND.

Truly, friend,

I know you by your short crisp ebon hair
Above that marble nape of thine.

TURASC.

I you,
Because I heard you meant to ensconce yourself
Within that friar's piece of chevaux-de-frize.

SIGISMUND.

Do I look a monk?

TURASC.

No man can sever you ;
For what is't makes a monk but's garb and
seeming?
Pity thou were not born one !

SIGISMUND.

If I hold
My borrowed form it will be well.

TURASC.

You cannot,
'T is known already. Why the plague upon you
Could you not keep your secret ?

SIGISMUND.

Faith ! I know not
How it got wind.

TURASC.

Be spritelier, my Lord :
You talk as you had but started from a dream.
It is thy bridal eve.

SIGISMUND.

So I am instructed.
Yet when I think my parent 's still unknown
A sorrow steals upon me, and I am lost
As one not worth the owning.

TURASC.

She 's a rare one
Our Maiden Queen ! . . by Juno I will sacrifice . . .
While yet we may . . . unto her. At this hour
To-morrow ! . . In your ear, Sir Bridegroom.

(Whispers SIGISMUND.) Is 't so?

SIGISMUND.

Fie ! Fie ! . . I know not.

TURASC.

'Gad, you make me smile.

(They pour out, and drink wine at a side table.)

See what a pleasant beam steals o'er the cup!
The diamond glance of Queen Czerina's eye
Is not more penetrating. Ha! how feel ye?
Come, charge anew! Do not your pulses beat
Quick time beneath this soul-inspiring lustre?
Dost thou not breathe a spirit with the Morn,
That warms like blood, and bids thee on to . . .
something.

Give me more wine: Drink you, my noble Lord,
Drink, like the Sea, whole floods: 'T is to your
Bride.

MASK.

Make much of her, your Grace.

TURASC.

Sir, time will show
How much he makes of her. I fear she'll groan
for it.

MASK.

We know you spite your Mask as the Epicure tells
When Caviare's passé . . . by your tartness.

Enter RUPERT disguised and masked.

RUPERT.

Save ye, sweet Gentlemen, what wine is toward?
Is 't Tocai?

TURASC.

No Sir, Montepulciano.
The King of Wine we quaff; the occasion's royal.

RUPERT.

Fill me a tun on 't. By God's lid! this monk
Looks as he 'd cross our mirth; now out upon him,
Good Father Sanctity, to cheat the world!
How soberly he stands.

TURASC.

Why would'st thou have him
Stand drunk? That were a feat indeed.

RUPERT (*offering his hand*).

My friend
I should discern you now, but

TURASC.

'T is so long
Since we last met, you would say?

RUPERT.

That's true : when was 't ?

TURASC.

Not since the brazen age.

RUPERT.

I wear a sword.

TURASC.

Which if you draw, good Sir, I may command
ye . . .

RUPERT.

What, Sir ?

TURASC.

To put it up again. Tut ! tut !
We are bosom intimates if you think fit.
Here's to the crummy wench belike you wot of
Who warbled richly in the Opera !
You recollect ?

RUPERT.

No faith ! Unless you mean
The jade who loved a loose-tongued ribald Lord,

Much of your pitch and gait, but for his voice,
His mother's cat had kittened in his mouth.

MASK.

Turasc, thou art paid.

TURASC.

Egad at Carnivals,
Fools' bolts are sped and must rebound. The man
Whose temper cannot waive his privileges
Should keep away from Masques.

MASK.

Where folly's chartered.

TURASC.

To take exceptions 'notes a queasy stomach ;
True mettle's shown not by escaping slights,
But by not wincing. The interpreting
That they can be such is the main part often
Of provocation. Why should aimless words,
Albeit they hit us, gall us with their folly ?
But that warm wench . . . (To RUPERT.) Do you
remember her ?

RUPERT

Quite well, but that's all one.

TURASC.

A likely girl !

RUPERT.

Ay, some such thing.

TURASC.

You 'll pledge her ?

RUPERT.

What ? that jilt ?

TURASC.

By Venus, Queen of Jealousy ! I reach
The spring of all your railing. Hark ye ! Sirs,
There was a scamp, I have heard his comrades
 speak of,
Who marvellously thinned for love of her :
But when he hoped to have had a snap, she left
 him
To sigh alone, else there be tales abroad.

RUPERT.

Go to !

TURASC.

Do you know him ?

RUPERT.

Know him? talking creature!
Pray hush yourself to sleep, we are weary of you.

MASK.

Let us have done with it.

TURASC.

Oh not for me.

RUPERT.

Nor me. His Reverence is recusant
To allay his draughts in water.

MASK.

Faith, he is so.

RUPERT.

Masters! Uncowl the heretic.

TURASC.

'T is not fair,
I'll wager he is as orthodox as any.

MASK.

How long has he taken orders? Why he did not
Pledge the plump lady of the lake erewhiles.

RUPERT.

He's musing on the maid he last condemned
To martyrdom or marriage . . . All the same.

TURASC.

Mind him not; 't is his humour. He will revel
With the best, ay, and 's racier in his mirth,
Take one day with another.

MASK.

I believe you.

RUPERT.

The wine of Italy hath turned to lava,
My veins run restive. I will join the dance.

[*Exit RUPERT: The Stage clears.*]

SIGISMUND *and* TURASC *come forward.*

TURASC.

This shows too leadenly in you. That thy mettle
Should check thus dully!

SIGISMUND.

Give me leave, my friend.

TURASC.

What Gorgon's head hath struck you into silence?
If you must play the statue for your credit
I will entreat a courtesy.

SIGISMUND.

What would you?

TURASC.

Change suits.

SIGISMUND.

It needs not.

TURASC.

But I'll have it so;
That you may muse your full, nor draw men's
eyes.

SIGISMUND.

I'll not deny you. Doff your jubon then.
Your casque I take.

TURASC.

And I your shaven crown.
This sword . . . I'll gird it on for you . . . disarmed

The other day my Lord Castaldo. Strange
How much I scorn that man !

SIGISMUND.

They say he 's mad.

TURASC.

I 'll fit you first.

SIGISMUND.

I thank you.

TURASC.

Prithee tell me,
Where gott'st thou these dull vestments ?

SIGISMUND.

From within ;
And, to say truth, I stole them.

TURASC.

So I thought.
Well, I will make 'em serve ; Do I pinch you ?

SIGISMUND.

No.

TURASC.

Come, this caparison shews royally
Upon your Highness ; Me it shamed. Wilt
buckle ?

SIGISMUND.

I am indifferent.

TURASC.

I warrant why ;
You 've clasps . . Czerina's arms !

SIGISMUND.

Now, Sir, to you.

TURASC.

I am made perfect in an instant ; there.
My cowl now : so, my beads : our toilet 's over.
Stay . . . Yet.
How soon to-morrow. Morrow ? Lo ! the night
Dies in yon line of light, and the pale stars
Go out like glow-worms : Come, let 's pledge each
other ;
Some half score glasses you are behind : Fill home !
Fill till the torrent leap upon our lips.
Here 's to the toy you wot of ! Meet the hour

With sumptuous bowl, and from the wave auspicious
Baptize the infant Day, and call him Happiness.

SIGISMUND.

The rooms are filled.

TURASC.

We meet anon ?

SIGISMUND.

You sway me.

[*Exeunt severally.*

(*They mix with the Masks.*)

Enter CZERINA in a domino and masked.

CZERINA.

That room was airless.

How hot the breaths beat on me where they dance
And waver to and fro.

And I've a motion too, a dull deep motion ;

But mine swings sad and heavy

Like any passing bell. I quake as if

I were a piece of shaking earth. What brings me
'Mid rout and revelry when sorrow sure

Is lonely ? But few brief hours

Are left my feverish hopes before I am buried

Within my bride-bed. God! thy light streams in
Right through the curtains. Runs the time so fast?
Ha! all the night is spent, and waxes faint
And pale with watching, like myself.
Be cursed for aye the shape of the vile mask
conceals thee,

Castaldo!

I've tracked, I've listened, taxed each Knight in
vain.

If that thy footsteps press this painted floor,
Oh Heavens and Earth! which art thou?

(After a pause.)

Martinuzzi,

His heart is ribbed with ice; nor tears nor sighs
Nor would warm prayers thaw it to any softness.
If I live till noon
He'll lead me gently by the hand to the altar,
Gently as Mothers kiss their babes asleep,
And fixed as Fate, with holy rites will damn me.

I hear that Monk's Sir Sigismund . . . My husband
Before the Ave Maria. That's a lie!
The dead they have no husbands. Ha! this way
He makes. Suppose I trust him? Why, Castaldo,
Hast thou abandoned me? Take courage, Soul!
All that concerns thy essence in this world,

Perchance thy immortality in Heaven,
Is cast on this last hope.

Enter TURASC in SIGISMUND's Monk-disguise.

TURASC.

I've crossed this Fair One
Before. She wanders quite alone. Her feet
Would stir a holy hermit with their motion:
All else is eclipsed. So tremulous and light
Their pressure where they touch, that to the flowers
Who spring to meet her tread 't is but a doubt.

CZERINA.

Sir . . .

TURASC.

Did she speak?

CZERINA.

My noble Lord . . .

TURASC.

Her tongue
Goes smooth and thrilling as her Thetis-feet.

CZERINA.

May I request your ear? I will not detain you.

TURASC.

'Till doomsday if you speak till I be weary.

CZERINA.

I would but ask you listen to a tale,
'T is brief.

TURASC.

Then in the telling draw it out.

CZERINA.

It is no story for all ears . . this way.

*(They move a few paces further from a Group of
Masks.)*

There is a lady, Sir, in Hermanstadt,
Who bade me, . . she . . .

TURASC.

That stop was admirable.
I never heard such music.

CZERINA.

Her birth is lofty . . this land owns no higher.

TURASC.

Ha! (TURASC bows low.)

CZERINA.

I have heard men call her fair ; she was so
In days gone by, but care can dull the eye
As soon as age.

TURASC.

What royal Madam, care ?

CZERINA.

Sir, I was born in danger, nursed 'mid sieges,
Nurtured and bred in camps, and horrid wars
Make all the recollection of my youth.
I hate your trumpets and the roar of engines,
Inferring massacre and bloodshed. From
Childhood I shuddered : all my life I yearned
For peace the parent of security.
But when a woman's knowledge filled this heart
No words can paint how I abhorred the pomp
Of martial symbols, and the men who bore them.
Then he . . 't is now two years since . . whom I
long
Had dreamt of . . came to Hermanstadt. He rose
A golden light on my horizon's verge,
And soon, too soon, Love dawned upon my soul.
There do not . . do not answer me . . I mean
Not yet, my Lord. I loved, but not at first

o

I grew acquainted with my heart. In him
 I speak of, Sir, his fine humanity
 Dwelt as an ornament, which became him more
 Than stars of honour. He had not borne arms,
 He was too merciful; and yet his gentleness
 Might shame the soldier 'gainst whose heart his
 trophies
 Are gloriously stuck. I have known him shudder,
 Moisture bedew his forehead, and his eyes
 Glisten with pearl of angels at the sight
 Of blood.

TURASC.

And couldst thou, Lady, affect one
 Of so soft mould?

CZERINA.

Ay, soft. His dainty hand
 Would spare a bee that stung him ; yet his spirit,
 His delicate kind spirit, challenged more
 Than that of any warrior set off
 With all the trim of Mars. I prized in him
 As mild a pattern of forgiving Nature
 As e'er wore earth about it. Thus awhile
 We nourished in a mutual strife of love
 An inward martyrdom . . .

TURASC.

Why dost thou pause ?

CZERINA.

He spake not first, albeit his sap is noble
As feeds the root of Kings. Castaldo hath
The essence of true royalty.

TURASC.

Castaldo !

CZERINA.

You love me not, for love is born of love :
Redeem me, then, release me from your claim :
Refuse me for your bride, and I will bless you.

TURASC (*aside*).

Castaldo ! faugh ! he owns a softer cheek
And more effeminacy than becomes a man ;
A whining posture monger, sewed together
In frippery by his tailor ! And shall he
Pluck forth a blessedness from Sigismund's bosom,
And place it in his own ? Supplant my friend,
Whom nought can raise above his virtues' pitch ?
By Mars ! He shall not.

CZERINA.

Gentle Sir, I thirst
To hear your accents . . . You 'll have pity on me?

TURASC (*aside*).

A trick of Ferdinand to trip up the heels
Of Martinuzzi's ward, and by that means
Into this rule hereafter plant himself.
(*To her.*) You will not marry me?

CZERINA.

Be not offended ;
But set a ransom for the prize ye count on ;
And whatsoever my fortunes you may challenge,
My prayers and my undying gratitude.

TURASC (*aside*).

To cast herself away upon a milksop,
That studies how to sigh and wag his feather,
But never would hold out ! For all the world,
A priceless pearl hung at an idiot's ear.
(*To her.*) No prayer, no ransom ever can suffice ;
My guardian wills it.

CZERINA (*aside*).

So my last hope crumbles

Within my grasp. (*To him.*) In truth you cannot mean it.

The flower you covet is a worthless weed :
For let me tell you I am naturally
Exceeding proud, of an unquiet temper,
Of too strong will to bend, am seldom pleased,
Unless it be with infinite observance,
Faults incident to Princes ; I have to boot
The humours, spleens, familiar to my sex ;
Lacking all providence and steadfastness,
Yea constancy . . except unto Castaldo ;
Or what I have I care not to bestow ;
If I seem good or fair, in fact I am not so ; . .
Not worthy to be loved . . .

TURASC.

Why do you labour
With these exclaims and libels to betray me
To a treason 'gainst your excellence ?

CZERINA.

Can it be
You let a Princess of my youth and place
Play suppliant ? The misery of birth !
Oh think who now entreats your mercy . . one
Whose wills are thy commands.

TURASC.

I do beseech you, pardon me.

CZERINA.

I will not.

I cannot pardon you until you say
You will not have me, Sir.

TURASC.

It were a rudeness,
That ignorance itself would blush to offer,
And my love dare not risk. Oh! rather, Lady,
I'll wed thee, and I'll wear thee in my heart,
For the high interests of Erdely,
And yet mistake me not; Of all the world
Thy betrothed husband is thy friend . . Believe it.

CZERINA (*violently*).

He is my fiend!
(*In a tone of deprecation.*) Oh no, Lord Sigis-
mund,
You will, I know, for all this callous bearing . .
Nay turn not from me . . not reject my prayer.

TURASC.

We are interrupted : By your gracious leave ! ..
Most loyally . . . (*He bows low.*)

CZERINA (*interrupting*).

A moment ! .. By your duty ! ..
Your love ! .. Allegiance . . .

[*Exit* TURASC.

(*She sinks on her knees.*)

Heaven and Earth ! I am
The wretch of all that stagger round the world.

Enter BONNEVAL.

BONNEVAL.

A wondrous handsome creature as I live !
And looks like choicest alabaster. When
I 'm dead, I 'd wish no better effigy
Of Madame B., with monumental robe
And hands enclasped, to kneel before my tomb.
My voice hath spoiled the picture of her rest.

CZERINA (*rising*).

He is my last hope.
I will not lose it. Gone ! I am used well !
Oh ! yes, I look and feel as if I were
That which I am. For what enormous sin,

Heaven ! For what enormous guilt of my
Great Ancestors am I subjected thus ?
I will go pray . . No, I will imprecate
Some Angel with destroying fire to sweep
Before his chariot my enemies,
My worst . . who drinks my blood . . the Cardinal !
Yet were his Highness here he 'd soothe me with
soft accents ;
Tame me with words as false as nurses frighten
babes with ;
And in few hours will immolate me in Church ;
And I shall quietly suffer martyrdom,
If he don't perish
Before these nuptials ; at which baleful thought
Tears unbidden rise. By my soul ! I think
He 'd daunt me on my deathbed, turn my spirit
From the high road to Heaven . . . With a glance
Of horrid fascination suck me in,
Like a dark eddy to its wheeling core,
And pull a curse upon me ;
At God's own footstool quell my treacherous
tongue,
Until it gave itself the lie, and faltered
Whate'er might suit his dark designs,
With oaths as monstrous as to swear to love
Where I withhold my heart.

BONNEVAL.

Her voice is low
As Madame B.'s before I married her.
'T is not so now. Those golden wires that sweep
Down from that beauteous head might string the
harp
Of God Apollo, as I used to swear
To Madame B., when first I courted her.
Since then they are darker like her eyelashes.

CZERINA.

Who is this? What are you, Sirrah?

BONNEVAL.

Now she's coming!
Put case I let my virtue ooze a little?
Who knows? Not Madame Bonneval. 'T were
hard
Not to be faithless once in a way, and I must;
And now if ever; say I be? . . . I will.

CZERINA.

He is the same. My prayers, shot up to Heaven,
Fell back like lazy mists; which straight dis-
perse,

And here's their answer. (*To him.*) Pray, my friend,
wilt thou

Be a courteous guide to me for some few days ?
I dare assure thee I'll not prove ungrateful.

BONNEVAL.

Now would she whip me up under her arm
As an old fox might swoop away a gosling.

CZERINA.

Wilt thou attend me ?

BONNEVAL.

When ?

CZERINA.

This very hour.

BONNEVAL (*aside*).

Quick work ! I never was idolatrous
Save unto Madame B. in all my days :
But she's a thing beyond my plighted troth :
I may as well be lost for love as looking.
(*To her.*) Lady, I will go with thee.

CZERINA.

Join me here
Some half hour hence. I'll then explain me
further.

[*Exit* CZERINA.]

BONNEVAL.

Here is another chance !
I will not lose it for want of putting forward.

[*Exit* BONNEVAL.]

Enter ISABELLA *masked.*

ISABELLA.

I have not crossed the Cardinal. These proofs
Have armed me, and we stand on equal ground ;
Or rather scorn, and wrath, and injury
Give me the advantage. Oh ! but yesterday
He might have blown me 'bout the world with a
breath ;
To-day, prest down with guilt, he's at my mercy.
And if (as I don't doubt I shall incline him)
Castaldo's purpose hold, shall taste my justice.
But I must temporize till the blow be struck.
If Martinuzzi have not in the blood
Of my poor Son glued him to impunity . . .

Enter RUPERT.

RUPERT.

A Goddess! By the mass! proportioned, sized,
Sublimed unto my wish . . and love's. I were
An Atheist not to breathe my incense quite
Through holy lips like thine, and loose my soul
there. (*Offers to kiss her.*)

ISABELLA (*starting back*).

Hold, Ruffian!
Unmannered Satyr!

RUPERT.

Satyr! I am composed
Of richer clay than e'er Prometheus wrought from.
I am a man; and for my countenance, Lady,
Look you! (*Takes off his mask.*) Like Gemini let's
twine our limbs
Together. Yield, be pliant, make no pother,
Or by the Venus in thee! . . .

ISABELLA.

Villain! Cease . . .

RUPERT.

Come, there is not a grace bedecks thy body
But plays the pimp within. I know your Sex.
First I will steal a kiss, and then we 'll parley.
(*Seizes her.*)

ISABELLA.

Dire lightnings! Scoundrel! Help!

SIGISMUND *rushes in.*

SIGISMUND.

What frantic cries . . .
Ha! free the lady, ravisher! Or thou diest.

RUPERT.

Sir Nimble-tongue, is it you? be not officious:
Find other sport, and take a magpie with thee.
Avaunt! Grow wiser, and curtail thy wits;
Away, or I 'll spear you, Swordfish!

SIGISMUND (*draws*).

Nay, thou rascal!

RUPERT.

What shall I give thee to begone?

Enter TURASC.

TURASC (*hurriedly addressing SIGISMUND*).

My Lord . . .

Ha! Rupert!

RUPERT.

I am dismasked. Now render quittance
Forbidden feet upon this bounding floor.

[RUPERT *runs off*.

TURASC.

I'll take a copy from your speed.

(*To SIGISMUND.*) My sword
Again: Your Highness' pardon!

(TURASC *takes his sword from the hand of
SIGISMUND, and rushes out.*)

ISABELLA (*musings*).

Said he, Rupert?

SIGISMUND (*taking off his mask*).

These revels fever me. What meant my friend?

ISABELLA (*after gazing on SIGISMUND intently*).

He is the Regent's foundling. Whence? His
voice,
It thrills upon my ears

SIGISMUND.

Fair Lady, spoke you?

ISABELLA.

Stronger than music . . Is it memory?

(*Violent clashing of swords heard without.*)

SIGISMUND (*looking beyond the scenes*).

My Friend! Turasc!

(*Exit SIGISMUND, and almost immediately returns
with TURASC, bearing the body of RUPERT,
which they place on an ottoman.*)

TURASC.

He's dead. What I do next shall be to tell
The Regent of this chance. Madam . . My Lord,
I acted by command. [*Exit TURASC.*]

ISABELLA (*with bitter emphasis*).

Oh doubtless! (*Apart.*) Rupert?

Bonneval's eyes forestalled the truth. But
wounded,

When yesterday . . . I stand upon a tower !
Shadows like prophecies float dimly by.

(Pauses, lost in thought.)

Had he done it formerly, there had been some
sense in it.

SIGISMUND.

See ! He revives.

RUPERT *(reviving)*.

I 'm sped. My Sun sets bloody,
And everlasting night

(Looks up to SIGISMUND.) What visage is it,

That parallels the full idea for ever

Wrapt up within me ? Ha ! Thou art he !

SIGISMUND.

Art better ?

RUPERT.

Thou art Martinuzzi's Ward ?

SIGISMUND.

I am so, Sir.

RUPERT.

I knew it by your likeness to your race.
Justice is ever equal ! You be witness !
I've documents to prove this youth is royal . . .
The son of Isabella by King John.

ISABELLA (*apart*).

It was his Father's voice ! I find the secret,
And whispering of my Nature.

SIGISMUND.

What is it
Thou sayest ?

RUPERT.

I have proofs.

ISABELLA (*with enthusiasm*).

They are in his lineaments,
His voice, his air ! What need of meaner proofs ?

RUPERT.

Papers are lodged in the house of Bonneval,
In Warsaw, which . . .

P

ISABELLA.

They are in my possession.

RUPERT.

Thine? No!

ISABELLA (*throwing off her mask*).

I am the widow of King John.

RUPERT.

If, Madam, thou speak'st true, this is thy son.

SIGISMUND (*calmly*).

May I be bold upon your words to think
This Lady is my Mother?

RUPERT.

Thou art the King.

SIGISMUND (*with uncontrollable emotion*).

Say it again. I'll kneel as reverently
As to an Angel. Tell me I've a Mother.
Quicken my dull lethargic sense, inform it
With a new soul. Mother! What word sounds
like it?

How many days I've lived upon the hope!

And in the still night wept myself to sleep
With thinking that it may be . . . And it is !
Great God, thou dost vouchsafe a present bliss
Makes my past orphanage sport! Dismaying
world !

I do defy thy malice from henceforward.
I am too full ; I clasp thee, Oh my Mother !

ISABELLA.

My joy 's born weeping ; Art thou Sigismund,
My Son ?

SIGISMUND.

My heart instructs me so to think ;
My knees incline to show the reverence struck
By such a sound as Mother through my ears.

ISABELLA.

Listen !

SIGISMUND.

I will. But should I breathe too loud,
Tell me. (*To RUPERT.*) I prithee to the point: Art
sure ?

RUPERT.

There be white witnesses in Heaven who know it.
 Those papers will confirm. The approach of death
 Dissolves earth's clinging mists, and opes the cloud
 That had concealed your birth. Thou art the babe
 My Mother bade me put to nurse in Ofen ;
 And afterwards, by order of the Regent,
 I did consign thee to Friar Francis' care,
 In far Carpathia. No stings of conscience
 Prick with such terror as the league I joined in
 With the Princess Matilda and my Mother
 To rob you of your rights. May this atone !
 Lady Czerina is thy Cousin. (*Feebly.*) I sink
 An earth-born slave ! I am mouldering to that
 Which I am come of. I do think the dust
 Is ill concealed within me, nay, is uppermost :
 I rot and ruin to eternity,
 Unless . . . Oh Heaven forgive me ! and . . . [*He dies.*]

SIGISMUND.

His soul

Has gone for answer !

ISABELLA.

Give me leave, my Lord ;
 And understand at large how sure you are
 My own ! It was . . . But see, I am prevented.

This way : The advent to my hopes is nigh !
Didst speak ? Methought thou whispered to my soul
(How sweet !) *Revenge!* . . . Till now I was no
Mother !

[*Exeunt* ISABELLA and SIGISMUND.

Enter BONNEVAL, *cloaked for a journey.*

BONNEVAL.

At her beauties service, and . . .
(*Starts at seeing the dead body.*) What stumbling
block
Is this cast in my way ? I shake to pieces.
This is no place to sleep in, as I take it.
I 've seen these clothes before, and hoped to have
worn 'em,
Thou having cast them off. My wife wrought this.
She little thought I know the embroidery,
Also the cunning of her needle, where
Young Cupid's arrows pierce true lovers' hearts.
Alas ! these stains are Death's ! Oh, Rupert,
Rupert !
Why dost thou walk and catch cold after dying ?
I 'll search the wound ; No, I will search his
pockets,
Being his sole executor for my wife.

Her picture! Well I never! and a letter
 From her: and here's another, and another!
 I'll read 'em at more leisure. How he glares
 On me! Should this be no corporeal presence?
 How came it here? If it should be an illusion?
 I've a lean conscience, and can speak no Latin.
 It is his ghost, the very ghost of Rupert!
 Oh Lord! Methinks thou art grown angelical.
 About thy head I view a heap of clouds
 Wrapt like a Turkish turban, and thy feet
 For buckles sport the stars they'll shortly touch.
 I do conjure thee leave me! Do not fright me!
 You know I am not valiant by nature.
 Be a good spirit, if thou art immaterial,
 And vanish. What, thou wilt not? Now I see
 He comes to warn me from the woman I wait for.
 Well, I repent. On wings connubial
 To Madame B. I'll fly. In her chaste arms
 Pour out my soul, confess my false intent,
 Swear to offend no more, and be forgiven!

[Exit BONNEVAL slowly.]

Enter MARTINUZZI, looking after BONNEVAL.

MARTINUZZI.

The rooms are cleared. He slowly turned away,

Amazed, and seemed, methought, to go off trem-
bling,

Loth to depart, e'en as a soul will cling
Out of mere habit to this state of being,
After its gloss and gauds, evanished, prove
The hieroglyphics of eternal sorrow.

The lamps diffuse a sickly gleam, which daylight
Is fast o'erwhelming, as the ocean flood
Engulfs the stagnant marsh. In such bright
scenes,

Where solemn Night is bribed by a thousand forms
Of mirth and revels, and the vaporous ether
Blinds with illusive glare, alas! how often,
Like to the people that St. Cyril speaks of,
We are practical Atheists, and as we list
Live, till the morn dispels the unhallowed light.
So vain, and meretricious, and so worthless
Shows all the dazzle of this night of time
In the orient beam of Heaven!

Ha! who 's there?

I feel a strange and thrilling coldness o'er me.
Rupert a senseless clod of earth? How 's that?
So knowing, and canst thou welter in thy blood
Without the power of injury or offence?
How? How? I know not; and what matters how?

Enough 't is Heaven's will o'ertakes my wishes.
Struck mute that tongue for evermore! The seal
Of the silent tomb be on him with my fears,
And waking jealousies! Then why, my heart,
Thy faltering measure still? I stand, methinks,
Firm as the centre. Fate hath done her worst!
She's spent, and I, her Master, from henceforth
Do wear security so thick upon me,
I fetch my breaths in peace.

Enter ISABELLA.

(After gazing at MARTINUZZI awhile, she slowly approaches him.)

ISABELLA.

Lord Cardinal.

MARTINUZZI *(starting)*.

Who's that? How Madam? Good day to your
Grace.

ISABELLA.

Fair peace unto your meditations, wrapt
In clouds above this piece of frailty where
His soul stands shivering before the Judge
Will make no tender search into his track

Of life, . . by whom suborned, by what bribes
 • tempted,
Those subtle pleas you Churchmen say that hide
From our own knowledge our deformities.
But for this corpse . . . Death is the life of
 good men ; . .

MARTINUZZI (*interrupting*).

 Knows your Grace
In what vile fray he fell ?

ISABELLA.

 But woe betide him !
If he hath done aught that leaves a stain on the soul,
Such as abetting traitors, then I say,
When he shall come to knock at that bright gate,
Woe unto him !

MARTINUZZI.

 Your Grace's pleasure must be
Matter of essence that doth choose an hour
Unapt for conference.

ISABELLA (*solemnly*).

 Death's throat is stuffed,
Else like Sibylla's cave, it would breathe horrors,

And through the hollow windings of our ear
Ransack our conscience . . . that is, were we guilty.

MARTINUZZI.

Be the Man's sins forgiven !

ISABELLA.

Man's sins ! why,
Do you not know his name ? 'T were fitting first
He cleared his bosom to you ere you shrived him.

MARTINUZZI.

His soul is past confession ; all he wants
Some thousand years' sleep, and a marble pillow.

ISABELLA.

Put case, I took into my throat his voice.

MARTINUZZI.

An impious supposition !

ISABELLA.

You shall shrive me . . .

MARTINUZZI.

To filch the holy habits of the church
To clothe unhallowed fancies were accurst.

(*Aside.*) My soul doth shake my body with its
burden,
And musters all the agonies of the past
Before my contemplation.

ISABELLA.

“*Reverend Father,
Thou knowest the low condition whence I sprung*” . . .

MARTINUZZI (*aside*).

Coldness invades me! (*To her.*) Madam, cease
this mockery.

ISABELLA.

My breath unrips deluded Rupert’s breast.

MARTINUZZI (*starts*).

Ha!

ISABELLA (*takes a paper from the folds of her dress, and
reads*).

“*When that my Mother upon Sigismund’s birth . . .*”

MARTINUZZI (*interrupting, with violent gesture*).

What dost thou read there, Madam? “*Sigismund’s
birth!*”

No more of it; I know not what thou sayest.

ISABELLA.

Then why that haggard visage if thou hast
No consciousness? What regions infinite
Lie 'twixt thy tongue and heart! I hold the copy
Of that this false knave writ to Hungary's Regent.

MARTINUZZI (*aside*).

This is a frenzied dream. (*To her.*) Some calumny
Forged 'gainst my state; the caitiff had a brain.

(*A pause.*)

Enter behind CZERINA, equipped for a journey.

CZERINA (*apart*).

My Mother in close parley with the Cardinal!

MARTINUZZI (*with agitation*).

May I see the paper?

ISABELLA.

Let me spell it first,
And then remit me. I am at confession.

MARTINUZZI (*with a gesture of horror and impatience*).

Read! read! for though thy venomous tongue
love hissing
Worse than a snake, and more malignant juice

Drop from thy words than lurks within the teeth
Of serpent creatures ; . . though each breath
 thou vomit'st
Act like a stream of brimstone on the penal
Furnace within, I cannot choose but listen.

ISABELLA (*taking a letter from her vest*).

I had forgot. I have a letter here
From holy Priest, I need not designate him.
Suppose we scan its purport ere your Eminence
Remit Sir Rupert : He is at confession.

(MARTINUZZI *covers his face with his hand* :
 ISABELLA *reads*.)

“*Unto my Soul's adored ! Princess Matilda.*”

(MARTINUZZI *starts : his hand falls*.)

ISABELLA (*reading*).

“*Oh thou art fairer than thy fortune, Lady,
And that is imperial ; and wilt thou then
Out of thy love, now bent on me so poor,
Steal from thy Palace home, nor breathe thy
 charm
In bright society, but where I pant
To lay my load of passion 'fore thy feet,
At constellated Midnight, take thy stand ?*”

*Oh! Princely Maid! Thou gildest him thou
look'st on ;*

And thy strong lustre feeds my Soul with light.

What though a Cowl be on my head, thou knowest

Our laws forbid not yellow Hymen's aid.

Pale learning yet may wreath that Cowl with laurel,

Or substitute her seal of dignity.

Albeit not royal, still I do aspire

To holier Princedoms, and even failing these ;

Love's is the truest Sovereignty, and thou

Shalt daff aside thy pageantry, Matilda,

To share his blessed realm with GEORGIUS

PRÆSUL."

MARTINUZZI (*who had stood during the perusal of the letter
like one whose mind is harrowed with the severest re-
collections, exclaims with violent perturbation*).

Stay there ! 't is all a mockery ! who knows ?

There is some hidden power in these dead things,

Or he is not lifeless.

(*Addressing the body.*) Rupert ! Perjured Devil !

Did'st not protest these papers were in Warsaw ?

Thou'd'st have a patent for Mount Halitz, Hey ?

And yet play'st false ! This vision wears me out !

I dreamt thou wert no more, and there thou sitt'st

No apparition, but a substance. Well :

I know not what I say . . Sir, pray go on.
What is your suit to me? Ah! How? Audacious!
The Queen of Hungary's hand? You must excuse
me.

(*To ISABELLA.*) Pardon, your Grace, my thoughts
were elsewhere busied.

If that I must give ear . .

ISABELLA.

Now Rupert speaks ; . . .

*“ Just rate the value of my keeping silence.
The babe I bore from my shrewd Midwife-Mother,
Sworn to the privacy of this great secret,
Was issue to the Crown. The world admires
The lovely substitute thou found'st for him,
Her specious rank deception! Oh, none guess,
That the perpetual zone of Regal foreheads
Descends to clasp the brow”*

MARTINUZZI (*breaking in*).

I will hear no more.

ISABELLA.

“ Of fair Matilda's child.”

MARTINUZZI (*interrupting*).

Those words are writ

With ink that's brewed in the infernal Styx,
Black as the wretch's heart.

(*After a pause.*) It makes me wonder,
Even as you see till I am not myself . . .
Albeit I know your Highness' disposition . . .
That you should lend your aid and voice while
 rancour
Spits poison on my purple.

ISABELLA.

 Oh ! take heed
I do not make thee cast that popular shroud
Wherein thy proud Soul sits apart like Death.
It makes you wonder ? Sir, it is a wonder
How men's ambitions should affect high honour,
And not be sound at heart. But say 't is false,
Oh, 't is a little word, and I 'll believe thee.
Yet can thy writing lie wherein thou speakest
With seeming indignation of this treason ?
How cunningly 't was plotted to convey,
From fair Matilda, whom the world believed
Unwedded, by our common midwife's aid,
A spurious progeny, new born, into
My ignorant arms, at that same luckless hour,
Made Mother of a Prince, whose birthright was

The crown that girl usurps ! as if a hedgeling
Should plume her feathers in the eagle's nest.

CZERINA (*apart*).

Merciful Heavens ! Do my ears deceive me ?

MARTINUZZI (*aside*).

I have heard that which had I apprehended
To hear, I should have died ere listened to.
It is. And I 'm alive . . to all appearance,
Calm as security in the midst of ruin.

ISABELLA.

Why how thou look'st now, that of late wert noble !
Can the stars lose their way ? or from the cope
Of Heaven descend to kiss the nether deep ?

MARTINUZZI (*aside*).

Each word she speaks like piercings of a sword
Confirms my shame . . lays bare my heart alive.

ISABELLA.

Let us condition : I may yet be mute,
Nor with Fame's trump i' the public thoroughfares
Play havock with your name.

MARTINUZZI.

That threat hath made an end. The sun is up :
I must be stirring ; 't is the hour of council :
And my affairs are great. Behold me ! Ah !

(After a pause.)

Where 's the Queen Mother ? Though 't is clear
. . as clear
As thine own eyes, thou art abased by tales
Framed to dishonour me, I should be glad
To prevent scandal : What do you propose ?

ISABELLA.

That Sigismund being invested in those honours
His blood and birth do challenge, and this league
Of marriage cancell'd, you, my Lord, quit Erdely.
Upon such terms I will commit this evidence
(Showing the packet.)
To the oblivious flames.

MARTINUZZI.

It bears false witness.
My innocence might safely dare the appeal,
For truth, howe'er eclipsed by mists of earth,
Must like the sun break out ; . . but I prefer

Thus to forestall thy charge, which told the
world

With thy last breath, thou'd'st die uncredited.

(He seizes the packet.)

ISABELLA *(with solemn energy)*.

The Spirit of Justice hovers 'twixt Heaven and
us,

By whom all things are stable, who, slow-coursed,
Outstrips the herald-sheeted lightning, and
Makes him or flag amazed, or stoop at guilt;
And (flapping his blue wings along) scorch up
All earthbred glory like a sapless reed.

Mine is her cause; that she will not forsake it
Judge thou from this; Sir Rupert ere he died
Impeached thee in the ears of Sigismund.

MARTINUZZI.

This is the coinage of thy quenchless hate,
Blacker than aconite . . . thou heed'st not that,
So it be bitter.

ISABELLA.

Thou may'st trust to it.
For judgment springeth up ere harvest time,
As hemlock in our path. My Son . . . the King,

Hath read those proofs, which shall be brought to
light,

Though they find out Earth's centre !

(After a pause.) Reconsider,
Lest when your prudent moments visit you,
You do repent.

MARTINUZZI.

That shall not be, I swear,

Then say . . .

ISABELLA.

Forbid these banns . . .

MARTINUZZI.

Enough : Farewell :

It must have been !

ISABELLA.

Else will I tongue thee, traitor,
And sweep away, like chaff before the wind,
The refuge of thy pride . . thy specious seeming.
The news of which shall make thee save the laws,
A labour by self-slaughter. Fare thee well !

*(CZERINA crosses the length of the stage slowly,
and Exit.)*

MARTINUZZI (*in a faltering voice*).

A moment! Oh! let this thought pass from me!

(*After a pause, in a violent paroxysm.*)

Thou hast flung fire into my brain, and blood
Into my eyes: *I'm blinded!* (*More calmly.*) Not
gone? Madam,
Why do you stand like Death? I said farewell.
Out of the world! Away! . . . these flames of
sulphur!

ISABELLA.

My Lord, my Lord, thou art inebriate.

MARTINUZZI.

With wormwood . . with the bitterness of grief,
Of which I am the consequence . . . No doubt!

ISABELLA.

Yet pause . . Wilt thou? . . .

MARTINUZZI (*involuntarily*).

Yet pause? Of course. I hope . . .

ISABELLA.

Hope still! Your fate is writhing in my fist.

[*Exit* ISABELLA.]

MARTINUZZI (*stands for some time quite motionless like one stupified, then with renewed passion*).

I'm blinded, and whatever things I see
Blush like a Hell, not to be quenched with tears.
Back to thine iron den, Oh Mighty Fiend!
I know thou fearest my words; Avaunt, dread
Death!

I feel a corpse more crimson than the rest.

(*After a pause.*)

If I am right it is a mass for me
That whizzes in my ears. What is 't that
creeps
Like a dead sleep upon me? Breath! breath!
breath!

I am a buried thing alive! Time's past?
It must be, if the honour which should blunt
His scythe's keen edge, hath felt the pestilent
tooth

Of slander which doth eat into the grave.

(*After a pause, more calmly, but with deep feeling.*)

When my eyes close, I'd have one object . . . one

I love to look on last, ere I be borne
Through the thin-million'd vacuum of space.
I'll seek her straight: My soul will part less
troubled.

And is time past? Faith! very near it. Little
Is left of Martinuzzi. Mountain Soul!
Eclipse awhile Heaven's light from this bright
flower.

Young as the present month, she will be blessed
In wedlock's bonds more than she dreams of yet.

(Pauses, then adds.)

I'll force her hand take that of Sigismund.

[Exit MARTINUZZI.]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

CZERINA *and* TURASC.

CZERINA.

His oratory? If he need my presence,
Let him attend me ; So inform the Cardinal.

TURASC.

His Grace gave orders I should be your convoy.

CZERINA.

You may or may not, Sir, report my words,
But be so courteous, leave me quite alone.

TURASC.

I will acquaint him with your waiting here.

CZERINA.

Waiting, my Lord ! Both you and he, I thought
Were by my breath commanded.

[*Exit* TURASC.

Now my pulse
Throbs like swoln billows when the delirious
Moon
Gives warning at her full. But 't is not fear.
My fears be wholly God's, and not again
Ever ascribed to that blown man, whose spells
Juggle no longer, since . . .

Enter MARTINUZZI *precipitately.*

MARTINUZZI.

So, Lady-bird,
No lackey less august than a Prince of the
Church
I'm told can grace you, and you'd have your
train
Borne proudly up. This high solemnity
Must stand suspended till my reverend steps
Forsooth do wait upon thee. Well, I'll borrow
Boldness to lead my Sovereign to the altar . . .
(*Takes her hand.*)

CZERINA.

Then be it so : let us descend ; with me
Walk hand in hand to death.

MARTINUZZI.

What means your Grace ?

CZERINA.

Do bring me to this trial : I 'll assign
Strange reasons why your kinsman should re-
lease me.

MARTINUZZI.

You should not use the magic of your tongue
Against yourself . . . but Sigismund will be deaf.

CZERINA.

Then I 'd rise up, and tell the assembled world
The Tyrant thou art.

MARTINUZZI.

Oh ! how I loathe
This contradiction ; thou wert better buried ;
Better Omnipotence above the clouds
Parched up the freshness of young life within thee ;
Better thou hadst ne'er been born, and that the
lightning

Had met thee guiltless in thy Mother's womb,
Than now, with matchless front of insolent
smoothness,
To contravene my hopes, or raise a thought
Against the absolute will of Martinuzzi.

CZERINA.

My Lord, if I may speak

MARTINUZZI (*in a severe tone*).

Be dumb! you may not.
Pale that flushed cheek; first quench those blazing
stars;
Gulp down thine impious syllables though they
choke thee,
Lest the firm Earth refuse to bear you up;
Or that my prayers, *which go direct to Heaven*,
Pull down a curse, when you will wish in vain
Each glance you dart had been a scorpion's sting,
Sharper than burning steel in thine own flesh.
I am angry.

CZERINA.

So am I : I will speak : Thou
Art false to me, and all . . .

MARTINUZZI (*with deep feeling*).

I false to thee !
But that thou hast confounded me with pain,

And sweat, and tears, that ooze up from my heart,
And agony, which clings to every nerve,
I'd show thee what a slanderer thou art.

CZERINA.

These words are strange to me.

MARTINUZZI.

There is not one
But is a holy amulet against
Death and his armies of confounding plagues.
Pray that the expiation they imply
May purchase up thy stubbornness, or else,
Spend all the treasures of the Earth in masses
They'll not redeem thy soul.

CZERINA.

Good Heaven! How well
He counterfeits your noise! Now though you roar
Louder than thunder, I will speak my mind.
My soul doth toil with thee, and I am weary
Even at the sound of mine own voice wherewith
In scorn I recommend thee to keep back
Thy proffered expiation. At thine audit
Try its efficacy on thyself.

MARTINUZZI.

Just God!

How thou dost rack us by the very idols
We make unto ourselves. Czerina, frown'st thou !
Were Angels, not with mortal eyes beheld,
Who at our elbows hover, to appear
And plead, not frown, yet should they not prevail
To make a piteous fountain of their tears
To drown my present purpose. This remains,
Will you with me descend, or shall I drag
Thy body to the altar ?

CZERINA.

Hold, my breath !
If not I'll thrust a dagger through my lips,
And bleed to death without a groan. Bring
tortures,
I'll match them with the revenge I leave behind ;
And thou shalt find it, proud man, to confound
thee.

MARTINUZZI.

'T is found already.
Other revenge than that I deal myself
There 's none to inflict.

CZERINA.

Thou dost mistake me still.
Oh, my Lord !
You are no Guardian more than I am Queen.

MARTINUZZI (*turning away his head, hides his face with his arm*).

Great God! thou overheard'st?

CZERINA.

Thou dazzling meteor,
That i' the air, not fixed to the roof of Heaven,
Hang'st like a prodigy to fright this world!
Thy fires are well-nigh spent, and may ere long
Be raked up like a sparkle of the Earth,
And then trod out by Justice.

MARTINUZZI (*clasps his hands before his face: after a pause*).

In that spirit
Which th' heavy laden use to Heaven, whilst
These supple knees, that have been ever stiff
To bend to thee . . . (*He kneels.*)

CZERINA.

Arise, and I will mark
Your every syllable.

MARTINUZZI (*half rising*).

Thus high: and, when
You take my hand in token of consent,
I rise up . . . to your bosom. Didst thou hear
Thou owed'st thy birth unto the late King's Sister?

CZERINA.

Even so.

MARTINUZZI.

Thy Father . . .

CZERINA.

Speak to that : *My Father?*

MARTINUZZI.

On that eventful morn, it chanced, was absent.
When afterwards, with news, that for the Prince
Thy innocent self was substitute, the midwife
Dared crack his ears to pieces. Oh ! methought
His proud heart rived in twain, and his mind's
light
Extinguished suddenly. 'T was long before
The truth redawned.
I cannot dwell upon his sufferings ;
His life of life, his heart of honour cleft !
Wildly he rushed unto Matilda's chamber,
Charged her with treason . . And in that fell hour . .
(*He pauses.*)
What had he done that she should rob him of her ?
Of her and truth, and . . Where, where were they all
Thenceforward ? Where ?

CZERINA.

Sir, where?

MARTINUZZI.

Alas, Czerina!

(He hides his face with both hands).

The Princess perished.

CZERINA.

I must weep her loss.

MARTINUZZI *(after a pause recovering her self-possession).*

At once, thy Sire determined to repair
To Erlau; there to render up to justice
(By laying his Secret Marriage with thy Mother,
And her Conspiracy, before his liege)
Midwife and Son; the latter (Rupert) being
Arrested with the Prince; but ere the bitterness
Of his first agony subsided, tidings
Came of King John's demise. There was a horror!

CZERINA.

I apprehend with wonder.

MARTINUZZI.

At that crisis

A darkness loomed over the region; none
Except thy Father *armed with regal functions*
Could help the vessel of the state from wreck.
He knew did he promulge the truth . . . in course

Of law his regency being void . . 't would plunge
The realm into confusion, rather bring it
Unto its period, since a specious opening
Would thereby offer to the ambitious views
Of Ferdinand and Solyman, who hovered
O'er the dismembered state, like wet-lipped vul-
tures,

Prepared to rend the insufficient carcass.
Thy Father saw the danger, and he cast
His honour in the Nation's gap ; did force
The hold of Pride, and wrench the bent of
Nature ;

Did doom himself to gnawing cares for ever ;
Albeit resolved these injuries to repair
By fighting for thy Cousin a free way
To the loftiest earthly good, which, with thy hand,
Stands on the dangerous passage of this hour
For his acceptance. Advertised of all,
He will his mother overrule to silence.

Reign jointly with King Sigismund. Do not stab
With parricidal obstinacy, the being
Whose pangs are locked or should be locked in
the blood

Which flows within thy veins. Oh Child, thou
knowest not

How much he merits at thy filial hands,
His love, his Providence, those thoughts which
 night
Doth shut down in her casket, and God opens,
His ceaseless orisons, forestalling thine,
His anxious guidance, his undying cares.

CZERINA (*with great emotion*).

Oh God! what a dream! . Sir! . . Cardinal! . .
 My Lord!
Or by what title else I ought to style thee!
The tears course down thy cheek! That look! I
 gasp:
Where is my Father!

MARTINUZZI.

 Groveling in the dust!
Kissing thy feet! Here! Praying of his child
By the blest Ashes of her Sainted Parent
To have mercy on me . . . and she will have mercy.

CZERINA.

My Soul hath been a Prophet in my dreams.
Your knees to me! The light will be ashamed
To see thee thus usurp my duty . . Father!

MARTINUZZI.

I will not quit my hold till, as I kneel,
My eyes all swollen with fretting floods, my hands
Heaved up and clenched, and my stretch'd heart-
strings ready
To break asunder, I extort thy promise
Now to present thyself before the assembled
Court, and espouse King Sigismund. I hear
The Altar call ! Say yes, and I embrace thee.

CZERINA.

Yes . . . (MARTINUZZI *rises*.)
If my words work not within your heart
New motions, I obey in that as all things.

MARTINUZZI.

What would you say ?

CZERINA.

You 've shot another Soul
Into my frame fills me with strength and voice.
So perfect in all else, I had not deemed
Thee clear in this ! Oh joy of joys ! To think
Of thy integrity ! Canst pardon me
For all the irreverend words I have spoken in
My idle moods ? But say ; Is Solyman hostile,

And dangerous as when strong necessity
Did first obstruct the steadfast march of thy soul ?

MARTINUZZI.

Thou know'st his Moony Standards are designed
Against the Arch-Duke.

CZERINA.

And He ?

MARTINUZZI.

Is prostrate. Buda
Must fall, and Hungary again be free.

CZERINA.

Then might not Sigismund uphold the powers
Of Government . . the times being so auspicious ?

MARTINUZZI.

Ay, as thy Husband.

CZERINA.

Wherefore not by right ?

MARTINUZZI.

The scorpion terrors which so long have haunted
me,

Which forced me keep that Rupert from our land,
And which he coined into substantial gold
To bribe his venal and injurious Soul,
Thicken around me at thy breath, and chill me
As all the winds of winter had thrown icicles
To crucify my heart. How black-tongued Slander,
With hoarse exclams, would by the memorable,
And bright and sunny side of my high character
Fly, but with hungry violence stoop upon
The single hateful carcass in her way !
I, that take up all people's eyes and love,
To sink so low as to endure suspicion
Should track my far renown through space and
time !

Could I, who have raised (for which God pardon me!)
An idol here to Fame immaculate,
Know the pure ermine I so dearly cherished
Stained by low-tricking obloquy, and live
An injury to Nature ?
No ; when from proud luxuriance my fame
Doth fall to rankness, may I likewise rot,
'Mid dust, and endless darkness to oblivion !
That I may hear no fiend i' the silent grave
Hint how I'm less than highest in the eyes
Of quick and dead . . . When I 'm beneath the
Earth,

My reputation dearer far than breath,
 Must walk abroad like Angel ever holy.
 Let Sigismund reign with thee, let justice triumph
 Without my suffering soul-felt, living shame,
 Wherefrom I shrink all in a bloody sweat,
 And agony that nigh o'erswells my reason,
 Compared with which the most horrid ceremony
 That waits upon the body's martyrdom
 Were actual, exquisite, substantial bliss.

CZERINA (takes his hand, and grasping it firmly, after a pause speaks with a determined voice).

What fond chimeras hast thou raised to fright
 Thy soul from its bright orbit! Look upon 'em
 With wisdom's eye they vanish. Good my Lord,
 Let Heaven alone, and scorn to doubt his justice.
 Since like a river thou hast kept thy course
 And never blended thy clear spring with foul
 Ambitious thoughts, why should'st thou waste a
 care

Upon the pestilent taints of unsound hearts,
 Being helmed and shielded with a noble con-
 science,

Or stoop to fear when weapon'd with the truth?
 Wherewith such mental exhalations touched,
 Fly like the shapes of clouds dispersed in sunshine.

MARTINUZZI (*shakes his head and turns from her : after a pause*).

Your words do strike a terror which doth tear me
Like fire some mine of Earth ; my frame of man
Quakes as 't would fall to pieces.

CZERINA.

Why would'st make
Distrust a tombstone of your deeds ? Why rob
Yourself of such a glory by weak doubts ?
Or let a vain misgiving bar thy purchase
On Fame to all posterity ? Oh ! wherefore
For such pernicious shadows, that like dreams
Have dwelt I fear upon you long, make sale
Of your dear peace of mind, and so pluck down
To ruin and their foundations all you built ?

MARTINUZZI.

Think you I dream because I 'm no less jealous
Of an imaginary speck upon
The sanctified whiteness of my stoled robe
Than of the sin that comes by wilfulness ?

CZERINA.

When Malice throws her stains such spots are
ermine.
Or at the worst but seem.

MARTINUZZI.

To seem 's to be.
Angels may see our hearts plain as our faces ;
But living here, desert lies in the beams
Of men's imaginous fancy, and their censure
Can slur the purity we own of Heaven.
I 'd shun the risk.

CZERINA.

And would you cheat yourself
Of the possession of enduring truth
To grasp at the fleeting semblance that slips from
you ?

MARTINUZZI.

No, but I would not have the eyes of men
Shoot their sharp-pointed doubts upon my virtue.

CZERINA (*with earnest dignity*).

Sir, with free voice tell what you have suffered
for
This land, and live a story through all time
Till ages end the world . . . A story of
Pure heroic will, serene, enthroned as light
In the orb of day, which no deforming fumes
That earth unrolls can quench.

MARTINUZZI.

Who 'd credit me?
If I laid bare my heart's core ?

CZERINA.

Every soul,
Urge you by what unanswerable reasons
You were compelled to what you did ; which yet
The event hath justified, and you repent not.

MARTINUZZI.

Stay awhile.
(*Aside.*) Say men impugn my motives . . what is that
To me or Virtue, which should shine through storm,
Or lose the name 't is known by ?

CZERINA.

I entreat
You do repeal all doubt. Dear Sir, thou hast not
Left so bright track of honour in time's roll,
And men believe thy every syllable
Not based as firm as the pillars of Creation.
Be what you should be : deem not that the poisons
Of the whole world can blast the well-earned
garlands
That grow about your forehead ; And . . albeit

Oh ! there 's a duty owing to such ties
As those of ours that should be cared for too.

MARTINUZZI (*aside*).

Is there in nature, that starts back from the effort,
Such awful power to force this revelation ?
Can my parental instinct work within
Stronger than resolution of long years ?

CZERINA.

I see a gentle yielding in your eye,
What you conceive your ruin, considered rightly,
Makes both arrive at happy.

MARTINUZZI (*tenderly*).

Thee, my jewel ?

CZERINA.

Wouldst cause me misery ? I must not wed.

MARTINUZZI (*after a pause, abruptly*).

By Heavens ! Thou must, and shalt.

CZERINA.

Oh, Sir !

MARTINUZZI.

And I
Will bind thee brightness ! to thy destined mate.

CZERINA.

My Lord ?

MARTINUZZI.

I saw as I crossed the Corridor
Castaldo . . . Thou hast caught a fever sure . . .
He entered Isabella's anteroom.
I owe my Ambassador imprisonment :
Thy locks then be his chains, thy touches fetters,
And in that wished-for bondage let him die !
Thou shalt return to him his . . . Nay, my child !

CZERINA.

Oh bless thee, Father ! Reverence and Joy
Strive for the Mastery here.

MARTINUZZI.

Saint of thy Sex !
That dost throw charms upon my heart 'gainst
which
It cannot hold out longer, thou hast prevailed.
Dispose my honour.

CZERINA.

How I love thee now !
Thou 'rt good and great all over.

MARTINUZZI.

But not happy,
And that is strange methinks. Where art thou,
Daughter?

CZERINA.

Here, Sir.

MARTINUZZI (*abstractedly*).

And I have banqueted with Plato,
To whose "*Republic*" I conformed my course
When I did take the rule upon myself
In that emergency. I've fed upon
His page, how near divine ! In Hungary
"*The crosier is an easy sceptre.*"* Men
Sing songs of gladness in their hearts, forgetting
Under their vines their tears : I've drove the
German
Disgraced and worsted home : By policy
I've struck the Infidel nerveless. Ah Czerina !
I have been great.

* *Hungarian Proverb.*

CZERINA.

Thou art. And thou shalt show
Thy child the way to her inheritance,
Which is a spacious world of glorious deeds.

MARTINUZZI.

I have been great, but he who is great no longer
Does nothing more in this world. It is past!
*(He throws himself into a chair, covers his face
with his hands, and bursts into tears.)*

CZERINA.

Dear Sir, such acts as thine are ever present.

MARTINUZZI *(mournfully)*.

Wilt thou hereafter when they speak of me,
As thou shalt hear nothing but of this shame,
Remember these things?

CZERINA.

Talk not thus, dear Father.

MARTINUZZI *(mournfully)*.

I pray thee do, for thou hast taken from me
Glory away, and thou shalt never see me
Stand upright more.

CZERINA (*doubtfully*).

You said, my Sire,
Castaldo's sword

MARTINUZZI (*with a smile*).

I 'll reach it thee : this way.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

APARTMENT IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

ISABELLA and CASTALDO discovered seated.

ISABELLA.

Ay, in the Hall of Audience. Why like leaves
Shrivelled and white in flame do your lips quiver
With inarticulate voice? No priest, would'st say?
Is 't not the Cardinal's office to beseech
High Heaven will crown the happy pair with
 blessings,
Health, and long life, and . . which way runs the
 rubric?
Brave miniatures of themselves yclept infants.
 Start not.
Such is the grace will be read over them
Anon before they banquet . . 'T is the hour!

CASTALDO.

Fierce flames fold in my brain. What 's unto such

The lowest pit? I'll seek this torturer.
And he shall give me ease.

ISABELLA.

He rates your voice
Lighter than ether. Witness fell Coloswar ;
And the ruin of this lustrous, fairest maid,
That ever took (*Aside.*) A leprosy spread o'er her !
(*Aloud.*)
The ear with plaints at being denied the bent
Of her affections when she plights her troth.

CASTALDO (*wildly*).

My bosom swells beneath some fatal spell,
Deadlier than nightshade. All your glistening path
Is strewed with aspicks. 'Gainst my shrinking ears
Millions of adders hiss. My destiny
Chokes in thy thick hot breath.

ISABELLA.

Thy brain is mated.
(*Aside.*) The struck, pale, ashen dullard might
have been !
How I once looked upon him !

CASTALDO.

In your dumbness

The multitudinous clamours of the damned
Over their orgies ring!

ISABELLA.

My Lord! my Lord?

CASTALDO.

I 'm in the red glare of a thousand torches
That onwards lure me to the dizzy brink
Of some infernal chasm. What strength have I
To turn aside? My moth-like soul will rush
Upon the blinding sunbeams thou hast gathered
To scorch it into cinders.

(After a pause.) I am ready
Now to obey thee.

(He again pauses: then in a beseeching voice.)

Oh! thou 'lt not insist
On Murder?

ISABELLA.

I insist! What is 't to me?
Thy Heart's Betrothed may shrink with slow
disgust,
Quit life, decay in alien arms . . 't is common,
Natural as eating. None would call that murder.

CASTALDO.

What would you have me do?

ISABELLA.

The veriest clod
With such a cause knocking against his heart
Would be more apt.

CASTALDO (*sadly*).

It is a wretched world !

ISABELLA.

There's mettle in it, Sir ; yet thou say'st right,
An everlasting scene of life and death
Drags forward, furnishing the joys of time.

CASTALDO.

I stir no more in this. May I begone ?

ISABELLA (*solemnly*).

The slayer and the slain have sat together
In Churches, Council Chambers, and on thrones ;
And there they are smitten though no gash be
seen for it.

What's he that is not stabbed at the core ? Not I,
Whose rights this man usurps ; nor thou, Castaldo,
Oppressed with barefaced wrong, rifled of hope.

CASTALDO (*in a subdued voice*).

If I should practise this ?

ISABELLA (*with scornful emphasis*).

Light wavering man !
Thy blood upon the cheek of a green girl
Would not compose a blush. Ah ! hear that choir.

CASTALDO.

Think'st thou I'll suffer it ?

ISABELLA (*contemptuously*).

As yon light cloud
Suffers, and darkens with earth's exhalations,
Weeping a moment in its senseless rage,
Whilst the faint beam that gilds its topmost ridge
Is thy love's emblem. Yes, thou 'lt suffer it !

CZERINA (*without*).

Where art thou, dear, my Lord Castaldo ?

CASTALDO (*impetuously*).

Madam,
Give way ! That stricken shape ! those pleading
looks !
I'll strike thy tyrant down . . in crimson streams
Rend every nerve of life !

(*As he is rushing out, ISABELLA places herself
before him, and grasps his arm.*)

ISABELLA.

Thou hast no weapon.

CASTALDO (*after feeling for his sword, slowly and as to himself*).

'T is an ill omen! Why should the Cardinal
perish?

ISABELLA.

I've lost my pains . . . Who is here?

(*ISABELLA retires to the back of the stage.*)

CASTALDO (*doubtfully, as if to himself*).

Yet that Colossus
Would make no scruple That I had my
sword!

Enter CZERINA with a drawn sword.

CZERINA.

There's one! thine own. Thank Martinuzzi for it:
Thou knowest the way.

CASTALDO (*shuddering*).

I do, and guess thy mission,
Thou awful, air-clad prompter! and obey.

(*CASTALDO steps back.*)

CZERINA.

Thou shudderest ! Take it.

CASTALDO.

Since I must : (*Snatches at it.*) I clutch it.

(*To himself, lost in morbid abstraction.*)

No doubt our souls can conjure with strong
thoughts,
Which are but dreams till their effects be tried,
Nor yet ensnared in the web of destiny,
Whose objects, who can reach ?

CZERINA.

I 've news in store
Will turn to air and fire all earth in thee.
My Guardian, dear Castaldo, is my Father.

CASTALDO (*misapprehending, and apart*).

Mysterious relation 'twixt two souls !
Father of neither world ! . . . That 's wrong
methinks !
Ghostly relation, not to be profaned !
(*To CZERINA.*) He heard a good confession when
thou namedst
Thy heart's engagements.

CZERINA.

Do not, Love, entice
Life's stream into my cheeks.

CASTALDO (*standing enrapt*).

She trembles! Stars,
Which hang their lamps over the chastest coronal
Of sovereign mountains, never saw such purity!
And shall she, clipped about! . . .

(*Stops short, overpowered.*)

CZERINA.

I am to bid you
Follow me straight where Martinuzzi waits
Ready to consecrate this piece of childhood
With solemn rites, that ask co-operation
Of heart and hand from thee. Thou art struck
with wonder.

Oh, Sir! When you awake you'll miss, and seek
me.

I'll trust your faith . . . 't is ever fine in love . . .
To whisper to what purpose. Ah Castaldo!

[*Exit CZERINA.*

CASTALDO (*with a vacant look*).

My hand is pledged.

ISABELLA (*advancing forward*).

By the Arch-Duke, whose warrant
For this most righteous deed I render back :

(*Gives CASTALDO paper.*)

By her, whose wreakful vengeance in thy grasp
Hath placed that blade of justice. Pierce her
enemy,
And take her for thy guerdon.

CASTALDO (*addressing the sword*).

Fated aspick !

My eyeballs crack to look upon thine edge.

All thy desires, temptations, policies,

Substantial aliment is oozing blood . .

Men's blood ! . . I am sick.

(*His voice dies away faintly.*)

ISABELLA.

The knot will soon be knit,
And sealed false bonds of love.

CASTALDO (*suddenly starting from his abstraction*).

(*Frantically.*)

'T is Martinuzzi !

Where'er I set my foot his mangled corpse

Heaves up beneath my tread. And I do think,

For I have caught a glimpse of things unearthly,

That I am likewise struck. Thus hand in hand
 With death, break off the accursed ceremony!
 Brighten their altar-piece with lightnings, Hea-
 ven!

Trample upon them, Earth! Thou blinding
 sword!

Dart beams before their eyes as athwart mine,
 That I unseen may glide into his life.

[*Exit CASTALDO : and in rushing
 out he drops the warrant.*

ISABELLA.

His will, I doubt, e'en yet lacks resolution.
 The soul this moment stunned, which now again
 Starts into frantic life, dares not encounter
 Pale Hazard with a frown great as her own,
 When she talks firmly with her finger thus.
 He'll fail in proof. So I, occasion suiting,
 This subtle juice (*Shows a phial.*) for Martinuzzi's
 bane

Shall find far mightier than the mightiest will.

(*After a long pause of thought.*)

Sigismund would have me pluck my hoarded
 vengeance

From out my heart. The Cardinal sports himself

With his own folded meanings : His invention
Hath played upon the foolish boy. “ *Howbeit
His Eminence meant not so.*” As if a bird
Fall in a snare, and no springe set for him !
Lucid cajolery ! and I perforce
Must pardon my long suffering at his hands ;
What time I was trodden down like mire before
The fulness of his self-sufficiency !
The infamy of which, my injuries,
Steams in the general breath ; long years of
slight
I must forget ! When he is laid in darkness
I ’ll think on ’t. Yet a very little while
I guess my wrath shall cease . . . but not be-
fore.

Enter TURASC.

TURASC.

His Eminence entreats your Highness’ presence,
To witness

ISABELLA.

True : I am aware. You found me
About to attend his Grace. My Lord, your pardon.

[*Exit ISABELLA.*

TURASC.

What have we ?

(Takes up the warrant, over which he glances.)

“ *To Castaldo ?*” Signed by

Ferdinand.

Heavens ! “ *Sentenced capitally !*” “ *See the
Regent*

Cut off ?” How ’s that ?

(After a pause.) A livid light breaks through,
As from a thunder-cloud ! The politic villain !
Ah ! I ’ll frustrate you yet.

[Exit TURASC.]

SCENE III.

GRAND HALL OF AUDIENCE.

SIGISMUND *seated on the Throne.*

MARTINUZZI, CZERINA, NOBLES, CHIEF
TAINS, &c. *assembled.*

(Loud acclamations.)

MARTINUZZI.

In my deep heart I thank ye for your plaudits.
(Solemnly.) Throw wide the portals, that contain
this kingdom,
And let all nations hear. I stretch beyond them,
Where thrones and sceptres dissipate in light :
Behold ! the mighty dead are waiting for me.
(Aside.) Have I done all things well that I am
bold
To come amongst them ? The perceptible awe,
That like a cloud of dew in heat of harvest,
Now fastens on me ! Wondrous empyrean !
Oh ! I am blind and weary with long yearning
After that shadowless night, and void immensity :

The end is surely near. I lose myself.

Aloud.) Nobles of Hungary! ye have heard my
cause,

And have absolved me. (*Shouts.*)

NOBLES.

Long live Martinuzzi!

The Patriot, and preserver of his country!

MARTINUZZI (*apart*).

I do not feel as if I had a heart,
But cold as rock; I cower beneath the seas
In sinking sands; the ground I seem to stand on
Totters beneath my weight; my eye-sight swims;
The difficult air of clouds doth stifle me;
Day's fiery planet is obumbrated.
These things come thus to light make life unfirm
In its four elements, and all is chaos
When reverence for this holy tabernacle
I call myself, and pure confiding thoughts
Be smothered up in apprehensive awe
Of how men's minds construe me. Oh this maim!
So deep! and yet my life not shrinks thereat!
But I am observed. Down, my torn heart! . . .

(*To SIGISMUND.*) My liege,
Have I your pardon?

SIGISMUND.

Good your Eminence,
For these dominions thou hast been a sword
To strike and awe ; a buckler 'gainst the world ;
A cedar whose top branch o'erspread the land,
Sheltering from nipping winter each low shrub,
And to the Lion's whelp affording shade . .
A seasonable screen . . till Time hath ripened
My challenge to this rule, which only as
Thy giving I assume. I owe thee all.

MARTINUZZI (*aside*).

The Axe is working at this Cedar's root,
Will never leave . . my inner being prompts me,
Till it hath hewn him down, yea root and branch ;
And at the sound thereof shall nations shake.

(*Renewed shouts of HAIL MARTINUZZI !*
SIGISMUND addresses himself to CZERINA :
Nobles converse together : MARTINUZZI comes
forward.)

MARTINUZZI (*apart to himself*).

For all these acclamations I perceive,
Some present yet make scruple with their hearts.
They either think I did abet the complot

Of that child's Mother, or my after silence
 Within the compass of their mute suspicion
 Doth cast mine honour ; or they may conceit
 By cunning in the working of this matter,
 I but redeem my fealty to my King,
 Assuming virtue of necessity.
 I 've fallen into taint, yet live ! But worse
 Even than self-slaughter were it could I stoop
 To mental suicide . . to make appeal
 As to a balance ; poising in one scale
 Their insolent dumb traducement of my faith,
 Their shrewd misgivings, not a jot less blighting
 Because unspoken, and what drift of mine
 Yet lurks unbreathed to weigh these to the beam
 Into the other. How might I endure
 Even in thought being put on my defence
 To make these doubts all even ? Can my nature
 Then have played booty that I am a tomb,
 Whited without, but in my linings rotten,
 Being gorged with shame ? I 'm but outside.
 Scarce that ;
 Since there remains no strength in me at all.
 My inward quality infects, methinks,
 Things outward ; and this scarlet shroud invests me
 With rank Corruption's shade, and makes my form
 Extern but parcel of my infamy ;

Showing the truth of what I am, and weighing
 Heavy as frost upon me. Lo! it sits
 A sign and an impediment to subject
 Me unto Fate, like Death upon a corpse.

Ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα χραταή.

(After a pause.)

Oh God! Ye underlings, whose voices climb
 In riotous chorus, how are ye not startled,
 Despite your sudden growth and consequence,
 At such a portent? Proud are ye your Regent
 To fetter with vile favour! . . . subject him,
 Corrupted e'en by reason of his brightness,
 Unto your best constructions! . . . him, whose heart
 Was high, and lifted up because of wisdom;
 Mark him bow down with all bound humbleness,
 His haughtiness made low, whilst ye, new built,
 Set your soul's rest on high, since bounty 't is
 Makes Men akin to Saints!

From their cold breath
 Doth Heaven engender hail, and beaten back
 I must abide the Storm . . . I shiver 'neath it!
 But yesterday they had not dared (my nod
 Making and marring fortunes) wag their hands,
 While I do stand aloof at gaze, and marvel

What this doth mean? and whither tend such peals,
Hollow as thunder in a burial vault?

My very name, that late was syllabled
Religiously as sanctities of worship,
Methinks is blown upon and worn to shame,
Like a clown's idol, which he curses by,
And, as the humour pricks him, breaks to pieces.
Those eyes, that in my presence rained their light
In sacrificial incense on the earth,
Now squander glances at me. Christ! they level
Even at my soul, right through my shrinking
nerves;

And they durst smile, though, like the scornful
plant,

Whose leaves do knit when touched, I have bent
my brow.

Oh! there 's no healing of this grievous bruise,
At which who hears the bruit shall clap their
hands.

Methinks each separate sinew is all sense;
And I, anatomized in every fibre,
Clothing my loins with trembling as a garment,
Do feel as it were useless or impossible
To live beyond this hour.

(*After a deep pause.*)

And am I then

That Martinuzzi whom the world reveres,
Yet with self-mastery cannot exorcise
Foul reveries, vain musings, and mad dreams,
Nor be sole monarch *here?* · Nay rule I will!
My rebel heart stands back at ebb no longer,
To cast up mire and dirt like troubled waters!
The servile Sprite that riots in my bosom,
The moistened bloodsucker, that turns my nature
Against itself, and gluts on happiness,
Degrades me for a Soldier. Rouse thee, Soul!
Disperse these flaws that do abuse my brain,
(Broods monstrous!) as the Sun doth shine
 through vapours:
Or make them tributary to thy will.
Put on thy spiritual panoply: withstand
This fever calmly! and when I have paid
Homage to Sigismund . . these rites being blest . .
Steal thou away from time insensibly,
Lest like an armed host strong fantasies
Push me to frenzy.

 Stinging lust of Honour,
Anxiety of Fame, Dismaying Fear,
Ambition, Pride, . . Ye wolves, which in my breast
Do make your lair, ravening your prey, be hushed!
I will lead ye to the slaughter like a lamb.
The things of time evanish as the world

Hereafter rises ; and the love in Christ
 Which passeth knowledge . . . Ancient of Days
 Unsearchable ! The depths of Heavenly Science,
 Mysterious Communion of the Saints,
 And prayer, whose Spirit bears the soul from Earth
 Unto the Angel of his hallowed presence
 Who with salvation beautifies the meek . . .
 Here are my fitting aims ! Here objects proper
 Unto the aspiring soul of Martinuzzi,
 Commensurate with his genius . . . They're
 immortal !

This body of sin and death be broken up !
 'T is the integrity of my deignous *self*,
 Which I will discipline before the Cross.
 And then my Soul, tracking Jehovah's way
 In storm and trouble, soon shall learn to welcome
 Dark clouds, as being the dust his chariot wheels
 Whirl round about to signify his coming.

(After a pause.)

I am resolved. Within the monastery
 Of Erdium I'll subdue eternity
 By giant thought : There studiously attend
 My dissolution, and with soft foot steal
 Unto the period of my pilgrimage ;
 Humbly with God as erst in childhood walking.

(CASTALDO *reels into the Hall: He stands apart.*)

CASTALDO (*aside*).

I see the rites go forward merrily.
But one there is stands forth bedight with scarlet,
Yet wists not of a silent shadowy court
Whose phantom lord doth frown, when in his pomp
He broods amidst the seven mortal sins.
From icy lips his coming chills the place,
And by my grave! Some here must be in peril.
I'll escape notice, while with eyelids closed,
I think for what my God hath sent me hither.

SIGISMUND (*to CZERINA*).

No tire, save regal, need to deck that brow,
Lady, with my good will.

CZERINA.

A double weight
Your Grace hath taken from me, and I am grateful.

SIGISMUND (*eagerly*).

With thy hand?

CZERINA.

Not so; yet most loyally.

CASTALDO (*apart*).

They are kissing ! All so near the throne of Death,
Who sits in council on the affairs of Men.
I will stand silently, and watch him where
He holds his state. Ha ! He is whispering sure ?
That 's fatal !

CZERINA (*gazing with astonishment on CASTALDO*).

(*Aside.*) Wherefore with that ghastly look
Stands my Castaldo, wrapt as in his searchcloth ?

MARTINUZZI (*kneeling*).

As Regent of the state I am first to swear
Allegiance to Sigismund of Zapola !

NOBLES (*kneeling*).

Long live the King !

SIGISMUND.

Thanks, fellow countrymen ! arise ! be seated.

(*They all rise.*)

Enter ISABELLA.

Our Royal Mother ! Widow of King John,
Thou comest in time to see thy son enthroned,
And render grace unto the Cardinal.

ISABELLA (*blandly*).

Nothing but grace and gentle salutation
Unto his Eminence! I do desire
To reconcile me to his holy friendship.
Wherefore in greater proof that I forget
Our past divisions, I would gladly pledge,
According to our country's use, his Highness
In one full cup of peace.

MARTINUZZI.

Faith, Royal Lady,
Our high and hurried life hath left small pause
While justled by left-handed injury.
Ho there! Some wine.

Enter ATTENDANT with goblet, &c.

A deep bowl!

ISABELLA (*taking the goblet*).

Reverend Lord,
In this day's festival be thou remembered
Till time come to his period! (*She drinks.*)

MARTINUZZI.

Lady, thanks!

ISABELLA (*having emptied the contents of the phial into the goblet*).

Now bear the cup to my Lord Cardinal.

MARTINUZZI.

Unto your Highness' health! May charity
Rise in the fair dominion of our souls,
Never to set again. (*He drinks.*)

ISABELLA (*aside*).

Our peace is perfect
Without Castaldo's aid.

CASTALDO (*apart*).

Those revellers
Should tope in silence. With their harsh descant
They scare my faculties, and wrench the strings
So lately tuned to sound forth harmony
Set to the fall of Kingdoms. Let me think
Awhile! I bear a sealed Commission, which,
Though blinded by the garish day, and that
My path be stuck with stumbling eyes, I'll
execute.

Enter TURASC.

(CASTALDO *advances towards MARTINUZZI with a stealthy pace: Then, as TURASC enters, he*

draws back. TURASC addresses MARTINUZZI,
and hands him the warrant, which he reads.)

CZERINA (*still gazing with astonishment on CASTALDO*).
What ails Castaldo that he stops and shakes,
Comes on, and now retires? He reels with . . . joy?

MARTINUZZI.

Here 's devilish faith! Methinks so vile an order
Should have been left more doubtful. What,
can Murder

Take up his sanctuary in Princes' domes,
To light mankind to the abysm beneath?
Men's destinies are with the King of Heaven,
Not in each other's hands! Oh mole-eyed Crime,
Whose ignorance is the curse of God! To think
The harmless lamb would practise on the mastiff!
When thou shed'st blood, mild-thoughted, kind
Castaldo!

Hell hath enlarged herself beyond her depths,
To meet such evil-doer at his coming,
The Earth's unhinged, Sin hath quite dispossessed
Concord and law of Nature from their seat,
Pity hath sought Astrea in the clouds,
And Até reigns supreme in human hearts!

(*To CZERINA.*) Hither, my child; read how
King Ferdinand

Would an assassin make of your beloved,
Gentle Castaldo ! (*Gives CZERINA the paper :
as she is reading.*)

Enter MESSENGER.

Sir, methinks thy looks
Should prelude some high news.

MESSENGER.

My Lord, I have tidings
To light the face of Kings or wash their eyes.
Buda hath fallen, and Hungary is in arms.

MARTINUZZI (*exultingly*).

Break forth in joy my native land ! and ye,
Waste places of the Magyari shout !
The Lord of Hosts hath bared his red right arm,
Thy oppressor is consumed ! And He hath made
Thy name a praise on earth, whereat my heart
Is moved, for I am Heaven's instrument.

(*He stands awhile in silence.*)

For this was I ordained ; and oh, how sweet
Unto the soul is such desire accomplished !
Methinks 't were well if I, without a sin,
Could take a bond of destiny, by seeking

A place of refuge in the world beyond,
Where kingdoms, crowns, and revolutions borne
Upon the floods of Time go out like bubbles
In the breathless ocean of Eternity.
Nought would then sow Corruption on my name,
Which I, by living well, have saved from worms.
When I am past, and have outrun calamity
My bones shall lie in no untrophied urn ; . .
A kingdom freed from vassalage, and recovered
By my brow's sweat, and my internal travail !
My 'scutcheon be my country's genius, perched
Like a white-sceptred virgin, newly winged,
Upon the point sublimest of the world !
(*To SIGISMUND.*) To Buda with triumphant
march, my Liege :
There, having seen thee crowned, my mission's
ended.

(*SIGISMUND bows, and then converses with
ISABELLA in dumb show.*)

CZERINA (*scorning the notion of CASTALDO being about to
commit murder, and musing on the warrant*).

Moist-eyed Castaldo ! He become in action
His very opposite ? When Nature shows
Such contraries within the world of Man
The antipodes are with us !

CASTALDO (*apart*).

Buda fallen !

And yet King Ferdinand's order unfulfilled ?

This instant

(CASTALDO *staggers towards MARTINUZZI : then stops short.*)

Ah ! my nature makes remiss

My feeble hand.

CZERINA.

I will show Castaldo this.

(*She moves towards CASTALDO : pauses.*)

Some thought infirm hath drunk his blood ? he
looks

His monument not himself . . . 'tis like a
dream !

CASTALDO.

While I thus mock the sleep-compelling grave
The deed is to do : I'll flag revenge no longer !

(*Again CASTALDO advances towards MARTINUZZI : The eyes of CZERINA are intently fixed upon his movements : As he nears the Cardinal, he suddenly halts.*)

TURASC (*to MARTINUZZI*).

My Lord, do you mark the Marquis Piadena
With naked sword?

MARTINUZZI (*with benignant smile*).

Go to ; He is proud 't is ransomed,
Albeit too tender-hearted for its use.

CASTALDO (*shuddering*).

What palsy wrestles with me ? I am dried up ;
Held back with giant strength. He smiles upon
me.

It is that smile doth give my steel repulse.

CZERINA.

A train of black and horrible thoughts like fiends
Come rushing through my brain ! that warrant !
(*After a pause.*) God !
He cannot mean it ? 't is impossible !

MARTINUZZI (*feebly*).

Leave me not, dearest.

CZERINA (*kneels, but with eyes fixed on CASTALDO*).

Yea, I 'll watch by thee,
Lest (which kind Heaven forbid !) danger should
reach thee.

MARTINUZZI (*faintly*).

I feel quite blighted by a venomous frost
Ready to breathe my soul . . if thou wilt kneel
A minute thus . . Away in thy embrace.

CZERINA (*wildly: still looking fearfully towards
CASTALDO*).

So ill? Unsay it: Let me free: One ques-
tion . .

One question to Castaldo. (*She rises.*)

(*To CASTALDO.*) Hast thou, Love,
Forgot it is my bridal day . . forgot
That I did speak? Oh, what intends thy
sword?

CASTALDO (*who had gradually tottered near, followed by
TURASC*).

Ha! I awake! roused by a glare of light.
(*Advancing to MARTINUZZI.*) Thou Adamant!
whom nought but blood can melt,
King Ferdinand sends thee this!

CZERINA (*with a scream*).

I'll guard thee, Father!

(*CASTALDO strikes at MARTINUZZI with his
sword: TURASC arrests his arm, but not until*

CZERINA, *who had interposed her person before her Father, receives the death-wound aimed at MARTINUZZI, and falls.*)

MARTINUZZI (*hanging over her*).

Sweet Child! My Joy! Thou! Be not wild,
Czerina.

Look here! Look here!

CZERINA (*looking reproachfully to CASTALDO*).

Was this blow kind, Castaldo?

(She dies.)

CASTALDO.

Earth's lightnings have struck me! I'm on fire!
A blasted thing alive! (*He stands image-like
and stupified.*)

TURASC (*securing CASTALDO*).

Thou loathsome Fiend!

MARTINUZZI (*hanging fondly over CZERINA*).

Light of my heart! thou 'lt not go out so quickly,
With no more leave taking? Did I not catch
Thy tiny respiration this were dreadful.
She's in a trance. I charge thee on my blessing!
What! Help! The Child's a corpse! Halt I below

When thou I loved, all the delight was left me,
 Hast shifted off thy earth? So dear! Most dear!
 She has fallen as if . . . Hard pillow for thy head!
 Come, kiss me, Love; . . . She's dead! my sight
 is dim.

Sad cheer these kisses now! On the cold ground?
 Lie next my heart . . . Alack! that's colder still.
 All's one.

(He turns, and addresses Attendant.) I prithee aid
 me: Softly! So!

(As they raise the body of CZERINA.)

Thou hast a sorry bridal of it, Sweetheart.
 Thy Gordian knot is knit where living man
 In violence comes not to untwine. Be sure
 Ye wake her not! I thank you.

(The body is laid upon a couch.) Wench! A
 minute!

First I've a word to say to this assembly,
 And then I'll follow starward. At each hair
 There hangs a several Angel, and thou hast
 breathed
 Death into me.

ISABELLA *(comes forward)*.

How came this fearful ruin?

Hold'st thou the clue, or thou,
(*In a low voice to CASTALDO.*) Or thou, my Lord?
Why dost thou gaze thyself to Hell? 't was God
Guided thy sword that would have slain . . . her
Father.

CASTALDO (*after a moment's stupefaction, in amazed horror*).

Fa . . . *Father!* Oh! I'm riddled to damnation!
(*To MARTINUZZI.*) Art thou . . . old man?

MARTINUZZI (*in a voice of thunder*).

Yea, Devil!
(*After a violent struggle with his feelings.*) My
pardon on thee!
For Oh, she loved thee! and I've soon to meet her
Clad like a daughter of blue Heaven, so
I must not curse her love. Alas! My pangs
Are mightier than my curse with the world's
Father.

TURASC (*to CASTALDO*).

What Devil hast thou wrought this tragedy?

CASTALDO (*roused; looks steadfastly at TURASC for some time, then in a broken voice, wildly*).

List to it altogether!

Thus 't was . . the Cardinal. He . . . You say
her Father . . .

Do call me Adamant, I pray thee do . . .

Well she, my Love, that is that gentleman's
daughter . .

Queen Isabella hearing the Arch-Duke . . .

There 't is! Now hark! This sword? . . What is 't
that stains it?

Ha!

(CASTALDO *drops down lifeless.*)

TURASC.

His flawed heart, o'ercharged, hath burst . .
He 's dead.

ISABELLA (*aside, in a deep agonized voice*).

He cannot speak! he 's choked! he shivers!
Death?

I meant not that. (*Stands as if suddenly stunned.*)

SIGISMUND (*to ISABELLA*).

Why, Madam, stand transfixed,
In stony, stainless, whiteness, with thine arms
Thus idly hanging, orbs distended wide,
While, in self-scrutiny, their subtle light
Hath empty left its home and shot its lustre
Inwards, with marble lips apart, and all

Inanimate as cold memorial
Over a tomb, save that from nerve to nerve
Some agony lives through thee, manifest
In thrills of horror that like lightning
Quiver athwart thy brow ? This owns some cause
Deeper than e'en these deaths. Oh, dearest Ma-
dam !
Speak, and explain these signs.

ISABELLA (*as if roused*).

They have a meaning !
(*She turns away, absorbed in thought.*)

MARTINUZZI.

And hath he joined her company ? Lightly Death !
I'll make the third. Thou spirit-touching power !
Quench not the flaming urn before my time !
(MARTINUZZI *turns away from the bodies, and*
addresses SIGISMUND.)

King Sigismund, you march to Buda straight :
There Solyman will join thee. 'T is a compact
'Twixt him and me I never named before.
He'll crown thee, and beneath his offices
Let Peace put forth her Olive. May I die
Believing thou wilt make for Hungary's sake
My foe thy Friend . . . I mean King Ferdinand ?

SIGISMUND.

Not die, your Eminence ?

MARTINUZZI (*feebly*).

I cannot stay my soul from fleeing . . . Promise.

SIGISMUND.

Ally with Ferdinand, whose fell minister
Is murder ! . . Unto whom your Eminence . . .

MARTINUZZI.

Speak not of me ; my sands must have expired ;
Your Country dates by centuries. Her King
Should anchor on her interests his heart,
And know no alien passion. Promise me.

SIGISMUND.

Your Eminence' will, alive or dead, is law.

MARTINUZZI.

Why then farewell Great World ! I 've done with
time !

And turn to thee, bright shadow of Czerina !
And thy eternity. I prithee throw
Forthwith a pall about us,
For I am sick at heart and know not wherefore.
I 'm sad as if I had done nothing good.
Can I have wrought deliverance in the land,

Yet weep? . . I 'm icy cold . . Will no one tell me,
 If this be death? It is! Soft music! Hark ye!
 Speak to me, Child, I know thee. I am in Heaven
 Already! For I hear my exody
 Sung for a hymn.

*(Earnestly clasping the hand of SIGISMUND, and
 fixing his eyes upon his countenance.)*

My Fame is pure, remember!

(A deep pause : after a feeble struggle.)

WHERE IS THE WORLD?

(MARTINUZZI expires.)

ISABELLA *(apart, with stern solemnity).*

'T is done! I would it were not! On my soul
 I feel the Phantom of this hour will rise
 Hereafter to appal me in my dreams.
 Ye horrible reactions of the mind,
 That make Man's natural bias to recoil
 Back on itself, in loathings most accursed!
 Mine is a bitter triumph!

(After a pause.) He is at rest;

But I, no more in this world . . or the next.

*(ISABELLA sinks on a seat, and covers her face
 with her hands.)*

SIGISMUND.

Raise ye the Corse! Ourselves with holy pomp

Will bear his hearse to Buda; and the while
The long-drawn funeral train, 'mid stately tapers,
'Mid swelling anthems and his passing knell,
'Mid requiem of chaunting litanies,
Moves through the shadowy aisle, Men's eyes shall
miss

Nothing of glory in those sad solemnities,
Save HIM . . the Mightiest! . . unto whom
they 're paid.

(After a pause.)

We will be crowned upon the sacred tomb
Of this great Patriot in St. Stephen's Church.

*(They raise the body: SIGISMUND, TURASC, and
NOBLES form a group around.)*

TURASC.

His was a Noble Spirit as e'er clay;
Was shaped to enshrine in beauty. May the peace
Eternal rest upon it!

ISABELLA *(in a deep low voice).*

But on *mine*?

(The curtain slowly descends to solemn music.)

FINIS.

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“The Author, in the motto he has chosen from Ford, characterizes his work as ‘A scholar’s fancy.’ The contents fully bear out the assumption of the *scholar’s* title. The Manuscripts of Erdely have a merit of the rarest kind in these days of stilted ignorance and prolific mediocrity. When we have but yesterday been deluged with a flood of vulgar impertinence and flippant ignorance, in the guise of a learned novel, it is matter of surprise, no less than of pleasure, to take up a book in which the only defects are attributable to the inexperience of the writer in the management of superfluous weight of metal. We recommend all our readers to peruse this work ; the style, enriched by the superabundant material at the author’s command, has not, indeed, the penny-a-line fluency of our fashionable novelists. Fresh drawn honey does not run with the limpidity of skimmed milk. Mr. Stephens has hitherto been a reading man, and is evidently a full one. We hope soon again to meet him in the walks of literature.”—*United Service Gazette*.

“The Author of these strange volumes, evidently a classical scholar of extensive reading and polished information, has chosen an age and country for his story which abound in all the wildest materials of exciting romance : of such a country and people treat these Manuscripts of Erdely, with splendour of language, and in a strain of eloquence. They contain more of the stupendous than it has fallen to our lot, for many a day, to find engrossed by a single work.”—*Sunday Herald*.

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“This is an extraordinary book, and the Author has probably worked his materials into the shape of a novel only because his is the age of novel writing. It is quite evident that his great learning, his extensive reading, and his philosophical views, qualify him rather for an historian, or for writing a metaphysical disquisition. The materials of which this truly wonderful story is composed, are ample, being derived from that interesting period in the history of Hungary, when she had freed herself from the yoke of Solyman, and struggled to maintain her indepen-

dence from the grasping power of Austria. An unsettled state of society, and the wildest characters in the wildest part of Europe during that unsettled state, form rich materials, which the Author has worked up with great effect. The characters, which are nearly all historical, are numerous and strongly marked, as were the passions of the time. Without encumbering the story with many citations, the author quotes a variety of passages from ancient authors, showing his extensive scholarship, and the sources whence he has borrowed his incidents. The work exhibits a rare union of much learning with a sparkling imagination. Like some of Sir Walter Scott's novels, and probably like all superior works, it will please more, and satisfy more, on a second and a third perusal. Romances are abundant, but it is very rare that we meet with one whose merits suggest a second reading. This does, and a second reading will hardly suffice to admit of its being laid down. . . . The above extracts by no means represent the power of describing characters which is visible in every page of the work. The Regent of Hungary seems to have been the favourite of the Author's imagination, and he has succeeded in placing that politician in the most pleasing light. It is perfectly impossible to read the scenes in which Martinuzzi's character develops itself, and which are many, without the deepest interest. He labours under a suspicion of having acted unjustly; and, as the circumstances which prove his integrity are withheld from the reader almost to the close of the book, the interest in the work and in the individual character never flags, and is maintained to the end."—*Courier*.

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