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B E L L's

BRITISH THEATRE.

VOLUME THE SEVENTH.
(13)

Bell's
BRITISH THEATRE ;
TRAGEDIES.



Northcote del.

M. Smith sculp.

LONDON
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B E L L's

BRITISH THEATRE,



ENGLISH PLAYS

VOLUME THE SEVENTH.

Being the Fourth VOLUME of TRAGEDIES.

CONTAINING

- The ROYAL CONVERT, by N. ROWE, Esq.
ALEXANDER THE GREAT, by N. LEE, Gent.
• MAHOMET, by the Rev. Mr. MILLER.
THEODOSIUS, by N. LEE, Gent.
LADY JANE GRAY, by N. ROWE, Esq.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, at the British Library, Strand.

M DCC LXXX.





Roberts del.

Published for Balls Bridge Theatre Nov^r 1777.

M^{rs} WARD in the Character of RODOGUNE.

—Ye Gods!— 'tis he himself—

Bell's Characteristical Edition.

THE ROYAL CONVERT.

A TRAGEDY. BY NICHOLAS ROWE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL COVENT-GARDEN.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book, by permission of the Managers,

BY MR. WILKINSON PROMPTER.

CHARACTERISTICS.

The' my date—Of mortal life be short it shall be glorious—Each minute shall be rich in some great action—To speak the king, the hero, and the lover—There never was a medley of such thinking—Ambition, hatred, mischief, and revenge—Gather like clouds on clouds; and then anon—Love, like a golden beam of light, shoots thro'—smiles on the gloom, and my heart bounds with pleasure. HENGIST.

Now shall I teach my tongue to frame a language—Different from my heart—My heart was made—Simple and plain, and fraught with artless tenderness—Form'd to receive one love, and only one—it knows not what there can be in variety—And would not it it could—'Tis much beneath my courage and my truth—To borrow any mean disguise from falsehood—I dare die—But dare not be oblig'd. I dare not owe—'Tis that I can never render back—To defend—My honour and my love from violation—O'er ev'ry bar resistless will I rush—And in despite of proud tyrannick Pow'—Seize and assert my right. ARIBERT.

I will not think he meant it—Revenge had else been swift—So high I hold—The honour of a soldier and a king—I won't think your master meant to wrong me—Let him beware however—What in a foe I pardon or despise—Is deadly from a friend, and so to be repaid—'Tis much beneath me—To ask again the debt you owe to honour—But mark me Hengist—I am not us'd to wait; and if this day—Pass unregarded as the former two—Soon as to-morrow dawns expect me—Arm'd in the field—Tho' I could wish it otherwise—Believe me I should still be found thy friend. OFFA.

I would preserve 'em both the royal brothers—But if their Fates ordain that one must fall—Then let my name stand. This Christian woman—Ay, there the mischief comes—Were she but well remov'd—Would 't were done—And my head safe—That! let me look to that. SEORFID.

Bred to my country's manners—I worship as my fathers did before me—Unpractic'd in disputes and wrangling schools—I seek no farther knowledge, and so keep—My mind at peace, nor know the pain of doubting—What others think I judge not of too nicely—But hold all honest men are in the right. OSWALD.

Whatever I am—As of myself, by native worth existing—My fierce haughty soul—Whatever she suffers still diddains to bend—How is the form'd, this rival of my love—To make me shine beyond me—Her mind! Ye Gods! which of you all—Could make that great, and fit to rival mine—Has she a soul—Can dare like mine—Oh no! she cannot, nature cannot bear it—It sinks ev'n me; the torrent drives me down—The native greatness of my spirit fails—I will find her—For whom I am despis'd—Look that she be your masterpiece ye Gods!—My jealous rage to move—A victim worthy my offended love—I feel my soul impatient of this bondage—Disdaining this unworthy idle passion—And struggling to be free. Now, now it shoots—It tow'rs upon the wing to crowns and empire—Thou native greatness of my soul befriend me. ERODOGUNE.

Oh! save me from pollution—Let me know—All miseries bedde, each kind of sorrow—And prove me with variety of pains—Whips, racks, and flames, for I was born to suffer—I am arm'd, and equal to the combat. ETHELINDA.



EDINBURG:

At the Apollo Press, by THE MARTINS, for Bell, LONDON, 1762.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES LORD HALIFAX.

MY LORD,

IF I could have the vanity to make a merit of dedicating this Tragedy, I should here take an opportunity of telling you that I am in this endeavouring to make the best and only return I am capable of for all those marks of exceeding goodness and humanity which I have still had the honour to meet with from your Lordship: but since the matter is quite otherwise, since it is highly to my advantage to shelter myself under so great a name, since I have done myself so much honour by it, I am bound to own, with all the gratitude I am capable of, that your Lordship's patronage is a new and will be a lasting obligation upon me.

Most kinds of poetry, but especially tragedies, come into the world now like children born under ill stars; a general indifference, or rather disinclination, attends like a bad influence upon 'em, and after having bustled thro' ill usage and a short life they sleep and are forgotten. The relish of things of this kind is certainly very much altered from what it was some time since; and though I will not presume to censure other people's pleasures, and prescribe to the various tastes of mankind, yet I will take the liberty to say, that those who scorn to be entertained like their forefathers will hardly substitute so reasonable a diversion in the room of that which they have laid aside. I could wish there were not so much reason as there is to attribute this change of inclinations to a disesteem of learn-

ing itself. Too many people are apt to think that books are not necessary to the finishing the character of a fine gentleman, and are therefore easily drawn to despise what they know nothing of. But, my Lord, among all these mortifying thoughts it is still a pleasure to the Muses to think that there are some men of too delicate understandings to give into the tastes of a depraved age, men that have not only the power but the will to protect those arts which they love, because they are masters of 'em.

It would be very easy for me to distinguish one among those few after the most advantageous manner, but all men of common sense have concurred in doing it already, and there is no need of a panegyrick.

I could be almost tempted to expostulate with the rest of the world (for I am sure there is no occasion to make an apology to your Lordship) in defence of poetry. I am far from thinking of a good poet as the Stoicks did of their wise man, that he was sufficient for every thing, could be every thing, and excel in every thing, as he pleased; yet sure I may be allowed to say that that brightness, quickness, that strength and greatness of thinking, which is required in any of the nobler kinds of poetry would raise a man to an uncommon distinction in any profession or business that has a relation to good sense and understanding. One modern instance can at least be given where the same genius that shone in poetry was found equal to the first employments of the state, and where the same man who by his virtue and wisdom was highly useful to and instrumental in the safety and happiness of his native country had been equally ornamental to it in his wit.

This is what I could not help saying for the honour of an art which has been formerly the favourite of the greatest men; not that it wants a recommendation to your Lordship, who have always been a constant and generous protector of it. This indeed would be much more properly said to the world, and when I have told them what men have equally adorned it and been adorned by it, I might not unfitly apply to them what Horace said to the Pisos,

———*Ne forte Pudori*
Sit tibi Musa Lyrae solers & Cantor Apollo.

DEDICATION.

For my own inconsiderable pretensions to verse I shall,
I confess, think better even of them than I have ever yet
done if they shall afford me the honour to be always thought,

My Lord,

your Lordship's most obedient

and devoted humble servant,

N. ROWE.

A iiij

PROLOGUE.

SINCE to your sam'd forefathers quite contrary
 You from their pleasures as their wisdom vary,
 What art what method shall the poet find
 To hit the taste of each fantastick mind?
 Legions of joys your wand'ring fancies lead;
 Like summer flies which in the shambles breed
 Each year they swarm anew, and to the last succeed.
 Time was when fools by fellowship were known,
 But now they stray, and in this populous Town
 Each coxcomb has a folly of his own.
 Some dress, some dance, some play, not to forget
 Your pequet parties and your dear basset:
 Some praise some rail, some bow, and some make faces,
 Your country foxes hunt foxes, your court places.
 The city rolls up the various scene,
 Where fools lay wagers and where wise men win.
 One rails at Calia for a late mischance,
 One grumbles and cries up the pow'r of France;
 This man talks politicks and that takes pills,
 One cures his own, and one the nation's ills.
 Now fiddling and the charms of singsong win ye,
 Harmonious Peg and warbling Valentini.
 As to your drinking—but for that we spare it,
 Nor with your other vile delights compare it;
 There's something more than sound, there's sense, in claret.
 Mean-while neglected verse, in long disgrace,
 Amongst your many pleasures finds no place;
 The virtuous laws of common sense forswearing,
 You damn us, like pack'd juries, without hearing.
 Each puny whipsler here is wit enough,
 With scornful airs and supercilious snuff,
 To cry, This Tragedy's such damn'd grave stuff!
 But now we hope more equal judges come,
 Since Flanders sends the gen'rous warriors home.
 You that have fought for liberty and laws,
 Whose valour the proud Gallick tyrant awes,
 Join to assert the sinking Muses' cause;
 Since the same flame, by diff'rent ways express,
 Glows in the hero's and the poet's breast,
 The same great thoughts that rouse you to the fight
 Inspire the Muse and bid the poet write.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

Covent-Garden.

HENGIST, king of Kent, son to Hengist the first Saxon invader of Britain,	}	Mr. Wroughton.
ARIBERT, his brother,		Mr. Lewis.
OFFA, a Saxon prince,	}	Mr. Whitfield.
SEOFRID, first minister and favourite to the king,		Mr. Hull.
OSWALD, friend to Aribert,		Mr. Robson.

WOMEN.

RODOGUNE, a Saxon princess, sister to Offa, betrothed to the king,	}	Mrs. Ward.
ETHELINDA, a British lady, privately married to Aribert,		Mrs. Hartley.

Priests, Officers, Soldiers, and other Attendants.

SCENE IN KENT, about twenty years after the first invasion of Britain by the Saxons.



THE ROYAL CONVERT.

ACT I.

SCENE, a palace.

ARIBERT and OSWALD.

ARIBERT.

SUCH are, my friend, the joys our loves have known,
So still to be desir'd, so ever new,
Nor by fruition pall'd nor chang'd by absence.
Whate'er the poets dreamt of their Elysium,
Or what the faints believe of the first paradise,
When nature was not yet deform'd by winter,
But one perpetual beauty crown'd the year,"
Such have we found 'em still, still, "still," the same.

Osw. Such grant, kind Heav'n! their course to be for
But yet, my Prince, forgive your faithful Oswald [ever!
If he believes you melt with too much tenderness;
Your noble heart forgets its native greatness,
And sinks in softness when you languish thus,
Thus sigh and murmur but for six days absence.

Arib. Chidenot, but think ife'er, "when thou wert young,"
Thou lov'dst thyself, how thou wert won't to judge
Of time, of love, of absence, and impatience.
What! six long days, and never write nor send!
Thou' Adelmars and Kenwalds, faithful both,
Were left behind to bring me tidings from her.
How, Ethelinda! how hast thou forgot me!

Osw. Perhaps I err; but if the pain be such,

* The lines distinguished by inverted commas are omitted in the representation, and those printed in Italicks are the additions of the Theatre.

Why is the fair one who alone can ease it
Thus far divided from your longing arms?
"I were better ne'er to part than thus to mourn.
Oswald! is there not a fatal cause?
You know't my Ethelinda——

Q/w. Is a Christian,
A name by Saxons and their gods abhorr'd.
To me her diff'ring faith imports not much;
'Tis true indeed bred to my country's manners
I worship as my fathers did before me;
Unpractis'd in disputes and wrangling schools
I seek no farther knowledge, and so keep
My mind at peace, nor know the pain of doubting:
What others think I judge not of too nicely
But hold all honest men are in the right.

Arib. Then know yet more, for my whole breast is thine,
Ev'n all my secret soul: I am a Christian.
'Tis wonderful to tell, for oh, my Oswald!
I listen'd to the charmer of my heart.
Still as the night that fled away I sat,
I heard her with an eloquence divine
Reason of holy and mysterious truths,
Of Heav'n's most righteous doom, of man's injustice,
Of laws to curb the will and bind the passions,
Of life, and death, and immortality,
"Of gnashing fiends beneath and pains eternal,
"Of starry thrones and endless joys above."
My very soul was aw'd, was shook within me;
Methought I heard distinct, I saw most plain,
Some angel in my Ethelinda's form
Point out my way to everlasting happiness.

Osw. 'Tis wonderful indeed! and yet great souls,
By nature half divine, soar to the stars,
And hold a near acquaintance with the gods.
And oh! my Prince, when I survey thy virtue
I own the seal of Heav'n imprinted on thee;
I stand convince'd that good and holy pow'rs
Inspire and take delight to dwell within thee:
Yet crowds will still believe and priests will teach
As wand'ring fancy and as int'rest lead.
How will the King and our fierce Saxon chiefs

Approve this bride and faith? Had royal Hengist
Thy father liv'd——

Arib. 'Tis on that rock we perish;
'Thou bring'st his dreadful image to my thoughts;
And now he stands before me stormy, fierce,
Imperious, unrelenting, and to death
Tenacious of his purpose once resolv'd.
Just such he seems as when severe and frowning
He forc'd the King my brother and myself
To kneel and swear at Woden's cruel altar
First never to forego our country's gods,
Then made us vow with deepest imprecations
If it were either's fortune e'er to wed
Never to chuse a wife among the Christians.

Osw. Have you not fail'd in both?

Arib. 'Tis true I have,
But for a cause so just, so worthy of me,
That not to 'ave fail'd in both had been to 'ave fail'd.
Yes, Oswald, by the conscious judge within
So do I stand acquitted to myself,
That were my Ethelinda free from danger,
On peril of my life I would make known
And to the world avow my love and faith.

Osw. I dare not, nay 'tis sure I cannot, blame you;
"You are the secret worship of my soul,
"To me so perfect that you cannot err."
But oh! my Prince, let me conjure you now
By that most faithful service I 'ave still paid you,
By love and by the gentle Ethelinda,
Be cautious of your danger, rest in silence.
In holy matters Zeal may be your guide,
And lift you on her flaming wings to heav'n,
But here on earth trust Reason and be safe.

Arib. 'Tis true the present angry face of things
Bespeaks our coolest thoughts: the British king,
Ambrosius, arms and calls us forth to battle,
Demanding back the fruitful fields of Kent,
By Vortigern to royal Hengist giv'n,
A mean reward for all those Saxon lives
Were lost in propping Britain's sinking state.

Osw. The war with Britain is a distant danger,
Nor to be weigh'd with our domestick fears.

Young Offa, chief among our Saxon princes,
 Who at the King's entreaty friendly came
 From Northern Jutland and the banks of Elbe
 With twice ten thousand warriors to his aid,
 Frowns on our court, complains aloud of wrongs,
 And wears a publick face of discontent.

Arib. 'Tis said he is offended that the King
 Delays to wed his sister.

Osw. 'Twas agreed,
 'Twas made the first condition of their friendship,
 And sworn with all the pomp of priests and altars,
 That beauteous Rodogune should be our queen,
 Then wherefore this delay? The time was fix'd,
 The feast was bid, and mirth proclaim'd to all;
 The crowd grew jovial with the hopes of many days,
 And each, according to our country's custom,
 Provok'd his fellow with a friendly bowl,
 And blest'd the royal pair; when on the morn,
 The very morn that should have join'd their hands,
 The King forbad the rites.

Arib. Two days are past,
 Nor has my brother yet disclos'd the cause.
 Last night at parting from him he stopt short,
 Then catch'd my hand, and with a troubled accent,
 With words that spoke like secret shame and sorrow,
 He told me he had something to impart,
 And wish'd that I would wait him in the morning.

Osw. But see, Prince Offa and his beauteous sister!
 The King's most favour'd counsellor, old Seofrid,
 Is with 'em too.

Arib. Retire; I would not meet 'em;
 That princess, Oswald, is esteem'd a wonder:
 To me she seems most fair; and yet, methinks,
 Dost thou not mark? there is I know not what
 Of sullen and severe, of fierce and haughty,
 That pleases not but awes: I gaze astonish'd,
 And fear prevents desire.—“ So men tremble
 “ When lightning shoots in glitt'ring trails along:
 “ It shines 'tis true, and gilds the gloomy night,
 “ But where it strikes 'tis fatal.” [*Exeunt Arib. and Osw.*]

Enter OFFA, RODOGUNE, SEOFRID, and Attendants.

Of. By Woden no! I will not think he meant it;

Revenge had else been swift—So high I hold
 The honour of a soldier and a king
 I won't think your master meant to wrong me.
 Let him beware however—jealous friendship
 And beauty's tender fame can brook no slight.
 What in a foe I pardon or despise
 Is deadly from a friend, and so to be repaid.

Seof. Whatever fame or ancient story tells
 Of brother's love or celebrated friends,
 Whose faith in perils oft' and oft' in death
 Severely had been try'd and never broke,
 Such is the truth and such the grateful mind
 Of royal Hengist to the princely Offa.

For you, my prince, [To Rodogune.] frown if wars and

If your councils and if cares, which wait
 On kings, the nursing fathers of their people,
 Withhold a while the monarch from your arms.

Rod. When fierce Ambrosius leads the Britons forth,
 Thunders in arms and shakes the dusty field,
 It suits thy wary master's caution well
 To sit with dreaming hoary heads at council,
 And waste the midnight taper in debates;
 But let him still be wise, consult his safety,
 And trouble me no more. Does he send thee
 With tales of dull respect and faint excuses;
 Tell him he might have spar'd the formal message
 Till some kind friend had told him how I languish'd,
 How like a turtle I bemoan'd his absence.

Seof. Pardon, fair Excellence! if salt'ring age
 Profanes the passion I was bid to paint,
 And drops the tale imperfect from my tongue.
 But lovers best can plead their cause themselves;
 And see your slave the King, my master, comes
 To move your gentle heart with faithful vows,
 And pay his humble homage at your feet.

Enter the KING, Guards, and other Attendants.

King. But that I trust not to that babbler Fame,
 Who careless of the majesty of kings
 Scatters lewd lies among the crowd, and wins
 The easy idiots to believe in monsters,

I should have much to charge you with my brother:
I stand accus'd—

Of. How Sir! *

King. So speaks report,
As wanting to my honour and my friend;
By you I stand accus'd.

Of. Now by our friendship,
If that be yet an oath, resolve me Hengist
Whence are these doubts between us, whence this coldness?
Say, thou who know'st, what sudden secret thought
Has stepp'd between and dash'd the publick joy.
Thou call'st me Brother; wherefore wait the priests,
And suffer Hymen's holy fires to languish?
What hinders but that now the rites begin,
That now we lose all thoughts of past displeasure,
And in the temple tie the sacred knot
Of love and friendship to endure for ever?

King. What hinders it indeed but that which makes
This medley war within, but that which causes
This sickness of the soul, and weighs her down
With more than mortal cares?

Of. What shall I call
This secret gloomy grief that hides its head
And loves to lurk in shades? Have royal minds
Such thoughts as shun the day?

King. Urge me no farther,
But like a friend be willing not to know
What to reveal would give thy friend a pain.
Be still the partner of my heart, and share
In arms and glory with me; but oh! leave,
Leave me alone to struggle thro' one thought,
One secret anxious pang, that jars within me,
That makes me act a madman's part before thee,
And talk confusion—If thou art my friend
Thou hast heard me, and be satisfy'd—if not,
I have too much descended from myself
To make the mean request—But rest we here.
To you, fair princess—

Rod. No!—there needs no more,
For I would spare thee the unready tale.
Know, faithless King! I give thee back thy vows,
And bid thee sin secure, be safely perjur'd,

Since if our gods behold thee with my eyes
 Their thunder shall be kept for nobler vengeance,
 And what they scorn like me they shall forgive.

King. When anger lightens in the fair one's eyes
 Lowly we bow as to offended Heav'n,
 With blind obedience and submissive worship,
 "Nor with too curious boldness rashly reason
 "Of what is just or unjust; such high pow'r
 "Is to itself a rule and cannot err;
 "Yet this may be permitted me to speak,"
 Howe'er the present circumstance reproach me,
 Yet still my heart avows your beauty's pow'r,
 My eyes confess you fair——

Rod. Whate'er I am
 Is of myself, by native worth existing,
 Secure and independent of thy praise;
 Nor let it seem too proud a boast if minds
 By nature great are conscious of their greatness,
 And hold it mean to borrow ought from flattery.

King. You are offended Lady.

Rod. Hengist no.
 Perhaps thou think'st this gen'rous indignation
 That blushing burns upon my glowing cheek,
 And sparkles in my eyes a woman's weakness,
 "The malice of a poor forsaken maid
 "Who rails at faithless man"—Mistaken Monarch!—
 For know e'en from the first my soul disdain'd thee,
 Nor am I left by thee but thou by me:
 "So was thy falsehood to my will subservient,
 "And by my purpose bound. Thus man, tho' limited
 "By Fate, may vainly think his actions free,
 "While all he does was at his hour of birth
 "Or by his gods or potent stars ordain'd."

Of. No more my sister; let the gowmen talk,
 And mark out right and wrong in noisy courts,
 While the brave find a nearer way to justice;
 They hold themselves the balance and the sword,
 And suffer wrong from none. 'Tis much beneath me
 To ask again the debt you owe to honour,
 So that be satisfy'd we still are friends
 And brothers of the war: but mark me Hengist;
 I am not us'd to wait, and if this day

Pals unregarded as the former two
Soon as to-morrow dawns expect me——

King. Where?

Of. Arm'd in the field——

Seof. to the King.] Beseech you Sir be calm,
The valiant prince——

Of. Tho' I could wish it otherwise:
And since the honour of the Saxon name
And empire here in Britain rests upon thee,
Believe me I would still be found thy friend.

[Exeunt Offa, Rodogune, and Attendants.]

King. No, I renounce that friendship: perish too,
Perish that name and friendship both for ever!
What are the kingdoms of the peopled earth,
What are their purple and their crown, to me?
If I am curs'd with in, and want that peace
Which ev'ry slave enjoys?

Seof. My royal master,
It racks my aged heart to see you thus;
But oh! what aid, what counsel, can I bring you,
When all yon' castern down, ev'n to the surge
That bellowing beats on Dover's chalky cliff,
With crested helmets thick embattled shines?
With these your friends what are you but the greatest?
With these your foes—Oh! let me lose that thought,
And rather think I see you Britain's king,
Ambrosius vanquish'd, and the farthest Picts
Submitted to your sway, tho' the same scene
Discover'd to my view the haughty Rodogune
Plac'd on your throne and partner of your bed.

King. What! should I barter beauty for ambition,
“Forlake my heav'n of love to reign in hell,”
Take a domestick Fury to my breast,
And never know one minute's peace again?
Statesman, thou reason'st ill: by mighty Thor,
Who wields the thunder, I will rather chuse
To meet their fury. Let 'em come together
Young Offa and Ambrosius: tho' my date
Of mortal life be short it shall be glorious;
Each minute shall be rich in some great action,
To speak the king, the hero, and the lover.

Seof. “The hero and the king are glorious names;

"But oh, my master! wherefore is the lover?"
 In honour's name remember what you are,
 Break from the bondage of this feeble passion,
 And urge your way to glory; leave with scorn
 Unmanly pleasures to unmanly minds,
 And thro' the rough the thorny paths of danger
 Aspire to virtue and immortal greatness.

King. Hence with thy hungry, dull, untimely, morals,
 The fond deluding sophistry of schools!

Who would be great but to be happy too?

"And yet such idiots are we to exchange

"Our peace and pleasure for the trifle glory."

What is the monarch mighty, rich, and great?

Wretched but the common victim of the state,

Born to grow w' d in cares, to waste his blood,

And still be wretched for the publick good?

"So by the priests the noblest of the kind

"Is to atone the angry gods design'd,

"And while the meaner sort from death are freed

"The mighty bull that wont the herd to lead

"Is doom'd for fatal excellence to bleed." [Exeunt.] }

ACT II.

Enter the KING and SEGFRIÐ.

KING.

NO more of these unnecessary doubts;
 Thy cold thy cautious age is vainly anxious,
 Thy fears are inauspicious to my courage,
 And chill the native ardour of my soul.
 This fullen cloudy sky that bodes a storm
 Shall clear, and ev'ry danger fleet away;
 Our Saxons shall forget the present discord,
 And urge the Britons with united arms;
 Hymen shall be aton'd, shall join two hearts
 Agreeing, kind, and fitted for each other,
 And Aribert shall be the pledge of peace.

Seof. Propitious god of Love! incline his heart
 To melt before her eyes, to meet her wishes,

And yield submission to the haughty maid :
 "Thou that delight'st in cruel wantonness
 "To join unequal necks beneath thy yoke,
 "For once be gentle, and inspire both hearts
 "With mutual flames, that each may burn alike :
 "Oft' hast thou ruin'd kingdoms, save one now,
 "And those who curs'd thee,
 "Parfimonious Age
 "And rigid Wisdom, shall raise altars to thee !"

Enter Aribert.

King. But see, he comes, "and brings our wishes with
 Oh Aribert ! my soul has long desir'd thee, [him."
 Has waited long for thy relief, and wanted
 To share the burden which she bears with thee,
 And give thee half her sorrows.

Arib. Give me all,
 Ev'n all the pain you feel, and let my truth
 Be greatly try'd ; let there be much to suffer,
 To prove how much my willing heart can bear
 To ease my king, my brother, and my friend.

King. I know thee ever gentle in thy nature,
 "Yielding and kind, and tender in thy friendship,"
 And therefore all my hope of peace dwells with thee ;
 For oh ! my heart has labour'd long with pain,
 "I have endur'd the rage of secret grief,
 "A malady that burns and rankles inward,"
 And wanted such a hand as thine to heal me.

Arib. Speak it, nor wound the softness of my soul
 With these obscure complainings : speak my Lord.

King. First then, this fatal marriage is my curse ;
 This galling yoke to which my neck is doom'd,
 This bride—she is my plague—she haunts my dreams,
 Invades the softer silent hour of rest,
 And breaks the balmy slumber : night grows tedious,
 She seems to lag and hang her sable wings,
 And yet I dread the dawning of the morn,
 As if some screaming sprite had shriek'd, and call'd,
 Hengist, arise, to-morrow is thy last.

Arib. A thousand speaking griefs are in your eyes
 To tell the rack within—I read it plain ;
 But oh, my King ! what prophet could have dreamt
 A turn like this, that beauty should destroy,
 And love which should have bless'd you curse you most ?

King. Oh! wherefore nam'st thou love? can there be love
When choice, the free the cheerful voice of Nature,
And reason's dearest privilege, is wanting?

What cruel laws impose a bride or bridegroom
On any brute but man? Observe the bealls,
And mark the feather'd kind; does not the turtle,
When Venus and the coming spring incite him,
Chuse out his mate himself, and love her most,
Because he likes her best? but kings must wed
(Curse on the hard condition of their royalty!)

That fordid slaves may toil and eat in peace.

Arib. 'Tis hard indeed!—Would she had never come,
This——

King. So would I—but now—

Arib. Ay, now, what remedy,
When to refuse the Saxon Offa's sister
Shall shake your throne, and make the name of Hengist,
The famous the victorious name of Hengist,
Grow vile and mean in Britain?

King. Yes, my brother,
There is a remedy, and only one.
This proud imperious fair, whose haughty soul
Disdains the humble monarchs of the earth,
“Who soars elate, affects to tread the stars,
“And scorns to mingle but with those above,”
Ev'n she, with all that majesty and beauty,
“The proudest and the fairest of her sex,”
She has the passions of a very woman,
And dotes on thee my Aribert.

Arib. On me!——

What means my Lord? impossible!

King. 'Tis true,
As true as that my happiness depends
Upon her love to thee. My faithful Seofrid
Has pierc'd into her very inmost heart,
And found thee reigning there.

Arib. Then all is plain;
My swelling heart heaves at the wrong you do me,
And wo't not be repress'd. Some fiend from hell
Has shed his poison in your royal breast,
And stung you with the gnawing canker jealousy.
But wherefore should I ask for fiends from hell,

"And trace the malice of the thought from far,"

"Since the perfidious author stands confess'd?

This villain has traduc'd me.—

Seof. "By the soul

"Of your victorious father, royal Hengist,

"My ever gracious ever honour'd master!

"Much have you wrong'd your faithful Seofrid,

"To think that I would kindle wrath betwixt you,

"Or strive to break your holy bond of brotherhood!

King. "No, Aribert, accuse him not, nor doubt

"His oft' his well-try'd faith; but cast thy eyes

"Back on thyself, and while I hold the mirror

"Survey thyself, the certain cause of love;

"Survey thy youthful form, by nature fashioned

"The most unerring pattern of her skill,

"The pomp of loveliness she spreads all o'er thee,

"And decks thee lavishly with ev'ry grace

"That charms in woman or commands in man;

"Behold—nor wonder then if crowns are scorn'd.

"And purple Majesty looks vile before thee.

Arib. "Oh! whither, whither would you lead? and why

"This prodigality of illtim'd praise?

Seof. "Were you not all my royal master said,

"Form'd to enthral the hearts of the soft sex,

"Yet that she loves is plain from—

Arib. "Hence, thou sycophant!"

Seof. Your pardon Sir; it has not been my office

To forge a tale, or cheat your ear with flatt'ry,

Nor have I other meaning than your service;

But that the princess loves you is most true:

Emma, the chief, most favour'd of her women,

The only partner of her secret soul,

To me avow'd her passion; and howe'er

Her haughty looks resent the King's delay,

Yet in her heart with pleasure she applauds it,

And would forego, tho' hard to womankind,

The pride, high place, and dignity, of empire,

To share an humbler fate with princely Aribert.

King. Why dost thou turn away? wherefore deform

The grace and sweetness of thy smiling youth

With that ungentle frown? Art thou not pleas'd

To see the tyrant beauty kneel before thee,

"Divest'd of her pride, and yield to thee,"
Unask'd, a prize for which, like Grecian Helen,
The great ones of the earth might strive in arms,
And Empires well be lost?

Arib. Are we not brothers?

We are, and Nature form'd us here alike,
Save that her partial hand gave all the majesty
And greatness to my King, and left me rich
Only in plainness, friendship, truth, and tendernefs:
Then wonder not our passions are the same,
That the same objects cause our love and hate.
You say you cannot love this beauteous stranger,
Is not my heart like your's?

King. Come near, my brother,
And while I lean thus fondly on thy bosom
I will disclose my inmost soul to thee,
And shew thee ev'ry secret sorrow there.
I love, my Aribert, I dote to death;
The raging flame has touch'd my heart, my brain,
And madness will ensue.

Arib. 'Tis most unhappy!

But say, what royal maid, or Saxon born
Or in the British court, what fatal beauty,
Can rival Rodogune's imperial charms?

King. 'Tis all a tale of wonder, 't is a riddle.

High on a throne, and royal as I am,
I want a slave's consent to make me happy:
Nay more, possess'd of her I love, or Love,
Or some divinity more strong than Love,
Forbids my bliss, nor have I yet enjoy'd her.
Tho' I have taught my haughty heart to bow,
Tho' lowly as she is, of birth obscure,
And of a race unknown, I oft' have offer'd
To raise her to my throne, make her my queen,
Yet still her colder heart denies my suit,
And weeping still she answers 't is in vain.

Arib. Mysterious all and dark! yet such is Love,
And such the laws of his fantastick empire;
The wanton boy delights to bend the mighty,
And scoffs at the vain wisdom of the wise.

King. Here in my palace, in this next apartment,
Unknown to all but this my faithful Seofrid,

The charmer of my eyes, my heart's dear hope,
Remains, at once my captive and my queen!

Arib. Ha! in your palace! here!——

King. Ev'n here, my brother;

But thou, thou shalt behold her, for to thee,
As to my other self, I trust. The cares
Of courts and tyrant bus'ness draw me hence,
But Scofrid shall stay, and to thy eyes

[*The King signs to Scofrid, who goes out.*

Disclose the secret treasure. Oh my Aribert!
'Thou wot not wonder what distracts my peace
When thou behold'st those eyes. Pity thy brother,
And from the beach lend him thy friendly hand,
Lest while conflicting with a sea of sorrows
The proud waves overbear him and he perish.

Arib. Judge me, just Heav'n! and you, my royal bro-
ther, my own life be dear to me as your's. [ther,

All that my scanty pow'r can give is your's:
If I am circumscrib'd by Fate, oh pity me
That I can do no more! for oh my King!
I would be worthy of a brother's name,
Would keep up all my int'rest in your heart,
That when I kneel before you, (as it soon
May happen that I shall) when I fall prostrate,
And doubtfully and trembling ask a boon,
The greatest you can give or I can ask,
I may find favour in that day before you,
And bless a brother's love that bids me live.

King. Talk not of asking, but command my pow'r.
By Thor, the greatest of our Saxon gods,
I swear the day that sees thee join'd to Rodogune
Shall see thee crown'd, and partner of my throne.
Whate'er our arms shall conquer more in Britain
Thine be the pow'r and mine but half the name.
With joy to thee, my Aribert, I yield
The wreathes and trophies of the dusty field,
To thee I leave this noblest isle to sway,
And teach the stubborn Britons to obey,
While from my cares to Beauty I retreat,
Drink deep the luscious banquet, and forget
That crowns are glorious or that kings are great.

[*Exit King.*

Arib. "Oh, fatal love!—curst inauspicious flame!
 "Thy baleful fires blaze o'er us like a comet,
 "And threaten discord, desolation, rage,
 "And most malignant mischief."—Lov'd by Rodogune!
 What I!—must I wed Rodogune!—Oh misery!—
 "Fantastick cruelty of hoodwink'd Chance!"
 There is no end of thought—the labyrinth winds,
 And I am lost for ever—Oh! where now,
 Where is my Ethelinda now!—that dear one
 That gently us'd to breathe the sounds of peace,
 "Gently as dews descend or slumbers creep,"
 That us'd to brood o'er my tempestuous soul
 And hush me to a calm?

Enter SEOFRID and ETHELINDA.

Seof. Thus still to weep
 Is to accuse my royal master's truth:
 He loves you with the best the noblest meaning,
 With honour—

Ethel. Keep, oh! keep him in that thought,
 And save me from pollution. Let me know
 All miseries beside, each kind of sorrow,
 "And prove me with variety of pains,
 "Whips, racks, and flames," for I was born to suffer,
 And when the measure of my woes is full,
 That Pow'r in whom I trust will set me free.

Arib. It cannot be—no, 't is illusion all; [*Seeing her.*
 Some mimic phantom wears the lovely form,
 Has learn'd the musick of her voice to mock me,
 To strike me dead with wonder and with fear.

Ethel. And do I see thee then, my Lord! my Aribert!
 What! once more hold thee in my trembling arms!
 Here let my days and here my sorrows end:
 I have enough of life.

Seof. Ha! "what is this!"
 "But mark a little farther."

Ethel. Keep me here,
 Oh! bind me to thy breast, and hold me fast,
 For if we part once more 't will be for ever.
 'T is not to be told what ruin follows,
 'T is more than death, 't is all that we can fear,
 And we shall never never meet again.

Arib. Then here, thus folded in each other's arms,

Here, let us here resolve to die together,
 Defy the malice of our cruel fate,
 And thus preserve the sacred bond inviolable
 "Which Heav'n and Love ordain'd to last for ever."
 But 'tis in vain, 'tis torn, 'tis broke already,
 "And envious Hell, with its more potent malice,
 "Has ruin'd and deform'd the beauteous work of Heav'n;
 Else wherefore art thou here? tell me at once,
 And strike me to the heart——But 'tis too plain;
 I read thy wrongs——I read the horrid incest——

Seof. "Ha! incest said he? incest"——

[*Aside.*]

Ethel. Oh! forbear

The dreadful impious sound; I shake with horror
 To hear it nam'd. Guard me thou gracious Heav'n,
 Thou that hast been my sure defence till now,
 Guard me from hell, and thine its blackest crime.

Arib. Yes, ye celestial host, ye saints and angels,
 She is your care, you ministers of goodness!
 For this bad world is leagu'd with hell against her,
 And only you can save her.——I myself, [*To Ethel.*
 Ev'n I, am sworn thy foe; I have undone thee,
 My fondness now betrays thee to destruction.

Ethel. Then all is bad indeed,

Arib. Thou see'st it not:

My heedless tongue has talk'd away thy life;
 And mark the minister of both our fates,

[*Pointing to Seofrid.*]

Mark with what joy he hugs the dear discov'ry,
 And thanks my folly for the fatal secret:
 "Mark how already in his working brain
 "He forms the well-concerted scheme of mischief:
 "'Tis fix'd, 'tis done, and both are doom'd to death"——
 And yet there is a pause——If graves are silent,
 And the dead wake not to molest the living,
 Be death thy portion——die, and with thee die
 The knowledge of our loves.

[*Aribert catches hold of Seofrid with one hand, with the
 other draws his sword, and holds it to his breast.*]

Seof. What means my Lord?

Ethel. Oh, hold! for mercy's sake restrain thy hand!

[*Holding his hand.*]

Blot not thy innocence with guiltless blood.
What would thy rash thy frantick rage intend?

Arib. Thy safety and my own——

Ethel. Trust 'em to Heav'n.

Seof. Has then my hoary head deserv'd no better
Than to behold my royal master's son
Lift up his armed hand against my life?

Oh Prince! oh! wherefore burn your eyes? and why,
Why is your sweetest temper turn'd to fury?

Arib. Oh! thou hast seen and heard and known too much,
Hast pry'd into the secret of my heart,
And found the certain means of my undoing.

Seof. "Where is the merit of my former life,
Or my d experience of my faithful years?

Are they forgot, and can I be that villain?

Arib. "Thou wert my father's old his faithful servant."

Seof. Now by thy life, our empire's other hope,
Oh, royal youth! I swear my heart bleeds for thee;
Nor can this object of thy fond desire,
This lovely weeping fair, be dearer to thee
Than thou art to thy faithful Seofrid.

I saw thy love, I heard thy tender sorrows,
With somewhat like an anxious father's pity,
With cares, and with a thousand fears for thee.

Arib. "What!" is it possible!

Seof. Of all the names
Religion knows point the most sacred out,
And let me swear by that.

Arib. I would believe thee.

Forgive the madness of my first despair.

[*Letting fall his sword.*]

And if thou hast compassion shew it now;
Be now that friend, be now that father to me,
Be now that guardian angel, which I want;
Have pity on my youth, and save my love.

Seof. First then, to stay these sudden gusts of passion
That hurry you from reason; rest assur'd
The secret of your love lives with me only.

The dangers are not small that seem to threaten you,
Yet would you trust you to your old man's care
I durst be bold to warrant yet your safety.

Arib. "Perhaps the ruling hand of Heav'n is in it,

“ And working thus unseen by second causes
“ Ordains thee for its instrument of good
“ To me and to my love.” Then be it so,
I trust thee with my life; but oh! yet more,
“ I trust thee with a treasure that transcends
“ To infinite degrees the life of Aribert;”
I trust thee with the partner of my soul,
My wife, the kindest, dearest, and the truest,
That ever wore the name.

Seof. Now blessings on you——
May peace of mind and mutual joys attend
To crown your fair affections! may the sorrows
That now sit heavy on you pass away,
And a long train of smiling years succeed
To pay you for the past! *Tel let me ask,*
For wonder still possesses all my mind,
Whence and how grew your loves?

Arib. It was my chance,
On that distinguish'd day when valiant Flavian,
A name renown'd among the British chiefs,
Fell by the swords of our victorious Saxons,
To rescue this his daughter from the violence
Of the fierce soldier's rage. “ Nor need I tell thee,
“ For thou thyself behold'st her, that I lov'd her,
“ Lov'd her, and was belov'd.” Our meeting hearts
Consented soon, and marriage made us one.
Her holy faith and Christian cross, oppos'd
Against the Saxon gods, join'd with the memory
Of the dread king my father's fierce command,
Urg'd me to seek my Ethelinda's safety,
And hide her from the world. Just to my wish,
Beneath the friendly covert of a wood,
Close by whose side the silver Medway ran,
I found a little pleasant lonely cottage,
A mansion fit for Innocence and Love,
Had but a guard of angels dwelt around it
To keep off Violence—but forc'd from thence—
By whom betray'd—why I behold her here—
There I am lost——

Ethel. There my sad part begins.
It was the second morn since thou hadst left me
When thro' the wood I took my usual way

To seek the coolness of the wellspread shade
That overlooks the flood. On a fear branch
Low bending to the bank I sat me down,
Musing and still; my hand sustain'd my head,
My eyes were fix'd upon the passing stream,
And all my thoughts were bent on heav'n and thee,
When sudden thro' the woods a bounding stag
Rush'd headlong down and plung'd amidst the river;
Nor far behind, upon a foaming horse,
There followed hard a man of royal port;
I rose, and would have fought the thicker wood,
But while I hurry'd on my hasty flight
My heedless feet deceiv'd me, and I fell:

“Alas! leaping from his horse he rais'd me up.”

“Surpris'd and troubled at the sudden chance

“I begg'd he would permit me to retire,

“But he with furious wild disorder'd looks,”

With eyes and glowing visage flashing flame,

“Swore 't was impossible; he never would,

“He could not leave me; with ten thousand ravings,

“The dictates of his looser rage. At length”

He seiz'd my trembling hand; I shriek'd and call'd

To Heav'n for aid, when in a luckless hour

Your faithful servants, Adelmarr and Kenwald,

Came up, and lost their lives in my defence.

Arib. Where will the horror of thy tale have end?

Ethel. The furious King, (for such I found he was)

By three attendants join'd, bore me away,

Resistless, dying, senseless with my fears.

Since then, a wretched captive, I deplore

) Our common woes, for mine I know are thine.

Arib. “Witness the sorrows of the present hour,

“The fears that rend ev'n now my lab'ring heart,

“For thee and for myself. And yet, alas!

“What are the present ills compar'd to those

“That yet remain behind for both to suffer?

“Think where thy helpless innocence is lodg'd;

“The rage of lawless pow'r and burning lust

“Are bent on thee; 't is hell's important cause,

“And all its blackest fiends are arm'd against thee.

Ethel. “'Tis terrible! my fears are mighty on me,

“And all the coward woman trembles in me.

" But oh! when hope and neverfailing faith
 " Revive my fainting foul, and lift my thought
 " Up to yon' azure sky and burning lights above,
 " Methinks I read my safety written there;
 " Methinks I see the warlike host of heav'n
 " Radiant in glitt'ring arms and beamy gold,
 " The great angelick pow'rs, go forth by bands
 " To succour truth and innocence below;
 " Hell trembles at the sight, and hides its head
 " In utmost darkness, while on earth each heart
 " Like mine is fill'd with peace and joy unutterable."

Seof. Whatever gods there be their care you are;
 Nor let your gentle breast harbour one thought
 Of outrage from the King: his noble nature,
 Tho' warm, tho' fierce, and prone to sudden passions,
 Is just and gentle when the torrent rage
 Ebbs out and cooler reason comes again.
 Should he, (which all ye holy pow'rs avert!)
 Urg'd by his love, rush on to impious force,
 If that should happen, in that last extreme
 On peril of my life I will assist you,
 And you shall find your safety in your flight.

Arib. Oh! guard her innocence; let all thy care
 Be watchful to preserve her from dishonour.

Seof. Rest on my diligence and caution safe.
 Ere twice the ruler of the day return
 To gild the chalky cliffs on Britain's shore
 Some favourable moment shall be found
 To move the King your royal brother's heart
 With the sad tender story of your loves.
 Till then be cheer'd, and hide your inward sorrows
 With well-dissembled necessary smiles;
 Let the King read compliance in your looks,
 A free and ready yielding to his wishes.
 At present to prevent his doubts 't were fit
 That you should take a hasty leave and part.

Ethel. What! must we part?

Seof. But for a few short hours,
 That you may meet in joy and part no more.

Arib. Oh, fatal sound! oh, grief unknown till now!
 While thou art present my sad heart seems lighter;
 I gaze and gather comfort from thy beauty;

"Thy gentle eyes send forth a quick'ning spirit,
 "And feed the dying lamp of life within me;"
 Oh! when thou art gone, and my fond eyes
 Seek thee all around, but seek in vain,
 What pow'r, what angel, shall supply thy place,
 Help me to support my sorrows then,
 And save my soul from death?"

My life! my Lord!

What would my heart say to thee!—but no more—

Oh! lift thy eyes up to that holy Pow'r
 Whose wondrous truths and majesty divine
 Thy Ethelinda taught thee first to know,
 There fix thy faith and triumph o'er the world;
 Who can help or who can save besides?

Does not the deep grow calm and the rude north
 Be hush'd at his command? thro' all his works
 Does not his servant Nature hear his voice,
 Hear and obey? then what is impious man
 That we should fear him when Heav'n owns our cause?
 That Heav'n shall make my Aribert's care,
 "Shall to thy groans and sighings lend an ear,"
 And save thee in the moment of despair.

Arib. Oh! thou hast touch'd me with the sacred theme,
 And my cold heart is kindled at thy flame;

"An active hope grows busy in my breast,
 "And something tells me we shall both be blest."

Like thine my eyes the starry thrones pursue,
 And heav'n disclos'd stands open to my view;
 And see the guardian angels of the good

Reclining soft on many a golden cloud,
 To earth they seem their gentle heads to bow,
 And pity what we suffer here below;

"But oh! to thee, thee most they seem to turn,
 "Joy in thy joys, and for thy sorrows mourn;"
 Thee, oh my love! their common care they make,
 Me to their kind protection too they take,
 And save me for my Ethelinda's sake.

Exeunt Seofrid and Ethelinda at one door, Aribert at the other.

ACT III.

Enter SEOFRID.

SEOFRID.

WHAT is the boasted majesty of kings,
 Their godlike greatness, if their fate depend
 Upon that meanest of their passions, love?
 The pile their warlike fathers toil'd to raise,
 That noble monument of deathless fame,
 A woman's hand o'erturns. "The cedar thus,
 "That lifted his aspiring head to heav'n,
 "Secure, and fearless of the sounding axe,
 "Is made the prey of worms; his root destroy'd,
 "He sinks at once to earth, the mighty ruin
 "And triumph of a wretched insect's power."
 Is there a remedy in human wisdom
 My mind has left unfought to help this evil?
 I would preserve 'em both the royal brothers;
 But if their Fates ordain that one must fall
 Then let my master stand. This Christian woman——
 Ay, there the mischief comes!—"What are our gods
 "That they permit her to defy their pow'r?
 "But that's not much; let their priests look to that.
 "Were she but well remov'd"——But then the King——
 Why absence, bus'ness, or another face,
 A thousand things may cure him——Would 'twere done,
 "And my head safe——That! let me look to that"——
 But see, the husband comes!——Ha!——not ill thought;
 It shall be try'd at least.——

*Enter ARIBERT.**Arib.* Still to this place

My heart inclines, still hither turn my eyes,
 Hither my feet unbidden find their way.
 "Like a fond mother from her dying babe
 "Forc'd by officious friends' and servants' care,
 "I linger at the door, and wish to know,
 "Yet dread to hear the fate of what I love."
 Oh Seofrid! dost thou not wonder much,
 And pity my weak temper, when thou seest me
 Thus in a moment chang'd from hot to cold,
 My active fancy glowing now with hopes,

Am I thus drooping, death in my pale visage,
My heart and my chill veins all freezing with despair?

Seof. I bear an equal portion of your sorrows;
Your fears too all are mine; and oh! my Prince,
I would partake your hopes, but my cold age,
Is apt to fear the worst—

Seof. What dost thou fear?

Seof. Yes! Nay, nothing worse than what we both have

Arib. How! nothing!—speak thy fear. [fear'd.

Seof. "Why—nothing now"—

The King!—"that's all."

Arib. The King!—"oh, that's too much!"

And yet—yet there is more; I read it plain

In thy dark sullen visage—"like a storm

That gathers black upon the frowning sky

"And grumbles in the wind—But let it come,

"Let the whole tempest burst upon my head,

"Let the fierce lightning blast, the thunder rive me;"

And oh! 'tis sure the fear of what may come

Does far transcend the pain.

Seof. You fear too soon,

And fancy drives you much too fiercely on.

I do not say that what may happen will;

Chance often mocks what wisely we foresee;

"Besides, the ruling gods are over all,

"And order as they please their world below."

The King 'tis true is noble—but impetuous;

"And love, or call it by the coarser name,

"Lust, is of all the frailties of our nature

"What most we ought to fear; the headstrong beast

"Rushes along impatient for the course,

"Nor hears the rider's call nor feels the rein."

Arib. What wouldst thou have me think?

Seof. Think of the worst,

Your better fortune will arrive more welcome.

To speak then with that openness of heart

That should deserve your trust, I have my fears:

What if at some dead hour of night the King

Intend a visit to your weeping princeps?

Arib. Ha!—

Seof. "He may go, 'tis true, with a fair purpose."

Suppose her sunk into a downy slumber,

Her beating heart just tir'd and gone to rest :

" Methinks I see her on her couch repos'd,

" The lovely, helpless, sweet, unguarded, innocence!

" With gentle heavings rise her snowy breasts,

" Soft steals the balmy breath, the rosy hew

" Glows on her cheek, a deep vermilion dies

" Her dewy lip, while Peace and smiling Joy

" Sit hush'd and silent on the sleeping fair ;"

Then think what thoughts invade the gazing King,

Catch'd with the sudden flame at once he burns,

At once he flies resistless on his prey :

Waking she starts distracted with the fright,

To Aribert's lov'd name in vain she flies ;

Shrieking she calls her absent lord in vain :

The King possess'd of all his furious will—

Arib. First sink the tyrant-ravisher to hell !

Seize him ye Fiends!—first perish thou and I !

Let us not live to hear of so much horror :

The curst deed will turn me savage wild,

" Blot ev'ry thought of nature from my soul. "

" A brother!—I will rush and tear his breast,

" Be drunk with gushing blood," and glut my vengeance

With his incestuous heart.

Seof. It is but just

You should be mov'd, for sure the thought is dreadful.

But keep this swelling indignation down,

And let your cooler reason now prevail,

That may perhaps find out some means of safety.

Arib. Talk'st thou of safety!—we may talk of heav'n,

May gaze with rapture on yon' starry regions,

But who shall lend us wings to reach their height ?

Impossible!—

Seof. There is a way yet left,

And only one.

Arib. Ha! speak—

Seof. Her sudden flight.

Arib. Oh! by what friendly means? be swift to answer,
Nor waste the precious minutes with delay.

Seof. The King, now absent from the palace, seems
To yield a fair occasion for your wishes:

A private postern opens to my gardens

Thro' which the beauteous captive might remove,

Till night and a disguise shall farther aid her
To fly with safety to the Britons' camp.

As true, one danger I might well object—

Arib. Oh! do not, do not blast the springing hopes

Which thy kind hand has planted in my soul:

If the danger turn it all on me;

Let me be noted head——

Seof. " 'Tis not much; "

'Tis but my life, and I will gladly give it

To buy your peace of mind.

Arib. Alas! what mean'st thou?

Seof. Does it not follow plain? shall not the King

Turn all his rage upon this hoary head?

Shall not all arts of cruelty be try'd

To make at tortures equal to my falsehood?

" Imagine you behold me bound and scourg'd,

" My aged muscles harrow'd up with whips,

" Or hear me groaning on the rending rack,

" Groaning and screaming with the sharpest sense

" Of piercing pain, or see me gash'd with knives,

" And fear'd with burning steel, till the scorch'd marrow

" Fries in the bones and shrinking sinews start,

" A smeary foam works o'er my grinding jaws,

" And utmost anguish shakes my lab'ring frame; "

For thus it must be.

Arib. Oh, my friend! my father!

" It must not be, it never can, it sha' not. "

Wouldst thou be kind and save my Ethelinda,

Leave me to answer all my brother's fury:

The crime, the falsehood, shall be all my own.

Seof. Just to my wish.

[*Aside.*

Arib. Thou shalt accuse me to him:

Thou know'st his own admittance gave me entrance;

Swear that I stole her, that I forc'd her from thee;

Frame with thy utmost skill some artful tale,

And I'll avow it all.

Seof. Then have you thought

Upon the danger Sir?

Arib. Oh! there is none,

Can be no danger while my love is safe.

Seof. Methinks indeed it lessens to my view.

When the first violence of rage is over

The fondness of a brother will return,
And plead your cause with Nature in his heart;
You will, you must be safe; and yet 't is hard,
And grieves me much I should accuse you to him.

Arib. 'Tis that must cover the design. But fly,
"Lose not a minute's time;"

Haste to remove her from this cursed place;
My faithful Oswald shall at night attend thee,
And help to guard her to the British camp;
"Thou know'st that is not far."

Scof. "Too near I know it."

[*Aside.*

Arib. She has a brother there, the noble Lucius,
A gallant youth, and dear to brave Ambrosius;
To his kind care resign thy beauteous charge.

Scof. This instant I obey you.

[*Going.*

Arib. Half my fears

Are over now——

Scof. One thing I had forgot.

It will import us much that you should seem
Inclin'd to meet the love of haughty Rodogune:
" 'Twill cost you but a little courtly flatt'ry,
"A kind respectful look, join'd with a sigh,
"A few soft tender words that mean just nothing,
"Yet win most womens' hearts." But see she comes:
Constrain your temper Sir; be false, and meet her
With her own sex's arts. Pursue your task,
And doubt not all shall prosper to your wish.

[*Exit Scofrid.*

Arib. She comes indeed! now where shall I begin,
How shall I teach my tongue to frame a language
So different from my heart? Oh Ethelinda!
My heart was made to fit and pair with thine,
Simple and plain, and fraught with artless tenderness;
Form'd to receive one love, and only one,
"But pleas'd and proud, and dearly fond of that,
"It knows not what there can be in variety,
"And would not if it could."

Enter RODOGUNE.

Rod. Why do I stay,
Why linger thus within this hated place,
Where ev'ry object shocks my loathing eyes,
And calls my injur'd glory to remembrance?

The King! the wretch! but wherefore did I name him!
Find out, my soul, in thy rich store of thought
Somewhat more great more worthy of thyself,
To let the mimick Fancy shew its art,
And paint some pleasing image to delight me;
Let beauty mix with majesty and youth,
Let my grace be temper'd well with softness,
Let *Love*, the god himself, adorn the work,
And I will call the charming phantom Aribert.
Oh Venus!—whither—whither would I wander?
Be hush'd my tongue—"Ye gods!"—'t is he himself—

[Seeing Aribert.]

Arib. When, fairest Princess! you avoid our court,
A lonely thus from the full pomp retire,
Love and the Graces follow to your solitude,
They crowd to form the shining circle round you,
And all the train seems your's, "while purple Majesty,
"And all those outward shews which we call greatness,
"Languish and droop, seem empty and forsaken,
"And draw the wond'ring gazer's eyes no more.

Rod. "The courtier's art is meanly known in Britain
"If your's present their service and their vows
"At any shrine but where their master kneels;
"You know your brother pays not his to me,
"Nor would I that he should.

Arib. "The hearts of kings
"Are plac'd, 't is true, beyond their subjects' search;
"Yet might I judge by love's or reason's rules
"Where shall my brother find on earth a beauty
"Like what I now behold?"

Rod. That you can flatter
Is common to your sex; you say indeed
We women love it—and perhaps we do:
Fools that we are, we know that you deceive us,
And yet, as if the fraud were pleasing to us,
And our undoing joy—still you go on,
And still we hear you—But, to change the theme,
I'll find a fitter for you than my beauty—

Arib. Then let it be the love of royal Hengist.

Rod. The King, your brother, could not chuse an advocate
Whom I would sooner hear on any subject,

'Bating that only one, his love, than you,
 Tho' you perhaps (for some have wondrous arts)
 Could soften the harsh sound. The string that jars,
 When rudely touch'd, ungrateful to the sense,
 With pleasure feels the master's flying fingers,
 Swells into harmony, and charms the hearers.

Arib. Then hear me speak of love——

Rod. But not of his.

Arib. 'Tis true I should not grace the story much;
 Rude and unskilful in the moving passion,
 I should not paint its flames with equal warmth;
 Strength, life, and glowing colours, would be wanting,
 And languid nature speak the work imperfect.

Rod. Then haply yet your breast remains untouched;
 Tho' that seems strange: you've seen the court of Britain;
 There, as I oft' have heard, imperial Beauty
 Reigns in its native throne like light in heav'n,
 While all the fair ones of the neighb'ring world
 With second lustre meanly seem to shine,
 The faint reflections of the glory there.

Arib. If e'er my heart incline to thoughts of love
 Methinks I should not (tho' perhaps I err)
 Expect to meet the gentle passion join'd
 With pomp and greatness: courts may boast of
 But Love is seldom found to dwell amongst 'em.

Rod. Then courts are wretched.

Arib. So they seem to Love:
 From pride, from wealth, from bus'ness, and from pow'r,
 Loathing he flies, and seeks the peaceful village;
 He seeks the cottage in the tufted grove,
 The russet fallows and the verdant lawns,
 The clear cool brook and the deep woody glade,
 Bright winter fires and summer ev'ning sun;
 These he prefers to gilded roofs and crowns:
 Here he delights to pair the constant swain
 With the sweet unaffected yielding maid;
 Here is his empire, here his choice to reign,
 Here, where he dwells with Innocence and Truth.

Rod. To minds which know no better these are joys,
 But princes sure are born with nobler thoughts.
 Love is in them a flame that mounts to heav'n,
 And seeks its source divine and kindred stars;

That urges on the mortal man to dare,
Kindles the vast desires of glory in him,
And makes ambition's sacred fires burn bright;
Nor you, howe'er your tongue disguise your heart,
Have meaner hopes than these.

Arib. Mine have been still
Match'd with my birth, a younger brother's hopes.

Rod. "Nay more; methinks I read your future greatness,
"And like some bard inspir'd I could foretell
"What wondrous things our gods reserve for you.
"Perhaps ev'n now your better stars are join'd,
"Auspicious Love and Fortune now conspire
"At once to crown you and bestow that greatness
"Which partial Nature at your birth deny'd."

Enter the KING, Guards, and other Attendants.

King. She must, she shall, be found, tho' she be sunk
Deep to the centre, tho' eternal Night

"Spread wide her sable wing to shade her beauties—
"And shut me from her sight." But say, thou traitor,
Thou that hast made the name of Friendship vile,
And broke the bonds of duty and of nature,
Where hast thou hid thy theft?—"So young so false—
"Have I not been a father to thy youth,
"And lov'd thee with a more than brother's love?
"And am I thus repaid!"——But bring her forth,
Or by our gods thou dy'st.

Rod. What means this rage?

[*Aside.*

Arib. Then briefly thus. You are my king and brother,
The names which most I reverence on earth,
And fear offending most; yet to defend
My honour and my love from violation
O'er ev'ry bar resistless will I rush,
And in despite of proud tyrannick pow'r
Seize and assert my right.

King. What, thine! thy right!

"Riddles and tales!"

Arib. Mine by the dearest tie,
By holy marriage mine: she is my wife.

Rod. "Racks, tortures, madness, seize me! Oh," con-
fusion!

[*Aside.*

Arib. I see thy heart swells, and thy flaming visage
Reddens with rage at this unwelcome truth;

But since I know my Ethelinda safe
 I have but little care for what may happen:
 "To-morrow may be Heav'n's—or your's to take;
 If this day be my last, why farewell life,
 I hold it well bestow'd for her I love.

Rod. "May sorrow, shame, and sickness, overtake
 "And all her beauties like my hopes be blasted."

King. So brave! but I shall find the means to tame
 To make thee curse thy folly, curse thy love,
 And to the dreadful gods who reign beneath
 Devote thy fatal bride. She is a Christian,
 Remember that fond boy, and then remember
 That sacred vow which perjur'd as thou art
 Prostrate at Woden's altar, and invoking
 With solemn Runick rights our country's gods,
 Thou mad'st in presence of our royal father.

Arib. Yes, I remember well the impious oath,
 Hardly extorted from my trembling youth,
 When burning with misguided zeal the king
 Compell'd my knee to bend before his gods,
 And forc'd us both to swear to what we knew not.

King. Now by the honours of the Saxon race,
 "A long and venerable line of heroes!"
 I swear thou art abandon'd, lost to honour,
 "And fall'n from ev'ry great and godlike thought.
 "Some whining coward priest has wrought upon thee,
 "And drawn thee from our brave forefathers' faith,"
 False to our gods as to thy king and brother.

Arib. 'Tis much beneath my courage and my truth
 To borrow any mean disguise from falsehood:
 No!—'t is my glory that the Christian light
 Has dawn'd, like day, upon my darker mind,
 And taught my soul the noblest use of reason,
 "Taught her to soar aloft, to search, to know,
 "That vast eternal fountain of her being,"
 Then warm with indignation to despise
 The things you call our country's gods, to scorn
 And trample on their ignominious altars.

King. 'Tis well Sir—Impious boy!—Ye Saxon god
 And thou, oh royal Hengist! whose dread will
 And injur'd majesty I now assert,
 Hear and be present to my justice; hear me

While thus I vow to your offended deities
This traitor's life: he dies, nor ought on earth
Saves his devoted head. One to the priests, [*Exit a Gent.*
Bid 'em be swift, and dress their bloody altars
With ev'ry circumstance of tragick pomp,
To-day a royal victim bleeds upon 'em:
Rich shall the smoke and steaming gore ascend
To glut the vengeance of our angry gods.

Rod. "At once ten thousand racking passions tear me,
"And my heart heaves as it would burst my bosom."
Oh! can I, can I, hear him doom'd to death,
Nor stir nor breathe one single sound to save him?
It won't be—and my fierce haughty soul,
Whate'er she suffers, still disdains to bend,
To sue to the "curs'd" hated tyrant King.
Oh love! oh glory!—Wouldst thou die thus tamely?

[*To Aribert.*

Is life so small a thing, so mean a boon,
As is not worth the asking?—"Thou art silent;
"Wilt thou not plead for life?"—Entreat the tyrant,
And waken nature in his iron heart.

Arib. Life has so little in it good or pleasing,
That since it seems not worth a brother's care
'Tis hardly worth my asking.

King. Seize him guards
And bear him to his fate.

[*Guards seize Aribert and bear him off.*

Rod. Yet, Hengist, know
If thou shalt dare to touch his precious life,
Know that the gods and Rodogune prepare
The sharpest scourges of vindictive war:
Fly where thou wilt the sword shall still pursue
With vengeance to a brother's murder due:
Driv'n out from man, and mark'd for publick scorn,
Thy ravish'd sceptre vainly shalt thou mourn;
And when at length thy wretched life shall cease,
When in the silent grave thou hop'st for peace,
Think not the grave shall hide thy hated head,
Still, still I will pursue thy fleeting shade;
Curs'd thee living and I'll plague thee dead.

[*Exit Rod.*

King. "On to the temple with him:" let her rave
 And prophesy ten thousand thousand horrors;
 I could join with her now, and bid 'em come;
 They fit the present fury of my soul.
 "The stings of love and rage are fix'd within,
 "And drive me on to madness. Earthquakes, whirlwinds,
 "A gen'ral wreck of Nature, now would please me!"
 For oh! not all the driving wintry war,
 When the storm groans and bellows from afar,
 "When thro' the gloom the glancing lightnings fly,
 "Heavy the rattling thunders roll on high,
 "And seas and earth mix with the dusky sky,"
 Not all those warring elements we fear
 Are equal to the inborn tempest here,
 Fierce as the thoughts which mortal man control
 When love and rage contend and tear the lab'ring soul.

Exeunt.

ACT IV.

*"The Scene is a temple adorned according to the superstition
 "of the ancient Saxons; in the middle are placed their three
 "principal idols Thor, Woden, and Freya. Musick is
 "heard at a distance, as of the priests preparing for the sa-
 "crifice."*

SCENE, a prison.

Enter ARIBERT.

ARIBERT.

ALL night the bloody priests, a dreadful band!
 Have watch'd, intent upon their horrid rites,
 "With many a dire and execrable pray'r
 "Calling the fiends beneath, the fullen demons
 "That dwell in darkness deep, and, foes to man,
 "Delight in reeking streams of human gore:
 "Now huddled on a heap they murmur'd hoarse,
 "And hissing whisper'd round their mystick charms;
 "And now, as if by sudden madness struck,
 "With screaming shrill they shook the vaulted roof,
 "And vex'd the still, the silent, solemn, midnight.
 "Such, sure, in everlasting flames below,

"Such are the groans of poor lamenting ghosts,
 "And such the howlings of the last despair.
 "Anon to sounds of wo and magick strings
 "They danc'd in wild fantastick measures round,
 "Then all at once they bent their ghastly visages
 "On me, and yelling thrice they cry'd out Aribert!"
 I have endur'd their horrors—And at length
 See the night wears away, and cheerful morn,
 All sweet and fresh, spreads from the rosy east;
 Fair nature seems reviv'd, and ev'n my heart
 Sits light and jocund at the day's return,
 And fearless waits an end of all its sufferings.

Enter one of the Guards, he delivers a letter to Aribert.

Guard. From Oswald this, on peril of my life,
 I have engag'd to render to your hands. [Exit.

Arib. reads.] "Seofrid has been just to his word; he has
 "delivered the fair Ethelinda to my charge: we have hap-
 "pily past all the guards, and hope in two hours to reach
 "the Britons' camp.

"From your faithful Oswald."

"Then thou hast nothing left on earth, my soul,
 "Worthy thy farther care. Why do I stay,
 "Why linger then, and want my heav'n so long?
 "To live is to continue to be wretched,
 "And robs me of a great and glorious death.

Enter RODOGUNE with an Officer; he speaks to her entering.

Off. Thus Offa to his beauteous sister sends;
 Depend upon a brother's love and care
 To further all you wish.

Rod. 'Tis well; be near, [Exit Officer.

And wait my farther order. "See, my heart,
 "See there thy dearest choice, thy fond desire;"
 See with how clear a brow, what cheerful grace,
 With all his native sweetness undisturb'd,
 The noble youth attends his harder fate!
 I came to join my friendly grief with your's, [To Aribert.
 To curse your tyrant brother, and deplore
 Your youthful hopes thus all untimely blasted:
 But you, I see, have learn'd to scorn your danger;
 You wear a face of triumph not of mourning.
 Was death so little in it?

Arib. Oh! 't is nothing
 To minds that weigh it well: the vulgar fear it,
 And yet they know not why, since never any
 Did from that dark and doubtful land as yet
 Turn back again to tell us 't is a pain.
 To me it seems like a long wish'd-for happiness
 Beyond what ev'n our expectation paints:
 'Tis comfort to the soul, 'tis peace, 'tis rest;
 "It comes like slumber to the sick man's eyes:
 "Burning and restless with a fever's rage
 "All night he tosses on his weary bed,
 "He tells the tedious minutes as they pass,
 "And turns, and turns, and seeks for ease in vain;
 "But if at morning's dawn sweet sleep falls on him,
 "Think with what pleasure he resigns his senses,
 "Sinks to his pillow, and forgets his pain!"

Rod. Perhaps it may be such a state of indolence,
 But sure the active soul should therefore fear it.
 "The gods have dealt unjustly with their creatures
 "If barely they bestow a wretched being,
 "And scatter not some pleasures with the pain
 "To make it worth their keeping." Is there nothing
 Could make you wish to live?

Arib. Oh yes! there is,
 There is a blessing I could wish to live for,
 To live for years, for ages, to enjoy it;
 But far, alas! divided from my arms,
 It leaves the world a wilderness before me,
 With nothing worth desiring.

Rod. "Dull and cold!
 "Or cold at least to me; dull, dull indifference." [*Aside.*
 What if some pitying pow'r look down from heav'n
 And kindly visit your afflicted fortunes?
 What if it send some unexpected aid,
 "Some gen'rous heart and some prevailing hand
 "Willing to save and mighty to defend,
 "Who from the gloomy confines of the grave
 "Timely shall snatch shall bring you back to life,"
 And raise you up to empire and to love?

Arib. The wretched have few friends, at least on earth;
 Then what have I to hope?

Rod. Hope ev'ry thing,

"Hope all that merit such as your's may claim,
 "Such as commands the world, exacts their homage,
 "And makes ev'n all the good and brave your friends.

Arib. "And can you then vouchsafe to flatter misery,
 "Then rich so fall'n so lost a thing as I am
 "With the sweet breath of praise? So pious virgins
 "Rob the whole spring to make their garlands fine,
 "Then hang them on a senseless marble tomb."

Rod. A burning purple flushes o'er my face,
 And shame forbids my tongue, or I would say
 That I—oh Aribert!—I am thy friend.
 Yet wherefore should I blush to own the thought?
 For who—who would not be the friend of Aribert?

Arib. Why is this wondrous goodness lost on me?
 Why is this bounty lavish'd on a bankrupt,
 Who has not left another hour of life,
 To pay the mighty debt?

Rod. "Oh! let me yet,
 "Yet add to it, and swell the sum yet higher,
 "Nor doubt but Fate shall find the means to pay it."
 Know then that I have pass'd this livelong night
 Sleepless and anxious with my cares for thee:
 The gods have sure approv'd the pious thought,
 And crown'd it with success, since I have gain'd
 Alfred, the chief of mighty Woden's precincts,
 To find a certain way for thy escape.

One of the sacred habits is at hand
 Prepar'd for thy disguise; the holy man
 Attends to guide thee to my brother's camp:
 Myself—oh! yet lie still my beating heart— [Aside
 Whatever dangers chance, myself will be
 The partner and the guardian of thy flight.

Arib. Now what return to make—Oh! let me sink
 With all these warring thoughts together in me,
 Blushing to earth, and hide the vast confusion!

Rod. Ye gods! he answers not, but hangs his head
 In sullen silence—See! he turns away,
 And bends his gloomy visage to the earth.
 To what am I betray'd? Oh shame, dishonour,
 And more than woman's weakness! he has seen me,
 Seen my fond heart, and scorns the easy prize.
 "Blast me, ye lightnings! strike me to the centre,

" Drive, drive me down, down to the depths beneath :

" Let me not live nor think—let me not think,

" For I have been despis'd—Ten thousand thousand,

" And yet ten thousand curses—Oh ! my folly—

Arib. " Thus let me fall thus lowly to the earth,

[*Kneels.*]

" In humble adoration of your goodness,

" Thus with my latest accents breathe your name,

" And blest you ere I die." Oh Rodogune,

Fair royal maid ! to thee be all thy wishes,

Content and everlasting peace dwell with thee,

And ev'ry joy be thine, nor let one thought

Of this ungrateful this unhappy Aribert

Remain behind to call a sudden sigh

Or stain thee with a tear. Behold I go,

Doom'd by eternal Fate, to my long rest ;

Then let my name too die, sink to oblivion,

And sleep in silence with me in the grave.

Rod. Dost thou not wish to live ?

Arib. I cannot.

Rod. Why ?

Behold I give thee life.

Arib. And therefore—oh !

Therefore I cannot take it ! I dare die,

But dare not be oblig'd. I dare not owe

What I can never render back. *Ethelinda !*

Rod. " Confusion ! "

Is then the blessing life become a curse

When offer'd to thee by my baleful hand ?

Arib. " Oh no ! for you are all that 's good and gracious ;

" Nature, that makes your sex the joy of ours,

" Made you the pride of both ; she gave you sweetness

" So mix'd with strength, with majesty so rais'd,

" To make the willing world confess your empire,

" And love while they obey : nor staid she there,

" But to the body fitted so the mind

" As each were fashion'd singly to excel,

" As if so fair a form disdain'd to harbour

" A soul less great, and that great soul could find

" Nothing so like the heav'n from whence it came

" As that fair form to dwell in.

Rod. " Soothing sounds !

" Delightful flattery from him we love;
 " But what are these to my impatient hopes? [*Aside.*

Arib. " Yet wherefore should this mighty mass of wealth

" Be vainly plac'd before my wond'ring eyes,

" Since I must ne'er possess it, since my heart

" Once giv'n can ne'er return, can know no name

" But Ethelinda, only Ethelinda?

" Fix'd to its choice, and obstinately constant,

" It listens not to any other call:

" So rigid hermits that forsake the world

" Are deaf to glory, greatness, pomps, and pleasures;

" Severe in zeal, and insolently pious,

" They let attending princes vainly wait,

" Knock at their cells, and lure them forth in vain."

Rod. How is she form'd, with what superiour grace,

This rival of my love? What envious god,

In scorn of Nature's wretched works below,

Improv'd and made her more than half divine?

" How has he taught her lips to breathe ambrosia?

" How dy'd her blushes with the morning's red,

" And cloth'd her with the fairest beams of light,"

To make her shine beyond me?

Arib. Spare the theme.

Rod. " But then her mind! Ye Gods! which of you all

" Could make that great and fit to rival mine?

" What more than heav'nly fire informs the mass?"

Has she a soul can dare beyond our sex,

Beyond ev'n man himself, can dare like mine?

Can she resolve to bear the secret stings

Of shame and conscious pride, distracting rage,

And all the deadly pangs of love despis'd?

Oh no! she cannot, nature cannot bear it; [*Weeping.*

It sinks ev'n me, the torrent drives me down,

" The native greatness of my spirit fails,

Thus melts, and thus runs gushing thro' my eyes,

" The floods of sorrow drown my dying voice,

" And I can only call thee—cruel Aribert!

Arib. " Oh thou, just Heav'n! if mortal man may dare

" To look into thy great decrees, thy fate,

" Were it not better I had never been

" Than thus to bring affliction and misfortune,

Thus curse what thou hadst made so good and fair!

Rod. But see the King and cruel train appear,
 Nor can I save thee now: thou hast thy wish; [*To Arib.*
 But what remains for me? "My heart beats fast,
 "And swells impatient at the tyrant's sight:
 "My blood, erewhile at ebb, now flows again,
 "And with new rage I burn." Since love is lost
 Come thou, Revenge! succeed thou to my bosom,
 And reign in all my soul. Yes, I will find her,
 This fatal she, for whom I am despis'd.
 Look that she be your masterpiece ye Gods!
 Let each celestial hand some grace impart
 To this rare pattern of your forming art;
 Such may she be my jealous rage to move,
 Such as you never made till now to prove
 A victim worthy my offended love. *Exit Rod.*

Enter at the other door the KING, Guards, and other Attendants.

King. Hast thou bethought thee yet perfidious boy?
 Won't thou yet render back thy theft? Consider
 The precipice is just beneath thy feet;
 'Tis but a moment and I dash thee off
 To plunge for ever in eternal darkness.
 Somewhat like Nature has been busy here,
 And made a struggle for thee in my soul;
 Restore my love, and be again my brother.

Arib. "Rage and the violence of lawless passion
 "Have blinded your clear reason, wherefore else
 "This frantick wild demand?" What! should I yield,
 Give up my love, my wife, my Ethelinda,
 To an incestuous brother's dire embrace?
 Oh horror!—But to bar the impious thought,
 Know Heav'n and brave Ambrosius are her guard:
 Ere this her flight hath reach'd the Britons' camp,
 And found her safety there.

King. Fled to the Britons!
 Oh most accursed traitor! Let her fly
 Far as the early dayspring in the east,
 "Or to the utmost ocean, where the sun
 "Descends to other skies and worlds unknown,"
 Ev'n thither shall my love take wing and follow
 To seize the flying fair. The Britons!—Gods!
 Shall they withhold her?—first my arms shall shake

Their island to the centre. But for thee,
Think'st thou to awe me with that phantom incest?
Such empty names may fright thy coward soul,
But know that mine disdains 'em. Bind him straight.

[To the Priests.

"I won't lose another thought about thee. [To Aribert.

"Begin the rites,"

And drag him to yon' holy altar, where
Stand ministr'ing priests to die the hallow'd steel
Deep in his Christian blood. The gods demand him.

Arib. Why then, no more: but if we meet again,

As when the day of great account shall come
Perhaps we may, may'st thou find mercy there
More than thou shew'st thy brother here. Farewell.

King. "Farewell." To death with him, "and end the
dreamer. [The Priests bind Aribert, and lead him to
the altar, while the solemn musick is playing."

Enter SEOFRID.

Seof. Stay! "Haste and break off your inauspicious
The instant dangers summon you away, [rites;"
Destruction threatens in our frightened streets,
And the gods call to arms.

King. What means the fear
That trembles in thy pale thy haggard visage?
Speak out, and ease this labour of thy soul.

Seof. Oh fly my Lord! the torrent grows upon us,
And while I speak we're lost: fierce Offa comes,
From ev'ry part his crowding ensigns enter,
And this way waving bend. With idle arms
Your soldiers careless stand and bid 'em pass;
"Some join, but all refuse to arm against 'em;
"They call 'em Friends, Companions, and their Country-
chosen band, led by the haughty princefs, [men."
Imperious Rodogune, move swiftly hither
To intercept your passage to the palace:

That only strength is left, then fly to reach it.

King. Curs'd chance! but haste, dispatch that traitor
They sha' not bar my vengeance. [straight;

Seof. Sacred Sir!

Think only on your safety. For the prince
Your crown, but more your love, a thousand reasons,

All urge you to defer his fate: time presses,
Or I could speak 'em plain.

King. Then hear me Soldier;
I give him to thy charge.

Scot. "They come my Lord."

King. Look to him well, for by yon^s dreadful stars
Thy life shall pay for his if he escape:
First kill him, plunge thy poignard in his bosom,
And see thy King reveng'd.

[*Exeunt King, Scotrid, Guards, and Attendants.*]

Firſt Of. Be cheer'd my Lord,
Nor keep one doubt of me; I am your slave.
The King is fled, and with him all your dangers:
Fate has reserv'd you for some glorious purpose,
And see your guardian goddess comes to save you,
To break your bonds, and make you ever happy.

[*Enter RODOGUNE and Soldiers.*]

Rod. Well have our arms prevail'd; behold he lives,
Ungrateful as he is, by me he lives!

Do I not come with too officious haste [To *Aribert*.]
Once more to press the burden life upon you,
To offer with an idiot's importunity
The nauseous benefit you scorn'd before?

Arib. If I refus'd the blessing from your hands
Think it not rudely done with sullen pride,
Since life and you are two of Heav'n's best gifts;
Yet both should be receiv'd, both kept, with honour.

Rod. "However live—yes, I will bid thee live;
"No matter what ensues. Fly far away,
"Forget me, blot my name from thy remembrance,
"And think thou ow'st me nothing—What! in bonds!
"Well was the task reserv'd for me: but thus
"I break thy chain—would I could break my own."

[*Aside.*]

[*Enter an Officer.*]

Offi. A party of our horse that late went forth
To mark the order of the Britons' camp
Met in their course some servants of the King,
For so they call'd themselves: ours judg'd 'em traitors,
And would have seiz'd, as flying to the foe:
After a sharp resistance some escap'd,

The rest, for so your princely brother wills,
Without attend your order.

Rod. Let 'em enter.

A woman!

Enter ETHELINDA, with Guards.

Ethel. Is there then an end of sorrows?

[Running to Aribert.]

Has then that cruel Chance that long pursu'd me,
That vex'd me with her various malice long,
Been kind at last, and blest me to my wish,
Lodg'd me once more within thy faithful arms!

Arib. Oh, my foreboding heart! oh, fatal meeting!

Ethel. Why droops my love, my Lord, my Aribert?
Why dost thou sigh and press me? and oh! wherefore,
Wherefore these tears that stain thy manly visage?
They told me Heav'n had strove for thy deliverance,
Had rais'd thee up some kind some great preserver,
To save thee from thy cruel brother's hand:

Why therefore dost thou mourn when thou art blest?

Or does some new affliction wound thee? say;

Perhaps I am the cause.

Rod. By all the tortures,

The pangs, that rend my groaning breast, 'tis she,

My curs'd my happy rival! "See the Siren,

"See how with eager eyes he drinks her charms;

"Mark how he listens to her sweet allurements;

"She winds herself about his easy heart,

"And melts him with her soft enchanting tongue."

Ethel. Wot thou not answer yet?

Arib. Oh Ethelinda!

Why art thou here? is this the Britons' camp?

Is Lucius here? hast thou a brother here

To guard thy helpless innocence from wrong?

Ethel. Have I not thee?

Arib. Me!——what can I do for thee?

For we are wretched both.

Rod. I'll doubt no more:

My jealous heart confesses her its foe,

And beats and rises, eager to oppose her;

Nor shall she triumph o'er me: "No, ye Gods!

"If I am doom'd by you to be a wretch

"He too shall suffer with me." Prince, you seem *[To Aribert.]*

To know this pris'ner, whom the Saxon chiefs
 Accuse of flying to our foes the Britons;
 However, I will think more nobly of you
 Than to believe you conscious of the treason;
 Nor can you grieve if justice dooms her to
 That fate she has deserv'd. Bear her to death.

[To the Guard.]

Ethel. Alas! to death!—what mean you? say by what
 Unknown unwilling crime have I offended?
 To you, fair Princess! since 't is you that judge me;
 "Tho' now this moment to my eyes first known,"
 To you I bend, to you I will appeal, [Kneeling.]
 And learn my crime from you.

Arib. Learn it from me;
 I am thy crime; 't is Aribert destroys thee.

Ethel. If thou art my offence I 'ave sinn'd indeed,
 Ev'n to a vast and numberless account,
 For from the time when I beheld thee first [To Aribert.]
 My soul has not one moment been without thee;
 Still thou hast been my wish, my constant thought,
 Like light, the daily blessing of my eyes,
 And the dear dream of all my sweetest slumbers.

Rod. Oh the distracting thought!

Ethel. Nor will you think it [To Rodogune.]

A crime to love, "for that I love is true."
 In your fair eyes I read your native goodness.
 Haply some noble youth shall in your breast
 Kindle the pure the gentle flame, and prove
 As dear to you as Aribert to me;
 "Would it be just that you should die for loving?
 "Think but on that and I shall find your pity,
 "For pity sure and mercy dwell with love."

Rod. Be dumb for ever, let the hand of Death
 Close thy bewitching eyes and seal thy lips,
 'That thou may'st look and talk no more delusion;
 For oh! thy ev'ry glance, each sound, shoots thro' me,
 And kills my very heart. Hence, bear her hence.
 "My peace is lost for ever—but she dies."

Arib. Oh, hold! "for"——

Rod. "Wherefore dost thou catch my garment?
 "Thou that hast set me on the rack, com'st thou

"To double all my pains, and with new terrors

"Dreadful to shake my agonizing soul?"

Arib. What shall I say to move thee?

Rod. Talk for ever,

Winds shall be still and seas forget to roar,
The din of babbling crowds and peopled cities,
All shall be hush'd as death while thou art speaking,
For there is musick in thy voice.

Arib. Then hear me,

With gentlest patience, with compassion, hear me;
Thus while I fall before thee, grasp thee thus,
Thus with a bleeding heart and streaming eyes
Implore thee for my Ethelinda's life.

Rod. Tho' thou were dearer to my doting eyes
Than all they knew besides, tho' I could hear thee
While ages past away, yet by the gods,
If such there are, who rule o'er love and jealousy,
"And swell our heaving breasts with mortal passions,"
I swear she dies, my hated rival dies.

Arib. Then I have only one request to make,
Which sha' not be deny'd; to share one fate,
And die with her I love.

Rod. Ungrateful wretch!

Yet, I would make thy life my care——

Arib. "No more:

"Now I scorn life indeed. Tho' you had beauty
"More than the great Creator's bounteous hand
"Bestow'd on all his various works together,
"Tho' all ambition asks, the kingly purple," [to give,
"Tho' life, tho' glory, "and" wealth and pow'r, were your's
"Tho' length of days and health were in your hand,
And all were to be mine, yet I would chuse
To turn the gift with indignation back,
And rather fold my Ethelinda thus,
And sleep for ever with her in the grave.

Rod. Then take thy wish, and let both die together.

Yes, I will tear thee from my fond remembrance,
And be at ease for ever.

Ethel. Oh my love!

What can I pay thee back for all this truth?

What but, like thee, to triumph in my fate,

And think it more than life to die with thee.

"Haste then, ye Virgins! break the tender turf,

"And let your chaster hands prepare the bed

"Where my dear lord and I must rest together;

"Then let the myrtle and the rose be strow'd,

"For 't is my second better bridal day.

"On my cold bosom let his head be laid,

"And look that none disturb us

"Till the last trumpet's sound break our long sleep

"And calls us up to everlasting bliss."

Rod. Hence with 'em, take 'em, drive 'em from my sight,

The fatal pair——

[*Exeunt all but Rod.*]

That look shall be my last.

I feel my soul impatient of its bondage,

Disdaining this unworthy idle passion,

And struggling to be free. Now, now it shoots,

It tow'rs upon the wing to crowns and empire;

While love and Aribert, those meaner names,

Are left far, far behind, and lost for ever.

"So if by chance the eagle's noble offspring,

"Ta'en in the nest, becomes some peasant's prize,

"Compell'd a while he bears his cage and chains,

"And like a pris'ner with the clown remains;

"But when his plumes shoot forth and pinions swell,

"He quits the rustick and his homely cell,

"Breaks from his bonds, and in the face of day

"Full in the sun's bright beams he soars away,

"Delights thro' heav'n's wide pathless ways to go,

"Plays with Jove's shafts and grasps his dreadful bow,

"Dwells with immortal gods and scorns the world below." }

[*Exit.*]

ACT V.

SCENE, *the palace.*

Enter the KING and SEOFRID.

KING.

"No! I will follow the fond chase no more,
 "No more pursue the flying phantom glory,
 "But lay me down and rest in fullen peace,
 "Secure of all events to come, and careless
 "If the gods guide the world by Fate or Fortune;
 "Let 'em take back the worthless crown they gave
 "Since they refuse their better blessings to me."

Seof. If not to glory yet awake to love,
 And tho' regardless of your royal state
 Yet live for Ethelinda, live to save her,
 Doom'd by the cruel Rodogune to die!
 Helpless and desolate methinks she stands,
 And calls you to her aid.

King. "What! doom'd to die!
 "Shall those dear glowing beauties then grow cold,
 "Pale, stiff, and cold? nor shall I fold her once?
 "Shall she not pant beneath my strong embrace,
 "Swell to desire, and meet my furious joy?
 "Shall she not breathe, and look, and sigh, and murmur,
 "'Till I am lost for ever, sunk in ecstasies,
 "And bury'd in ten thousand thousand sweets?
 "What! shall she die? No by the god of Arms,
 "No—I will"—

Seofrid, yes! I'll once more rouse me to the war,
 And snatch her from her fate.

Seof. Then hear the means
 By which the gods preserve your crown and love.
Osvald, of all our Saxon chiefs the first
 And nearest to your brother's heart, had drawn
 The chosen strength of all the British youth,
 Under the leading of the gallant Lucius,
 To save the prince from your impending wrath;
 By secret marches they are near advanc'd,
 And meant this night to make their bold attempt.

King, How favours this my purpose?

Seof. Thus, my Lord:

I have prevail'd their force shall join with all
Those faithful Saxons who are still your subjects,
Your foes, fierce Offa and his haughty sister,
Secure and insolent with new successes,
Despise your numbers and inferiour strength,
And may this night with ease become your prey;
Oswald attends without to learn your pleasure,
And bear it to the valiant British chiefs.

King. The Britons! Gods!—the nation which I hate—
That Oswald too!—The traitor still has been
A vow'd the slave of Aribert, his creature,
His bosom fawning parasite—No matter;
They serve the present purpose of my heart,
And I will use 'em now. Taught by thy arts—
I will look kindly on the wretch I loathe,
And smile on him I destine to destruction.
Bid him approach.

[*Exit Seofrid, and reenter with Oswald.*]

Seof. Your valiant Oswald, Sir.

King. Your friend has spoke at large your bold design,
Worthy your courage and your princely friend;
And howsoever the meddling hand of Chance
Has sown th' unlucky seeds of strife between us,
Yet I have still a brother's part in Aribert,
Nor shall my hand be slow to lead you on
Till we have driv'n these haughty inmates forth,
And independent fix'd that sov'reign right
Which our brave fathers fought to gain in Britain.

Osaw. With honourable purpose are we come,
With friendly greeting from the Britons' king,
And the fair offer of an equal peace.
This only he demands; send back the troops—
Which late arriv'd with Offa, now your foe—
As well as his, and set your princely brother,
With the fair Ethelinda, safe and free.
These just conditions once confirm'd to Lucius
Ambrosius is the friend of royal Hengist:
The Britons then shall join their arms with yours
To drive out these inhospitable guests,
And leave you peaceful lord of fruitful Kent,
The first possession of your warlike father.

King. In friendly part take we his proffer'd love.
Bear this our signet to the gallant Lucius,

[*Giving his ring to Oswald.*]

Our bond and pledge of peace, "which in full form
"We will confirm soon as the present danger
"Is well remov'd, and better time allows."

Haste thou to join our valiant friends the Britons;
My faithful Seofrid shall soon attend you
With full instructions for your private march
And means of entrance here, with the whole order
In which we mean t' attack the common foe.

Osw. I go, my Lord, and may the gods besfriend us!

[*Exit.*]

[*The King looks after Oswald, then turns and walks two or three times hastily across the stage.*]

Seof. Ha! whence this sudden start? [*Aside.*] That wrath-
ful frown,

Your eyes fierce glancing, and your changing visage,
Now pale as death, now purpled o'er with flame,
Give me to know your passions are at odds,
And your whole soul is up in arms within.

King. Oh! thou hast read me right, hast seen me well;

To thee I have thrown off that mask I wore,
And now the secret workings of my brain
Stand all reveal'd to thee. "I tell thee, Seofrid,

"There never was a medley of such thinking:

"Ambition, hatred, mischief, and revenge,

"Gather like clouds on clouds; and then anon

"Love, like a golden beam of light, shoots thro',

"Smiles on the gloom, and my heart bounds with pleasure."

But 't is no time for talk. To Siwald fly,

My soldier and my servant often try'd;

Bid him draw out a hundred chosen horse,

And hold 'em ready by the night's first fall:

Let 'em be all of courage well approv'd,

Such as dare follow wherefoe'er I lead,

Where'er this night or Fate or Love shall bear me.

Seof. I hasten to obey you: but alas!

Might your old man have leave to speak his fears?

King. I read thy care for me in all those fears,

But be not wise too much. Oft' thou hast told me

Love is a base, unmanly, whining, passion;

This night I mean to prove it and forsake it.
 "I was, 't is true, the slave of this soft folly,
 "And waited at an awful abject distance,
 "Restrained by idle rules which scornful Beauty
 "And sullen honour dictate; but no more:"
 No! by our gods I'll suffer it no more.

Seof. Where will this fury drive you?

King. To my heav'n,
 To Ethelinda's arms. This very ev'ning,
 While the deluded Britons urge our foes,
 And wreak my vengeance on the Saxon Offa,
 Amidst the first disorder of the fray
 'Twill not be hard to seize the weeping fair,
 And while the fighting fools contend in vain
 With all the wings the god of Love can lend
 To bear her far away.

Seof. Ha!—whither mean you
 To bend this rash, I fear, this fatal flight?

King. Near where the Medway rolls her gentle waves.
 To meet the Thames in his imperial stream
 Thou know'st I have a castle of such strength
 As well may scorn the menace of a siege,
 Thither I mean to bear my lovely prize,
 And in despite of all the envious world
 There riot in her arms. But break we off.
 Haste to perform my orders, and then follow
 And share in all the fortunes of thy king. [*Exit King.*]

Seof. "Fools that we are! to vex the lab'ring brain
 "And waste decaying nature thus with thought,
 "To keep the weary spirits waking still,
 "To goad and drive 'em in eternal rounds
 "Of restless racking care! 'tis all in vain!
 "Blind goddess, Chance, henceforth I follow thee:
 "The politicians of the world may talk,
 "May make a mighty bustle with their foresight,
 "Their schemes and arts; their wisdom is thy slave.

[*Exit Seofrid.*]

SCENE changes to a temple.

Enter ARIBERT and ETHELINDA.

Ethel. When this the last of all our days of sorrow
 Lies fast and hastens to fulfil its course,

When the blest hour of death at length is near,
 Why dost thou mourn? when that good time is come
 When we shall weep no more, but live for ever
 In that dear place where no misfortunes come,
 Where age, and want, and sickness, are not known,
 And where this wicked world shall cease from troubling,
 When quick descending angels crowd the air,
 And wait with crowns of glory to reward us,
 Why art thou sad my love, my lord, my Aribert?

Arib. "It comes, indeed the cruel moment comes,
 That must divide our faithful loves for ever.

A few short minutes more and both shall perish,
 Sink to the place where all things are forgotten:
 Our youth and fair affections shall be barren,
 Shall know no joys which other lovers know,
 Shall leave no name behind us, no posterity,
 Only the sad remembrance of our woes,
 To draw a tear from each who reads our story,
 And dost thou ask me wherefore I am sad?

Ethel. "'Tis hard indeed, 'tis very hard to part.
 Tho' my heart grieves to want its heav'n so long,
 Pans for its bliss, and sickens with delay,
 Yet I could be content to live for thee:

Yes, I will own thy image stands before me
 And intercepts my journey to the stars,
 Calls back the fervent breathings of my soul
 To earth and thee; with longing looks I turn,
 Forget my flight and linger here below."

Arib. Is it decreed by Heav'n's eternal will
 That none shall pass the golden gates above
 But those who sorrow here? Must we be wretched,
 Must we be drown'd in many floods of tears
 To wash our deep our inborn stains away,
 Or never see the saints and taste their joys?

Ethel. The great o'erruling Author of our beings
 Deals with his creature man in various ways,
 Gracious and good in all: some feel the rod,
 And own, like us, the Father's chast'ning hand;
 "Sev'n times, like gold, they pass the purging flame,
 And are at last refin'd; while gently some
 Tread all the paths of life without a rub;
 With honour, health, with friends and plenty, blest'd,

" Their years roll round in innocence and ease;
 " Hoary at length, and in a good old age,"
 They go declining to the grave in peace,
 And change their pleasures here for joys above.

Arib. " To have so many blessings heap'd on me
 " Transcends my wish. I ask'd but only thee:
 " Give me, I said, but life and Ethelinda;
 " Let us but run the common course together,
 " Grow kindly old in one another's arms,
 " And take us to thy mercy then good Heav'n!
 " But Heav'n thought that too much.

Ethel. " If our dear hopes,
 " If what we value most on earth, our loves,
 " Are blasted thus by Death's untimely hand,
 " If nothing good remains for us below,
 " So much the rather let us turn our thoughts
 " To seek beyond the stars our better portion,
 " That wondrous bliss which Heav'n reserves in store
 " Well to reward us for our losses here,
 " That bliss which Heav'n, and only Heav'n, can give,
 " Which shall be more to thee than Ethelinda,
 " And more to me—Oh, vast excess of happiness!
 " Where shall my soul make room for more than Aribert!"

Enter RODOGUNE and Attendants.

Rod. If while she lives still I am doom'd to suffer
 Why am I cruel to myself?—No more—
 'Tis foolish pity—How secure of conquest
 The soft enchantress looks! But be at peace,
 Beat not my heart! for she shall fall thy victim.
 Appear, ye priests! ye dreadful holy men,
 " Ye ministers of the gods' wrath and mine!"
 Appear, and seize your sacrifice, this Christian;
 Bear her to death, and let her blood atone
 For all the mischiefs of her eyes and tongue.

[Solemn music.]

[The SCENE draws and discovers the inner part of the temple; a fire is prepared on one of the altars, near it are placed a rack, knives, axes, and other instruments of torture, several priests attending as for a sacrifice.]

Arib. See where death comes array'd in all its terror,
 The rack, consuming flames, and wounding steel.
 Your cruel triumph had not been complete

Without this pomp of horror. Come, begin:
 Tear off my robes, and bind me to the rack;
 Stretch out my corded sinews till they burst,
 And let your knives drink deep the flowing blood:
 You shall behold how a prince ought to die,
 And what a Christian dares to suffer.

[*The Guards seize Aribert and Ethelinda.*]

Priest. Hold!—

The Prince's fate is yet deferr'd: the woman
 Is first ordain'd to suffer—Ere she fall
 A victim to our gods she must kneel to 'em
 And prove the torture.

Ethel. I disdain those gods.

Priest. Bind her straight and bear her to the rack.

Arib. Hold her!—Oh merciless!

Ethel. Oh, say me not, my love! with joy I go
 To meet the bitter pains of death before thee,
 And lead thee on in the triumphant way.

Arib. And can my eyes endure it! to behold
 Thy tender body torn? these dear soft arms,
 That oft' have wreath'd their snowy folds about me,
 Distorted, bent, and broke with rending pain?
 Oh Rodogune! read, read in my full eyes
 More, than my tongue can speak, and spare my love!—

Rod. "And couldst thou find no other name but that?
 "Thy love!—Oh fatal, curs'd, distracting, sound!"
 No, I will steel my heart against thy pray'r,
 And whisper to myself with fullen pleasure
 The gods are just at length, and thou shalt feel
 Pains such as I have known.

Arib. Let me but die;
 Cut off this hated object from your sight——

Rod. "Nor that—for know that I can too deny,
 "And make thee mourn thy coldness and disdain."
 No more! I'll hear no more?

Arib. "They bind her! see!

"See with rude cords they strain her tender limbs
 "Till the red drops start from their swelling channels,
 "And with fresh crimson paint her dying paleness.
 Oh, all ye host of heav'n! ye saints and angels!

Ethel. "Oh, stay thy tears, and mourn no more for me,
 "Nor fear the weakness of my woman's soul,

"For I am arm'd and equal to the combat.
 "In vain they lavish all their cruel arts,
 "And bind this feeble body here in vain;
 "The free impassive soul mounts on the wing
 "Beyond the reach of racks and tort'ring flames,
 "And scorns their tyranny"—Oh follow thou!
 Be constant to the last, be fix'd, my Aribert!
 'Tis but a short, short passage to the stars:
 Oh, follow thou! nor let me want thee long,
 And search the blissful regions round in vain.

[Solemn music.]

"Enter an Officer.

Offi. "Arm, royal maid! and take to your defence
 "The King with sudden fury sallies forth,
 "And drives our outmost guards with foul confusion."
 "Rod. The King! what frenzy brings the madman
 "Thus headlong to his fate?—But let him come,
 "His death shall fill my triumph—wealth and honour,
 "The noblest best reward, shall wait the man
 "Whose lucky sword shall take his hated head."

Enter a second Officer, his sword drawn.

Second Offi. Hengist is here; he bears down all before
 The Britons too have joined their arms to his, [him:
 And this way bend their force.

Rod. Fly to my brother, [To her Attendants.
 And call him to our aid.

[Shouts within, and clashing of swords.

King within.] Slave, give me way,
 "Or I will tear thy soul"—

Sold. within.] You pass not here.

Seof. within.] What, know'st thou not the King?—

Oh, cursed villain!

Enter the KING wounded, SEOFRID, OSWALD, and Soldiers
with their swords drawn. Oswald runs to Aribert.

Seof. Perdition on his hand—you bleed, my Lord!

King. My blood flows fast—What, can I languish now!
 So near my wish—Lend me thy arm, old Seofrid,
 To bear me to her—Ha! bound to the rack!
 Merciless dogs—ye most pernicious slaves!
 "And stand ye stupid, haggard, and amaz'd?"
 Fly swift as thought, and set her free this moment,
 "Or by my injur'd love, a name more sacred

"Than all your function knows, your gods and you,
 "Your temples, altars, and your holy shrines,
 "Your holy trumpery, shall blaze together."

[*They unbind Ethelinda.*]

Rod. 'Tis vain to rave and curse my fortune now.
 Thou native greatness of my soul befriend me,
 And help me now to bear it as I ought.

King. The feeble lamp of life shall lend its blaze
 To light me—thus far—only—and no farther.

[*Falling at Ethelinda's feet.*]

Yet look up and gaze on those bright eyes,
 Hop'd to gather heat from thence
 To feed the vital flame for ever.
 You faint, your hasty breath comes short,
 Your heart runs gushing from your breast.
 Your thoughts from each deluding passion,
 And wing your parting soul for her last flight;
 Call back your thoughts to all your former days,
 To every unrepented act of evil,
 And sadly deprecate the wrath divine.

King. Oh, my fair teacher! you advise in vain;
 "The gods and I have done with one another:
 "This night I meant to rival them in happiness;
 "Spite of my brother and thy cruel coldness
 "This night I meant to 'ave past within thy arms.

Ethel. "Oh, horror!

King. "But 't is gone:" those envious gods
 Have done their worst, and blasted all my hopes;
 They have despoil'd me of my crown and life
 By a slave's hand—but I forgive 'em that.
 Thee—they have robb'd me of my joys in thee—
 Have trod me down to wither in the grave—

Scot. My master and my king!

King. Old man, no more:

I have not leisure for thy grief—Farewell—
 Thou, Aribert—shalt live and wear my crown—
 Take it, and be more blest with it than I was.
 But Ethelinda! she too shall be thine:

That—that's too much. This world has nothing in it
 So good to give—the next may have—I know not—

[*The King dies.*]

Arib. "There fled the fierce, untam'd, disdainful, soul."
 Turn thee from death, and rise, my gentle love;

A day of comfort seems to dawn upon us,
And Heav'n at length is gracious to our wishes.

Ethel. So numberless have been my daily fears,
And such the terrors of my sleepless nights,
That still, methinks, I doubt th' uncertain happiness,
Tho' at the music of thy voice I own
My soul is hush'd, it sinks into a calm,
And takes sure omen of its peace from thee.

Ofw. To end your doubts your brother, the brave Lu-
cius, [To *Ethel.*

Will soon be here—ev'n now he sends me word
Fierce Offa and the Saxons fly before him;
The conqu'ring Britons fence you round from all
And peace and safety wait upon your love.

Arib. Nor you, fair princess! frown upon me,
Still shall my grateful heart retain you,
And still be mindful of the life you gave.
Nor must you think yourself a prisoner here:
Whene'er you shall appoint a guard attend
To wait you to your brother's camp with honour.

Rod. Yes, I will go, fly far as earth can bear me
From thee, and from the face of man for ever.
Curs'd be your sex, the cause of all our sorrows,
Curs'd be your looks, your tongues, and your false arts;
That cheat our eyes and wound our easy hearts;
"Curs'd may you be for all the pains you give,
"And for the scanty pleasures we receive;"
Curs'd be your brutal pow'r, your tyrant sway,
By which you bend and force us to obey!
Oh, Nature! partial goddess, lend thy hand,
Be just for once, and equal the command;
Let woman once be mistress in her turn,
Subdue mankind beneath her haughty scorn,
And smile to see the proud oppressor mourn.

[Exit *Rodogune.*

Ofw. The wind shall scatter all those idle curses
Far, far away from you, while ev'ry blessing
Attends to crown you. From your happy nuptials,
From royal Aribert, of Saxon race,
Join'd to the fairest of the British dames,
Methinks I read the people's future happiness,
And Britain takes its pledge of peace from you.

Ethel. Nor are those pious hopes of peace in vain,

Since I have often heard a holy sage,
A venerable, old, and saintlike hermit,
"With visions often blest'd, and oft' in thought
"Rapt to the highest brightest seats above,"
Thus with divine prophetick knowledge fill'd
Disclose the wonders of the times to come:
"Of royal race a British queen shall rise
"Great, gracious, pious, fortunate, and wise;
"To distant lands she shall extend her fame,
"And leave to latter times a mighty name;
"Tyrants shall fall, and faithless kings shall bleed,
"And groaning nations by her arms be freed,
"In this happy land her care shall prove,
"To give her a more than mother's love;
"To keep the isle she shall preserve it free,
"Safe in the bosom of her ambient sea:
"Who find her arms in many a cruel fight,
"Yet more in peaceful arts she shall delight,
"And her chief glory shall be to unite:
"Picts, Saxons, Angles, shall no more be known,
"But Briton be the noble name alone:
"With joy their ancient hate they shall forego,
"While Discord hides her baleful head below;
"Mercy, and Truth, and Right, she shall maintain,
"And ev'ry Virtue crowd to grace her reign;
"Auspicious Heav'n on all her days shall smile,
"And with eternal union bless her British isle."

*One general state this nation shall arise,
In arms unrivall'd and in councils wise;
Picts, Saxons, Angles, shall no more be known,
But Britain be the noble name alone;
To distant lands she shall extend her fame,
And leave to latest times a glorious name;
Her naval powers shall rule the circling sea,
And all her children shall be brave and free.*

[Exeunt.]

EPILOGUE. SPOKEN BY ETHELINDA.

*THE bus'ness of the day being now gone thro',
 I quit the saint and am like one of you,
 As well to look so, tho' not quit so good;
 I hate in spirit, but keep my flesh and blood.
 The moral of this play being rightly scann'd
 Is, he that leaves his now dear wife is damn'd.
 I leave to you to make the application;
 The doctrine, tho' a little out of fashion,
 May be of use in this same sinful nation.
 What think you of the matter? Which of you
 Would for his spouse like my true turtle do?
 When wealth and beauty both at once importune
 Who would not leave his wife to make his fortune?
 To some I know it may appear but oddly
 That this place of all others should turn golly;
 But what of that, since some good folks were
 Would gladly be instructed any where?
 Nor should you scorn the weakness of the teacher;
 The wisest man is not the ablest preacher.
 Ev'n we, poor women, have sometimes the pow'r,
 Read as you are, and rich in learning's store,
 To teach you men what you ne'er knew before.
 To no enthusiastick rage we swell,
 Nor foam nor aë Tom Tumbler out of zeal:
 But tho' we do n't pretend to inspiration,
 Yet like the prophets of a neighbour nation
 Our teaching chiefly lies in agitation.
 Perhaps indeed such are your wand'ring brains
 Our Author might have spar'd his tragick pains:
 By that you've supp'd, and are set in to drinking,
 Some sweeter matters will employ your thinking;
 With nymphs divine, writ on each glass before ye,
 You'll be but little better for our story:
 But since the parting hour, tho' late, will come,
 And all of you, at least as I presume,
 May find some kind instructive sbe at home,
 Then curtain lectures will I hope be read,
 Those morals then which from your thoughts were fled
 Shall be put home to you and taught abed.*

From the APOLLO PRESS,
 by the MARTINS,
 April 6. 1782.



Engraved for J. G. Smith Theatre Royal at 1778.

MR. SMITH in the Character of ALEXANDER

*When Glory like the darling Eagle stood
Perch'd on my Beaver in the Grannuck Flood.*

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

A TRAGEDY. BY NATHANIEL LEE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY-LANE.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book, by permission of the Managers,

BY MR. HOPKINS PROMPTER.

CHARACTERISTICS.

Tho' all the curtains of the sky were drawn—And the stars wink, young Ammon shall go on—
—When Glory like the dazzling eagle rood—Perch'd on my banner in the Granick flood—
When Fortune's self my standard trembling bore—And the pale Fates flood trembling on the shore—
When each immortal on the billows rode—I myself appear'd the leading god—Like Mercury I leap'd the walls, and flew amidst the foe—And like a baited lion dy'd myself—
All over in the blood of those bold hunters—Till spent with toil I battled on my knees—
Pluck'd forth the darts that made my shield a forest—And haul'd 'em back with moan unconquer'd fury—
Then shining in my arms I funn'd the field—Mov'd, spoke, and fought, and was myself a war—I am lost: what has my vengeance done!—Oh, ye have undone me! You that could dissension—Could not torn me! ye should have drawn your sword—And barr'd my race with the advancing points—Clytus would so have done to save your lives—(Oa!) I am all a ruin—
—My heart's blood can never wash away—Here is not silence but tears—Yet none had courage to prevent this murder—Oh! when shall I see ALEXANDES.

With bare devotion kneel—And let a health to Jove's great son go round, HEPHESTUS.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

LYSIMACHUS.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

CASSANDER.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

POLYPERCHON.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

CLYTUS.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

THESSALUS.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

PERDICCAS.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

ROXANA.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

SYGAMKIS.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

PARISATIS.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.

STATIRA.
—I'll be true to you, yet I'll be true to me—When Fame invites and Alexander leads—Dangers are all but animate to me—I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had—Were they all mortal they should becom unmind'd.



EDINBURG:

At the Apollo Press, by THE MARTINS, for Wells, LONDON, 1782.

The Alterations and Additions in the
paring it with the original, were found so numerous, and so
judiciously connected with the words of the original, that it was
judged impracticable to restore the necessary omissions, without
greatly embarrassing the Reader: the Editor has therefore
thought it advisable to deviate from his general plan, and present
the Play to the Publick as literally delivered in the representa-
tion, with the original Dedication, Prologue, and Epilogue, and
a Poem addressed to the Author by Mr. Dryden.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN EARL OF MULGRAVE,

*Gentleman of his Majesty's Bedchamber, and Knight of the
most noble Order of the Garter.*

MY LORD,

I hear by many persons, not indifferent judges, that I am valued most even where they most ignore me, sometimes by those too whom they esteem for flatterers, sycophants, and little swarming with flattery. In all such undertakings there is nothing so grateful to me than a Dedication. So nicely have you judged that after a play has been generally admired, and the industrious malice of some after-observer shall damn it for an epistle or a preface. For this reason my Lord, Alexander was more to seek for a patron in my troubled thoughts than for the temple of Jupiter Ammon in the spreading wilds and rolling sands. 'Tis certain too he must have been lost had not Fortune, whom I must once at least acknowledge kind in my life, presented me to your Lordship. You were pleased, my Lord, to read it over act by act, and by particular praises, proceeding from the sweetness rather than the justice of your temper, lifted me up from my natural melancholy and diffidence to a bold belief that what so great an understanding warranted could not fail of success.

And here I were most ungrateful if I should not satisfy the judging world of the surprise I was in. Pardon me my Lord for calling it a surprise when I was first honoured by waiting upon your Lordship: so much unexpected, and indeed unusual affability, from persons of your birth and quality, so true an easiness, such frankness without affectation, I never saw. Your constant but few friends shew the firmness of your mind, which never varies; so godlike a virtue, that a prince puts off his majesty when he parts with resolution. In all the happy

A ij

times that I attended you, unless business or accident interposed, I have observed your company to be the same. You have travelled through all tempers, sailed through all humours of the court's unconstant sea; you have gained the gallant prizes which you fought, your selected invaluable friends; and I am perfectly persuaded if you traffick but seldom abroad 't is for fear of splitting upon knaves or fools. Nor is it pride, but rather a delicacy of your soul, that makes you shun the sordid part of the world; the lees and dregs of it, while in the noblest retirement you enjoy the finer spirits, and have that just greatness to be above the baser. How commendable then for is such a reservation! how admirable such a solitude! you are singular in this we ought to blame. In a dissipated, thinking, dissolute age; an age whose business is a dissipation, riot, Neronian gambols, and ridiculous debauchery; an age that can produce few persons besides your Lordship who dare be alone: all our hot hours burnt in night revels, drowned by day in dead sleep, or if we wake 't is a point of reeling honour jogs us to the field, where if we live or die we are not concerned; for the soul was laid out before we went abroad, and our bodies were after acted by mere animal spirits without reason.

When I more narrowly contemplate your person, methinks I see in your Lordship two of the most famous characters that ever ancient or modern story could produce, the mighty Scipio and the retired Cowley. You have certainly the gravity, temperance, and judgment, as well as the courage, of the first; all which in your early attempts of war gave the noblest dawn of virtue, and will, when occasion presents, answer our expectation, and shine forth at full: then for the latter, you possess all his sweetness of humour in peace, all that halcyon tranquillity of mind, where your deep thoughts glide like silent waters without a wrinkle; your hours move with softest wings, and rarely any larum strikes to discompose you. You have the philosophy of the first, and (which I confess of all your qualities I love most) the poetry of the latter. I was never more moved at Virgil's Dido than at a short poem of your Lordship's, where nothing but the shortness can be disliked. As our churchmen with there were more noblemen of their function, so wish I in the behalf of de-

pressed poetry that there were more poets of your Lordship's excellency and eminence. If Poetry be a Virtue she is a ragged one, and never in any age went barer than now. It may be objected she never deserved less. - To that I must not answer: but I am sure when she merited most she was always dissatisfied, or she would not have forsaken the most splendid courts in the world. Virgil and Horace, favourites of the mightiest emperour, retired from him, preferring a mistress or a white boy, and two or three cheerful drinking friends in a country village, to all the magnificence of Rome; or if sometimes they were snatched from their cooler pleasures to an imperial banquet, we may see their verses in praise of a country life 't was against their inclination, witness Horace in his epode *Beatus ille qui procul*, &c. part of his sixth satire, his epistle to Fusc. Arist. Virgil's Georgick *O Fortunatus nimium bona si*, &c. all rendered by Mr. Cowley so copiously and naturally as no age gone before or coming after shall equal, tho' all heads join together to outdo him: I speak not of his exactness to a line, but of the whole. This then may be said as to the condition of poets in all times, few ever arrived to a middle fortune, most have lived at the lowest, none ever mounted to the highest; neither by birth, for none was ever born a prince, as no prince to my remembrance was ever born a poet; nor by industry, because they were always too much transported by their own thoughts from minding the grave business of a world, nor of their humour: whereas even slaves, the rubbish of the earth, have by most prodigious fortune gained a sceptre, and with their vile heads sullied the glories of a crown. Praise is the greatest encouragement we chameleons can pretend to, or rather the manna that keeps soul and body together; we devour it as if it were angels' food, and vainly think we grow immortal. For my own part, I acknowledge I never received a better satisfaction from the applause of an audience than I have from your single judgment. You gaze at beauties and wink at blemishes, and do both so gracefully, that the first discovers the acuteness of your judgment, the other the excellency of your nature. And I can affirm to your Lordship there is nothing transports a poet, next to love, like commending in the right place; therefore my Lord, this Play must be your's; and

Alexander, whom I have raised from the dead, comes to you with the assurance answerable to his character and your virtue. You cannot expect him in his majesty of two thousand years ago; I have only put his ashes in an urn, which are now offered with all observance to your Lordship, by

My Lord,

your Lordship's

most humble,

obliged, and

devoted servant,

NAT. LEE.

TO MR. LEE ON HIS ALEXANDER.

THE blast of common censure could I fear
 Before your Play my name should not appear,
 For 't will be thought, and with some colour too,
 I pay the bribe I first receiv'd from you,
 That mutual vouchers for our fame we stand,
 To lay the game into each other's hand,
 And to our own worths to ourselves afford
 A witness to the brothers of the sword.
 Such ill-iterate men may well endure
 When states and kings themselves are not secure;
 But men conscious of their inward guilt,
 Think the best actions on by-ends are built:
 And yet my silence had not 'scap'd their spite,
 Then envy had not suffer'd me to write;
 For since I could not ignorance pretend
 Such merit I must envy or commend.
 So many candidates there stand for wit
 A place in court is scarce so hard to get;
 In vain they crowd each other at the door,
 For ev'n reverfions are all begg'd before;
 Desert, how known foe'er, is long delay'd,
 And then too fools and knaves are better pay'd:
 Yet as some actions bear so great a name
 That courts themselves are just for fear of shame,
 So has the mighty merit of your Play
 Extorted praise and forc'd itself a way.
 'Tis here as 't is at sea, who farthest goes,
 Or dares the most, makes all the rest his foes.
 Yet when some virtue much outgrows the rest
 It shoots too fast and high to be exprest,
 As his heroick worth struck envy dumb
 Who took the Dutchman and who cut the boom.
 Such praise is your's, while you the passions move,
 That 't is no longer feign'd; 't is real love,
 Where nature triumphs over wretched art;
 We only warm the head, but you the heart:

Always you warm; and if the rising year,
 As in hot regions, bring the sun too near,
 'Tis but to make your fragrant spices blow,
 Which in our cooler climates will not grow;
 They only think you animate your theme
 With too much fire who are themselves all phlegm:
 Prizes would be for lags of slowest pace
 Were cripples made the judges of the race.
 Despise those drones who praise while they accuse
 The too much vigour of your youthful muse:
 That humble style which they their virtue make
 Is in your pow'r; you need but stoop and take.
 Your beauteous images must be allow'd
 By all but some vile poets of the crowd:
 But how should any signpost dauber know
 The worth of Titian or of Angelo?
 Hard features ev'ry bungler can command,
 'To draw true beauty shews a master's hand.

JOHN DRYDEN.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY SIR CAR SCROOP, BART.

*How hard the fate is of the scribbling drudge
Who writes to all when yet so few can judge!
Wit, like religion, once divine was thought,
And the dull crowd believ'd as they were taught;
Now each fanatick fool presumes to explain
The text, and does the sacred writ profane;
For while your wits each other's fall pursue
The fops usurp the pow'r belongs to you.
You think y' are challeng'd in each new play-bill,
And here you come for trial of your skill,
Where fencer-like you one another hurt,
While with your wounds you make the rabble sport.
Others there are that have the brutal will
To murder a poor play but want the skill;
They love to fight, but seldom have the wit
To spy the place where they may thrust and hit,
And therefore, like some bully of the Town,
Ne'er stand to draw, but knock the poet down.
With these like hogs in gardens it succeeds,
They root up all, and know not flow'rs from weeds.
As for you, Sparks, that hither come each day
To act your own and not to mind our play,
Rehearse your usual follies to the pit,
And with loud nonsense drown the stage's wit,
Talk of your clothes, your last debauches tell,
And witty bargains to each other sell,
Glout on the silly she who for your sake
Can vanity and noise for love mistake,
Till the coquette sung in the next lampoon
Is by her jealous friends sent out of Town,
For in this duelling intriguing age
The love you make is like the war you wage,
You're still prevented e'er you come to engage:
But 'tis not to such trifling foes as you
The mighty Alexander deigns to sue;
Ye Persians of the pit he does despise,
But to the men of sense for aid he flies;*

*On their experienc'd arms he now depends,
 Nor fears he odds if they but prove his friends;
 For as he once a little handful chose
 The numerous armies of the world t' oppose,
 So back'd by you who understand the rules
 He hopes to rout the mighty host of fools.*

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>	<i>Covent-Garden.</i>
ALEXANDER THE GREAT,	Mr. Smith.	Mr. Clench.
HEPHESTION, Alexander's favourite,	Mr. Davies.	Mr. Wroughton.
LYSIMACHUS, prince of the blood.	Mr. Brereton.	Mr. Hull.
CASSANDER,	{ <i>Conspira-</i> <i>tors.</i>	Mr. Fearon.
POLYPERCHON,		Mr. Booth.
PHILIP,		
CLYTUS, master of the horse,	Mr. Jefferson.	Mr. Clarke.
THESSALUS, the Median,	Mr. Farren.	Mr. Thompson.
PERDICCAS, a commander,	Mr. Usher.	Mr. Whitfield.
EUMENES,	Mr. Norris.	Mr. Fox.
ARISTANDER, a sooth- fayer,	Mr. Wrighten.	Mr. L'Estrange.
SLAVE,	Mr. Griffith.	

WOMEN.

ROXANA, first wife of Ale- xander,	Miss Younge.	Mrs. Hunter.
SYGAMBRIS, mother of the royal family,	Mrs. Johnson.	Mrs. Booth.
PARISATIS, in love with Lyfimachus,	Miss Hopkins.	Miss Dayes.
STAFIRA, married to Ale- xander,	Mrs. Yates.	Mrs. Hartley.

SCENE BABYLON.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

ACT I.

SCENE, *the gardens of Semiramis.*

HEPHESTION *and* LYSIMACHUS *fighting, CLYTUS parting them.*

CLYTUS.

WHAT! are ye madmen? This a time for quarrel?
Put up I say—or by the gods that form'd me
He who refuses makes a foe of Clytus.

Lyf. I have his sword.

Clyt. But must not have his life.

Lyf. Must not, old Clytus!

Clyt. Hairbrain'd boy you must not.

Heph. Lend me thy sword, thou father of the war,
Thou far-fam'd guard of Alexander's life.
Curse on this weak unexecuting arm!

Lend it, old Clytus, to redeem my fame;

Lysimachus is brave, and else will scorn me.

Lyf. There, take thy sword; and since thou'rt bent on
Know 'tis thy glory that thou dy'st by me. [death,

Clyt. Stay thee Lysimachus; Hephestion hold;

I bar you both. My body interpos'd,
Now let me see which of you dares to strike.

By Jove you've stirr'd the old man!—that rash arm
That first advances moves against the gods
And our great king, whose deputy I stand.

Lyf. Some prop'rer time must terminate our quarrel.

Heph. And cure the bleeding wounds my honour bears.

Clyt. Some prop'rer time! 'tis false—no hour is proper;
No time should see a brave man do amiss.

Say what's the noble cause of all this madness,
What vast ambition blows the dang'rous fire?

Why, a vain, smiling, whining, coz'ning, woman!

By all my triumphs in the heat of youth,
 When towns were sack'd and beauties prostrate lay,
 When my blood boil'd, and nature work'd me high,
 Clytus ne'er bow'd his body to such shame;
 I knew 'em, and despis'd their cobweb arts.
 The whole sex is not worth a soldier's thought.

Lys. Our cause of quarrel may to thee seem light,
 But know a less has set the world in arms.

Clyt. Yes, Troy they tell us by a woman fell;
 Curse on the sex, they are the bane of virtue!
 Death! I'd rather this right arm were lost
 Than that the king should hear of your imprudence—
 What, on a day thus set apart for triumph!

Lys. We were indeed to blame.

Clyt. This memorable day,
 When our hot master, whose impatient soul
 Outrides the sun, and sighs for other worlds
 To spread his conquests and diffuse his glory,
 Now bids the trumpet for a while be silent,
 And plays with monarchs whom he us'd to drive,
 Shall we by broils awake him into rage,
 And rouse the lion that has ceas'd to roar?

Lys. Clytus, thou'rt right—put up thy sword Heph-
 Had passion not eclips'd the light of reason—
 Untold we might this consequence have seen.

Heph. Why has not reason pow'r to conquer love?
 Why are we thus enslav'd?

Clyt. Because unmann'd,
 Because ye follow Alexander's steps.
 Heav'ns! that a face should thus bewitch his soul
 And ruin all that's great and godlike in it!
 Talk be my bane, yet the old man must talk,
 Not so he lov'd when he at Issus fought
 And join'd in mighty combat with Darius,
 Whom from his chariot, flaming all with gems,
 He hurl'd to earth and catch'd th' imperial crown.
 'Twas not the shaft of Love perform'd that feat;
 He knew no Cupids then. Now mark the change;
 A brace of Rival Queens embroil the court,
 And while each hand is thus employ'd in beauty
 Where has he room for glory?

Heph. In his heart.

Clyt. Well said young Minion!—I indeed forgot
To whom I spoke—But Syfigambis comes:
Now is your time, for with her comes an idol
That claims homage.—I'll attend the king. [*Exit.*]

Enter SYFIGAMBIS *with a letter*, and PARISATIS.

Syf. Why will ye wound me with your fond complaints,
And urge a suit that I can never grant?
You know my child, 'tis Alexander's will;
Here he demands you for his lov'd Hephæstion;
'To disobey him might inflame his wrath,
And plunge our house in ruins yet unknown.

Par. To sooth this god and charm him into temper
Is there no victim, none but Parisatis?

Must I be doom'd to wretchedness and woe
That others may enjoy the conqueror's smiles?
Oh! if you ever lov'd my royal father—
And sure you did, your gushing tears proclaim it—
If still his name be dear, have pity on me!
He would not thus have forc'd me to despair;
Indeed he would not—Had I begg'd him thus
He would have heard me ere my heart was broke.

Syf. When will my sufferings end? oh when, ye Gods!
For sixty rolling years my soul has stood
The dread vicissitudes of fate unmov'd;
I thought 'em your decrees, and therefore yielded:
But this last trial, as it springs from folly,
Exceeds my sufferance, and I must complain.

Syf. When Syfigambis mourns no common woe
Can be the cause—'tis misery indeed.
Yet pardon, mighty queen! a wretched prince
Who thus presumes to plead the cause of love.
Beyond my life, beyond the world, [*Kneeling.*] I prize
Fair Parisatis.—Hear me I conjure you!
As you have authoriz'd Hephæstion's vows
Reject not mine—grant me but equal leave
To serve the princess, and let love decide.

Heph. A blessing like the beauteous Parisatis
Whole years of service, and the world's wide empire,
With all the blood that circles in our veins,
Can never merit, therefore in my favour
I begg'd the king to interpose his int'rest,

Therefore I begg'd your majesty's assistance;
Your word is past, and all my hopes rest on't.

Lyf. rising.] Perish such hopes! for love's a gen'rous
Which seeks the happiness of her we love [passion,
Beyond th' enjoyment of our own desires;
Nor kings nor parents here have ought to do:
Love owns no influence, and disdains control;
Let 'em stand neuter—'t is all I ask.

Heph. Such arrogance did Alexander woo
Would lose him all the conquests he has won.

Lyf. To talk of conquests well becomes the man
Whose life and sword are but his rival's gift!

Syf. It grieves me, brave Lyfimachus, to find
My pow'r fall short of my desires to serve you:
You know Hephestion first declar'd his love,
And 'tis as true I promis'd him my aid;
Your glorious king, his mighty advocate,
Became himself an humble suppliant for him.
Forget her prince, and triumph o'er your passion,
A conquest worthy of a soul like thine.

Lyf. Forget her Madam! sooner shall the sun
Forget to shine and tumble from his sphere.
Alas! the stream that circles thro' my heart
Is less than love essential to my being!
Farewell great queen—my honour now demands
That Alexander should himself explain
That wondrous merit which exalts his fav'rite,
And casts Lyfimachus at such a distance. [Exit.

Syf. In this wild transport of ungovern'd passion
Too far I fear he will incense the king.
Is Alexander yet, my Lord, arriv'd?

Heph. Madam, I know not; but Cassander comes;
He may perhaps inform us.

Syf. I would shun him:
Something there is, I know not why, that shocks me,
Something my nature shrinks at when I see him.

[Exit.

Enter CASSANDER.

Cas. The face of Day now blushes scarlet deep,
Now blackens into night; the low'ring Sun,
As if the dreadful bus'ness he foreknew,
Drives heavily his sable chariot on.

[Thunder.

How fierce it lightens! how it thunders round me!
 All Nature seems alarm'd for Alexander.
 Why, be it so: her pangs proclaim my triumph.
 My soul's first wishes are to startle Fate
 And strike amazement thro' the host of heav'n.
 A mad Chaldean with a flaming torch
 Came to my bed last night, and bellowing o'er me,
 "Well had it been," he cry'd, "for Babylon
 "If curst Cassander never had been born."

Enter THESSALUS with a packet.

How now? dear Thessalus! what packet's that?

Thes. From Macedon; a trusty slave just brought it.
 Your father chides us for our cold delay;
 He says Craterus, by the king's appointment,
 Comes in his room to govern Macedon,
 Which nothing, but the tyrant's death, can hinder;
 Therefore he bids us boldly strike,
 Or quit our purpose and confess our fears.

Cas. Is not his fate resolv'd? this night he dies,
 And thus my father but forestals my purpose.
 How am I slow then? If I rode on thunder,
 Wing'd as the lightning, it would ask some moments
 Ere I could blast the growth of this Colossus.

Thes. Mark where the haughty Polyperchon comes!
 Some new affront by Alexander giv'n
 Swells in his heart, and flings him into madness.

Cas. Now, now's our time; he must, he shall, be ours:
 His haughty soul will kindle at his wrongs,
 Blaze into rage, and glory in revenge.

Enter POLYPERCHON.

Poly. Still as I pass fresh murmurs fill my ears;
 All talk of wrongs, and mutter their complaints.
 Poor soulless reptiles!—their revenge expires
 In idle threats—the fortitude of cowards!
 Their province is to talk, 't is mine to act,
 And shew this tyrant when he dar'd to wrong me
 He wrong'd a man whose attribute is vengeance.

Cas. All nations bow their heads with servile homage,
 And kiss the feet of this exalted man.
 The name, the shout, the blast, from ev'ry mouth
 Is Alexander! Alexander fluns
 The list'ning ear and drowns the voice of Heav'n!

The earth's commanders fawn like crouching spaniels;
 And if this hunter of the barb'rous world
 But wind himself a god all echo him
 With universal cry.

Poly. I fawn or echo him!

Cassander no; my soul disdains the thought!
 Let eastern slaves or prostituted Greeks
 Crouch at his feet, or tremble if he frown;
 When Polyperchon can descend so low,
 False to that honour which thro' fields of death
 I still have courted where the fight was fiercest,
 Be scorn my portion, infamy my lot.

Thef. The king may doom me to a thousand tortures,
 Ply me with fire, and rack me like Philotas,
 Ere I shall stoop to idolize his pride.

Cas. Not Aristagoras, had he rais'd all hell,
 Cou'd more have shock'd my soul than thou hast done
 By the bare mention of Philotas' murder.
 Oh Polyperchon! how shall I describe it!
 Did not your eyes rain blood to see the hero?
 Did not your spirits burst with smother'd vengeance
 To see thy noble fellow-warriour tortur'd,
 Yet without groaning or a tear endure
 The torments of the damn'd? Oh! death to think it!
 We saw him bruise'd, we saw his bones laid bare,
 His veins wide lac'd, and the poor quiv'ring flesh
 With fiery pincers from his bosom torn,
 Till all beheld where the great heart lay panting.

Poly. Yet all like statues stood!—cold lifeless statues!
 As if the fight had froze us into marble,
 When with collected rage we should have flown
 To instant vengeance on the ruthless cause,
 And plung'd a thousand daggers in his heart.

Cas. At our last banquet, when the bowl had gone
 The giddy round, and wine inflam'd my spirits,
 I saw Craterus and Hephæstion enter
 In Persian robes; to Alexander's health
 They largely drank, and falling at his feet
 With impious adoration thus address'd
 Their idol god; Hail, son of thund'ring Jove!
 Hail, first of kings! young Ammon, live for ever!
 Then kiss'd the ground, on which I laugh'd aloud,

And scoffing ask'd 'em why they kiss'd no harder?
Whereon the tyrant, starting from his throne,
Spurn'd me to earth, and stamping on my neck,
Learn thou to kiss it, was his fierce reply,
While with his foot he press'd me to the earth
Till I lay welt'ring in a foam of blood.

Poly. Thus when I mock'd the Persians that ador'd him
He struck me on the face,
And bid his guards chastise me like a slave:
But if he 'scape my vengeance may he live
Great as that god whose name he thus profanes,
And like a slave may I again be beaten,
Scoff'd as I pass, and branded for a coward.

Cas. There spoke the spirit of Calisthenes.
Remember he's a man, his flesh as penetrable
As any girl's, and wounded too as soon;
'To give him death no thunders are required:
Struck by a stone young Jupiter has fall'n,
A sword has pierc'd him and the blood has follow'd,
Water will drown him, or the fire will burn;
Nay, we have seen an hundred common ailments
Bring this immortal to the gates of death.

Poly. Oh let us not delay the glorious bus'ness!
Our wrongs are great, and honour calls for vengeance.
Are your hearts firm?

Thef. As Heav'n or Hell can make 'em.

Poly. Take then my hand, and if you doubt my truth
Rip up my breast and lay my heart upon it.

Cas. While thus we join our hands and hearts together
Remember Hermolaus, and be hush'd.

Poly. Hush'd as the eve before an hurricane,
Or baleful planets when they shed their poisons.

Cas. This day exulting Babylon receives
The mighty robber—with him comes Roxana,
Fierce haughty fair! on his return from India
Arful she met him in the height of triumph,
And by a thousand wiles at Susa kept him
In all the luxury of eastern revels.

Poly. How bore Statira his revolted love?
For if I err not ere the king espous'd her
She made him promise to renounce Roxana.

Thef. No words can paint the anguish it occasion'd;

Ev'n Syfigambis wept, while the wrong'd queen,
Struck to the heart, fell lifeless on the ground,
And thus remain'd, spite of her care and cordials,
For an hour.

Cas. When the first tumult of her grief was laid
I fought to fire her into wild revenge,
And to that end with all the art I could
Describ'd his passion for the bright Roxana;
But tho' I could not to my wish inflame her,
Thus far at least her jealousy will help;
She'll give him troubles that perhaps may end him,
And set the court in universal uproar.
But see, she comes. Our plots begin to ripen;
Now change the vizor, ev'ry one disperse,
And with a face of friendship meet the king. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter SYSIGAMBIS, STATIRA, and PARISATIS.

Stat. Oh for a dagger, a draught of poison, flames!
Swell heart! break, break, thou wretched stubborn thing!
Now by the sacred fire I'll not be held!
Why do you wish my life, yet stifle me for
Want of air?—Pray give me leave to walk.

Sys. Is there no rev'rence to my person due?
'Trust me, Statira, had thy father liv'd
Darius wou'd have heard me.

Stat. Oh he's false!
This glorious man, this wonder of the world,
Is to his love and ev'ry god foresworn!
Oh! I have heard him breathe such ardent vows,
Outweep the morning with his dewy eyes,
And sigh and swear the list'ning stars away!

Sys. Believe not rumour; 't is impossible:
Thy Alexander is renown'd for truth,
Above deceit—

Stat. Away, and let me die:
'Twas but my fondness, 'twas my easy nature,
Wou'd have excus'd him.—
Are not his falsehoods and Statira's wrongs
A subject canvass'd in the mouths of millions?
The babbling world can talk of nothing else.
Why, Alexander, why wouldst thou deceive me!
Have I not lov'd thee, cruel as thou art!

Have I not kiss'd thy wounds with dying fondness,
Bath'd 'em in tears, and bound 'em with my hair!
Whole nights I've sat and watch'd thee as a child,
Lull'd thy fierce pains, and sung thee to repose!

Par. If man can thus renounce the solemn ties
Of sacred love who wou'd regard his vows?

Stat. Regard his vows! the monster, traitor! Oh!
I will forsake the haunts of men, converse
No more with aught that's human, dwell with darkness;
For since the sight of him is now unwelcome,
What has the world to give Statira joy?
Yet I must tell thee, perjur'd as he is,
Not the soft breezes of the genial spring,
The fragrant violet or op'ning rose,
Are half so sweet as Alexander's breath.
Then he will talk—good Gods! how he will talk!
He speaks the kindest words, and looks such things,
Vows with such passion, and swears with such a grace,
That it is heav'n to be deluded by him!

Syf. Her sorrows must have way.

Stat. Roxana then enjoys my perjur'd love,
Roxana clasps my monarch in her arms,
Dotes on my conq'ror, my dear lord, my king!
Oh, 't is too much! by Heav'n I cannot bear it!
She clasps him all—she, the curst happy she—
I'll die, or rid me of the burning torture!
Hear me bright god of Day! hear ev'ry god.

Syf. Take heed Statira, weigh it well my child,
Ere desp'rate love enforces you to swear.

Stat. Oh! fear not that, already have I weigh'd it,
And in the presence here of Heav'n and you
Renounce all converse with perfidious man.
Farewell ye coz'ners of our easy sex!
And thou, the falsest of the faithless kind,
Farewell for ever! Oh, farewell! farewell!
If I but mention him the tears will flow!

How couldst thou, cruel! wrong a heart like mine,
Thus fond, thus doting, ev'n to madness, on thee!

Syf. Clear up thy griefs, thy Alexander comes,
Triumphant in the spoils of conquer'd India;
This day the hero enters Babylon.

Stat. Why, let him come; all eyes will gaze with rapture,
All hearts will joy to see the victor pass,
All but the wretched the forlorn Statira.

Syf. Wilt thou not see him then?

Stat. I swear, and Heav'n be witness to my vow! [*Kneels.*
Never from this sad hour, never to see
Nor speak, no, nor, if possible, to think
Of Alexander more. This is my vow,
And when I break it——

Syf. Do not ruin all.

Stat. May I again be perjur'd and deluded!
May Furies rend my heart! may lightnings blast me!

Syf. Recall, my child, the dreadful imprecation.

Stat. No, I will publish it thro' all the court,
Then to the bow'rs of great Semiramis
Retire for ever from the treach'rous world,
There from man's sight will I conceal my woes,
And seek in solitude a calm repose.
Nor pray'rs nor tears shall my resolves control,
Nor love itself, that tyrant of the soul. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE, a triumphal arch.

CASSANDER and POLYPERCHON.

CASSANDER.

HE comes, the headlong Alexander comes;
The gods forbid him Babylon in vain;
In vain do prodigies foretel his fall:
Attended by a throng of scepter'd slaves
'This rapid conq'ror of the ravag'd globe
Makes his appearance, and defies the danger.

Poly. Why all this noise—ye partial Pow'rs declare—
'These starts of nature, at a tyrant's doom?
Is Alexander of such wondrous moment
That Heav'n should feel the wild alarms of fear,
And Fate itself become a babbler for him?

Cas. Cas'd in the very arms we saw him wear
The spirit of his father haunts the court
In all the majesty of solemn sorrow;

The awful spectre fix'd his eyes upon me,
 Wav'd his pale hand—and threatful shook his head,
 Groan'd out Forbear——and vanish'd from my view.
 A fear till then unknown possess'd my soul,
 And sick'ning Nature trembled at the sight!

Poly. Why should you tremble?—Had the yawning earth
 Laid all the tortures of the damn'd before me
 My soul, unshaken in her firm resolve,
 Wou'd brave those tortures and pursue the tyrant.

Cas. Yes, Polyperchon, he this night shall die;
 Our plots in spite of prodigies advance;
 Success attends us.—Oh, it joys my soul
 To deal destruction like the hand of Heav'n,
 Felt while unseen!

Poly. The Persians all dissatisfy'd appear,
 Loudly they murmur at Statira's wrongs,
 And fiercely censure Alexander's falsehood.

Cas. I know he loves Statira more than life,
 And when he hears the solemn vow she made,
 The oath that bars her from his sight for ever,
 Remorse and horror will at once invade him,
 Rend his wreck'd soul, and rush him into madness.

Poly. Of that anon—the court begins to thicken;
 From ev'ry province of the wide-spread earth
 Ambassadors in Babylon are met,
 As if mankind had previously agreed
 To compliment the tyrant's boundless pride,
 And hold a solemn synod of the world
 Where Alexander like a god should dictate.

Cas. We must away or mingle with the crowd.
 Adore this god till apt occasion calls
 To make him what he wou'd be thought—immortal.

[*Exeunt.*

A symphony of warlike musick.

Enter CLYTUS, and ARISTANDER *in his robes.*

Arist. Hastе, rev'rend Clytus, haste and stop the king:

Clyt. Already is he enter'd, and the throng
 Of princes that surround him is so great
 They keep at distance all that would approach.

Arist. Were he encircled by the gods themselves
 I must be heard, for death awaits his stay.

Clyt. Then place yourself within his trumpet's sound;
 Shortly he'll appear. [Exeunt.

Enter ALEXANDER in a triumphal car drawn by black slaves, trophies and warlike ensigns in procession before him; CLYTUS, HEPHESTION, LYSIMACHUS, ARISTANDER, Captives, Guards, and Attendants.

I.

See the conqu'ring hero comes,
Sound the trumpet beat the drums;
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
Sports of triumph to him sing.

II.

See the godlike youth advance,
Breathe the flute and lead the dance;
Myrtle wreath and roses twine
To deck the hero's brow divine.

Heph. Hail, son of Jove! great Alexander! hail.

Alex. Rise all; and thou my second self, my friend,
Oh, my Hephestion! raise thee from the earth!
Come to my arms, and hide thee in my heart;
Nearer, yet nearer, else thou lov'st me not.

Heph. Not love my king! bear witness all ye Pow'rs,
And let your thunder nail me to the centre
If sacred friendship ever burn'd more brightly!
Immortal bosoms can alone admit

A flame more pure, more permanent, than mine.

Alex. Thou dearer to me than my groves of laurel,
I know thou lov'st thy Alexander more
Than Clytus does the king.

Lyf. Now for my fate!
I see that death awaits me—yet I'll on.
Dread Sir! I cast me at your royal feet.

Alex. Rise, my Lyfimachus; thy veins and mine
From the same fountain have deriv'd their streams:
Rise to my arms, and let thy king embrace thee.
Is not that Clytus?

Clyt. Your old faithful soldier.

Alex. Clytus, thy hand—thy hand Lyfimachus;
Thus double arm'd methinks
I stand tremendous as the Lybian god,
Who while his priests and I quaff'd sacred blood
Acknowledg'd me his son: my lightning thou,
And thou my mighty thunder. I have seen
Thy glitt'ring sword outfly celestial fire;

And when I've cry'd Begone and execute,
I've seen him run swifter than starting hinds,
Nor bent the tender grass beneath his feet.

Lys. When fame invites, and Alexander leads,
Dangers and toils but animate the brave.

Clyt. Perish the soldier inglorious and despis'd
Who starts from either when the King cries—On.

Alex. Oh Clytus! Oh my noble veteran!
'Twas, I remember, when I pass'd the Granicus
His arm preserv'd me from unequal force:
When fierce Itanor and the bold Rhesaces
Fell both upon me with two mighty blows,
And clove my temper'd helmet quite asunder,
Then like a god flew Clytus to my aid,
Thy thunder struck Rhesaces to the ground,
And turn'd with ready vengeance on Itanor.

Clyt. To your own deeds that victory you owe,
And sure your arms did never boast a nobler.

Alex. By Heav'n they never did; they never can;
And I more glory to have pass'd that stream
Than to have drove a million o'er the plain.
Can none remember, yes, I know all must,
When Glory like the dazzling eagle stood
Perch'd on my beaver in the Granick flood,
When Fortune's self my standard trembling bore,
And the pale Fates stood frighted on the shore,
When each immortal on the billows rode,
And I myself appear'd the leading god?

Arist. Haste, first of heroes, from this fatal place;
Far, far from Babylon enjoy your triumph,
Or all the glories which your youth has won
Are blasted in their spring.

Alex. What mean thy fears?
And why that wild distraction on thy brow?

Arist. This morn, great King! I view'd the angry sky,
And frighted at the direful prodigies
To Orosmales for instruction flew;
But as I pray'd deep echoing groans I heard,
And shrieks as of the damn'd that howl for sin.
'Shock'd at the omen, while amaz'd I lay
In prostrate rev'rence on the trembling floor,

'Thus spoke the god:
The brightest glory of imperial man,
The pride of nations, and the boast of fame,
Remorseless Fate in Babylon has doom'd
To sudden and irrevocable ruin.

Alex. If Heav'n ordains that Babylon must fall
Can I prevent th' immutable decree?

Enter PERDICCAS.

Per. O horror! horror! dreadful and portentous!

Alex. How now Perdicas! whence this exclamation?

Per. As Meltager and myself this morn
Led forth the Persian horse to exercise
We heard a noise as of a rushing wind,
When suddenly a flight of baleful birds,
Like a thick cloud, obscur'd the face of heav'n;
On sounding wings from diff'rent parts they flew,
Encount'ring met, and battled in the air,
Their talons clash'd, their beaks gave mighty blows,
And show'rs of blood fell copious from their wounds.

Alex. Tho' all the curtains of the sky were drawn,
And the stars wink, young Ammon shall go on.
While my Statira shines I cannot stray,
Love lifts his torch to light me on my way,
And her bright eyes create another day.

Lyf. Vouchsafe, dread Sir! to hear my humble suit;
A prince entreats it.

Alex. A foldier asks it; that's the noblest claim.

Lyf. For all the services my word has done
Humbly I beg the princess Parisatis.

Alex. Lyfimachus, no more—it is not well—
My word, you know, was to Hephestion giv'n:
How dare you then——

Lyf. At your command to scale th' embattled wall,
Or fetch the gore-dy'd standard from the foe,
When has Hephestion flown with warmer zeal?
When did he leave Lyfimachus behind?
These I have done, for these were in my pow'r;
But when you charge me to renounce my love,
And from my thoughts to banish Parisatis,
Obedience there becomes impossible,
Nature revolts, and my whole soul rebels.

Alex. It does, brave Sir!—Now hear me, and be dumb.

When by my order curst Calisthenes
 Was as a traitor doom'd to live in torments,
 Your pity sped him in despite of me.
 Think not I have forgot your insolence,
 No, tho' I pardon'd it—Yet if again
 Thou dar'st to cross me with another crime
 The bolts of fury shall be doubled on thee.
 In the mean-time—think not of Parisatis,
 For if thou dost—by the immortal Ammon
 I'll not regard that blood of mine thou shar'st,
 But use thee as the vilest Macedonian.

Lyf. I knew you partial ere I mov'd my suit,
 Yet know it shakes not my determin'd purpose;
 While I have life and strength to wield a sword
 I never will forego the glorious claim.

Alex. Against my life! ha! traitor, was it so?
 'Tis said that I am rash, of hasty humour;
 But I appeal to the immortal gods
 If ever petty, poor, provincial, lord
 Had tempter like to mine? My slave, whom I
 Could tread to clay, dares utter bloody threats.

Clyt. Forgive, dread Sir! the frantick warmth of love;
 The noble prince, I read it in his eyes,
 Wou'd die a thousand deaths to serve his king,
 And justify his loyalty and truth.

Lyf. I meant his minion there should feel my arm:
 Love claims his blood, nor shall he live to triumph
 In that destruction that awaits his rival.

Alex. I pardon thee for my old Clytus' sake;
 But if once more thou mention thy rash love,
 Or dar'st attempt Hephestion's precious life,
 I'll pour such storms of indignation on thee
 Philotas' rack, Calisthenes' disgrace,
 Shall be delight to what thou shalt endure.

Clyt. My Lord, the aged queen, with Parisatis,
 Come to congratulate your safe arrival.

Enter SYSIGAMBUS and PARISATIS.

Alex. Oh thou, the best of women, Syfigambis!
 Source of my joy, blest parent of my love!

Syf. In humble duty to the gods and you
 Permit us, Sir, with gratitude to kneel.
 Thro' you the royal house of Persia shines,

Rais'd from the depth of wretchedness and ruin,
 In all the splendour of imperial greatness.
 To meet me thus was generously done,
 But still there wants to crown my happiness
 That treasure of my soul, my dear Statira!
 Had she but come to meet her Alexander
 I had been blest indeed.

Clyt. Now who shall dare
 To tell him of the queen's vow?

Alex. How fares
 My love?—Ha! neither answer me! all silent!
 A sudden horror, like a bolt of ice,
 Shoots to my heart, and numbs the seat of life.

Heph. I would relate it, but my courage fails me.

Alex. Why stand you all as you were rooted here?
 What! will none answer? my Hephestion silent!
 If thou hast any love for Alexander,
 If ever I oblig'd thee by my care,
 When thro' the field of death my eye has watch'd thee,
 Resolve my doubts, and rescue me from madness.

Heph. Your mourning queen has no disease but grief,
 Occasion'd by the jealous pangs of love.
 She heard, dread Sir! (for what can 'scape a lover)
 That you, regardless of your vows, at Susa
 Had to Roxana's charms resign'd your heart,
 And revell'd in the joys you once forswore.

Alex. I own the subtle fore'refs in my riot,
 My reason gone, seduc'd me to her bed,
 But when I wak'd I shook the Circe off,
 Tho' the enchantress held me by the arm,
 And wept and gaz'd with all the force of love;
 Nor griev'd I less for that which I had done
 Than when, at Thais' suit, enrag'd with wine,
 I set the fam'd Persepolis on fire.

Heph. Your queen Statira, in the rage of grief,
 And agony of desp'rate love, has sworn
 Never to see your Majesty again.

Alex. Oh Madam! has she? has Statira sworn
 Never to see her Alexander more?
 Impossible! she cou'd not, wou'd not, swear it.
 Is she not gentle as the guileless infant,

Mild as the genial breezes of the spring,
And softer than the melting sighs of love?

Par. With sorrow, Sir, I heard the solemn vow,
My mother heard it, and in vain adjur'd her
By ev'ry tender motive to recall it.

Syf. But with that fierceness she repents her wrongs,
Dwells on your fault, and heightens the offence,
That I could wish your Majesty forget her.

Alex. Ha! could you wish me to forget Statira!
The star which brightens Alexander's life,
His guide by day and goddess of his nights!
I feel her now, she beats in ev'ry pulse,
Throbs at my heart, and circles with my blood!

Syf. Have patience son, and trust to Heav'n and me;
If my authority has any influence
I will exert it, and she shall be your's.

Alex. Haste, Madam, haste, if you would have me live;
Fly ere for ever she abjure the world,
And stop the sad procession: [*Exit Syf.*] and Parisatis,
Hang thou about her, wash her feet with tears.
Nay haste: the breath of gods and eloquence
Of angels go along with you. [*Exit Parisatis.*]
Oh my heart!

Lyf. Now let your Majesty who feels the pangs
Of disappointed love reflect on mine.

Alex. Ha!

Clyr. What, are you mad? is this a time to plead!

Lyf. The prop'rest time; he dares not now be partial,
Lest Heav'n in justice should avenge my wrongs,
And double ev'ry pang which he feels now.

Alex. Why dost thou tempt me thus to thy undoing?
Death thou shouldst have were it not courted so:
But know, to thy confusion, that my word,
Like Destiny, admits of no repeal;
Therefore in chains shalt thou behold the nuptials
Of my Hephæstion. Guards, take him prisoner.

[*The Guards seize Lyfimachus.*]

Lyf. Away ye Slaves! I'll not resign my sword
Till first I've drench'd it in my rival's blood.

Alex. I charge you kill him not; take him alive:
The dignity of kings is now concern'd,
And I will find a way to tame this rebel.

Clyt. Kneel—for I see rage lightning in his eyes.

Lyf. I neither hope nor will I sue for pardon.

Had I my sword and liberty again,

Again I would attempt his fav'rite's heart.

Alex. Hence from my sight, and bear him to a dungeon.

Perdiccas, give this lion to a lion:

None speak for him: fly; stop his mouth; away.

[*Exeunt Lyf. Perd. and Guards.*]

Clyt. This comes of women—the result of love:

'Tis folly all, 'tis frenzy and distraction;

Yet were I heated now with wine I doubt

I should be preaching in this fool's behalf.

Alex. Come hither Clytus, and my friend Hephestion;

Lend me your arms:

I fear betwixt Statira's cruel vows

And fond Roxana's arts your king will fail.

Clyt. Better the race of women were destroyed,

And Persia sunk in everlasting ruin!

Heph. Look up my Lord, and bend not thus your head,

As if you purpos'd to forsake the world,

Which you have greatly won.

Alex. Wou'd I had not;

There's no true joy in such unwieldy fortune.

Eternal gazers lasting troubles make;

All find my spots, but few observe my brightness.

Stand from about me all, and give me air.

Yes, I will shake this Cupid from my soul,

I'll fright the feeble god with war's alarms,

Or drown his pow'r in floods of hostile blood.

Grant me, great Mars! once more in arms to shine,

And break like lightning thro' th' embattled line,

Thro' fields of death to whirl the rapid car,

And blaze amidst the thunder of the war,

Resiftless as the bolt that rends the grove,

Or greatly perish like the son of Jove.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE, *an open court; trumpets sounding a dead march; LYSIMACHUS led prisoner; EUMENES, PERDICCAS, PARISATIS, and Guards.*

PARISATIS.

STAY my Lyfimachus! a moment stay!
Oh, whither art thou going!—hold a moment!
Unkind! thou know’st my life was wrapt in thine,
Why wouldst thou then to worse than death expose me?

Lys. Oh, may’st thou live in joys without allay!
Grant it ye Gods! a better fortune waits thee;
Live and enjoy it—’t is my dying wish,
While to the grave the lost Lyfimachus
Alone retires, and bids the world adieu.

Par. Ev’n in that grave will Parisatis join thee;
Yes, cruel man! not death itself shall part us:
A mother’s pow’r, a sister’s soft’ning tears,
With all the fury of a tyrant’s frown,
Shall not compel me to outlive thy loss.

Lys. Were I to live till Nature’s self decay’d
This wondrous waste of unexampled love
I never could repay—Oh Parisatis!
Thy charms might fire a coward into courage,
How must they act then on a soul like mine?
Defenceless and unarm’d I fight for thee,
And may perhaps compel th’ astonish’d world,
And force the king, to own that I deserve thee.
Eumenes, take the princess to thy charge.
Away Perdicas, all my soul’s on fire.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *the palace.*

Enter ROXANA and CASSANDER.

Rox. Deserted! saidst thou? for a girl abandon’d!
A puny girl, made up of wat’ry elements!
Shall she embrace the god of my desires,
And triumph in the heart Roxana claims?

Cas. Oh princess! had you seen his wild despair,
Had you beheld him when he heard her vow,
Words wou’d but wrong the agonies he felt;
He fainted thrice, and life seem’d fled for ever;
And when by our assiduous care recall’d,

He snatch'd his sword, and aim'd it at his breast,
Then rail'd at you with most unheard of curses.

Rox. If I forget it may'st thou, Jove, deprive me
Of vengeance, make me the most wretched thing
On earth while living, and when dead the lowest
Of the fiends.

Cas. Oh, nobly said!

Just is the vengeance which inflames your soul;
Your wrongs demand it—but let reason govern;
This wild rage else may disappoint your aims.

Rox. Away, away, and give a whirlwind room!
Pride, indignation, fury, and contempt,
War in my breast, and torture me to madness.

Cas. Oh! think not I would check your boldest flights;
No—I approve 'em, and will aid your vengeance:
But, princess, let us chuse the safest course,
Or we may give our foes new cause of triumph,
Should they discover and prevent our purpose.

Rox. Fear not Cassander, nothing shall prevent it;
Roxana dooms him, and her voice is fate.
My soul from childhood has aspir'd to empire;
In early nonage I was us'd to reign
Among my she-companions; I despis'd
The trifling arts and little wiles of women,
And taught 'em with an Amazonian spirit
To win the steed, to chase the foaming boar,
And conquer man, the lawless charter'd savage.

Cas. Her words, her looks, her ev'ry motion, fires me.

Rox. But when I heard of Alexander's fame,
How with a handful he had vanquish'd millions,
Spoil'd all the East, and captive held our queens,
Unconquer'd by their charms,
With heav'nly pity he assuag'd their woes,
Dry'd up their tears, and sooth'd them into peace,
I hung attentive on my father's lips,
And wish'd him tell the wondrous tale again.
No longer pleasing were my former sports,
Love had its turn, and all the woman reign'd:
Involuntary sighs heav'd in my breast,
And glowing blushes crimson'd on my cheek;
Ev'n in my slumbers I have often mourn'd
In plaintive sounds, and murmur'd Alexander.

Caf. Curse on his name—she dotes upon him still.

Rox. At length this conq'rour to Zogdia came,
And cover'd o'er with laurels storm'd the city:
But oh Cassander! where shall I find words
To paint th' ecstasick transports of my soul
When midst a circle of unrivall'd beauties
I saw myself distinguish'd by the hero!
With artless rapture I receiv'd his vows,
The warmest sure that ever lover breath'd
Of fervent love and everlasting truth.

Caf. And need you then be told those times are past?
Statira now engrosses all his thoughts;
The Persian queen without a rival reigns
Sole mistress of his heart—nor can thy charms,
The brightest sure that ever woman boasted,
Nor all his vows of everlasting love,
Secure Roxana from disdain and insult.

Rox. Oh thou hast rous'd the lion in my soul!
Ha! shall the daughter of Darius hold him?
No, 'tis resolv'd; I will resume my sphere,
Or falling spread a gen'ral ruin round me.
Roxana and Statira! they are names
That must for ever jar;
When they encounter thunders must ensue.

Caf. Behold she comes in all the pomp of sorrow,
Determin'd to fulfil her solemn vow! [*They retire.*]

Enter SYSIGAMBIS and STATIRA.

Rox. Away, and let us mark th' important scene.

Sys. Oh my Statira! how has passion chang'd thee!
Think in the rage of disappointed love,
If treated thus and hurry'd to extremes,
What Alexander may denounce against us,
Against the poor remains of lost Darius.

Stat. Oh fear not that! I know he will be kind,
For my sake kind, to you and Parisatis.
Tell him I rail'd not at his falsehood to me,
But with my parting breath spoke kindly of him;
Tell him I wept at our divided loves,
And sighing sent a last forgiveness to him.

Sys. No, I can ne'er again presume to meet him,
Never approach the much-wrong'd Alexander,
If thou refuse to see him.—Oh Statira!
Thy aged mother and thy weeping country

Claim thy regard and challenge thy compassion:
Hear us my child, and lift us from despair.

Stat. Thus low I cast me at your royal feet
To bathe them with my tears; or if you please
I'll let out life and wash 'em with my blood:
But I conjure you not to rack my soul,
Nor hurry my wild thoughts to perfect madness:
Should now Darius' awful ghost appear,
And you my mother stand beseeching by,
I would persist to death and keep my vow.

Rox. This fortitude of soul compels my wonder.

Syf. Hence from my sight! ungrateful wretch begone!
Hence to some desert,
And hide thee where bright virtue never shone,
For in the sight of Heav'n I here renounce
And cast thee off, an alien to my blood. [Exit *Syf.*

ROXANA comes forward.

Rox. Forgive, great queen! th' intrusion of a stranger;
With grief Roxana sees Statira weep:
I've heard and much applaud your fixt resolve
To quit the world for Alexander's sake,
And yet I fear so greatly he adores you
That he will rather chuse to die of sorrow
Than live for the despis'd Roxana's charms.

Stat. Spare, Madam, spare your counterfeited fears;
You know your beauty and have prov'd its pow'r:
Tho' humbly born, have you not captive held
In love's soft chains the conqueror of the world!
Away to libertines and boast thy conquest,
A shameful conquest! In his hours of riot
Then, only then, Roxana could surprise
My Alexander's heart.

Rox. To some romantick grove's sequester'd gloom
Thy sickly virtue would it seems retire
To shun the triumphs of a favour'd rival.
In vain thou fly'st—for there, even there, I'll haunt thee,
Plague thee all day, and torture thee all night:
There shalt thou hear in what ecstasick joys
Roxana revels with the first of men;
And as thou hear'st the rapt'rous scene recited
With frantick jealousy thou'lt madly curse
Thy own weak charms that could not fix the rover.

Stat. How weak is woman! at the storm she shrinks,
Dreads the drawn sword and trembles at the thunder;
Yet when strong jealousy inflames her soul
The sword may glitter and the tempest roar;
She scorns the danger and provokes her fate.
Rival, I thank thee—thou hast fir'd my soul,
And rais'd a storm beyond thy pow'r to lay;
Soon shalt thou tremble at the dire effects,
And curse too late the folly that undid thee.

Rox. Sure the disdain'd Statira dares not mean it.

Stat. By all my hopes of happiness I dare:
And know, proud woman, what a mother's threats,
A sister's sighs, and Alexander's tears,
Could not effect thy rival rage has done.
My soul, that starts at breach of oaths begun,
Shall to thy ruin violated run:
I'll see the King in spite of all I swore,
Tho' curs'd, that thou may'st never see him more.

Enter ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, CLYTUS, &c.

Alex. Oh my Statira!—thou relentless fair!
Turn thine eyes on me—I would talk to them.
What shall I say to work upon thy soul!
What words, what looks, can melt thee to forgiveness?

Stat. Talk of Roxana and the conquer'd Indies,
Thy great adventures and successful love,
And I will listen to the rapt'rous tale;
But rather shun me, shun a desp'rate wretch
Refig'n'd to sorrow and eternal wo.

Alex. Oh, I could die, with transport die, before thee!
Wouldst thou but as I lay convuls'd in death
Cast a kind look or drop a tender tear:
Say but 't was pity one so fam'd in arms,
One who has 'scap'd a thousand deaths in battle,
For the first fault should fall a wretched victim
To jealous anger and offended love.

Rox. Am I then fall'n so low in thy esteem
That for another thou wouldst rather die
Than live for me?—How am I alter'd tell me,
Since last at Susa with repeated oaths
You swore the conquest of the world afforded
Less joy, less glory, than Roxana's love?

Alex. Take, take that conquer'd world, dispose of crowns,

And canton out the empires of the globe!
 But leave me, Madam, with repentant tears
 And undissembled sorrows to atone
 The wrongs I've offer'd to this injur'd excellence.

Rox. Yes, I will go, ungrateful as thou art!
 Bane to my life, and murd'rer of my peace,
 I will be gone; this last disdain has cur'd me.
 But have a care—I warn you not to trust me,
 Or by the gods, that witness to thy perjuries,
 I'll raise a fire that shall consume you both,
 Tho' I partake the ruin.

[*Exit.*

Enter SYSIGAMBIS.

Stat. Alexander!—Oh, is it possible!
 Immortal gods! can guilt appear so lovely?
 Yet, yet I pardon, I forgive thee all.

Alex. Forgive me all! oh catch the heav'nly sounds!
 Catch 'em ye Winds! and as ye fly disperse
 The rapt'rous tidings thro' th' extended world,
 That all may share in Alexander's joy!

Stat. Yes, dear Deceiver! I forgive thee all,
 But longer dare not hear thy charming tongue;
 For while I hear thee my resolves give way;
 Be therefore quick, and take thy last farewell:
 Farewell my love—eternally farewell!

Alex. Oh, my Hephestion! bear me or I sink.
 Why, why Statira, will you use me thus?
 I know the cause, my working brain divines it;
 You say you've pardon'd, but with this reserve,
 Never again to bless me with your love.

Stat. Allseeing Heav'n support me!

Alex. Speak to me love; tho' banishment and death
 Hang on thy lips, yet while thy tongue pronounces
 The music will a while suspend my pains,
 And mitigate the horrors of despair.
 Oh, could I see you thus!

Stat. His sorrows wound my heart,
 Soft pity pleads, and I again must love him;
 But I have sworn, and therefore cannot yield.

Alex. Go then, inhuman! triumph in my pains,
 Feed on the pangs that rend this wretched heart,
 For now 'tis plain you never lov'd. Statira!
 Oh, I could sound that charming cruel name

Till the tir'd Echo faint with repetition,
Till all the breathless groves and quiet myrtles
Shook with my sighs, as if a tempest bow'd 'em :
My tongue could dwell for ever on that name.
Statira! oh Statira!

Stat. Such was his looks, so melting was his voice,
Such his soft sighs, and his deluding tears,
When with that pleasing perjur'd breath avowing
His whispers trembled thro' my cred'lous ears,
And told the story of my utter ruin.
Gods! if I stay I shall again believe:
Farewell, thou greatest pleasure, greatest pain!

Alex. I charge ye stay her;
Oh turn thee, thou bewitching brightness, turn,
Hear my last words, and see my dying pangs!
Lo! at your feet behold a monarch falls,
A prince who gave the conquer'd world to thee,
And thought thy love bought cheaply with the gift,
Whose glories, laurels, bloom but in thy smiles,
Now shrunk and blasted by thy cruel hate,
Untimely falls. Yet oh! when thou shalt die
May death be mild, as thou art cruel now,
And may thy beauties gently sink to earth,
While circling angels waft thee to repose!

Syl. Art thou turn'd savage? is thy heart of marble?
But if this posture move thee not to pity
I never will speak more.

Alex. Oh my Statira!
I swear, my queen, I'll not outlive our parting.
My soul grows still as death. Say, wilt thou pardon?
'Tis all I ask. Wilt thou forgive the transports
Of a deep wounded heart, and all is well?

Stat. Rise, and may Heav'n forgive you like Statira!

Alex. You are too gracious—Clytus, bear me hence,
When I am laid i' th' earth yield her the world.
There's something here that heaves as cold as ice,
That stops my breath. Farewell, farewell for ever!

Stat. Hold off, and let me run into his arms.
My life, my love, my lord, my Alexander!
If thy Statira's love can give thee joy
Revive, and be immortal as the gods.

Alex. My flutt'ring heart, tumultuous with its bliss,

Would leap into thy bosom: 'tis too much.
Oh let me press thee in my eager arms,
And strain thee hard to my transported breast!

Stat. But shall Roxana——

Alex. Let her not be nam'd.

Oh Madam! how shall I repay your goodness,
And you my fellow-warriours, who could grieve
For your lost king? But talk of griefs no more;
The banquet waits, and I invite you all.
My equals in the throne as in the grave,
Without distinction come, and share my joy.

Clyt. Excuse me, Sir, if I for once am absent.

Alex. Excuse thee Clytus! none shall be excus'd:
All revel out the day, 'tis my command.
Gay as the Persian god ourself will stand
With a crown'd goblet in our lifted hand;
Young Ammon and Statira shall go round,
While antick measures beat the burthen'd ground,
And to the vaulted skies our trumpets clangours sound.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

Enter CLYTUS, HEPHESTION, and EUMENES.

CLYTUS.

URGE me no more, I hate the Persian dress,
Nor should the King be angry at the reverence
I owe my country—sacred are her customs,
And honest Clytus will to death observe 'em.
Oh! let me rot in Macedonian rags,
Or like Calisthenes be cag'd for life,
Rather than shine in fashions of the East.

Eum. Let me, brave Clytus, as a friend entreat you

Heph. What virtue is there that adorns a throne,
Exalts the heart, and dignifies the man,
Which shines not brightly in our royal master?
And yet perversely you'll oppose his will,
And thwart an innocent unhurtful humour.

Clyt. Unhurtful! oh! 'tis monstrous affectation!

Pregnant with venom in its nature black,
And not to be excus'd!—Shall man, weak man!
Exact the rev'rence which we pay to Heav'n,
And bid his fellow-creatures kneel before him,
And yet be innocent? Hephæstion, no;
The pride that lays a claim to adoration
Insults our reason and provokes the gods.

Eum. Yet what was Jove, the god whom we adore?
Was he not once a man, and rais'd to heav'n
For gen'rous acts and virtues more than human?

Heph. By all his thunder and his sov'reign pow'r
I'll not believe the world yet ever felt
An arm like Alexander's.—Not that god
You nam'd, tho' riding in a car of fire,
Could in a shorter space do greater deeds,
Or more effectually have taught mankind
To bend submissive and confess his sway.

Clyt. I tell you, boy, that Clytus loves the King
As well as you or any soldier here;
Yet I disdain to sooth his growing pride:
The hero charms me but the god offends.

Heph. Then go not to the banquet.

Clyt. Why, I was bid,
Young minion, was I not, as well as you?
I'll go, my friend, in this old habit, thus,
And laugh, and drink the King's health heartily;
And while you blushing bow your heads to earth,
And hide them in the dust—I'll stand erect,
Straight as a spear, the pillar of my country,
And be by so much nearer to the gods.

Heph. But see, the King appears.

*Enter ALEXANDER, STATIRA, SYSIGAMBIS, PARISATIS,
and Attendants.*

Par. Oh, gracious Monarch!
Spare him, oh spare Lyfimachus's life!
I know you will—the brave delight in mercy.

Alex. Shield me, Statira, shield me from her sorrows.

Par. Save him, oh save him, ere it be too late!
Speak the kind word; let not your soldier perish
For one rash action by despair occasion'd.
I'll follow thus, for ever on my knees;
You shall not pass. Statira, oh entreat him!

Alex. Oh Madam! take her, take her from about me;
Her streaming eyes assail my very soul,
And shake my best resolves.

Stat. Did I not break
Thro' all for you? Nay, now my Lord, you must:
By all th' obedience I have paid you long,
By all your passion, sighs, and tender looks,
Oh save a prince whose only crime is love!

Syl. I had not join'd in this bold suit my son,
But that it adds new lustre to your honours.

Alex. Honour! what's that? Has not Statira said it?
Were I the king of the blue firmament,
And the bold Titans should again make war,
Tho' my resistless thunders were prepar'd,
By all the gods she should arrest my arm
Uplifted to destroy them! Fly, Hephestion,
Fly, Clytus; snatch him from the jaws of death,
And to the royal banquet bring him straight,
Bring him in triumph, fit for loads of honour.

[*Exeunt Hephestion, &c.*]

Stat. Why are you thus beyond expression kind?
Oh my Lord! my raptur'd heart,
By gratitude and love at once inflam'd,
With wild emotion flutters in my breast;
Oh teach it then, instruct it, how to thank you!

Alex. Excellent woman!
'Tis not in nature to support such joy.

Stat. Go, my best love; unbend you at the banquet;
Indulge in joy, and laugh your cares away;
While in the bowers of great Semiramis
I dress your bed with all the sweets of nature,
And crown it as the altar of our loves,
Where I will lay me down and softly mourn,
But never close my eyes till you return. [*Exit Statira.*]

Alex. Is she not more than mortal can desire,
As Venus lovely and as Dian chaste?
And yet I know not why our parting shocks me;
A ghastly paleness sat upon her brow,
Her voice like dying echoes fainter grew,
And as I wrung her by the rosy fingers
Methought the strings of my great heart were crack'd.
What could it mean? Forward, Leomachus.

Enter ROXANA, CASSANDER, and POLYPERCHON.
Why, Madam, gaze you thus?

Rox. For a last look,
And to imprint the memory of my wrongs,
Roxana's wrongs, on Alexander's mind.

Alex. On to the banquet. *[Ex. Alex. &c.]*

Rox. Ha! with such disdain!
So unconcern'd! Oh I could tear myself,
Him, you, and all the hateful world, to atoms.

Cas. Still keep this spirit up, preserve it still,
And know us for your friends: we like your rage:
Here in the sight of Heav'n Cassander swears,
Unaw'd by death, to second your revenge:
Speak but the word, and swift as thought can fly
The tyrant falls a victim to your fury.

Rox. Shall he then die? shall I consent to kill him?
I that have lov'd him with that eager fondness,
Shall I consent to have him basely murder'd,
And see him clasp'd in the cold arms of Death?
No, Cassander,

Worlds should not tempt me to the deed of horror.

Poly. The weak fond scruples of your love might pass
Was not the empire of the world concern'd;
But, Madam, think when time shall teach his tongue,
How will the glorious infant which you bear
Arraign his partial mother for refusing
To fix him on the throne which here we offer?

Cas. If Alexander lives you cannot reign,
Nor will your child: old Sygambis plans
Your sure destruction; boldly then prevent her:
Give but the word and Alexander dies.

Poly. Not he alone, the Persian race shall bleed:
At your command one universal ruin
Shall like a deluge whelm the eastern world,
Till gloriously we raise you to the throne.

Rox. But till the mighty ruin be accomplish'd
Where can Roxana fly th' avenging arms
Of those who must succeed this godlike man?

Cas. Would you vouchsafe in these expanded arms
To seek a refuge, what could hurt you here?
There you might reign with undiminish'd lustre
Queen of the East, and empress of my soul.

Rox. Disgrac'd Roxana! whither art thou fall'n?
Till this curs'd hour I never was unhappy:
There's not one mark of former majesty
To awe the slave that offers at my honour.

Casf. Impute not, Madam, my unbounded passion
To want of reverence—I have lov'd you long.

Rox. Peace, villain! peace, and let me hear no more.
Think'st thou I'd leave the bosom of a god
And sloop to thee, thou moving piece of earth!
Hence from my sight, and never more presume
To meet my eyes; for mark me, if thou dar'st,
To Alexander I'll unfold thy treason,
Whose life, in spite of all his wrongs to me,
Shall still be sacred, and above thy malice.

Casf. By your own life, the greatest oath, I swear
Cassander's passion from this hour is dumb,
And as the best atonement I can make
Statira dies, the victim of your vengeance.

Rox. Cassander, rise; 't is ample expiation.
Yes, rival, yes—this night shall be thy last;
'This night I know is destin'd for thy triumph,
And gives my Alexander to thy arms.
Oh murd'rous thought!

Poly. The bow'rs of great Semiramis are made
The scene of love; Perdiccas holds the guard.

Casf. Now is your time, while Alexander revels,
And the whole court reechoes with his riot,
To end her, and with her to end your fears.
Give me but half the Zogdian slaves that wait you
And deem her dead; nor shall a soul escape
That serves your rival to disperse the news.

Rox. By me they die Perdiccas and Statira;
Hence with thy aid, I neither ask nor want it,
But will myself conduct the slaves to battle.
Were she to fall by any arm but mine
Well might she murmur and arraign her slays;
'Tis life well lost to die by my command.
Rival, rejoice, and pleas'd resign thy breath;
Roxana's vengeance grants thee noble death.

[Exit.

Casf. All but her Jove this Semele disdains.
We must be quick—she may perhaps betray
The great design, and frustrate our revenge.

Poly. Has Philip got instructions how to act?

Cas. He has my friend, and, faithful to our cause,
Resolves to execute the fatal order.

Bear him this vial—it contains a poison
Of that exalted force, that deadly nature,
Should Æsculapius drink it in five hours
(For then it works) the god himself were mortal:
I drew it from Nonacris' horrid spring;
Mix'd with his wine a single drop gives death,
And sends him howling to the shades below.

Poly. I know its pow'r, for I have seen it try'd;
Pains of all sorts thro' ev'ry nerve and art'ry
At once it scatters—burns at once, and freezes,
Till by extremity of torture forc'd
The soul consents to leave her joyless home,
And seek for ease in worlds unknown to this.

Cas. Now let us part: With Thessalus and Philip
Haste to the banquet—at his second call
Let this be giv'n him, and it crowns our hopes.
Now, Alexander, now, we'll soon be quits;
Death for a blow is interest indeed.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, the palace.

ALEXANDER, PERDICCAS, CASSANDER, POLYPERCHON,
EUMENES, *discovered at a banquet, &c.*

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

Alex. To our immortal health and our fair queen's:
All drink it deep; and while the bowl goes round
Mars and Bellona join to make us musick;
A thousand bulls be offer'd to the Sun,
White as his beams; speak the big voice of war;
Beat all our drums, and sound our silver trumpets;
Provoke the gods to follow our example
In bowls of nectar and replying thunder.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*]

Enter CLYTUS, HEPHESTION, and LYSIMACHUS *bloody.*

Clyt. Long live the King! long live great Alexander!
And conquest crown his arms with deathless laurels,
Propitious to his friends, and all he favours.

Alex. Did I not give command you should preserve
Lysimachus?

Heph. Dread Sir! you did.

Alex. What then
Portend these bloody marks?

Heph. Ere we arriv'd
Perdiccas had already plac'd the prince
In a lone court, all but his hands unarm'd.

Clyt. On them were gauntlets; such was his desire,
In death to shew the difference betwixt
The blood of *Æacus* and common men.
Forth issuing from his den amaz'd we saw
The horrid savage, with whose hideous roar
The palace shook: his angry eyeballs glaring
With triple fury menac'd death and ruin.

Heph. With unconcern the gallant prince advanc'd:
Now, *Parisatis*, be the glory thine,
But mine the danger, were his only words;
For as he spoke the furious beast descry'd him,
And rush'd outrageous to devour his prey.

Clyt. Agile and vigorous, he avoids the shock
With a slight wound, and as the lion turn'd
Thrust gauntlet arm and all into his throat,
And with Herculean strength tears forth the tongue:
Foaming and bloody, the disabled savage
Sunk to the earth, and plough'd it with his teeth,
While with an active bound your conqu'ring soldier
Leap'd on his back, and dash'd his skull in pieces.

Alex. By all my laurels 't was a godlike act!
And 't is my glory as it shall be thine
That Alexander could not pardon thee.
Oh my brave foldier! think not all the pray'rs
And tears of the lamenting queens could move me
Like what thou hast perform'd: grow to my breast.

Lys. Thus, self-condemn'd, and conscious of my guilt,
How shall I stand such unexampled goodness?
Oh, pardon Sir the transports of despair,
The frantick outrage of ungovern'd love!
Ev'n when I shew'd the greatest want of reverence
I could have dy'd with rapture in your service.

Alex. *Lyfimachus*, we both have been transported;
But from this hour be certain of my heart.
A lion be the impress of thy shield,
And that gold armour we from *Porus* won
Thy King presents thee——But thy wounds ask rest.

Lys. I have no wounds dread Sir! or if I had,
Were they all mortal they should stream unmind'd
When Alexander was the glorious health.

Alex. Thy hand Hephestion: clasp him to thy heart,
And wear him ever near thee. Parisatis
Shall now be his who serves me best in war.
Neither reply, but mark the charge I give;
Live, live as friends—you will, you must, you shall:
'Tis a god gives you life.

Clyt. Oh monstrous vanity!

Alex. Ha! what says Clytus? who am I?

Clyt. The son
Of good King Philip.

Alex. By my kindred gods
'Tis false. Great Ammon gave me birth.

Clyt. I've done.

Alex. Clytus, what means that dress? Give him a robe
Take it and wear it. [there.]

Clyt. Sir, the wine, the weather,
Has heated me: besides, you know my humour.

Alex. Oh, 'tis not well!—I'd rather perish, burn,
'Than be so singular and froward.

Clyt. So would I——
Burn, strag, drown, but in a better cause.
I'll drink or fight for sacred majesty
With any here. Fill me another bowl.
Will you excuse me?

Alex. You will be excused:
But let him have his humour; he is old.

Clyt. So was your father Sir; this to his memory:
Sound all the trumpets there.

Alex. They shall not sound
Till the King drinks. Sure I was born to wage
Eternal war. All are my enemies,
Whom I could tame—But let the sports go on.

Lys. Nay Clytus, you that could advise so well—

Alex. Let him persist, be positive, and proud,
Envious and fullen, 'mongst the nobler souls,
Like an infernal spirit that hath stole
From hell, and mingled with the mirth of gods.

Clyt. When gods grow hot no difference I know

'Twixt them and devils—Fill me Greek wine—yet—
Yet fuller—I want spirits.

Alex. Let me have musick.

Clyt. Musick for boys—Clytus would hear the groans
Of dying soldiers and the neigh of steeds;
Or if I must be pester'd with shrill sounds
Give me the cries of matrons in sack'd towns.

Heph. Let us, Lyfimachus, awake the King;
A heavy gloom is gath'ring on his brow.
Kneel all, with humblest adoration kneel,
And let a health to Jove's great son go round.

Alex. Sound, sound, that all the universe may hear.

[*A loud flourish of trumpets.*]

Oh for the voice of Jove! the world should know
The kindness of my people.—Rise, oh rise!
My hands, my arms, my heart, are ever yours.

Clyt. I did not kiss the earth; nor must your hand—
I am unworthy Sir.

Alex. I know thou art:

Thou enviest the great honour of thy master.
Sit all my friends. Now let us talk of war,
The noblest subject for a soldier's mouth,
And speak, speak freely, else you love me not.
Who think you was the greatest general
That ever led an army to the field?

Heph. A chief so great, so fortunately brave,
And justly so renown'd, as Alexander
The radiant sun, since first his beams gave light,
Never yet saw.

Lys. Such was not Cyrus or the fam'd Alcides,
Nor great Achilles, whose tempestuous sword
Laid Troy in ashes, tho' the warring gods
Oppos'd him.

Alex. Oh, you flatter me!

Clyt. They do indeed, and yet you love 'em for't,
But hate old Clytus for his hardy virtue.
Come, shall I speak a man with equal bravery,
A better gen'ral, and experter soldier?

Alex. I should be glad to learn: instruct me Sir.

Clyt. Your father Philip—I have seen him march,
And fought beneath his dreadful banner, where
The boldest at this table would have trembled.
Nay, frown not Sir, you cannot look me dead.

When Greeks join'd Greeks then was the tug of war !
The labour'd battle sweat, and conquest bled.
Why should I fear to speak a bolder truth
Than e'er the lying priests of Ammon told you ?
Philip fought men but Alexander women.

Alex. All envy, spite and envy, by the gods !
Is then my glory come to this at last
To conquer women ! Nay, he said the stoutest,
The stoutest here, would tremble at his dangers.
In all the sickness, all the wounds, I bore,
When from my reins the jav'lin's head was cut,
Lyfimachus, Hephestion, speak Perdicas,
Did I once tremble ? Oh, the cursed falsehood !
Did I once shake or groan, or act beneath
The dauntless resolution of a king ?

Lys. Wine has transported him.

Alex. No, 't is mere malice.

I was a woman too at Oxydrace,
When planting on the walls a scaling ladder
I mounted, spite of show'rs of stones, bars, arrows,
And all the lumber which they thunder'd down.
When you beneath cry'd out, and spread your arms,
That I should leap among you, did I so ?

* *Lys.* Dread Sir ! the old man knows not what he says.

Alex. Was I woman when, like Mercury,
I leap'd the walls and flew amidst the foe,
And like a baited lion dy'd myself
All over in the blood of those bold hunters,
Till spent with toil I battled on my knees,
Pluck'd forth the darts that made my shield a forest,
And hurl'd 'em back with most unconquer'd fury,
Then shining in my arms I sunn'd the field,
Mov'd, spoke, and fought, and was myself a war ?

Clyt. 'Twas all bravado ; for before you leap'd
You saw that I had burst the gates asunder.

Alex. Oh, that thou wert but once more young and vi-
g'rous,

That I might strike thee prostrate to the earth,
For this audacious lie, thou feeble dotard !

Clyt. I know the reason why you use me thus :
I sav'd you from the sword of bold Rhescaces,

Else had your godship slumber'd in the dust,
And most ungratefully you hate me for it.

Alex. Hence from the banquet : thus far I forgive thee.

Clyt. First try (for none can want forgiveness more)
To have your own bold blasphemies forgiv'n,
The shameful riots of a vicious life,
Philotas' murder.

Alex. Ha ! what said the traitor ?

Heph. Clytus, withdraw ; Eumenes, force him hence :
He must not tarry : drag him to the door.

Clyt. No, let him send me if I must be gone,
To Philip, Atalaus, Calisthenes,
To great Parmenio, and his slaughter'd sons.

Alex. Give me a javelin.

Heph. Hold, mighty Sir !

Alex. Sirrah ! off.

Left I at once strike thro' his heart and thine.

Lys. Oh, sacred Sir ! have but a moment's patience.

Alex. What ! hold my arms ? I shall be murder'd here,
Like poor Darius by my barb'rous subjects.
Perdiccas, sound our trumpets to the camp ;
Call all my foldiers to the court : nay, haste,
For there is treason plotting 'gainst my life,
And I shall perish ere they come to save me.
Where is the traitor ?

Clyt. Sure there is none amongst us,
But here I stand—honest Clytus,
Whom the King invited to the banquet.

Alex. Begone to Philip, Atalaus, Calisthenes,

[*Stabs him.*]

And let bold subjects learn by thy example
Not to provoke the patience of their prince.

Clyt. The rage of wine is drown'd in gushing blood.
Oh Alexander ! I have been to blame :
Hate me not after death ; for I repent
That I so far have urg'd your noble nature.

Alex. What's this I hear ! say on, my dying foldier.

Clyt. I should have kill'd myself had I but liv'd
To be once sober—Now I fall with honour ;
My own hands would have brought foul death. Oh, par-
don !

[*Dies.*]

Alex. Then I am lost: what has my vengeance done!
Who is it thou hast slain? Clytus! what was he?
The faithfullest subject, worthiest counsellor,
The bravest foldier, he who sav'd thy life,
Fighting barcheaded at the river Granick,
And now he has a noble recompense!
For a rash word, spoke in the heat of wine,
The poor the honest Clytus thou hast slain,
Clytus, thy friend, thy guardian, thy preserver!

Heph. Remove the body, it inflames his sorrow.

Alex. None dare to touch him: we must never part.
Cruel Hephestion and Lyfimachus,
That had the pow'r, yet wou'd not hold me. Oh!

Lyf. Dear Sir we did.

Alex. I know ye did; ye held me
Like a wild beast, to let me go again,
With greater violence.—Oh, ye've undone me!
Excuse it not; you that cou'd stop a lion
Cou'd not turn me! ye should have drawn your swords,
And barr'd my rage with their advancing points,
Made reason glitter in my dazzled eyes
Till I had seen the precipice before me:
That had been noble, that had shewn the friend;
Clytus wou'd so have done to save your lives.

Lyf. When men shall hear how highly you were urg'd—

Alex. No; you have let me stain my rising glory,
Which else had ended brighter than the sun.
Oh! I am all a blot, which seas of tears
And my heart's blood can never wash away!
Yet 'tis but just I try, and on the point
Still reeking hurl my black polluted breast.

Heph. Oh, sacred Sir!—it shall not—must not be.

Lyf. Forgive, dread Sir!—forgive my pious hands,
That dare in duty to disarm my master.

Alex. Yes, cruel men! ye now can shew your strength:
Hefe's not a slave but dares oppose my justice,
Yet none had courage to prevent this murder:
But I will render all endeavours vain
That tend to save my life—here will I lie

[Falls on Clytus.

Close to my murder'd foldier's bleeding side,

Thus clasping his cold body in my arms
Till death like his has clos'd my eyes for ever.

Enter PERDICCAS.

Per. Treason! foul treason! Hephæstion, where's the King?

Heph. There, by old Clytus' side, whom he hath slain.

Per. Rise, sacred Sir! and haste to save the queen.

Roxana, fill'd with furious jealousy,
Came with a guard unmark'd; she gain'd the bow'r,
And broke upon me with such sudden fury
That all have perish'd who oppos'd her rage.

Alex. What fate Perdiccas? is the queen in danger?

Per. Haste, Sir, or she dies.

Alex. Thus from the grave I rise to save my love:
All draw your swords, on wings of lightning move,
Young Ammon leads you, and the cause is love. }
When I rush on sure none will dare to stay,
'Tis Beauty calls, and Glory leads the way. [Exeunt.

ACT V.

SCENE, the bower of Semiramis.

STATIRA discovered asleep.

STATIRA.

BLESS me, ye Pow'rs above, and guard my virtue!
Where are you fled, dear shades? where are you fled?

'Twas but a dream, and yet I saw and heard

My royal parents, who, while pious care
Sat on their faded cheeks, pronounc'd with tears,
Tears such as angels weep, this hour my last.

But hence with fear—my Alexander comes,

And fear and danger ever fled from him.

Wou'd that he were here!

For oh I tremble, and a thousand terrours

Rush in upon me and alarm my heart!

But hark! 'tis he, and all my fears are fled:

My life, my joy, my Alexander, comes!

Rox. within.] Make fast the gate with all its massy bars;

At length we 'ave conquer'd this stupendous height,
And reach'd the grove.

Stat. Ye guardian gods defend me!
Roxana's voice! then all the vision's true,
And die I must.

Enter ROXANA.

Rox. Secure the brazen gate.
Where is my rival? 't is Roxana calls.

Stat. And what is she who with such tow'ring pride
Wou'd awe a princess that is born above her?

Rox. Behold this dagger!—'t is thy fate Statira!
Behold, and meet it as becomes a queen.

Fain wou'd I find thee worthy of my vengeance;
Here, take my weapon then, and if thou dar'st—

Stat. How little know'st thou what Statira dares!
Yes, cruel woman! yes, I dare meet death

With a resolve at which thy coward heart
Wou'd shrink; for terroure haunts the guilty mind,

While conscious innocence, that knows no fear,
Can smiling pass, and scorn thy idle threats.

Rox. Return, fair insolent! return, I say:
Dar'st thou, presumptuous, to invade my rights!

Restore him quickly to my longing arms,
And with him give me back his broken vows,

For perjur'd as he is he still is mine,
Or I will rend them from thy bleeding heart.

Stat. Alas, Roxana! 't is not in my pow'r;
I cannot if I wou'd—and oh, ye gods!

What were the world to Alexander's loss!

Rox. Oh, forcerefs! to thy accursed charms
I owe the frenzy that distracts my soul;

To them I owe my Alexander's loss:

Too late thou tremblest at my just revenge,
My wrongs cry out, and vengeance will have way.

Stat. Yet think, Roxana, ere you plunge in murder,
Think on the horrors that must ever haunt you;

Think on the Furies, those avenging ministers

Of Heav'n's high wrath, how they will tear your soul,
All day distract you with a thousand fears,

And when by night thou vainly seek'st repose

They'll gather round and interrupt your slumbers
With horrid dreams and terrifying visions.

Rox. Add still, if possible, superiour horrors.
Rather than leave my great revenge unfinish'd
I'll dare 'em all, and triumph in the deed;
Therefore——

[*Holds up the dagger.*]

Stat. Hold, hold, thy hand advanc'd in air:
I read my sentence written in thy eyes;
Yet oh Roxana! on thy black revenge
One kindly ray of female pity beam,
And give me death in Alexander's presence.

Rox. Not for the world's wide empire shouldst thou see
Foul! but for him thou might'st unheeded live; [him.
For his sake only art thou doom'd to die.
The sole remaining joy that glads my soul
Is to deprive thee of the heart I've lost.

Enter SLAVE.

Slave. Madam, the King and all his guards are come,
With frantick rage they thunder at the gate,
And must ere this have gain'd admittance.

Rox. Ha!
Too long I've trifled. Let me then redeem
The time mispent, and make great vengeance sure.

Stat. Is Alexander, oh ye gods! so nigh,
And can he not preserve me from her fury?

Rox. Nor he nor Heav'n shall shield thee from my ju-
Die forc'refs, die, and all my wrongs die with thee! [stabs.
[*Stabs her.*]

Alex. without.] Away, ye slaves! stand off—quick let
me fly
With lightning's wings! nor heav'n nor earth shall stop me.

Enter ALEXANDER.

Ha! oh my soul! my queen, my love, Statira!
These wounds! are these my promis'd joys?

Stat. Alas!
My only love, my best and dearest blessing!
Wou'd I had dy'd before you enter'd here;
For thus delighted, while I gaze upon thee
Death grows more horrid, and I'm loath to leave thee.

Alex. Thou shalt not leave me—Cruel, cruel, stars!
Oh, where's the monster, where's the horrid fiend,
That struck at innocence and murder'd thee!

Rox. Behold the wretch who, desp'rate of thy love,

In jealous madness gave the fatal blow;
A wretch that to possess once more thy love
Wou'd with the blood of millions stain her soul.

Alex. To dungeons, tortures, drag her from my sight.

Stat. My soul is on the wing: oh come my Lord,
Haste to my arms, and take a last farewell.
Thus let me die. Oh! oh!

Alex. Look up my love.

Oh Heav'n! and will you, will you, take her from me!

Stat. Farewell, my most lov'd Lord: ah me! farewell!
Yet ere I die grant this request.

Alex. Oh speak,

That I may execute before I follow thee.

Stat. Leave not the world till Heav'n demands you. Spare
Roxana's life—'Twas love of you that caus'd
The death she gave me. And oh! sometimes think,
Amidst your revels, think on your poor queen,
And ere the cheerful bowl salutes your lips
Enrich it with a tear, and I am happy. [Dies.]

Alex. Yet ere thou tak'st thy flight—She's gone, she's
All, all is hush'd, no musick now is heard; [gone!]
The roses wither, and the fragrant breath
That wak'd their sweets shall never wake 'em more!

Rox. Weep not, my Lord! no sorrow can recall her.
Oh turn your eyes, and in Roxana's arms
You'll find fond love and everlasting truth.

Alex. Hence from my sight, and thank my dear Statira
That yet thou art alive.

Rox. Oh, take me to your arms:
In spite of all your cruelty I love you;
Yes, thus I'll fasten on your sacred robe,
Thus on my knees for ever cling around thee,
Till you forgive me, or till death divide us.

Alex. Hence, Fury, hence: there's not a glance of thine
But like a basilisk comes wing'd with death.

Rox. Oh speak not thus to one who kneels for mercy!
Think for whose sake it was I madly plung'd
Into a crime abhorrent to my nature.

Alex. Off, murd'ress, off! for ever shun my sight;
My eyes detest thee, for thy soul is ruin.

Rox. Barbarian! yes, I will for ever shun thee.
Repeated injuries have steel'd my heart,
And I cou'd curse myself for being kind.
If there is any majesty above
That has revenge in store for perjur'd love,
Send, Heav'n, the swiftest ruin on his head!
Strike the destroyer! lay the victor dead!
Kill the——

But what are curses? curses will not kill,
Nor ease the tortures I am doom'd to feel.

Alex. Oh my fair star, I shall be shortly with thee!
What means this deadly dew upon my forehead?
My heart too heaves——

Caf. The poison works.

Enter EUMENES.

Eum. Pardon, dread Sir! a fatal messenger:
The royal Syfigambis is no more.
Struck with the horror of Statira's fate
She soon expir'd, and with her latest breath
Left Parisatis to Lyfimachus.
But what I fear most deeply will affect you,
Your lov'd Hephestion's——

Alex. Dead! then he is blest!

But here, here lies my fate. Hephestion, Clytus!
My vict'ries all for ever folded up
In this dear body. Here my banner's lost,
My standard's triumphs gone.
Oh when shall I be mad! Give orders to
The army that they break their shields, swords, spears,
Pound their bright armour into dust——Away.
Is there not cause to put the world in mourning?
Burn all the spires that seem to meet the sky,
Beat down the battlements of ev'ry city,
And for the monument of this lov'd creature
Root up these bow'rs, and pave 'em all with gold;
Draw dry the Ganges, make the Indies poor,
To deck her tomb; no shrine nor altar spare,
But strip the pomp from gods to place it there. [*Exit.*

Enter THESSALUS.

Caf. He's gone—but whither—follow Thessalus,
Attend his steps, and let me know what passes.

[*Exit Thessalus.*

Vengeance, lie still, thy cravings shall be sated:
 Death roams at large, the Furies are unchain'd,
 And Murder plays her mighty masterpiece.

Enter POLYPERCHON, THESSALUS, and PHILIP.

Phil. Saw you the King?

Poly. Yes; with disorder'd wildness in his looks
 He rush'd along, till with a casual glance
 He saw me where I stood, then stepping short,
 Draw near he cry'd—and grasp'd my hand in his,
 Where more than fevers rag'd in ev'ry vein.
 Oh Polyperchon! I have lost my queen!
 Statira's dead!—and as he spoke the tears
 Gush'd from his eyes—I more than felt his pains.

Thef. Hence, hence, away!

Cas. Where is he Thessalus?

Thef. I left him circled by a crowd of princes.
 The poison tears him with that height of horror
 Ev'n I cou'd pity him—He call'd the chiefs,
 Embrac'd 'em round—then starting from amidst 'em
 Cry'd out, I come—'twas Ammon's voice; I know it—
 Father, I come; but let me ere I go
 Dispatch the business of a kneeling world.

Poly. No more; I hear him—we must meet anon.

Cas. In Saturn's field—there give a loose to rapture,
 Enjoy the tempest we ourselves have rais'd,
 And triumph in the wreck which crowns our vengeance.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE, the palace.

ALEXANDER *with his hair dishevelled*, LYSIMACHUS, EUMENES, PERDICCAS, and Attendants. ALEXANDER *discovered*.

Alex. Search there; nay, probe me, search my wounded
 Pull, draw it out. *[reins—]*

Lys. We have search'd, but find no hurt.

Alex. Oh, I am shot! a forked burning arrow
 Sticks cross my shoulders: the sad venom flies
 Like lightning thro' my flesh, my blood, my marrow.

Lys. How fierce his fever!

Alex. Ha! what a change of torments I endure!
 A bolt of ice runs hissing thro' my bowels;
 'Tis sure the arm of Death: give me a chair;

Eijj

Cover me, for I freeze, and my teeth chatter
And my knees knock together.

Eum. Have mercy Heav'n!

Alex. I burn, I burn again:

The war grows wondrous hot: hey for the Tigris!
Bear me, Bucephalus, amongst the billows.

[Jumps into the chair.]

Oh 'tis a noble beast! I would not change him
For the best horse the Sun has in his stable,
For they are hot, their mangers full of coals,
Their manes are flakes of lightning, curls of fires,
And their red tails like meteors whisk about.

Lyf. Help all; Eumenes, help.

Alex. Ha, ha, ha! I shall die with laughter.
Parmenio, Clytus, do you see you' fellow,
That ragged foldier, that poor tatter'd Greek?
See how he puts to flight the gaudy Persians
With nothing but a rusty helmet on, thro' which
The grisly bristles of his pushing beard
Drive 'em like pikes—Ha, ha, ha!

Per. How wild he talks!

Lyf. Yet warring in his wildness.

Alex. Sound, sound! keep your ranks close. Ay, now
Oh the brave din, the noble clank, of arms! *[they come;]*
Charge, charge apace, and let the phalanx move.
Darius comes—ay, 'tis Darius,

I see, I know, him by the sparkling plumes,
And his gold chariot drawn by ten white horses;
But like a tempest thus I pour upon him——
He bleeds; with that last blow I brought him down:
He tumbles; take him, snatch th' imperial crown.
They fly, they fly! Follow, follow—Victoria!

Victoria! Victoria!—— *[Leaps into the soldiers' arms.]*

Per. Let's bear him softly to his bed.

Alex. Hold, the least motion gives me sudden death;
My vital spirits are quite parch'd, burnt up,
And all my smoky entrails turn'd to ashes.

Lyf. When you, the brightest star that ever shone,
Shall set it must be night with us for ever.

Alex. Let me embrace you all before I die.

[All kneel and weep.]

Weep not my dear Companions! the good gods
 Shall send ye in my stead a nobler prince,
 One that shall lead ye forth with matchless conduct.

Lys. Break not our hearts with such unkind expressions.

Per. We will not part with you, nor change for Mars.

Alex. Perdiccas, take this ring,

And see me laid in the temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Lys. To whom does your dread Majesty bequeath
 The empire of the world?

Alex. To him that is most worthy.

Per. When will you, sacred Sir! that we should give
 To your great memory those divine honours
 Which such exalted virtue does deserve?

Alex. When you are all most happy and in peace.
 Your hands—Oh father! if I have discharg'd

The duty of a man to empire born,

If by unwearied toil I have deserv'd

The vast renown of thy adopted son,

Accept this soul which thou didst first inspire,

And which this sigh thus gives thee back again! [*Dies.*]

Lys. There fell the pride and glory of the war.

If there be treason let us find it out,

Lyfimachus stands forth to lead you on,

And swears by these most honour'd dear remains

He will not taste those joys which beauty brings

Until he has reveng'd the best of kings.

EPILOGUE.

*W*HATE'ER they mean, yet ought they to be curst
 Who this censorious age did polish first,
 Who the best play for one poor error blame,
 As priests against our ladies' arts declaim,
 And for one patch both soul and body damn.
 But what does more provoke the actor's rage,
 (For we must show the grievance of the stage)
 Is that our women which adorn each play,
 Bred at our cost, become at length our prey:
 While green and sour like trees we bear them all,
 But when they're mellow straight to you they fall;
 You watch 'em bare and squab, and let 'em rest,
 But with the first young down you snatch the nest.
 Pray leave those poaching tricks if you are wise,
 Ere we take out our letters of reprimand;
 For we have vow'd to find a sort of toys
 Known to black friars, a tribe of chopping boys;
 If once they come they'll quickly spoil your sport;
 There's not one lady will receive your court:
 But for the youth in petticoats run wild,
 With oh the archest wog, the sweetest child,
 The panting breast, white hands, and lily feet!
 No more shall your pall'd thoughts with pleasure meet:
 The woman in boy's clothes all boy shall be,
 And never raise your thoughts above the knee.
 Well, if our women knew how false you are,
 They wou'd stay here, and this new trouble spare:
 Poor souls! they think all gospel you relate,
 Charm'd with the noise of settling an estate;
 But when at last your appetites are full,
 And the tir'd Cupid grows with action dull,
 You'll find some trick to cut off the entail,
 And send 'em back to us all worn and stale.
 Perhaps they'll find our stage, while they have rang'd
 To some vile canting conventicle, chang'd;
 Where for the sparks who once resorted there,
 With their curl'd wigs that scented all the air,
 They'll see grave blockheads with short greasy hair,

*Green aprons, steeple-hats, and collarbands,
 Dull sniv'ling rogues that ring not clap their hands,
 Where for gay punks that drew the shining crowd,
 And misses that in vizards laugh'd aloud,
 They'll hear young sisters sigh, see matrons old
 To their chopp'd cheeks their pickled kerchers hold,
 Whose zeal too might persuade, in spite to you,
 Our flying angels to augment their crew,
 While Farringdon their hero struts about 'em,
 And ne'er a damning critick dares to flout 'em.*

From the APOLLO PRESS,
 by the MARTINS,
 March 13. 1782.

Act V

MAHOMET.

Scene



Richardson del.

Printed for Dods, British Theatre Dec 1776.

Thornhill sculp.

M. BENSLEY in the Character of M. AHOMET.
— Such be the fate of all who braves our Law.

Bell's Characteristical Edition.

MAHOMET THE IMPOSTOR.

A TRAGEDY. BY THE REV. MR. MILLER.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY-LANE.

Regularly from the Prompt-Book, by permission of the Managers,

BY MR. HOPKINS PROMPTER.

CHARACTERISTICS.

Norious hypocrisy! what fools are they—Who fraught with lustful or ambitious views—
Wear not thy specious mask—Wrong will be ever purs'd and fed with blood—Ambition
Knows not conscience—Shall Mahomet—Give a new Paradise to all mankind—And the re-
mark of conscience—be the hell—Of his own breast—Oh I justice! justice—Villains quarrel
as I am I am a slave—And by the world ador'd dwell with the danc'd—My eyes are full of
venom—scorpions in my breast—Here, here I feel 'em—Ay, that is the hell—*MIRVAN.*
I'd avenge him—With all the forces of enthusiasm—There lies our strength—*MIRVAN.*
In his own sins Zaphna bore his guilt's reward—A deadly draught of poison—*MIRVAN.*
be silent I am here Hercules is.

See, thy few troops—Are come to die beside thee—*ALL.*
Blat Alcanor, right—*MIRVAN.*—Yet free and uncontaminat—Shall
league with fraud or adulate a tyrant—Tis Mahomet, and tyrants like to Mahomet—Tis
an, and apostates like to Mirvan—I only would make tremble—Ye sacred Powers—
Protect my spirit—In that firm purpose it has always held—To combat violence, fraud,
To pluck the spoil from the oppressor's jaws—And keep my country as I
Hear the Mahomet—Were I doom'd or to enslave my country—or to be-
embred hands—Deprive me of my children—Know I'd not admit a doubt
choice—in death I can but serve my country—What yet not but would wish
a cause to fall a martyr.

My beams—E'er gave me glimpse from whom I am descended—The camp of
Mahomet has been—My cradle and my country—Holy ground—Ready for thee to
wade thro' seas of danger—Or cope with death itself, I hither hasten'd—Place, oh place
me in the front of battle—Against odds innumerable, try me there—Or if a single combat
be—*MIRVAN.*—The house of Zaphna—Step forth and see—If Zaphna fail to grieve him as
he ought—Fix'd, *MIRVAN.*—Or to redeem or die a captive with thee—My father—*MIRVAN.*
canst thou ought more?

My noble Lord, I cannot—Must not, deſt—Thou shalt not find thy Phœnix back in
ought—That tends to thy deliverance.

My country is not a single spot—Of such a mould, or fix'd to such a clime—'Tis the so-
cial circle of my friends—The lov'd community in which I'm link'd—And in whose wel-
fare all my wishes centre—Trust me, Zaphna, my affection for thee—is of that pure that
disinterested nature—So free from passion's taint, I have no use with—To have thee more
than thus; have thee my friend—share thy lov'd converse, wait upon thy willance—And
view thee with a sister's spotless eyes—in loving Zaphna sure I cannot err—For I have still
thought—That Heaven itself approv'd of my affection—And gave a sanction to our mutual
ardours—I follow thy ev'ry footstep, tho' they lead—To the dark gulf of death—'Twas I
alone—That work'd his will to this unnatural deed—Upon whose terms alone he wou'd be
mine—And incest was the price of parricide—I will share thy fate—Unhappy Zaphna, too
I share thy guilt—I follow thee.



EDINBURG:

At the Apollo Press, by THE MARTINS, for Bell, LONDON, 1784.

TO THE RIGHT HON.

EDWARD SOUTHWELL, ESQ.

SIR,

IT was the design of my deceased husband to have presented this Piece to you. As it was always my duty and inclination to obey his commands, I have, living, to I think, with great satisfaction (though after his death) in performing what he intended.

As he might not put a title into your hands he waited for the opinion of the Town, and now that has been favourable, it has fallen to my disconsolate office to make the melancholy offering.

In my unfortunate circumstances it cannot be expected (though I were capable) that I should speak either to the merits of the Piece or of the Patron; the former may possibly want a recommendation to the world, but I have often heard my husband say the latter did not.

What I have more to add is, that you would be pleased to receive this as the last testimony of his affection and gratitude from the hands of his

Disconsolate wife,

DOROTHY MILLER,

PROLOGUE.

*To point out the necessity of her cause,
And what she has to contend;
What her just claims to her country's rage,
And makes the troubled earth one tragick stage,
What blasphemies imposture dare advance,
And build what terrors on weak ignorance,
How fraud alone rage to religion binds,
And makes a Pandemonium of our minds;
Our Gallick bard, fir'd with these glorious views,
First to his Crusade led the tragick Muse,
Her pow'r thro' France his charming numbers bore,
But France was deaf—for all her priests were sore,*

*On English ground she makes a firmer stand,
And hopes to suffer by no hostile band:
No clergy here usurp the freeborn mind,
Ordain'd to teach and not enslave mankind;
Religion here bids persecution cease,
Without all order and within all peace;
Truth guards her happy pale with watchful care,
And frauds tho' pious find no entrance there.*

*Religion to be sacred must be free;
Men will suspect—where bigots keep the key:
Hooded and train'd like hawks th' enthusiasts fly,
And the priests' victim in their pounces die:*

*Like velpets born blind, by mother-church they're bred,
 Nor wake to fight to know themselves misled;
 Murder's the game—and to the sport unprest,
 Proud of the sin, and in the duty blest,
 The layman's but the bloodhound of the priest.
 Whoe'er thou art that dar'st such themes advance,
 To priestly Spain repair or slavish France,
 For Juda's hire there do the devil's task,
 And trick up slav'ry in religion's mask;
 England still free no surer means requires
 To sink their fottish souls and damp their martial fires.*

*Britons! these numbers to yourselves you owe;
 Voltaire hath strength to shoot in Shakspeare's bow;
 Fame led him at his Hyppocrene to drink,
 And taught to write with Nature as to think:
 With English freedom English wit he knew,
 And from the inexhausted stream profusely drew;
 Cherish the noble bard yourselves have made,
 Nor let the frauds of France steal all our trade.
 Now of each prize these English bays are wearing
 E'en send our English stage a privateering;
 With your commission we'll our sails unfold,
 And from their loads of dress import some gold.*

Dramatis Personae.

MAHOMET, —
 MIRVAN, his general, —
 ALI, —
 HERCIDES, }
 AMMON, }
 ZAPUNA, }
 PALMIRA, }
 ALCANOR, chief of the senate of Mecca,
 PHARON, his friend, —

Officers of Mahomet.

Captives brought up under Mahom.

MEN.

Mr. Blansby.
 Mr. Whitefield.
 Mr. Norris.
 Mr. Stageldier.
 Mr. Brereton.
 Miss Younge.
 A Gentleman.
 Mr. Davies.

SCENE MECCA.

MAHOMET*.

ACT I.

SCENE, *an apartment in the temple of MECCA.*

Enter ALCANOR *and* PHARON.

ALCANOR.

PHARON, no more—shall I
Fall prostrate to an arrogant impostor,
Whom in Mecca one I banish'd thence,
And incense the delusions of a rebel!
No—blast Alcanor, righteous Heav'n! if e'er
Thine hand, yet free and uncontaminate,
Shall league with fraud or adulate tyrant.
Pha. Trust and sacred chief, Ishmael's senate,
This zeal of thine, ~~as it is,~~
fatal now—our impotent resistance
Shall not Mahomet's unbounded progress,
Nor our weak'ning irritates the tyrant.
When once a citizen you well condemn'd him
For an obscure seditious innovator;
But now he is anq'ror, prince, and pontiff,
Whom all our laws embrace his laws,
And pay him adoration—ev'n in Mecca
He has profelytes.

Alc. Such profelytes
Are worthy of him—low untutor'd reptiles,
In whom sense only lives—most credulous still
Of what is most incredible.

Pha. Be such
Disdain'd my Lord; but may n't the pest spread upwards
And seize the head—Say, is the senate found?
I fear some members of that rev'rend class
Are mark'd with the contagion, who from views
Of higher pow'r and rank
Worship this rising sun, and give a sanction
To his invasions.

Alc. If, ye Pow'rs divine!
Ye mark the motions of the nether world,
A strong arm to crush, crush those vipers,

* The names of persons and places are omitted in the representation.

Who singled out by a community
To guard their rights shall for a grasp of ore
Or paltry office sell 'em to the foe!

Pha. Each honest citizen, I grant, is thine,
And grateful for thy boundless blessings on them,
Would serve thee with their lives; but the approach
Of this usurper to their very walls
Strikes 'em with such a dread that ev'n these
Implore thee to accept his proffer'd peace.

Alc. Oh, people lost to wisdom as to glory!
Go, bring in pomp, and serve upon your knees:
This idol, this will crush you with its weight.
Mark I abjure him: by his savage hand
My wife and children perish'd, whilst in vengeance
I carry'd carnage to his very tent,
Transfix'd to earth his sole son, and wore
His trappings as a trophy of my conquest.
This torch of enmity thus lighted 'twixt us
The hand of Time itself can ne'er extinguish.

Pha. Extinguish not, but smother for a while
Its fatal flame, and greatly sacrifice
Thy private sufferings to the publick welfare.
Oh say, Alcanor, wert thou to behold
(As soon thou may'st) this fam'd
With foes begirt, behold its pining tena-
Prey on each other for the means of life,
Whilst lakes of blood and mountains of the slain
Putrify the air,

And sweep off thousands with their pois'nous steams;
Would thy slain children be aveng'd by this?

Alc. No, Pharon, no; I live not for myself:
My wife and children lost my country's now
My family.

Pha. Then let not that be lost.

Alc. 'Tis lost by cowardice.

Pha. By rashness often.

Alc. Pharon, desist.

Pha. My noble Lord, I cannot,
Must not, desist, will not, since you're possess'd
Of means to bring this insolent invader
To any terms you'll claim.

Alc. What means?

Pha. Palmira,

That blooming fair, the flow'r of all his camp,
By thee borne off in our last skirmish with him,
Seems the divine ambassadrefs of peace,
Sent to procure our safety. Mahomet
Has by his heralds thrice propos'd her ransom,
And bad us fix the price.

Pha. I know it Pharon:

And wouldst thou then restore this noble treasure
To that Barbarian? "Wouldst thou for the frauds,
The deaths, the devastations, he brings on us
"Enrich his ruffian hands with such a gain,
And render beauty the reward of rapine?—
Nay, I will not friend, nor think that at these years,
Well to well'd in the winter of my days,
I entertain a thought towards this young beauty
But what's as pure as the western gale
That breathes upon the uncropt violet—

Pha. My Lord—

My heart, by age and grief congeal'd;
More sensible to love's endearments
Than our barren rocks to morn's sweet dew
That balmy trickles down their rugged cheeks.
Each masterpiece of nature
Comes to pay tributary homage from us.

My tenderness unselt before,
A sympathetick grief with ardent wishes
To make her happy fill'd my widow'd bosom:
I dread her being in that monster's pow'r,
And burn to have her hate him like myself.
'Twas on this hour I, at her modest suit,
Promis'd her audience in my own pavilion.
Pharon, go thou mean-while and see the senate
Assembled straight—I'll sound 'em as I ought.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE changes to a room of state.

Enter PALMIRA.

Pal. What means this boding terror that usurps
The o'er the dominion o'er my heart,
That from the flower of newblown hope
Has pluck'd the bud, and left me to my soul
A void that nothing can fill?—Oh holy prophet!

Shall I ne'er more attend thy sacred lessons?
 Oh Zaphna! much-lov'd youth! I feel for thee
 As for myself—But hold, my final audit
 Is now at hand—I tremble for th' event!
 Here comes my judge—Now liberty or bondage?

Enter ALCANOR.

Alc. Palmira, whence those tears? trust me fair maid!
 Thou art not fall'n into Barbarians' hands;
 What Mecca can afford of pomp or pleasure,
 To call Attention from Misfortune's lap,
 Demand and share it.

Pal. No, my generous victor!
 My suit's for nothing Mecca can afford;
 Pris'ner these two long months beneath your roof
 I've tasted such benignity and candour,
 Whilst your own hands so labour'd to beguile
 The anxious moments of captivity,
 That oft' I've call'd my tears ingratitude.

Alc. If ought remains that's in my pow'r to free
 The rigour of your fate, and crown your wishes
 Why, 't would fill
 The furrows in my cheeks, and make old age
 Put on its summer's garb.

Pal. Thus low I bless thee.
 It is on you, on you alone, Alcanor,
 My whole of future happiness depends:
 Have pity then;
 Pity, Alcanor, one who's torn from all
 That's dear or venerable to her soul;
 Restore me then, restore me to my country,
 Restore me to my father, prince, and prophet.

Alc. Is slav'ry dear then? is fraud venerable?
 What country? a tumultuous wand'ring camp!

Pal. My country, Sir, is not a single spot
 Of such a mould, or fix'd to such a clime;
 No, 'tis the social circle of my friends,
 The lov'd community in which I'm link'd,
 And in whose welfare all my wishes centre.

Alc. Excellent maid! Then Mecca be thy country.
 Robb'd of my children, would Palmira deign
 To let me call her child, the toil I took
 To make her destiny propitious to her.

Would lighten the rough burthen of my own:
But no; you scorn my country and my laws.

Pal. Can I be yours when not my own? Your bounties
Claim and share my gratitude—but Mahomet
Claims right o'er me of parent, prince, and prophet.

Alc. Of parent, prince, and prophet! Heav'n's! that
Who, a scap'd felon, emulates a throne, [robber
And scoffer at all faiths proclaims a new one!

Pal. Oh, cease my Lord; this blasphemous abuse
On one whom millions with myself adore
Does violence to my ear; such black profaneness
'Gainst Heav'n's interpreter blots out remembrance
Of favours past, and nought succeeds but horror.

Oh superstition! thy pernicious rigours,
Inflexible to reason, truth, and nature,
Banish humanity the gentlest breath.
Palmira, I am here—see, plung'd
deep in error—

Do you then reject
Tithon? can Alcanor's goodness
Lead to such rising virtue?

But the ransom,
And Mahomet's—treble what you ask,
—from Mahomet can offer

propose to the prize. Trust me, Palmira,
—see up. What! to a tyrant
Who wrongs thy youth, and mocks thy tender heart
With vile illusions and fanatick terrors!—

Enter PHARON.

What wouldst thou Pharon?

Pha. From yon' western gate
Which opens on Moradia's fertile plains
Mahomet's gen'ral Mirvan hastes to greet thee.

Alc. Mirvan, that vile apostate!

Pha. In one hand
He holds a scimitar, the other bears
An olivebranch, which to our chiefs he waves,
An emblem of his suit—a martial youth,
—by name, attends him for our hostage.

[Alc. exits.] Ophidius! mysterious heav'n!

Pha. Mirvan, attend!

—I say, attend!—to render you his charge.

Alc. "Mirvan advance! how dare the traitor see me?"
 Palmira, thou retire—Pharon, be present. [*Exit Palmira.*]

Enter MIRVAN.

After six years of infamous rebellion
 Against thy native country, dost thou, Mirvan,
 Again profane with thy detested presence
 These sacred walls which once thy hands defended,
 But thy bad heart has vilely since betray'd?
 Thou poor deserter of thy country's gods,
 Thou base invader of thy country's rights,
 What wouldst thou have with me?

Mir. I'd pardon thee—
 Out of compassion to thy age and full rings,
 And high regard for thy experienc'd valour.
 Heav'n's great apostle offers thee in friendship
 A hand could crush thee, and I come to tender
 To name the terms of peace and amity.

Alc. He deigns to tender! insolent impostor!
 Dost thou not, Mirvan, blush
 To serve this wretch—this base of soul as birth?

Mir. Mahomet's grandeur 's in himself; he shines
 With borrow'd lustre.
 Plung'd in the night of prejudice, and
 In fetters of hereditary faith,
 My judgment slept; but when I found
 To mould anew the prostrate universe
 I started from my dream, join'd his career,
 And shar'd his arduous and immortal labours.
 Once I must own I was as blind as thou;
 Then wake to glory, and be chang'd like me.

Alc. What death to honour wak'ning to such glory!

Pha. Oh, what a fall from virtue was that change!

Mir. Come, embrace our faith, reign with Mahomet,
 And cloth'd in terrors make the vulgar tremble.

Alc. 'Tis Mahomet, and tyrants like to Mahomet,
 'Tis Mirvan, and apostates like to Mirvan,
 I only would make tremble—Is it, say'st thou,
 Religion that's the parent of this rapine,
 This virulence and rage?—No; true Religion
 Is always mild, propitious, and humane,
 Plays not the tyrant, plants no faith in blood,
 Nor bears destruction on her chariot wheels,

But stoops to polish, succour, and redress,
And builds her grandeur on the publick good.

Mir. Thou art turn'd Christian sure! some straggling
Has taught thee these tame lessons—— [monk

Alc. If the Christians

Hold principles like these, which reason dictates,

“Which all our notions of the Pow’rs divine

Declare the social laws they meant for man,

“And all the beauties and delights of nature

Bear witness to,” the Christians may be right;

“But sect cannot; who, nurs’d in blood and slaughter,

Worship a cruel and revengeful being,

And draw him always with his thunder-round him

As if for the destruction of mankind.

Mir. If clemency delights thee learn it here.

“Thou’st been taught by thy voice his nation’s cry,

Thou’st by thy hands—— his only son,

“Mahomet pardons thee; nay farther, begs

“Thou’st been burning ‘twixt you be extinguish’d

With reconciliation’s generous tear.

Alc. I know thy milder arts; his gen’rous tears,

Like the refreshing drops that previous fall

To the wild onsets of o’erwhelming earthquakes

Shake the world’s base;—

Courage, valour, and bravery,

And all the brave avocations are the sure attendants

On his victorious car.

Pha. Leagues he will make too——

Alc. Like other grasping tyrants, till he eyes

A lucky juncture to enlarge his bounds,

Then he’ll deride ‘em, leap o’er ev’ry tie

Of sacred guarantee or sworn protection,

And when th’ oppress’d ally implores assistance

Beneath that mask invade the wish’d-for realms,

And from pure friendship take them to himself.

Mir. Mahomet fights Heav’n’s battles, bends the bow

To spread Heav’n’s laws, and to subject to faith

The iron neck of error.

Alc. Lust and ambition, Miran, are the springs

Of all the virtues which the world esteems

And all the virtues which the world esteems

And all the virtues which the world esteems

ACT II.

SCENE, PALMIRA'S apartment.

Enter PALMIRA.

PALMIRA.

CEASE, cease ye streaming instruments of woe
From your ignoble toil—Take warmth, my heart!
Collect thy scatter'd pow'rs, and brave misfortune.
In vain the stormtost mariner repines;
Were he within to raise as great a tempest
As bears him from without it would not smoothe
One barbarous surge: impatience only throws
Discredit on mischance, and adds a shame
To our affliction.

Enter ZAPHNA.

Ha! a gracious Heav'n!
Thou, Zaphna! is it thou? what pitying angel
Guided thy steps to these abodes of bondage?
Zaph. Thou sov'reign of my soul and all its pow'rs,
Object of ev'ry fear and ev'ry wish,
Friend, sister, love, companion, all that's dear!
Do I once more behold thee, my Palmira?
O! I will set it down the whitest hour
That Zaphna e'er was blest with!—

Pal. Say, my hero——

Are my ill's ended then? They are, they are:
Now Zaphna's here I am no more a captive
Except to him: oh, blest captivity!

Zaph. Those smiles are dearer to my raptur'd breast,
Sweeter those accents to my list'ning heart,
Than all Arabia's spices to the sense.

Pal. No wonder that my soul was so elate,
No wonder that the cloud of grief gave way,
When thou my son of comfort wert so nigh.

Zaph. Since that dire hour when on Sabaria's strand
The barbarous foe depriv'd me of Palmira,
In what a gulf of horror and despair
Have thy imagin'd perils plung'd my soul!
Stretch'd on expiring coles for a while

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The barbarous foe depriv'd me of Palmira,
In what a gulf of horror and despair
Have thy imagin'd perils plung'd my soul!
Stretch'd on expiring corse for a while

To the deaf stream I pour'd out my complaint,
 And begg'd I might be number'd with the dead
 That strew'd its banks——then starting from despair
 With rage I flew to Mahomet for vengeance;
 He, for some high mysterious purpose known
 To Heav'n and him alone, at length dispatch'd
 The valiant Mirvan to demand a truce:
 Instant on wings of lightning I pursu'd him,
 And enter'd as his hostage——fix'd, Palmira,
 Or to redeem or die a captive with thee.

Pal. Heroick youth!

Zaph. But how have these Barbarians
 Treated my fair?

Pal. With high humanity
 I in my victor found a friend——
 Has made me feel cap——
 But absence from my

Zaph. I grieve a so——
 But now presented as a——
 His noble bearing and humanity
 Made captive of my heart; I felt, methought,
 A new affection lighted in my breast,
 And wonder'd whence the infant ardour sprang.

Pal. Yet gen'rous as he is not all my prayers
 Not all the tears I lavish at his feet,
 Can move him to restore me——

Zaph. But he shall——

Let the Barbarian know he shall, Palmira;
 The god of Mahomet, our divine protector,
 Whose still triumphant standard I have borne
 O'er piles of vanquish'd infidels——that pow'r
 Which brought unnumber'd battlements to earth,
 Will humble Mecca too.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, noble Mirvan,
 Do my Palmira's chains sit loose upon her;
 Say, is it freedom? This presumptuous senate——

Mir. Has granted all we ask'd, all we could wish——
 The truce obtain'd t——
 Flew open——

Zaph. Mahomet i
 Once more in Mecca

Pal. Transport! bid him welcome.

Zaph. Thy suff'rings then are o'er, the ebb is past,
And a full tide of hope flows in upon us.

Mir. The spirit of our prophet that inspir'd me
Breath'd such divine persuasion from my lips

As shook the reverend fathers—Sirs, cry'd I,
This fav'rite of high Heav'n, who rules in battle,
Before whose footstool tributary kings

Bow the anointed head, born here in Mecca,

Asks but to be enroll'd a senator,

And you refuse his pray'r. Deluded sages!

Altho' your conquest he requests no more

Than one day's truce, pure pity to yourselves!

To save you if he can, and you—Oh shame!—

At this a gen'ral murmur spread around,

Which seem'd propitious to us—

Zaph. Greatly carry'd!

Go on—

Mir. Then straight th' inflexible Alcanor

Flew thro' the streets, assembling all the people

To bar our prophet. Thither too I fled,

Urg'd the same arguments, exhorted, threaten'd,

Till they unhing'd the gates, and gave free passage

To Mahomet and his chiefs—In vain Alcanor

And his dishearten'd party, strove t' oppose him;

Severe and dauntless thro' the gazing crowd

With more than human majesty he mov'd,

Bearing the peaceful olive, whilst the truce

Was instantly proclaim'd—

Pal. But where's the prophet?

Mir. Reclin'd in yonder grot that joins the temple,
Attended by his chiefs.

Zaph. There let us haste

With due respect, and bow ourselves before him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to a spacious grotto.

MAHOMET discovered with the Alcoran before him.

Mah. Glorious hypocrisy! what fools are they

Who fraught with lustful or ambitious views

Wear not thy specious mask—Thou, Alcoran!

Hast won more battles, ta'en more cities for me,

Than thrice my feeble numbers had achiev'd

Without the succour of thy sacred impulse.

Enter HERCIDES, AMMON, and ALI.

Invincible supporters of our grandeur!
My faithful chiefs, Hercides, Ammon, Ali!
Go and instruct this people in my name
That faith may dawn, and like a morning-star
Be herald to my rising:
Lead them to know and to adore my God;
But above all to fear him—Lo, Palmira! [*Ext. Her. &c.*]
Her angel-face, with unfeign'd blushes spread,
Proclaims the purity that dwells within.

Enter MIRYAN, ZAPHNA, and PALMIRA.

[*To Palmira.*] The hand of War was ne'er before so bar-
Never bore from me half so rich a spoil [*barons*]
As thee my fair.

Pal. Joy to my heavenly guardian!
Joy to the world that Mahomet's in Mecca!

Mab. My child, let me embrace thee—How's this
Thou here! [*Zaphna*

Zaph. kneeling.] My father, chief, and holy pontiff!
The god that thou'rt inspir'd by march'd before me.
Ready for thee to wade thro' seas of danger,
Or cope with death itself, I hither hasten'd
To yield myself an hostage, and with zeal
Prevent thy order.

Mab. 'Twas not well, rash boy:
He that does more than I command him errs
As much as he who falters in his duty,
And is not for my purpose—I obey
My god—implicitly obey thou me.

Pal. Pardon, my gracious Lord, his wellmeant ardour
Brought up from tender infancy beneath
The shelter of thy sacred patronage,
Zaphna and I have been animated still
By the same sentiments: alas, great Prophet!
I've had enough of wretchedness—to languish
A prisoner here, far both from him and you;
Grudge me not then the ray of consolation
His presence beam'd, nor cloud my dawning hope
Of rising freedom and full

Mab. Palmira,
Be not alarm'd;
Of thrones and all

Will watch o'er thee as o'er the universe.
Follow my gen'ral's Zaphna. Fair Palmira,
Retire, and pay your pow'rful vows to Heav'n,
And dread no wrongs but from Alcanor.

[Zaphna and Palmira go out separately.]

Mirvan—

Attend thou here—'Tis time, my trusty soldier,
My longtry'd friend, to lay unfolded to thee
The close resolves and councils of my heart.
The tedious length of a precarious siege
May damp the present ardour of my troops,
And check me in the height of my career.
Let us not give deluded mortals leisure
By reason to disperse the mystick gloom
We 'ave cast about us—Prepossession, friend,
Reigns monarch of the million—Mecca's crowd
Gaze at my rapid victories, and think
Some awful pow'r directs my arm to conquest;
But whilst our friends once more renew their efforts
To win the wav'ring people to our interest,
What think'st thou, say, of Zaphna and Palmira?

Mir. As of thy most resign'd and faithful vassals.

Mab. Oh, Mirvan! they're the deadliest of my foes.

Mir. How!

Mab. Yes, they love each other—

Mir. Well—what crime?—

Mab. What crime! dost say?—Learn all my frailty then—

My life's a combat: keen austerity
Subjects my nature to abstemious bearings:
I've banish'd from my lips that trait'rous liquor
That either works to practices of outrage
Or melts the manly breast to woman's weakness;
Or on the burning sands or desert rocks
With thee I bear th' inclemency of climates,
Freeze at the pole, or scorch beneath the line.
For all these toils love only can retaliate,
The only consolation or reward,
Fruit of my labours, idol of my incense,
And sole divinity that I adore;
Know then that I prefer this young Palmira
To all the ripen'd beauties that attend me,
Dwell on her accents, dote upon her smiles,

And am not mine but her's. Now judge, my friend,
How vast the jealous transports of thy master;
When at his feet he daily hears his charmer
Avow a foreign love, and, insolent,
Give Mahomet a rival!

Mir. How! and Mahomet
Not instantly revenge—

Mab. Ah! should he not?
But better to detest him know him better:
Learn then that both my rival and my love
Sprang from the loins of this audacious tyrant.

Mir. Alcanor!

Mab. Is their father; old Heracles,
To whose sage institution I commit
My captive infants, have reveal'd it to me—
Perdition! I myself light up their flame,
And feed it till I set myself on fire.

Well, means must be employ'd: but see, the father:
He comes this way, and lanches from his eye
Malignant sparks of enmity and rage.

Mirvan, see all ta'en care of; let Heracles
With his escorte beset yon' gate; bid Ali
Make proper disposition round the temple;

This done return, and render me account
Of what success we meet with 'mongst the people:

Then, Mirvan, we'll determine or to loose
Or bridle in our vengeance as it suits. *[Exit Mirvan.]*

Enter ALCANOR.

Mab. Why dost thou start Alcanor? whence that horror
Is then my sight so baneful to thee? *[Rous!]*

Alc. "Heavens!"
Must I then bear this? must I meet in Mecca,
On terms of peace, this spoiler of the earth?

Mab. Approach, old man, without a blush, since Heav'n
For some high end decrees our future union.

Alc. I blush not for myself, but thee, thou tyrant;
For thee, bad man! who com'st with serpent-guile
To sow dissention in the realms of peace:

Thy very name sets families at variance,
'Twixt son and father bursts the bonds of nature,
And scars endearment from the nuptial pillow?

"Ev'n truce with thee is a new stratagem."

And is it, insolent dissembler! thus
Thou com'st to give the sons of Mecca peace,
And me an unknown god?

Mab. Were I to answer any but Alcanor
That unknown god should speak in thunder for me,
But here with thee I'd parley as a man.

Alc. What canst thou say? what urge in thy defence?
What right hast thou receiv'd to plant new faiths,
Or lay a claim to royalty and priesthood?

Mab. The right that a resolv'd and tow'ring spirit
Has o'er the growling instinct of the vulgar——

Alc. Patience, good Heav'n's! have I not known thee,
When void of wealth, inheritance, or fame, [Mahomet,
Rank'd with the lowest of the low at Mecca?

Mab. Dost thou not know, thou haughty feeble man,
That the low insect, lurking in the grails,
And the imperial eagle, which aloft
Ploughs the ethereal plain, are both alike
In the Eternal Eye—Mortals are equal:
It is not birth, magnificence, or pow'r,
But virtue only makes the difference 'twixt them.

Alc. apart.] What sacred truth from what polluted lips!

Mab. By virtue's ardent pinions borne on high
Heav'n met my zeal, gave me in solemn charge
Its sacred laws, then bade me on and publish.

Alc. And did Heav'n bid thee on and plunder too?

Mab. My law is active, and inflames the soul
With thirst of glory. What can thy dumb gods?
What laurels spring beneath their footy altars?
Thy slothful feet disgrace the humankind,
Enervate lifeless images of men!

Mine bear th' intrepid soul; my faith makes heroes.

Alc. Go preach these doctrines at Medina, where
By prostrate wretches thou art rais'd to homage.

Mab. Hear me; thy Mecca trembles at my name;
Therefore thou wouldst save thyself or city
Embrace my proffer'd friendship——What to-day
I thus solicit I'll command to-morrow.

Alc. Contract with thee a friendship! frontless man!
Know'st thou a god can work that miracle?

Mab. I do——Necessity——thy interest.

Alc. Interest is thy god, Equity is mine.

Propose the tie of this unnatural union ;
 Say, is 't the loss of thy illfated son,
 Who in the field fell victim to my rage,
 Or the dear blood of my poor captive children,
 Shed by thy butchering hands?

Mab. Ay, 'tis thy children.

Mark me then well, and learn th' important secret
 Which I'm sole master of——Thy children live.

Alc. Live!

Mab. Yes——both live——

Alc. What say'st thou? Both!

Mab. Ay, both.

Alc. And dost thou not beguile me?

Mab. No, old man.

Alc. Propitious Heav'ns! Say, Mahomet, for now
 Methinks I could hold endless converse with thee,
 Say what's their portion, liberty or bondage?

Mab. Bred in my camp, and tutor'd in my law,
 I hold the balance of their destinies,
 And now 'tis on the turn——their lives or deaths——
 'Tis thine to say which shall preponderate.

Alc. Mine! can I save them? name the mighty ransom——
 If I must bear their chains double the weight,
 And I will kiss the hand that puts them on;
 Or if my streaming blood must be the purchase,
 Drain ev'ry sluice and channel of my body,
 My swelling veins will burst to give it passage.

Mab. I'll tell thee then——renounce thy Pagan faith,
 Abolish thy vain gods, and——

Alc. Ha!

Mab. Nay, more,
 Surrender Mecca to me, quit this temple,
 Assist me to impose upon the world,
 Thunder my Koran to the gazing crowd,
 Proclaim me for their prophet and their king,
 And be a glorious pattern of credulity
 To Korah's stubborn tribe. These terms perform'd
 Thy son shall be restor'd, and Mahomet's self
 Will deign to wed thy daughter.

Alc. Hear me Mahomet——

I am a father, and this bosom boasts
 A heart as tender as e'er parent bore.

After a fifteen years of anguish for them
 Once more to view my children, clasp them to me,
 And die in their embraces—melting thought!
 But were I doom'd or to enslave my country,
 And help to spread black error o'er the earth,
 Or to behold these blood-embued hands,
 Deprive me of them both—Know me then Mahomet,
 I'd not admit a doubt to cloud my choice——
Looking earnestly at Mahomet for some time before he speaks.
 Farewell. *[Exit Alcanor.]*

Mah. Why, fare thee well then—churlish dotard!
 Inexorable fool! Now by my arms
 I will have great revenge; I'll meet thy scorn
 With treble retribution.

Enter MIRVAN.

Well, my Mirvan,
 What say'st thou to it now?

Mir. Why, that Alcanor
 Or we must fall.

Mah. Fall then the obdurate rebel!

Mir. The truce expires to-morrow, when Alcanor
 Again is Mecca's maller, and has vow'd
 Destruction on thy head: the senate too
 Have pass'd thy doom.

Mah. Those heart-chill'd paltry babblers
 Plac'd on the bench of sloth with ease can nod
 And vote a man to death; why don't the cowards
 Stand me in yonder plain?—With half their numbers
 I drove them headlong to their walls for shelter,
 And he was deem'd the wisest senator
 That enter'd first the gate; but now they think
 They've got me in the toil their spirits mount,
 And they could prove most valorous assassins——
 Well, this I like—I always ow'd my greatness
 To opposition; had I not met with struggles
 I'd been obscure—Enough—Perish Alcanor!
 He marbled up the pliant populace,
 Those dupes of novelty will bend before us
 Like oars to a hurricane——

Mir. No time
 Is to be lost.

Mah. But for a proper arm;

For, however irksome, we must save
Appearances, and mask it with the vulgar.

Mir. True, my sage chief—What think'st thou then of

Mab. Of Zaphna, say'st thou! [Zaphna:]

Mir. Yes, Alcanor's hostage—

He can in private do thee vengeance on him :
Thy other fav'rites of maturer age,
And more discreetly zealous, would not risk it :
Youth is the stock whence grafted superstition
Shoots with unbounded vigour. He's a slave
To thy despotick faith, and urg'd by thee,
However mild his nature may appear,
Howe'er humane and noble is his spirit,
Or strong his reason, where allow'd to reason,
He would for Heav'n's sake martyr half mankind.

Mab. The brother of Palmira!

Mir. Yes, that brother,

The only son of thy outrageous foe,
And the incestuous rival of thy love.

Mab. I hate the stripling, loathe his very name ;
The manes of my son too cries for vengeance
On the curs'd fire ; but then thou know'st my love,
Know'st from whose blood she sprang ; this staggers, Mirvan ;
And yet I'm here surrounded with a gulf
Ready to swallow me ; come too in quest
Of altars and a throne—What must be done !—
My warring passions, like contending clouds
When fraught with thunder's fatal fuel, burst
Upon themselves, and rend me with the shock.
And shall enervating contagious love
Hag my aspiring spirit, sink me down
To woman's shackles, make a lapthing of me ?
Glory ! that must not be ! ambition still
And great revenge impetuous urge their claims,
And must be notic'd. Mirvan, sound this youth ;
Touch not at once upon the startling purpose,
But make due preparation.

Mir. I'll attack him

With all the forces of enthusiasm ;
There lies our strength.

Mab. First then, a solemn vow

To act whatever Heav'n by me enjoins him ;

Next omens, dreams, and visions, may be pleaded;
Hints too of black designs by this Alcanor
Upon Palmira's virtue and his life——
But to the proof—Be now propitious, Fortune,
Then love, ambition, vengeance, jointly triumph. [*Exe.*]

ACT III.

SCENE, a grand apartment.

Enter ZAPHNA and PALMIRA.

ZAPHNA.

ALCANOR claim a private conference with us!
What has he to unfold?

Pal. I tremble Zaphna.

Zaph. Time press'd too, did he say?

Pal. He did; then cast

A look so piercing on me it o'erwhelm'd
My face with deep confusion; this he mark'd,
Then starting left me.

Zaph. aside.] Ha! this gives me fear
That Mirvan's jealousies are too well grounded;
But I must not distract her tender bosom
With visionary terrors. [*To Pal.*] Both in private?

Pal. In private both.

Zaph. Her virtue and my life! [*Apart.*]
It cannot be; so reverend a form
Could ne'er be pander to such black devices.

Pal. But let us shun it Zaphna; much I fear
Alcanor has deceiv'd us: dread the treachery
Of this blood-thirsty senate. Trust me, Zaphna,
They've sworn the extirpation of our faith,
Nor care by what vile means—

Zaph. My soul's best treasure,
For whose security my ev'ry thought
Is up in arms, regardless of my own;
Satin thou Alcanor's presence. This hour, Palmira,
Mirvan, by order of our royal pontiff,
Prepares to solemnize some act of worship
Of a more hallow'd and mysterious kind
Than will admit of vulgar eye; myself
Alone am honour'd to assist.

Pal. Alone!

Farewell my love; I fly to gain the summit
Of earth's felicity—to gain Palmira.

[*Exit.*]

Pal. Where'er I turn me here 't is all suspicion.
What means this vow? Mirvan, I like thee not:
Alcanor too distracts my tim'rous breast;
Ev'n Mahomet's self I dread whilst I invoke him.
Like one benighted 'midst a place of tombs
I gaze around me, start at ev'ry motion,
And seem hemm'd in by visionary spectres.
Allrighteous Pow'r, whom trembling I adore,
And blindly follow, oh deliver me
From these heart-rending terrors!—Ha! who's here?

Enter MAHOMET.

'Tis he! 'tis Mahomet himself! kind Heav'n
Has sent him to my aid—My gracious Lord!
Protect the dear dear idol of my soul;
Save Zaphna; guard him from——

Mah. From what!—why Zaphna?
Whence this vain terror? is he not with us?

Pal. Oh Sir, you double now my apprehensions!
These broken accents and that eager look
Shew you have anguish smother'd at the heart,
And prove for once that Mahomet 's a mortal.

Mah. apart.] Ha! I shall turn a traitor to myself—
Oh woman! woman! hear me; ought I not
To be enrag'd at thy profane attachment?
How could thy breast, without the keenest sting,
Harbour one thought not dictated by me?
Is that young mind I took such toil to form
Turn'd an ingrate and infidel at once?
Away, rebellious maid——

Pal. What dost thou say—
My royal Lord? Thus prostrate at your feet
Let me implore forgiveness if in aught
I have offended: talk not to me thus;
A frown from thee, my father and my king,
Is death to poor Palmira. Say then, Mahomet,
Didst thou not in this very place permit him
To tender me his vows?

Mah. apart.] “His vows! perdition!”
How the soft trait'refs racks me!—Rise Palmira—
[*Apert.*] Down, rebel love! I must be calm—Come hither;

Beware, rash maid, of such imprudent steps,
They lead to guilt. What wild pernicious errors
May n't the heart yield to if not greatly watch'd!

Pal. In loving Zaphna sure it cannot err;
There's nothing wild, nothing pernicious—

Mab. How!
This theme delights you——

Pal. I must own it does.
Yes, my great master, for I still have thought
That Heav'n itself approv'd of my affection,
And gave a sanction to our mutual ardours.
Can what was virtue once be now a crime?
Can I be guilty——

Mab. Yes—towards me you are——
You, nurs'd from infancy beneath my eye,
Child of my care and pupil of my faith,
You, whom my partial fondness still distinguish'd
From all the captive youths that grac'd my triumphs,
And you who now without my leave permit
A slave to bear thee from my sight for ever.

Pal. No, we both live, nay more, would die for thee;
And oh my Lord! if all that earth can offer
Of grandeur, opulence, or pleasure, e'er
Shall make me deaf to gratitude's demands,
May Zaphna's self be evidence against me,
And plead for double vengeance on my treachery.

Mab. apart.] Zaphna again! Furies! I shall relapse!
And make her witness of my weakness.

Pal. Sir!
What sudden start of passion arms that eye?

Mab. Oh nothing: pray retire a while: take courage;
I'm not at all displeas'd: 't was but to sound
The depth of thy young heart. I praise thy choice;
Trust then thy dearest int'rest to my bosom;
But know your fate depends on your obedience.
If I have been a guardian to your youth,
If all my lavish bounties past weigh aught,
Deserve the future blessings which await you.
Howe'er the voice of Heav'n dispose of Zaphna,
Confirm him in the path where duty leads,
That he may keep his vow and merit thee.