

# **The Project Gutenberg eBook of Cromwell: A Drama, in Five Acts, by Alfred Bate Richards**

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## **CROMWELL**

A Drama, in Five Acts

by

**ALFRED B. RICHARDS**

Author of "CROESUS, King of Lydia," a Tragedy; "VANDYCK," a Play of Genoa, "DEATH AND THE MAGDALEN," and other Poems; "THE DREAM OF THE SOUL," and other Poems; "OXFORD UNMASKED;" Part II of "BRITAIN REDEEMED;" and "POEMS, ESSAYS AND OPINIONS."

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**MDCCCLII**

## **DRAMATIS PERSONAE.**

**CROMWELL.**

MILTON, his Secretary.

**ARTHUR WALTON.**

BASIL, his Half-Brother.

SIR SIMON NEVEL, their Uncle.

IRETON, Son-in-law of Cromwell.

HARRISON, )  
DESBOROUGH, )  
BRADSHAW, )  
MARTEN, ) Parliamentarians.  
LILBURNE, )  
HACKER, )  
LUDLOW, )  
SIR HARRY VANE, )

WILLIAM, Servant to Arthur.

HEZEKIAH NEWBORN, Host.

PEARSON, Attendant on Cromwell.

WYCKOFF, Accomplice of Basil.

BOWTELL, an Ironside.

Cavaliers, Roundheads, Officers, Gentlemen, Soldiers,  
Guests of the Inn, Poachers, Citizens, a Preacher,  
Old Man, Trooper, Servants, Messengers, &c., &c.

**THE LADY CROMWELL.**

ELIZABETH, her Daughter.

FLORENCE NEVEL, Daughter of Sir Simon.

**LADY FAIRFAX.**

BARBARA, Maid of Florence.

Attendants, Women, &c.

**CROMWELL.**

**ACT I.**

**SCENE I.**

[*1st Cut.*] [*2nd Grooves.*]

*A Lane near a Village. Afternoon.*

*Enter ARTHUR WALTON and WILLIAM, R.S.E.*

*Arthur.* Give me your arm, my feet tread heavily;  
The sameness of this scene doth pierce my heart  
With thronging recollections of the past.  
There is nought chang'd—and what a world of care,  
Of sorrow, passion, pleasure have I known,  
Since but a natural part of this was I,  
Whose voice is now a discord to the sounds

Once daily mellow'd in my youthful being.  
Methinks I feel like one that long hath read  
A strange and chequer'd story, and doth rise,  
With a deep sigh to be *himself* again.

*Will.* One would not think, Sir, how much blood had stain'd  
Old England, since we left her, finding thus  
All things so peaceful; but one thing I mark'd  
As we did skirt the village.

*Arth.* What was that?

*Will.* The king's face was defac'd—the sign o' the inn  
At jolly Master Gurton's—mind you not  
How sad it look'd? Yet 'neath it I've been gay,  
A time or two; 'tis not my fortune now:  
Those bright Italian skies have even marr'd  
My judgment of clear ale.

*Arth.* I'faith 'twill need A marvellous scant repair.

*Will.* One jovial day Of honest mud and wholesome English fog.

*Arth.* That sign! 'twas once the royal head of James;  
Some thirsty limner passing made it Charles;  
I've heard it said 'twas e'en our good Queen Bess,  
By curious folk that trac'd her high starch'd ruff  
In the quaint faded back of antique chair,  
Her stomacher in Charles's shrivell'd vest—  
Who in his turn is gone. Well, take this letter,  
See the old knight; but not a word to him.  
Stay, I forgot, my little rosy cousin  
Should be a woman now; thus—full of wiles,  
Glancing behind the man that trusts her love  
To his best friend, and wanton with the girls  
She troops with, in such trifling, foolish sort,  
To turn the stomach of initiate man.  
Fie! I care not to hear of her; yet ask  
If she be well. Commend me to my brother;  
Thou wilt not tarry—he will give thee gold,  
And haste to welcome me—go! At the inn  
We'll meet some two hours hence.

[*Exit R.*]

*Will.* Hem! I doubt much  
About this welcoming.—Sad human Nature!  
This brother was a careful, godly youth  
That kept accounts, and smiling pass'd a beggar,  
Saying, "Good-morrow, friend," yet never gave.  
Where head doth early ripen, heart comes late—  
Therefore, I say, I doubt this welcoming. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

[*Last Cut.*] [*2nd Grooves.*]

*An Apartment in a Manor House.*

*Enter BASIL WALTON and FLORENCE, R.*

*Basil.* [*following Florence.*] I'll break thy haughty spirit!

*Flor.* Will you, sir?—  
'Tis base, ungentle, and unmannerly,  
Because, forsooth, you covet my poor wealth,

Which likes me not, as I care not for it,  
To persecute a helpless girl like me.

*Basil.* I will protect thee; but accept my love. Nay, do not frown so.

*Flor.* Love! say'st thou? Profane, Vile misuse of that sacred word. Away! Touch not my hand with your cold fingers—Off!

*Basil.* Thou foolish child, wouldst throw thyself away  
Upon some beggar? were he here, perchance  
Thy cousin Arthur? Come, our lands unite,  
Be prudent—

*Flor.* Prudent!  
Oh, there is no match  
Half so imprudent, as when interest  
Makes two, in heart divided, one—no work  
So vain, so mean, so heartless, dull and void,  
As that of him who buys the hollow "yes"  
From the pale lips where Love sits not enthron'd,  
Nor fans with purple wing the bosom's fire.  
Prudence! to waste a life, lose self-respect,  
Or e'en the chance of love bestowed and met?—

*Basil.* Sweet cousin, wilt not love me?

*Flor.* No! nor wish To hate thee, could I help it—therefore, go!

*Basil.* Well then I must— [*Seizes her hand.*]

*Flor.* For pity's sake; if not I'll fly thee and my home.

*Basil.* Ha! leave your father, Desert the old man in his hour of need? Fine ethics, truly. [*Advances.*]

*Flor.* Heaven! Leave me, sir—  
There something tells me Arthur will return,  
Whom you have cozen'd of his heritage,  
And then he'll aid me.

*Basil.* [*Aside.*] Hath she seen him then, Or heard? I must beware—

[*A Servant enters and beckons him out, L.*]

Nay! none can know. [*Aside.*] Doubtless a message from him—I must see That they meet not, or else  
— [*Aloud.*] Adieu! fair cousin; I trust you'll find your senses yet ere long.

[*Exit BASIL, L.*]

*Flor.* Once more he's gone—O world! indeed thou art Too oft the bad man's friend.

*Sir Sim.* [*Within.*] Ho! nephew Basil, Ho! Basil!

[*Enter SIR SIMON, R.*] Where's my nephew? [*To Florence.*]

*Flor.* He has left  
This moment, sir!  
O listen, he is rude.  
I cannot wed him,—Father! make me not  
Unhappy—

*Sir Sim.* Nay! Thou know'st, indeed, my child,  
How I do love thee. 'Tis a good young man,  
And wealthy—no fool, like his brother. Fool,  
Said I?—a madman, ape, dolt, idiot, ass,  
An honourable ass to give the land  
His weak sire left him, to our Basil—Ha!  
*He'll* give none back, I think!—no! no!  
Come, girl!  
Wouldst thou be foolish, too? I would not marry  
For money only, understand—no! no!

That I abhor, detest, but in my life  
I never saw a sweeter, properer youth.  
You like him not? Tush! marriage doth bring liking.  
Ay! love too—you are young!

*Flor.* But, I've enough— Why wed at all?

*Sir Sim.* Girl! girl! I say, would'st drive  
Thy father mad! A very handsome man,  
A healthy fine young man—lands joining too!  
Nay! I could curse you, wench! Not have him?  
This  
Comes from your mawkish sentiment. You are  
No child of mine—

*Flor.* Dear father! Hear me!

*Sir Sim.* Mark!  
You're not of legal age—I'll drive you forth.  
I'd rather see you dead, here, at my feet,  
Than baulk my counsels thus. Nay, try and see  
If sentiment will feed you, trick you out.  
O, who would be a father?

*Flor.* Have I not E'er shown you love and duty?

*Sir Sim.* Then obey! If I'd said nought—Oh! then you'd been in love With him, against my will—

*Flor.* No, sir, indeed! Spare me—I'll think—I'll try. Be kind to me!

*Sir Sim.* Well, well, child, 'tis not right to treat me thus:  
If I were full of passion—harsh, unkind,  
Your conduct were less cruel. But, you'll kill  
The old man some day with your cruelty.  
You don't care for him—not you; yet he acts  
All for your good. Some day you'll think so when  
You've lost him. Come, come, dry your tears, now kiss me;  
I should die happy, were you married well.  
I am old—all this agitation kills me.

*Flor.* Nay, father, talk not so.

*Sir Sim.* You should obey me. Your mother never dar'd oppose me thus; She swore obedience, and I made her keep it.

*Flor.* [*Aside.*] My mother, she died young, and yet too old;  
The breath of her whole life was one long sigh;  
She look'd like her own mourning effigy.  
Her sad "good morrow" was as others say  
"Good night." We never saw her smile but once,  
And then we wept around her dying couch,  
For 'twas the dazzling light of joy that stream'd  
Upon her from the opening gates of heaven;  
That smile was parted, she so gently died,  
Between the wan corpse and the fleeting spirit.

*Sir Sim.* [*Aside.*] She looks just like her mother.  
That pale face  
Making its sad obedience a reproach.  
If she would flout, sulk, scold, resist my will,  
I'd make her have him ere the day grew cold.

*Flor.* Her very kisses chill'd our infant brows;  
She pluck'd the very flowers of daily life  
As from a grave where Silence only wept,  
And none but Hope lay buried. Her blue eyes  
Were like Forget-me-nots, o'er which the shade  
Of clouds still lingers when the moaning storm

Hath pass'd away in night. It mattered not,  
They were the home from which tears never wander'd.

*Sir Sim.* [*Aloud.*] I shall lose patience shortly. Oh, that gout! Here, girl, assist me. Would you see me fall?

*Flor.* Well, father, leave me to myself awhile. I would obey you if I could.

*Sir Sim.* That's right.

You know I'm rough, but then who loves you like  
A father? You ought not to try me thus;  
Indeed you ought not. Come, my dear, we'll go,  
And find your cousin. [*FLORENCE hesitates.*] Hey! not now? Beware,  
'Tis better now! no nonsense. Come, come, come.  
You know you can do what you please with me,  
But then you must be more obedient—so!  
[*Going slowly, R.*]  
Your hand! You do me harm, girl! with this strife.  
Gently—your cousin never frets me thus. [*Exeunt, R.*]

[*Enter BASIL reading a letter, WILLIAM following, L. FLORENCE returns, R., and steals behind them, and listens to their conversation.*]

*Basil.* [*With a letter in his hand.*] Good William, thou shalt drink to me. [*Gives him money.*] And art thou still called thirsty William?

*Will.* What answer shall I bear to my master?

*Basil.* Thy master? 'Tis a good youth, though a wild—I hope he be well. Yet, frankly, I would that he had not just now returned. Our uncle is so violent, and will not hear his name. Arthur hath been so imprudent, loose, eh? William, I regret the old man hath heard of these things.

*Will.* My master is a very Puritan, sir!

*Basil.* [*Aside.*] Let his worth go begging, then—but he will soon be bad as his fortunes demand. Your poverty-stricken gentlemen were better on the coast of Barbary than in this civilized country. And whatever he do, he shall be judged harshly. [*Aloud to William.*]

I doubt not—Lies, lies; I said so at the time. Then you see my cousin Florence, a simple girl, trembles at his very name. You cannot wonder at it;—such stories have been told. Confess now, William, thy master hath been a prodigal. Doth he pay thy wages? Thou art scurvily clad. I have a place now—as it were.

*Will.* I desire no better, sir! I thank you, than where I am.

*Basil.* Oh! I did not mean unless you had left my brother first. Now, he desireth a thousand pound. Simply I have it not. There is no rent paid now. I would he had written rather than come. I will give him five hundred that I have, if he will pledge me his honourable word to leave England for five years. Are there not wars abroad whereby men live?—

*Will.* And die!

*Basil.* I would I could see him. But I have promised mine uncle not, and he cannot bear any shock to his health. Go, tell him this.

*Will.* Worshipful Master Basil! you will excuse me, but I must speak my master's mind. He saith he hath signed away his inheritance to thee, and that he expects this small gift, ere he comes among ye. He is but in sorry plight of dress, and he hath ever shown much affection for you.

*Basil.* Does he threaten? Hark ye, I owe him nought. Let justice be done. The fortune was mine by birth. Our father acted basely. My brother did very properly restore it. Shall he boast of a bare act of justice? He hath no claim on me. Shall I furnish his profligacies, his expenses, his foreign debaucheries, because I have gotten back mine own?

*Will.* You will not see him?—

*Basil.* No!

*Will.* Nor send him the money?—

*Basil.* No! except with the proviso I told thee of.

*Will.* You have no other message?—

*Basil.* No!

*Will.* Oh! Well, sir, I think the execution of my barren commission needs no farther stay. Touching that small portion of mammon wherewith thou wouldst endow my master's passage across the seas, in his name I will venture to refuse the gratuity.

*Basil.* Wouldst jest, villain? There are stocks! Back to the beggar that sent thee. [*Exit R.*]

[*WILLIAM going, L., FLORENCE approaches him from behind.*]

*Flor.* Good friend! I have heard something of your discourse. I would fain see thy master.

*Will.* Art thou not his cousin, lady?

*Flor.* I am.

*Will.* He hath often spoken of thee far hence.

*Flor.* We were children together. Is his temper sweet as it used to be? Hath he grown taller? I have much to say to him. Is he sunburnt? Doth he wear a beard? They say much ill of him.

*Will.* Lady! believe it not; [*aside*—for I affect much his society. [*Aloud.*] He is a good master and kind, though of a strange mood. For women, he cannot abear them.

*Flor.* Indeed! Good friend, nevertheless I must see your master. Bring me to him.

*Will.* I am going to the inn, where he awaits me. Will it please you to meet me opposite the old barn in two hours?

*Flor.* I will, I will, for I need his advice much. I am sore distressed. Here is for thee. Lose no time! [*Gives him money.*] Farewell! [*Exit R.*]

*Will.* By'r lady, angels! both of them. [*Exit L.*]

### SCENE III.

*An extensile landscape, with a road on the L; overhung with foliage. A Country Inn, U.E.R. Table, chairs, villagers sitting, a waiter bringing in refreshments during the symphony of the following*

GLEE and CHORUS.

Cold, oh! cold the March winds be;  
High up in a leafless tree  
The little bird sits and wearily twits,  
The woods with perjury:  
But the cuckoo-knave sings hold his stave,  
(Ever the spring comes merrily)  
And "O poor fool!" sings he—  
For this is the way in the world to live,  
To mock when a friend hath no more to give,  
Whether in hall or tree!

[*The villagers retire severally.*]

[*Enter WILLIAM, L.*]

*Will.* So this publican hath ceased to be a sinner! To think now of old sophisticate Gurton being called Hezekiah Newborn. Gadso, he babbles of salvation like the tap his boy left running this morning to see the troop of cavaliers go by. Yet I marked the unregenerate Gurton swore round ere Newborn found his voice to upbraid sourly as becomes a saint. He hath been more civil since I heard him. O Newborn, how utterly shalt thou be damned!

[*Enter HOST.*]

*Host.* The Lord be with thee, young man. It did seem to me that thou wert discoursing aloud in prayer. Doth thy master desire any creature-comfort?

*Will.* Master Gurton! thy belly hath kept pace with thy righteousness.

*Host.* Ha! Who told thee my carnal name? I prithee abstain. It doth remind me of the bonds of the flesh.

*Will.* Simply, thou art known to me. I am William Nutbrown.

*Host.* Nay! What, mine own friend Will, that had his bastard fathered on me? Why, he was a youth!

*Will.* He was! A youth of promise. Behold the fulfilment in these legs, this manly bosom!

*Host.* O wonderful! and to think I knew thee not! But thou art horribly, and as it were most monstrously improved? Will Nutbrown! to be sure—and whence comest thou?

*Will.* From the land of beccaficos, mine old Newborn! but thou understandest not—thou hast merely observed the increase of local timber and the decay of pigeon-houses. Thy sole chronicle hath been the ripe birth of undistinguishable curly-headed village children, and the green burial of undistinguished village bald old men hath been thine only lesson. Thou hast simply acquired amazement at the actions of the man of experience. Doth a quart measure still hold a quart?

*Host.* Alas! more—I will tell thee of it. These be sore times for us. You must know there hath been a Parliament commission of inquiry into weights and measures, and last Michaelmas a year, no! let me see—well, marry! there came down—

*Will.* Well, well, thou shalt finish anon.

*Host.* It went nigh to kill me.

*Will.* Thou shalt tell me all hereafter.

*Host.* Damnation! but I am glad. The Lord forgive me! I had nearly sworn.

*Will.* Thou hadst—nearly.

*Host.* And art thou a vessel of grace, or a brand given to the burning? Of a verity—

*Will.* Come, no lies with me! I shall doubt thee if thou cantest one word except in thy calling. Yet I saw by thy first look thou wert glad to see me; so give me thy hand, and I will shake it ere some one calls for a draught of ale, and thou dost relapse into the sordid and muddy calculation that makes thy daily self, and so forget that the friend of thy youth hath revisited thee. Nay, fear not, I will not betray thee to thy present customers. But first tell me, why thou art so changed: seeing that the cavaliers should be thy best friends?

*Host.* Friend Will! Twill tell thee—the cavaliers drink lustily, and of claret and sherris with spice, whereas, it is true, the elect chiefly do affect ale. But, O Will! your cavalier—not to speak of my keeping never a serving wench honest for a month, and I have daughters now grown—your best cavalier would ever pull out a long embroidered purse, with one gold piece in it, regarding which he would briskly swing it round, and jerking it together, replace in his doublet, saying between his hiccups, "Prithee, sweet Spigot!" or it may be, "Jolly Master Gurton! chalk it up; when the king hath his own again, I will repay thee;" or "I will go coin it from Noll's ruby nose," and would ride away singing, and in a fortnight the poor gentleman would surely be slain. And, as for your worst kind of cavalier, when I did gently remind him, he would swear and draw his rapier and make a fearful pass near my belly—that I was glad to see him depart with a skinful of mine own wine unpaid for. Moreover, Master Will, an he were handsome and a moon-raker, my wife, that is now at rest, would ever take his part, and cry shame on me for a cuckoldy villain to teaze a sweet, loyal gentleman so, that would pay when a could—moreover—

*Will.* Hold! Thy reasons are sufficient—Thou art, worthy Hezekiah! become a saint, to escape martyrdom. Methinks I see the gallant foins at thy belly.

[*Draws his sword and makes a feint at the Host.*]

Sa! sa!

*Host.* Have a care—[*William makes feints.*]



*Will.* I shall die! Gadzookers! thus, was it thus!—and thy wife—a cuckoldy villain—merely a figure of speech though, Master Gurton! Eh? Thou didst not suspect?

*Host.* Wilt thou be quiet; I see no jest.

*Will.* Nay, I'll be bound not. Sa! Sa!

*Host.* Laugh an thou likest; but put up thy toasting-iron.

*Will.* Well, thou hast reason for thanksgiving. But I think thy wife was right, if the poor gentleman's thrust was drunken, 'twas a compliment to thy wine. A scurvy rogue to ask for his money when he was poor, and thy wine did affect him.

*Host.* But to speak seriously, good Will, what bringeth thee here? Who is thy master! Can I assist thee in anything?

*Will.* Well, I pity thee, and will say no more. My master is young Arthur Walton. He hath returned. He gave up the fortune to his brother Basil.

*Host.* I thought he was settled abroad.

*Will.* No! no! He is here, and now he wanteth assistance from his brother; for we are in some present straits, and this Basil will have nought to say to him. What I shall want of thee is information of the family; and mayhap thy daughter will have to see Mistress Florence for us with a message.

[*Enter TAPSTER and two or three Roundhead Soldiers, L.*]

*Tap.* Master, master! here be soldiers quartered on us.

*Will.* The Philistines be upon thee!

*Host.* O Lord!—be praised. See directly and water the double ale—Tell my daughter to lock up the Trinidado tobaccos—Haste!

[*Enter IRETON, HARRISON, and Soldiers, L.U.E.*]

*Ire.* [*Reading Papers.*] Give us to drink, good measure; for the flesh is thirsty. That we have shall be paid. Who is that fellow [*points to William*] with his sword drawn?

*Har.* Ha! a malignant.—Smite him!

*Sold.* Lo! he shall die.

*Host.* Hold! hold! 'tis an innocent youth. He did but draw his weapon to defy the evil one. He is strong in prayer. [*To William aside.*] Speak quickly, an thou lovest thyself—something from Tobit, or the Psalmody.

*Har.* Thou hearest—Sin-Despise! touch not the youth. Lo, I myself have wrestled with the powers of darkness. [*To William.*] In what shape cometh he?

*Will.* With horns, an't please you, [*Aside.*] very like Master Newborn there.

*Har.* [*To himself.*] With me 'tis different. In the curtain'd night,  
A Form comes shrieking on me,  
With such an edg'd and preternatural cry  
'T would stir the blood of clustering bats from sleep,  
Tear their hook'd wings from out the mildew'd eaves,  
And drive them circling forth—  
I tell ye that I fight with him until  
The sweat like blood puts out my burning eyes.  
Call you this dreaming?

*Will.* [*Aside to the Host.*] Dost think the gentleman eats suppers?

*Ire.* A plague upon his damn'd repentant fancies!

*Har.* [*Still to himself.*] 'Twas on the heath,  
As he did gripe and hold it from his breast,  
He cut my blade with fifty pallid fingers,  
On his knees, crying out  
He had at home an old and doating father;

And yet I slew him!  
There was a ribbon round his neck  
That caught in the hilt of my sword.  
A stripling, and so long a dying? Why  
'Tis most unnatural!

*Host.* [*Aside to William.*] I would not have his conscience to be vintner to the Parliament.

*Will.* [*To Host.*] Nor I, for my master to be a fat-witted Duke, and I his chief serving-man.

*Ire.* Here we need counsel, and he raves of dreams  
And devils. Yet, 'tis true, he fights as if  
He were possess'd by them.  
Come, Harrison!  
Will you not hear how fortune dawns upon us?—

*Har.* Ay! indeed—  
Excuse me, Ireton, I was something absent;  
I think my health of late is shatter'd much.  
Sometimes I talk aloud. Did I not speak  
But now of Joab in the Bible,  
And how he did slay Abner?—  
Thou know'st I read the Scripture very oft.

*A Trooper.* Ay! he goes to bed with it under his pillow, lest the evil one should prevail. Desborough told him of it.

*Har.* Heard you of Falkland's death?

*Ire.* At Newbury?—  
I did. On either side, in this sad war  
The good and noble seem the ripest fruit,  
And so fall first.

*Har.* Thus let them perish, all That strive against the Lord. Is Cromwell nigh?—

*Ire.* He will be here anon.

*Har.* [*To himself.*] The mighty men  
Of Israel slew *all*. It was a sin  
To spare the child in the womb.  
I am a fool  
To shiver thus to think that night must come.  
The lion trembles at the sun's eclipse,  
But, not for murder of the innocent lamb.  
Who walks across my grave?—

*Ire.* Come, let us go:  
I cannot pray or wrestle in the spirit;  
But let us talk of earthly fights and toils.  
I love fat quarters in a Bishopric  
As well as any preacher of us all.

*Har.* Come, men, to quarters—  
In four hours' time we march  
To join Lord Essex—see your girths are slack'd,  
Your pistols prim'd, your beasts fed, and your souls  
Watching for grace, the word is "Kill and slay"—  
'Twere best all eat, for I will fast and pray.

[*Exeunt HARRISON and IRETON, R.S.E.*]

*A Soldier.* [*To William.*] I say, wilt thou discourse?

*2nd Sold.* Give him a text.

*3rd Sold.* He lacketh speech—He is a dumb Amalekite.

*1st Sold.* I will even awaken him with a prick of my sword.

*Host.* Nay! he is strong in the word. [*To William.*] Preach something, if thou beest wise.

*Will.* What the devil!—

*3rd Sold.* Ay! uplift thy voice against Beelzebub.

*Host.* Thou couldst talk fast enough just now.

*Will.* Gurton! for this I will undo thee. Newborn! thou didst just now water thine ale. Hezekiah! thou dissemblest, which is more than thy wife used to do; for she feared thee not.

*Host.* I pity thee, and will say no more.

*1st Sold.* Here is a stool, let him mount thereon.

*Will.* These be ignorant knaves. I will practice on them. It may come to good. [*Mounts the stool.*] The Lord leadeth his people through the wilderness to salvation, crinkeldom cum crankeldom. [*Mutters to himself.*]

*Soldiers.* Hum!

*Will.* Of all thirsts, there be none like that after righteousness.—[*Mutters to himself.*]

*Soldiers.* Hum!

*Will.* [*Aside.*] For strong ale, which I think hath to do with the conversion of this Gurton. [*Mutters to himself.*]

*1st Sold.* Lift thy voice higher, that we stumble not in the dark.

*Will.* [*Aside.*] I would I could remember a text—anything will do—[*Aloud.*] The General Cromwell hath, they say, a red nose, and doth never spit white, which I look upon as a great sign, as was the burning bush to Moses!

*2nd Sold.* Ha! Blasphemest thou?

*3rd Sold.* He scoffeth!

*4th Sold.* Down with him.

*Host.* O fool! There will be blood spilt!

[*They drag WILLIAM down (the HOST vainly endeavouring to interfere) and buffet him; as Sin-Despise draws his sword, the trumpets sound outside to saddle.*]

[*Enter HARRISON, R.S.E.*]

*Har.* Why dally ye? Away! Smite hip and thigh.  
To horse, to horse! what ho! Zerubbabel!  
Mount, mount, I say, for bloody Goring's near—  
To saddle, ho!

[*They immediately fall into line, and leave quickly, L. The trumpets are still heard sounding. Exeunt all but HOST and WILLIAM, who arranges his collar and adjusts himself.*]

*Host.* [Breathless.] What thinkest thou of this?

*Will.* Think! what of? Thy late wife's virtue? I would she were here.

*Host.* These be now your civil wars: didst mark? he said all should have been paid. Now, with them that were here, there were some fourscore and ten quarts that might have been drunk, had they staid an hour or so; and now to ride off thirsty to be killed.

*Will.* Well, it might have been worse, for they might have drunk it, and departed in that military haste which precludes payment.

*Host.* Ay! ay! thou wilt have thy jest.

[*Exit into house.*]

[*Enter ARTHUR WALTON, L.*]

*Arth.* Where hast thou been so long?

[*To WILLIAM.*]

*Will.* Truly at the burial of one Generosity!

*Arth.* And what manner of person was he?

*Will.* A fool in this world, but an angel of light in the next; if the word of God be true, which I remember to have heard in my childhood in the church there.

*Arth.* And how was he buried?

*Will.* About the setting of the sun, when he had no more to give. I saw none in the garb of mourning, though many wore long faces, because their gain was stopped.

*Arth.* And what wrote they on his tomb?

*Will.* Other names than his own. Extravagance, folly, imprudence, were the best terms there. One whom he had released from gaol, carved madness with a flint stone. There was but one would have painted his true name, but his tears defaced it—a humble dependent, who had been faithful to him, but whom he regarded not, being accustomed to his services.

*Arth.* Out! rogue! I have humoured thee too long, leave thy rascal allegory. Hast seen my brother?

*Will.* Ay, and thy cousin. She is a rare girl, and remembereth thee well. Thy brother is not attached to thee. He will give thee five hundred pounds if thou wilt swear to quit England for ever. He abuseth thee finely, saith thou art a debauched vagabond, which is an insult to me thy serving companion, whom he threatened with the stocks. Wilt thou not slay him?

*Arth.* O monstrous! Can it be? Fool that I have been. My father, thou wert right, indeed!

*Will.* Thy cousin would see thee. She is miserable about something, and will be here presently.

*Arth.* I will wither him with my reproaches.

*Will.* You have bad stuff to deal with. He will not become good suddenly, as in some stage-plays. You shall not frown him into a virtuous act. Nevertheless, abuse him, an 'twill do thee good. Look you, dear master, I will describe him. He hath a neat and cheerful aspect, and talketh very smoothly; nay, for a time he shall agree with everybody, that you shall think him the most good-natured fellow alive; he shall be as benevolent as a lawyer nursing his leg, whilst he listens to the tale of him whom his client oppreseth, and you shall win him just as easily. Let the question of gain put him in action, and the devil inside shall jump out, like an ape stirred up to malice. He affects, too, a vulgar frankness, which is often the mask of selfishness, as a man who helps himself first at table with a "ha! ha!" in a facetious manner, a jocose greediness, which is most actual, real earnest within.

*Arth.* Alas! If this be true, what chance have I? for such a one as thou describest would call charity herself a cheat, and deem the emotion of an angel morbid generosity.

*Will.* Bless you, he hath reasons! he would refuse tenpence to a starving wretch, because he owed ten pounds to his shoemaker, though he had ten thousand in his coffers at home. Yet would he still owe the ten pounds.

*Arth.* Nay, cease! I love not to hear it.

*Will.* And yet so meanly would he adopt appearances in the world's eye, that should he have to cross a muddy street where a beggar kept a passage clear with his besom, lest the gallants should soil their bravery, he would time his crossing, till one driven, or on horseback, should be near, that he might pass hurriedly on without giving him a groat, as in fear of being o'erridden. Like Judas—

*Arth.* Cease! cease! I bid thee cease!

*Will.* Thy cousin is very beautiful and gentle.

*Arth.* I will but see her, then my sword must carve my fortunes. Did she speak kindly of me? Alas! I need some welcoming. Go seek her. It is time.

[*Exit WILLIAM, R.*]

O sweet hour!  
In yonder heaven deep the stars are lit

For evening service of seraphic quires—  
Eternal pomp of serried, blazing worlds,  
The heraldry of God, ere yet Time was.  
The moon hangs low, her golden orb impearl'd  
In a sweet iris of delicious light,  
That leaves the eye in doubt, as swelling die  
Round trills of music on the raptur'd ear,  
Where it doth fade in blue, or softly quicken.  
How, through each glade, her soft and hallowing ray  
Stole like a maiden tiptoe, o'er the ground,  
Till every tiny blade of glittering grass  
Was doubled by its shadow.  
Can it be,  
That evil hearts throb near a scene like this?  
And yet how soon comes the Medusa, Thought,  
To chill the heart's blood of sweet fantasy!  
For, O bright orb!  
That glid'st along the fringe of those tall trees,  
Where a child's thought might grasp thee,  
Art thou not  
This night in thousand places hideous? To think  
Where thy pale beams *may* revel—on the brow  
Of ghastly wanderers, with the frozen breast  
And grating laugh, in murder's rolling eye,  
On death, corruption, on the hoary tomb,  
Or the fresh earth-mould of a new-made grave,  
On gaping wounds, on strife,—the pantomime  
Of lying lips, and pale, deceitful faces—  
Ay! searching every scene of rank pollution,  
In each foul corner busy as at play,  
With new horror gilding vice, disease, decay,  
Boast not, pale moon! to me thy harlot ray!

[*Enter WILLIAM, R.*]

*Will.* Sir, they come! Your collar is unfasten'd and your hair disorder'd. Let me—[*Attempts to adjust AUTHUR'S dress.*]

*Arth.* Heed it not! I thought you knew me better.

*Will.* Just a moment.—

*Arth.* No! yet will I meet her softly.  
She is the only creature of her sex,  
For whom I feel some kindness; 'tis because  
I knew her ere I knew the world beside,  
And all the lie of passion, that is nurs'd  
For long in early blighted hearts alone,  
Whom rank possession of the thing they pin'd for,  
Had cured in one short month.—Well, I'll be kind,  
Nay more, affectionate—

[*Enter FLORENCE and BARBARA, R. He salutes her distantly.*]

Fair mistress, thus  
I claim a young acquaintance, that hath grown  
Old in long absence.

*Flor.* [*Rushing to him*] Arthur! dearest. Arthur!  
How strange! Dear cousin! Sir! I wish'd to see you,  
Needing protection—nay! I was to blame,  
Too hasty, you must think me bold indeed!

*Arth.* [*Aside*] Is all her nature, art?—How beautiful! [*Aloud.*] Dear Florence. [*Attempts to take her hand warmly, she bows.*] I have scarcely words to speak. Cousin! I'll be your champion. [*Aloud.*]

*Flor.* There is nought

In which you can assist me? I have come  
Here, cousin, to entreat you, take this money.  
Indeed, you can repay me quite soon, when  
Your brother is more just. It is for him  
That I would give it—

*Arth.* For him? yes! you are Betroth'd?

*Flor.* My father wills so—

*Arth.* I need not This money—

*Flor.* Cousin, take it. You are proud. Will you refuse me?

*Arth.* 'Tis my character To doubt your sex, and yet from you I'd take it, But that I need it not in truth.

*Flor.* Why doubt us? Ah! cousin, I have heard you have been wild, And so think women false, as you deceive them.

*Arth.* That you have heard is false!

*Flor.* I thought so. Now  
I could indeed imagine it were true.  
Because, perchance, you've lightly won some hearts,  
Thus you must be severe and scoff at all,  
As if you had good reason!—It is proof  
Of an ungenerous mind or scatter'd heart.

*Arth.* Fair cousin, at your feet I would recant Mine error.

*Flor.* 'Tis polite, sir, thus to yield All your experience.

*Arth.* Nay, then! Do you not Believe a man may once love faithfully?

*Flor.* 'Twere base to doubt it—yet I think not you: You know you could not tell if it were true, Your love might be a jest. [*She goes up the stage.*]

*Arth.* [*following FLORENCE.*] By heaven! No.

[*WILLIAM and BARBARA come forward.*]

*Will.* Young woman! I doubt not your attachment, nor wonder at your love; but it cannot be returned. Principle forbids; and this heart is blighted.

*Barb.* Plighted, or not, I want none of it. What nonsense the man talks!

*Will.* This beard—what think you of it?

*Barb.* That it is red.

*Will.* Yet 'tis not for you.

*Barb.* I would humbly desire so.

*Will.* Do you know, lively rustic, that the beard of Mars, the god of war, is auburnly inclined? It is much affected by the ladies of the south.

*Barb.* I would they had it then, for it is an abhorr'd thing here.

*Will.* What a rank prude is woman, thus to disguise her inclination. They call thee Barbara—Bab! restrain not thy fancy. Come, hang round my neck and love me. What! wouldst thou be an exception to thy sex?

*Barb.* [*Strikes him.*] Take that, thou coxcomb!

[*Runs up the stage, WILLIAM follows, ARTHUR and FLORENCE advancing.*]

*Arth.* Break not my dream. It is not late. The night  
Will lose her beauty as thy footsteps fade  
In distance from me. Florence, go not yet.  
I had a thousand loyal thoughts, I swear,

To utter, and as many questions, Florence,  
To ask thee of thyself. Thou lovest not,  
Thou canst not love my brother; for thou saidst  
As much, nay more, this moment.

*Flor.* Did I so? Perchance I might have done; but then I love My father—

*Arth.* Tell me so again!

*Flor.* Indeed, I love My father!

*Arth.* Cruel! no, I'd have thee say If thou dost love my brother.

*Flor.* He's my cousin.

*Arth.* Or any one!

*Barb.* Dear lady, it is time.

*Flor.* Farewell, sir! yet I bid you take this purse 'Tis justice—nay, my will!

*Arth.* Oh, farewell, Florence  
May angels light thy feet, and all the stars  
From heaven race with envious beams to shed  
Celestial brightness on the path thou blessest.

[*Exit FLORENCE, R. ARTHUR gazes after FLORENCE. WILLIAM and BARBARA, coming down, L.*]

*Will.* Sweet Bab, I love thee.

*Barb.* That is a man's saying.

*Will.* Thou wouldst not have it said by anything but a man. Thou wilt not forget?

*Barb.* There, yes! no! anything!

[*Tries to get away. WILLIAM gives BARBARA a kiss.*]

*Barb.* Oh, dear, I must go. [*Exit R.*]

*Arth.* She's gone!

*Will.* They are, sir!

*Arth.* What *they*—

*Will.* Mistress Florence and Barbara, sir!

*Arth.* Why stand here prating, then?  
Go follow; see no harm comes, quick, the road  
Is dangerous. I'll wait here. Leave them not  
Before they are safe in. [*Exit WILLIAM, R.*]  
For thy sake, Florence,  
I will believe perfection's in thy sex.  
How much I might have said. Yes! I have been  
Imagination's wildest fool to deck  
With qualities that did beseem them not  
All the worst half of women. Thus we stoop  
To pick up hectic apples from the ground,  
Pierc'd by the canker or the unseen worm,  
And tasting deem none other grow but they,  
Whilst on the topmost branches of life's tree  
Hangs fruitage worthy of the virgin choir  
Of bright Hesperides. Soft! Who comes here?  
Surely my rascal is not yet return'd—  
The times are full of plotting. I will hide—

[*Stands aside. Voices heard.*]

[*Enter four POACHERS, one carrying a fawn.*]

*1st Poach.* I tell thee that I heard 'em bay.

*2nd Poach.* And I too! Curse me, but I thought his fangs did meet in the calf of my leg.

[*Enter POACHERS, L.U.E.*]

*3rd Poach.* 'Tis like it was the tooth of a dog-bramble.

*2nd Poach.* Well, well; it is the nature of man to hunt forbidden deer.

*Arth.* [Aside] And to carve his name on benches.

*2nd Poach.* And while game be preserved, there will be the likes of we.

*3rd Poach.* Right too. But it is a mortal sin to make us men into dog's-meat, and to hunt us with foreign bloodhound varmint. Hast heard, friend Gregory, who stole my apples?

*4th Poach.* Not I!

*3rd Poach.* Would I could catch the thieving rascals! Look ye, the tree is mine, and it does but hang over the road a scantling; and, as sure as nights are dark, comes me some ragged pilferers, that have not to pay an honest drunkenness, and basely steal my apples.

*Arth.* [Aside] Oh, most benighted conscience of the villains!

*4th Poach.* Shall I lend thee my bull-bitch to watch thy tree? She hath a real gripe for a rascally thin leg. Your orphan, your cast-away, hath no chance with her, I warrant. A rare bitch!

*Arth.* [Aside] O gentle sophist! what a line is here; Lions tear wolves, wolves rend the stricken deer.

*3rd Poach.* Well, now, I thank thee, friend Gregory. Thou art a true man. I will so belabour and flay any of the cyder-blooded rascals, an thy bitch shall hold him; 'twill do a man good to hear of it.

*1st Poach.* I know the bitch. She'll kill them outright! These be right times. There be no inquests now, Master Gregory?

*4th Poach.* What's that to me more than you others? I did not murder him!

*1st Poach.* Who? The Puritan young gentleman whom Noll the brewer, that is general now, made such a stir about—

*3rd Poach.* As if plenty didn't die in these wars—

*1st Poach.* Or the girl, Gregory! eh? the girl by the well, with her finger cut, and her throat—

*4th Poach.* Damn thee, have done! She was dead, ere I found her, and I did but take—

*1st Poach.* The ring, thou wouldst say.

*2nd and 3rd Poach.* Come, confess now!

*Arth.* [Aside] This is black devilry. Alas! poor England!  
How many private, sleeping villainies  
Now wake to horrid life that else had slept,  
But for the times' most bloody anarchy?

*2nd Poach.* They say this Cromwell is near these parts.

*4th Poach.* I heard another speak! [*Loud*] I never saw the girl till she was brought in, I tell ye.

*2nd Poach.* I heard it too.

*1st Poach.* 'Twas a cricket, or some such fowl.

*3rd Poach.* There's some one near. Look sharp!

*4th Poach.* Let's beat about— [*Loudly*] As for the girl, I saw her brought in. 'Twas a piteous sight—A love business, mark ye! I did not find her. [*They discover ARTHUR.*]

*1st Poach.* Ha!

*4th Poach.* Silence him!



*3rd Poach.* Curse thee, what brings thee here?—

*Arth.* Offhands! ye know me not. [*To 4th POACHER.*] Thou murderous dog! Wilt cut my throat as thou didst hers?—

[*4th POACHER staggers back.*]

*4th Poach.* Will no one finish him? 'Tis a spy; he will tell of ye all.

[*ARTHUR struggles and they strike at him.*]

[*Enter CROMWELL, R.U.E.*]

*Crom.* Who be these knaves? What, murder! Ha! then strike: Down with the sons of Belial!

[*Strikes down 4th POACHER with his sword. The rest fly.*]

The Lord is merciful to thee, young man! [*To ARTHUR.*]  
Another moment, and thy soul had fled—  
Wherefore, I hope, since it hath chanced so,  
And yet not chanc'd, since 'tis appointed thus,  
That no one falls or lives, unless the God  
Of battles hath decreed. Wherefore I trust  
Thou art of the good work.

[*Enter WILLIAM, R.*]

*Will.* My master bloody?— A dead man on the ground!—a knight of the road by his looks— [*Sees CROMWELL.*] What a grim stranger!

*Crom.* Sirrah! move That carrion. [*WILLIAM going up to his Master.*]

*Will.* Sir! I wait on this gentleman. What a look! [*Aside.*] I am sure he is either the devil, or some great Christian. [*Aloud.*] I will, my Lord! [*Moves the body.*] Come along! To think now this dead, two-legged thing should have been active enough just now to catch a four-footed live deer. No sooner does a man die, but you would think he had swallowed the lead of his coffin. Come along! Lord! how helpless it is! Why, he shall no more kick at his petty devouring, no, no more than if he were a dead king! [*Exit with body, U.E.L.*]

*Crom.* Ha! 'Tis well said.  
Would that this blood had not been shed.  
'Tis dreadful  
To send a soul destroy'd to plead against  
The frail destroyer. Yet I could not help it.  
[*TO ARTHUR.*]  
How farest thou now?

*Arth.* Good sir, I thank you for My life so promptly sav'd—not courtesy, But breath did fall me.

*Crom.* 'Tis a fearful thing That I have done. A life! I might have struck Less fiercely. God forgive me for the deed. [*To Arthur.*] Would he have slain thee?

*Arth.* 'Twas a murderer Most double-dyed in blood. I heard them speak His guilt.—

*Crom.* O, I could weep! and yet his death Had the best reason for't. Whence comest thou, sir?

*Arth.* I am but late returned unto this land.

[*Re-enter WILLIAM.*]

*Will.* Yes! yes, from Italy, Rome, gracious sir! Us'd to these things, you see—

*Crom.* Peace, knave, thou scoffest! Revilest thou; because a fellow-sinner's dead? Shame be upon thee!

*Will.* [*Aside.*] If I should be impertinent to him, 'twill be behind his back. He hath a quelling eye; although a man fear not. Now, amidst other brave men with swords, he would be as one that carried sword, and petronel to boot.

*Crom.* [*To Arthur.*] I fain would hear from thee, young sir,  
More of the land from whence thou comest. 'Tis

My hap, I thank God's holy will, to stay  
In this my country, lifting now her head  
From the curst yoke of proud Idolatry,  
Lately so vexing her, I thought to leave,  
A little while ago, her shores for ever,  
Unto the new Jerusalem, beyond  
The western ocean, where there are no kings,  
False worship, or oppression—but, no more.  
What say'st thou of this Italy? John Milton  
Loves well to speak romantic lore of Rome—  
A poet, though a great and burning light.  
I would have knowledge of it to confound him;  
A sober joke, a piece of harmless mirth.  
What think'st thou then of Rome where Brutus liv'd?

*Arth.* 'Tis the decay of a once splendid harlot,  
Painting her ruin, that the enthusiast eye  
Lives on the recollection still, and thus  
The alms of passers by still meet her cravings.  
She stands, her scarr'd proud features mock'd with rags,  
Fixt at the end of a great thoroughfare,  
With shrill gesticulation, fawning ways,  
Clinging unto the traveller to sustain  
Her living foul decay, and death in life,  
She is the ghoul of cities; for she feeds  
Upon the corpse of her own buried greatness.

*Crom.* Doubtless thou hast seen much to fill thy mind With such disgust.

*Arth.* Good, sir! I did scarce feel it, Till I return'd.

*Will.* Nay, sir! I do remember as we stood in the mouldy big Circus, having sundry of the lousy population idling within, whereby I did then liken it to a venerable cheese, in which is some faint stir of maggotry, that thou didst make a memorable speech against the land, where the only vocation of a nobleman is to defile the streets and be pimp to his own wife.

*Arth.* Cease, cease, yet there is truth in what he says.

*Crom.* Yet are there not amends in poetry,  
Art, science, and a thousand delicate thoughts  
Glowing on canvass, chisell'd in cold forms,  
The marbled dreams of sculptor's classic brain?  
Milton hath told of these.

*Arth.* Alas! 'tis but  
Corruption's gilding. 'Tis the trick of vice  
Full oft to pander in a graceful form;  
But when the finer chords of hearts are set  
In eyes glued to a dancer's feet, or ears  
Strain'd to the rapture of a squeaking fiddle,  
Think you 'tis well? Oh, say, should Englishmen  
Arrive at this, such price to set on art,  
Ne'er rivalling the untaught nightingale,  
That with their ears shut to wild misery,  
Deaf to starvation's groans, the prayer of want,  
The giant moan of hunger o'er the land,  
Till the sky darken with the face of angels,  
God's smiling ministers, averted—then!  
To buy a male soprano they should give  
His price in gold, that peach-fed lords and dames  
Might have their senses tickled with the trills  
Evolv'd from a soft, tumid, warbling throat—  
Why then farewell to England and her glory!

*Crom.* Methinks the end of all things should be near, When that doth happen!

*Arth.* Did I hear aright That Milton was thy friend?

*Crom.* Yea! with the saints,  
That crowd in arm'd appeal before high Heaven  
To set this nation free. He is my friend,  
And England's.

*Arth.* I in Italy did know  
That excellent man. Full often we have sat  
Upon the white and slippery marble limb  
Of some great ruin'd temple, whilst all round  
Was dipp'd in the warm, lustrous atmosphere  
We know not here, and purple eve did glow  
With shadows soft as beds of fallen roses,  
And he hath spoken in clear tones until  
He built up all again, and glory's home  
Grew glorious as ever. Then his voice  
Would sudden deepen into holy thought  
And mournful sweet philosophy, 'till all  
The air grew musical and my soul good.  
How well do I remember it.  
Yes! Milton was  
My honour'd tutor and my loving friend.

*Crom.* Came not his thoughts here often?—

*Arth.* Latterly, He would speak much of England, and of change Political, and coming strife and battles—

*Crom.* Ay! battles—  
Hast thou not a sword, young man?  
Thou should'st be friend of righteousness to know  
That zealous patriot and pure-minded man,  
Of whom thou spakest; surely he hath taught thee  
More than mere classic lore—wisdom and faith  
To help this stricken people from the thrall  
Of their idolatrous, self-seeking rulers?

*Arth.* Fair sir! I know you not enough for this:  
I am a stranger to these hapless broils  
Between your sovereign and some of you.  
Yet let me thank you for this worthless life—  
Worthless indeed, could I so lightly join  
So grave a cause as yours. Still deem me not  
The serf of custom to uphold a wrong,  
Or slave of tyrants to deny a right,  
Or such a one whose brib'd and paltry soul  
Aims shafts of malice at a patriot's heart,  
Hating the deed he cannot estimate:  
As if, when some great exile to our land  
Whose lips were touched with freedom's sacred fire,  
But poor in wealth as virtue's richest heir,  
Came speaking of the wrongs his country bore,  
Men said in youth he robb'd an orphan trust,  
The proof since burnt, betray'd a trusting friend,  
Haply now dead, or any other lie  
So monstrous, wicked, gross, improbable,  
That weak men found it easier to believe  
Than the invention; while the bad in heart,  
By true worth most offended, felt relief,  
Protesting still they wish'd it were not so,  
With that lean babble, custom's scant half-mask,  
Worn uselessly by hatred.  
Think me not  
Of these—nor yet too rash in sympathy.  
I would reflect well ere I draw the sword  
To fling the sheath away; I bid you now  
A kind farewell.

*Crom.* Full soon to meet array'd  
In arms, the instruments of Heaven together  
Thou art of us. Thy heart, thy tongue, thy sword.  
Are ours—now good night! [*With emotion.*]  
Sir, this poor land  
Needs all her honest children—noble sorrow,  
And yet a cheerful spirit to assert  
The truth of right, yea! God's eternal truth,  
Lest the world die a foolish sacrifice  
And perish flaming in the night of space,  
An atheist torch to warn the universe—  
Smile not, I pray thee. We meet soon; farewell!

[*Exit CROMWELL, L.*]

*Arth.* A rude and uncurb'd martialist!—and yet  
A God-intoxicated man. 'Tis not  
A hypocrite, too haggard is his face,  
Too deep and harsh his voice. His features wear  
No soft, diluted, and conventional smile  
Of smirk content; befitting lords, and dukes,  
Not men of nature's honoured stamp and wear—  
How fervently he spake  
Of Milton. Strange, what feeling is abroad!  
There is an earnest spirit in these times,  
That makes men weep—dull, heavy men, else born  
For country sports, to slip into their graves,  
When the mild season of their prime had reach'd  
Mellow decay, whose very being had died  
In the same breeze that bore their churchyard toll,  
Without a memory, save in the hearts  
Of the next generation, their own heirs,  
When they in turn grew old and thought of dying—  
Even such men as these now gird themselves  
With swords and Bibles, and, nought doubting, rush  
Into the world's undying chronicles!  
This struggle hath in it a solemn echo  
Of the old world, when God was present still  
In fiery columns, burning oracles:  
Ere earnest faith and new reality  
Had grown diluted, fading from the earth  
Through feeble ages of a mock existence,  
Whose Heaven and Hell were but as outer fables,  
That trouble not man's stage-like dream of life.

[*Exit into the Inn.*]

**END OF ACT I.**

## **ACT II.**

**SCENE I.**

[*2nd Grooves.*]

*A large Barn with folding doors. In it a number of Cavaliers drinking at various rude tables. Some women are interspersed among them. Many are playing at dice, &c. Their arms are piled in a corner.*

*1st Cav.* [*Sings*]

Noll's red nose,

In a bumper here goes  
To Beelzebub his own master;  
With the pikes at his flank  
Of our foremost rank,  
And the devil to find him plaster,  
Fairfax and Harrison,  
On them our malison.  
But drink and sing  
A health to the KING—  
Gentlemen! steady,  
Fill, now be ready.

*All.* He *shall* have his own again!

[*Shouting and huzzaing.*]

*A Cav.* A *toast!* gentlemen. "Noll's nose a-fire, and the devil's youngest daughter to baste it with aqua-vitae!"

*All.* Ha! ha!

*A Cav.* Would that Goring's moonrakers might come across the snuffling organ and cut it off. We would have it by way of *pavillon*. Thou, Frank Howard! shouldst carry it as senior cornet. Thou wouldst be like curly-headed David with the spoils of the Philistine drum-major Goliah. Led on by its light we'd march direct to Whitehall, our trumpets sending dismay to the virtue of the starched coifs of the round rosy rogues of London.

*A Cav.* [*Arranging his love-lock.*] Plague on't, I don't think their virtue would tremble at the chance.

*Anoth. Cav.* Lord! what rumpling of sober dimities! Poor little plump partridges, they cannot help their forced puritanism.—But all women are for king and cavalier in their hearts.

[*Two Cavaliers advance with angry gestures to the front of the stage.*]

*1st Cav.* I tell thee, Wilmington! 'twas I she did regard.

*2nd Cav.* And I tell thee that thou thinkest wrong. I know she loves me.

*1st Cav.* Did she tell thee so?

*2nd Cav.* This kerchief was hers.

*1st Cav.* Bah! Thou didst steal it from thy mother, boy! Go home and return it to her.

*2nd Cav.* Ha!

*3rd Cav.* Who is this piece of goods—she at the White Dragon?

*1st Cav.* Nay, a mercer's daughter. Wouldst like the address? She entertaineth well.

*2nd Cav.* How! 'Tis false!

*1st Cav.* I met her yestereen, and she said thou shouldst have been a canting Psalmsinger. Thou art so innocent a youth.

*2nd Cav.* Hell's fire! I'll not bear this. I tell thee she waved her hand to me from her lattice, and dropped this kerchief.

*1st Cav.* And to me she gave her garter when I left her.

*2nd Cav.* To hang thyself? Nay, thou liest!

*1st Cav.* [*Strikes him down.*] Take that, thou fool!

[*He rises, they draw. Closing in of the Cavaliers near, confusion.*]

*3rd Cav.* Hold, gentlemen! 'Tis a mere wanton! I believe these wenches are dowered by old Noll to set our young hot-bloods by the ears. Hold! 'Tis not worth!

[*They continue tonight. The 2nd Cavalier is wounded.*]

*A Cavalier, richly dressed, who has entered, L., in the meanwhile, and made inquiring gestures.*

*Cav.* For whose sake?

O shame! shame!

The King—

The Queen needs all your blood, and ye must shed it

In shameless broils like these!

Thus the dear blood that should, if spilt it be,

Dye our white spotless cause with its rich crimson,

Must now for every muslin thing that spites

Her prentice-lover, making fools of you.

And O ye others, loyal gentlemen!

I weep indeed for England and our King,

To see ye all, in this the perilous gasp

Of hardy enterprize, yourselves forget,

Like Circe's brutish swine. I tell ye now,

While ye are lost in drunken quarrelling,

Cromwell is near.

*3rd or 4th Cav.* The King shall have his own. Lillibullero!

*Cav.* I say, thee General Cromwell Is on the road with some four hundred men, And will surprise us.  
[*Confused movement to arm.*]

*1st Cav.* [*Who has continued to drink.*] Ha! What does it concern thee with thy preaching? Dost thou want ought here? [*Touching his sword-hilt.*] I care not for thee or Noll. Would he were here, and a matter of four thousand to back him. [*Draws.*] Sa! sa! canst fight as well as talk? Wilt take up the bilbo? Come, adopt the weapon of him I have sliced. Come, be nimble, sir, jig. I would fain go visit the haulage of my fancy.

[*A confused noise without.*]

*Cav.* Too late! O gentlemen! here, Willsden, is thy sword. Varley, arouse thee! The enemy! Away, women! Come, gentlemen—this table—a barricade, so— [*1st Cavalier stands in his way.*] Off, fool!  
[*Hurls him aside.*]

*A tremendous explosion; the wide doors behind are burst in by a petard; the barn falls, and discovers a view of York. Enter CROMWELL with IRONSIDES through the break.*

*Crom.* Yield, sons of Belial!

*Cav.* O Charles, my king! 'Tis time to die, ere see thy cause thus lost!

[*Throws himself on the pikemen.*]

Here, cavaliers! a blow, one blow, 'tis Noll  
The butcher, brewer Noll, that in your songs  
Ye send to hell so often. Send him now,  
If ye be men, not cowards. What! at loss!

[*1st Cavalier staggers against him as he parries two or three pikemen, and he receives a mortal stroke, and falls. During this the other cavaliers are struck down or disarmed.*]

Alas! I might have reach'd him, but betray'd  
By our own rotten conduct, die—Oh, had I words  
Now could I prophesy—destruction—Charles!  
My king! [*Dies.*]

*Crom.* There *is* no king save one, and He  
Is with us! [*Points to 1st Cavalier.*]  
Yon poor wretch—what saith he?  
Nay!  
Strike not his mouth.

*1st Cav.* I defy thee, Satan! I'll back my rapier, an' thou wilt fight, Brewer! Curse on thy muddy veins, thou hast no honourable desperation in thee. Come, if thou beest a man, give up thy odds. What, ho! Excalibur!

[*Makes a rush to get at CROMWELL*]

*Crom.* It seemeth that  
The ungodly fret. Go, place him in the stocks.  
I charge ye harm him not—  
But give him ale,  
Wine, and a scurvy song-book—Such as he  
Do make us triumph. Fie, fie, Cornet Dean!  
Well, stop his mouth, an't please ye; come, away!  
[*Trumpets sound.*]  
This is a gift of God, see burial  
Unto the dead—now on to Marston Moor.

[*Exeunt U.E.R.*]

[*Enter WILLIAM, U.E.L.*]

*Will.* So my master hath at last turned roundhead with a vengeance, and therefore I, to whom the rogue is necessary, am here, on the brink of nowhere. To think that so much merit may be quenched by the mechanical art of a base gunner, who hath no fear in his actions; for I take it that a discreet reverence for the body we live in, which the vulgar term fear, shows the best proof of the value of the individual. Egad! life here is as cheap as the grass on an empty common, where there is no democracy of goose to hiss at the kingly shadow of a single ass in God's sunshine. My master hath not done well; for he must have known that I could not leave him without a moral guide and companion—to die, too, with the sin of my unpaid wages on his conscience. Well, pray heaven, there come soon a partition of the crown jewels amongst us, after which I will withdraw this right arm from a cause I cannot approve; but to cherish principles one should not lack means; therefore, [*taking the feather from his cap and throwing it down*] lie thou there, carnal device! and I will go look for a barber and be despoiled, like a topsy-turvy Samson, not to lose strength, but to gain it. I thank heaven that our camp did yesterday fall in dry places, for there were many of these sour-visaged soldiers called me Jonah, and I did well to escape ducking in a horse-pond. Soft, here be some of them coming. Yestere'en I committed sacrilege in a knapsack, and stole a small Bible from amid great plunder for my salvation. Now will I feign to read it, and I doubt not the sin will be pardoned, for self-preservation is the second law of nature, as I have generally observed fornication to be the first!

*Enter a party of Soldiers, R.*

[*Looking up.*] These be some of Oliver's Ironsides; every one of whom is, as David, a man of war and a prophet; truly they are more earnest and sober than the others.

*1st Troop.* To-morrow we shall sup in York.

*Will.* [*Aside.*] How the man of war identifies himself with the remnant of those that shall sup.

*2nd Troop.* Not so—for this morning, when a surrender was demanded, they would have hanged our messenger. That raging Beelzebub, Rupert, in expected hourly to the relief. [*Distant firing.*] There! there! he is come.

*1st Troop.* What say the generals?

*2nd Troop.* Our own Cromwell is very prompt; but the rest chafe much, and the Scots are sore backsliders.

*3rd Troop.* I would we might be led on and the trumpets sounded, that the walls of yon Jericho might fall about their ears, and deliver them into our hands alive.

*Will.* Worthy martialist! may I speak?

*1st Troop.* Ay so?

*Will.* Is the King there in person?

*2nd Troop.* Surely not; he is in that city of abomination, Oxford.

[*Here CROMWELL enters, U.E.R., with his face covered.*]

*Will.* Is it not true that ye did ask them that guard the city to yield it in the King's name?

*2nd Troop.* I heard the message: it was so worded.

*Will.* 'Tis an excellent contradiction, to fight for and against. If ye should meet the King now in battle, would you fire on him with your pistols, or cleave him with your swords?

*1st Troop.* Nay!

*Crom.* [*Discovering himself.*] But I say, yea!

*Will.* [Without seeing CROMWELL.] What, in his own name, kill him for himself, for his own sake, as it were? I would fain argue that with your general—[*sees CROMWELL.*]—another time. Farewell, worthy sirs!

*Crom.* Stay, thou base knave! I'll have thee whipped without  
The army of the saints. Hearken ye all!  
Charles Stuart I would gladly smite to death:  
Not as a king, but as a man that fights  
Against the honour, conscience of the king,  
And the true rights of all his loving subjects.  
Is any here the muscles of whose arm  
Grow slack to think he may meet such an one  
In arms to-morrow? Let him home to-day,  
God and his country have no need of him.

*Soldiers.* A Cromwell! Cromwell! Lead on, we'll slay the king.

*Crom.* I did but say If ye should meet him, ye would not turn back.

*Soldiers.* No! No!

*Crom.* Nor slur the onset?

*Soldiers.* No!

*Crom.* Nor spare A courtier for his likeness to the King?

*Soldiers.* No! No!

*Crom.* Why then ye are mine own, [*observing the soldiers.*]  
My brave and trusty Ironsides! See here  
Are some right honest faces I have known  
From childhood, and they'll follow me to death,  
If needed.—Let the paltry Scot go hence,  
And even Fairfax rein his charger back—  
We'll on unto the breach. The Lord Himself  
Will ride in thunder with our mail-clad host:  
The proudest head that ever wore a crown  
Shall not withstand us.—Strike! and spare not! Ho!  
Down with the curs'd of God!

*Soldiers.* A Cromwell! Cromwell! Let us come on!

*Crom.* The sun that stood in Heaven, Until his beams grew red with two days' blood  
Of slaughtered Canaan, shall see them flee like chaff before us—

*Soldiers.* Joshua! cry aloud, A Joshua!—

*Crom.* These gay Philistine lords That fight for Dagon, will ye fly them, or Hurl them and Dagon  
down?—

*Soldiers.* A Samson! Samson!

[*Distant cannon heard. Cheering from the Soldiers.*]

*Will.* [*Aside.*] Here's gory enthusiasm! Now whilst every man is ready to preach individually on his  
own account, and the whole collectively are about to sing a psalm, I will endeavour to steal away  
unperceived, lest any of them, imagining himself somewhere between Deuteronomy and Kings, should  
take it upon himself to proclaim that I come from Gibeon, and so—

*Crom.* [*To William.*] Hither! sirrah! It is well I know the master that thou servest, or else thy back had  
paid the license of thy speech. Tell him I would speak with him two hours hence in his own quarters.  
[*Exit William, U.E.L.*] Good friend, [*to a soldier*] I am thirsty in the flesh. Get me, I prithee, a cup of  
thine ale. [*Soldier goes out.*] [*To another soldier.*] Give me thy pipe, Ruxton! is it right Trinidado?—[*To  
them all.*] Think ye now, the generals fare better than ye do—I mean now, Desborough or Rossiter, or



our brave Ireton?

*A Soldier.* Ay! do they. But just now we saw a store of good things carried into Desborough's tent. Lo! there goes Jepherson and Fight-the-good-Fight Egerton this instant to feast on the fat things of the earth. [*Here the soldier gives him a cup of ale.*]

*Crom.* [*Pausing ere he drinks.*] What is thy name, friend?

*A Soldier.* [*Near.*] Born-again Rumford.

*Crom.* A babe, I do protest, a babe of grace. See you not, he cannot speak himself. [*Drinks, and throws the remainder over Born-again Rumford's beard. Returns the cup and prepares his pipe.*] Now, Born-again! I think thou art baptized again! [*The soldiers laugh.*] So there is feasting and gluttony amongst our captains. Hearken ye, I shall call a conference straightway. When the generals be come, which they will do with sore grumbling, then do ye fall to and spare not! I will stand between you and the fierce wrath of them that be spoiled. Three rolls on the kettledrum shall be the signal. See that ye leave nothing. [*Going, L.*]

[*As he goes he strikes his pipe on the back of the corslet of one of the soldiers; so that the ashes fall on his neck.*]

*Sol.* Now may the devil!

*Crom.* Ho! swearest thou?—fy! fy! for shame, Orderly officer! set Hezekiah Sin-Despise down in thy book five shillings for an oath. Truly Sin-Despise is no fitting name for thee, but rather 'Overcome-by-Sin.' Come, as I did tempt thy railing, I will pay thy fine. [*Gives him money.*] Tush! grin not so, man. I thought my Ironsides were proof against fire as well as steel. [*Exit, L.*]

*Shouts of the Soldiers.* Live, Cromwell! live, our worthy general!

[*WILLIAM re-enters and joins the Soldiers. Exeunt, B.*]

*Enter ARTHUR reading a letter, U.E.L.*

"—and so, cousin, I am very miserable, and if you have this influence with the General Cromwell, whose fair daughter I do so well remember, get me a home with her; for, alas! I can stay no longer here. And yet my father? But to wed with one that I despise, it is impossible, and all things are prepared, I look to you alone for rescue. Farewell. *Florence.*"

I will! I will "Postscript. I hear you are engaged in these dreadful wars. Pray heaven! you have chosen aright; for I know not. But peril not your life more than becomes true valour; for I have heard you are dear to many. Adieu!" *I* dear to many?—let's see, there is my faithful serving-man—poor fellow, he likes not this life, and doth assume an amusing kind of fear, but I do believe thinking more of me than himself. Well then; I had a dog; but he was lost the night of our passage, when but for his inveterate barking, for which I beat him, I had surely been drowned in the cabin, where I slept, when the vessel was stranded—he loved me; but for more—I know them not.

O dearest Florence! were I lov'd indeed by thee,  
There were indeed a bright star in the sky,  
To guide my shatter'd bark of destiny! [*Retires, U.R.*]

*Enter CROMWELL, IRETON, DESBOROUGH, and others, U.E.L., ARTHUR joins them.*

*Crom.* Thus, gentlemen, the reports being ended, I would but detain you a short while in prayer.

*Des.* Nay! as I said before, we are fatigued, and the body needs refreshment.

*Ire.* [*Apart to Cromwell.*] How the pampered boar frets!

*Crom.* [*To Desborough.*] Will you to my tent?—I can give you a soldier's fare, with a soldier's welcome, a crust and cup of ale, and we can discourse what remains.

*An Officer.* Indeed we are engaged; but if the General Cromwell would honour us—

*Crom.* I thank you, I have supped ere you have dined.

[*Drum rolls. A loud shout of merriment and clatter is heard.*]

*Des.* What is that—in my tent too!

[*Looking off, R. WILLIAM comes forward, R.*]

By Heaven! rank mutiny. I'll have them shot.

*Will.* Nay! worthy sir, knock out the priming of your wrath from the matchlock of your vengeance, and abide till to-morrow, when you shall see many a stout fellow and gormandizer to boot levelled. [*To Cromwell.*] Great Sir! they complain that the wine is thin.

*Crom.* Go purchase some strong waters. [*Gives him money.*] I must not have my fellows' stomachs unsettled. Here, thou graceless knave.

*Will.* An't please you, we had no time for grace; but we return thanks to you, under Heaven.

*Des.* This then is your work, General Cromwell! Call you this discipline?

*Crom.* [*To the Soldiers as they enter, R.*] Go hence, you rascals.

[*Soldiers entering with whooping and shouts.*]

Sound bugles! fall in! quick march!

[*The Soldiers march round and fall in a line in perfect order, WILLIAM bringing up the rear, shouldering a bone.*]

*Ire.* [*To Arthur Walton.*] See you now the bent of this? How he doth make them his own? I tell you that the day will come, this host shall follow him alone, ay! and perchance England—

*Crom.* [*To Desborough, who has remained apart, indignant.*] Come, Desborough! if thou hast digested thine indignation—[*Taking Desborough's arm, kindly.*]

*Ire.* As he will never his dinner.

*Crom.* Thou wilt unto my tent, where is store of wholesome food.

*Enter HARRISON, L., hurriedly.*

*Har.* I fear they will not sally forth; our host Meanwhile will melt away. Despondency Sits heavy on my soul.

[*Firing is heard from the town.*]

*Ire.* If they abide In York, we'd best draw off. [*Exit ARTHUR, L.*]

*Crom.* But Rupert! Rupert!  
Wilt he not fight—The fiery-headed fool  
Will rush out on us from yon fenced town,  
And then—Whom have we here?

[*An Orderly hastens in.*]

*Ord.* The earl doth bid you Prepare for instant action; Rupert and Newcastle Are forth outside the gates.

*Crom.* Said I not so?— Their hearts are hardened by the Lord of hosts. [*Musketry in the distance.*] [*To an officer entering.*] Did you not hear me when I said "Bring up the fascines?" How shall we cross the ditch? Do you not heed? Quick, man!

*Offi.* Even as Balaam said to Balak, Lo! I will but speak what the Lord hath put in my mouth. [*Turning to the Soldiers.*] Wherefore, I say, O brethren, be ye as they the Lord set apart to Gideon—

*Crom.* [*Striking him with his pistol butt.*] Take that, thou babbling fool! this is no fitting time to preach. Ho! Jepherson. Bring up the fascines.

*Enter ARTHUR, L., to CROMWELL.*

*Arth.* Fairfax is beaten, and our right wing scattered.

*Crom.* Hist! dismay not these. Doth Rupert follow them?

*Arth.* He doth fight fiercely.

*Crom.* Then will I meet him. Victor to victor, we will close together. Ho! forward!

[*Another Officer enters.*]

*Offi.* The musketry of Belial hath mowed our ranks, and the sons of Zeruah—

*Crom.* Tush, tell me not of Zeruah, or, by the Eternal, I will smite thee! Speak in English.

*Offi.* The Scotch are in disorder. Lucas, and Porter, and the malignant Goring are playing havoc with them. Newcastle, with his white coats, is winning on us at the pike's point.

*Crom.* That's what is done. What is to do? What says the General?

*Offi.* That you charge Rupert.

*Crom.* Why did you not speak sooner?

I am dead

To hear you drawl thus. Righteous Lambert, on!

Bring up the regiments.

Tell brave Frizell,

He shall see sport anon—

[*A Soldier gives him his morion.*]

I will not wear it!

I cannot see around—

[*A heavy discharge of cannon heard without.*]

Ho! Desborough,

Here is a dinner for thee. See thou carve it

Right well. On! on! a Cromwell for a Rupert!

*Soldiers.* The Lord and Cromwell!

*Crom.* Nay, not thus: shout rather "God and his people! England! Liberty!"

[*Exeunt L.*]

[*Different parties of wounded Soldiers enter U.E.L; some being assisted, and others staggering; the scene becomes dark and obscured with clouds of smoke. Several Soldiers fall down.*]

[*Enter WILLIAM, R., meeting a wounded Trooper, L.*]

*Troop.* How goes the day? Why art thou not with the saints, that are now fighting?

*Will.* I was about to fight; but they waited not for me. It is all over now. The king hath no more chance than a butterfly three days at sea amongst a covey of Mother Carey's chickens. I would pursue, but lack spurs and a horse, or you should not find me here; [*Aside.*] or within ten miles of it.

*Troop.* Get me some water, friend!

*Will.* Ah! you would have watered me in a pond two days since; but here—this is better than water.

[*The Soldier takes a flask from him.*]

*Troop.* I think thou saidst that the malignants were smitten. Praised be the Lord! Yet I would I had not seen my father's white hairs amid yon accursed red coats. I parried a stroke from him that must have jarred the old man's arm.

[*Falls back exhausted.*]

*Will.* An' this be not a lesson! I have no father that is a malignant, and could therefore only undergo simple murder. However, [*touching the hilt of his sword*] rest thou there! in Mercy's hallowed name—nay more, as rashness is animal, so a due timidity is soul, which is mind, and I have a great mind to run away, and mind being soul, I think I have a greater soul than Alexander.

[*A loud discharge of cannon, L.*]

Now if it were not for that, this foolish brute, my body, might rush off in that direction, but it don't, for a great mind prevents it, therefore—

[*Stage more dark. He runs off in an opposite direction to the shot, R. More wounded enter and fall down, U.E.L.*]

*Enter an Old Man in the King's uniform, of red coats, L.*

*Old Man.* I thought the day was ours. The headlong Rupert  
Swept all before him, like the wind that bends  
The thin and unkind corn, his men were numb  
With slaying, and their chargers straddling, blown  
With undue speed, as they had hunted that  
Which could not turn again—e'en thus was Rupert,  
When round to meet his squadrons came a host  
Like whirlwind to the wind.  
There was a moment that the blood-surge roll'd  
Hither and thither, while you saw in the air  
Ten thousand bright blades, and as many eyes  
Of flame flashed terribly. Then Rupert stay'd  
His hot hand in amazement,  
And all his blood-stain'd chivalry grew pale:  
The hunters, chang'd to quarry, fled amain,  
I saw the prince's jet-black, favourite barb  
Thrown on her haunches; then away, away,  
Her speed did bear him safe. Then there came one,  
A grisly man, with head all bare and grey,  
That shouted, "Smite and scatter, spare not, ho!  
Ye chosen of the Lord!" and they did smite,  
As on the anvil; till the plumed helms  
Of all our best bent down. Alas! alas!  
That I should see this day—

*[Looks about and finds his son.]*

What's this, my son!  
Wounded? my disobedient child?  
I thought of him  
But now in charging, as I met a foe  
That beat my sword-arm down—had he been there  
I had not suffer'd—nay, what colours these?  
*Against* the king?—he is my son; I'll bear  
Him off, and win him to his king and me.

*[Takes him up, several cross the stage flying. Musketry from L. to R. A shot strikes the Old Man, who falls. Several officers and soldiers enter fighting with swords and firearms.]*

*CROMWELL enters pursuing, L. to R.*

*Crom.* Strike home! spare none! The father with the son,  
That fights for tyranny. *[To a Trooper.]* Give me thy sword!  
Mine own is hack'd with slaying—  
Where is Rupert?  
The haughty Rupert now?—  
Where is this king,  
That tempts the God of battles?—Are they gone,  
That cost these precious lives?

*[Here the sun breaks out in splendour and lights up the battle-ground behind.]*

"Let God arise,  
And let his enemies be scattered!"

END OF ACT II.

**ACT III.**

SCENE, I.

[*1st Grooves.*]

*An apartment in Cromwell's house.*

*Enter CROMWELL, ARTHUR, the LADY ELIZABETH, L.*

*Crom.* To have a home, that is no fitting home,  
Is worse than the sad orphan's part, who gathers  
His lean crumbs from the world's wide eager table,  
And pares the flint-stones borne in stranger breasts,  
To eke him out against the cruel winds—

[*Crosses to his daughter.*]

Thou say'st she was thy playmate—  
Come, thou hast  
Mov'd the stern soldier to thy woman's will.  
Go, sir! [To Arthur.] and fetch this Florence from her roof.  
There should be no such scandal done in England,  
As the loud insult of a marriage forc'd  
Before God's altar.

*Arth.* If they do oppose?

*Crom.* Thy brother is a worker in my hands,  
Leave him to me; the old man loves his wealth  
Too well. I say, go quickly, and return  
With speed direct—I'd have thee near me, [*Aside.*] for  
Thy noble confidence that dares to speak  
The first-fruits of thy mind,—  
I have regard [*Aloud.*]  
For thee, young man, see that you keep it warm  
As now—but mind, no swords, as ye are brothers—  
Not e'en reproach.—Sweet heart, when foolish mercy  
[*To his daughter.*]  
Doth beg an idle tale from thy dear lips,  
Perchance thou'lt seek thy father—until then,  
All good be with thee! [*Crosses to R.*]  
Sir! I will direct [*To Arthur.*]  
A present escort for you.

[*Exit CROMWELL, R.*]

*Arth.* Lady! deem My heart coin'd into words to thank you nothing For payment of this service.

*Eliz.* Sympathy  
Is just as often born of happiness,  
As bitter suffering of the world's contempt.  
Within the magic circle of a home,  
Happy and loved as mine is,  
The heart is touched with pity's gentle wand  
To do her lightest bidding—  
But in this,  
There is no kind emotion worth the name;  
For I would see my school-fellow and friend  
To talk old nothings, something still to us,  
And look beneath the lashes of her eyes,  
To learn her plaint against the selfish world,  
And read her trust in Heaven—  
Is she fair  
As childhood promised?—[*Looking archly at Arthur.*]  
Do you know, I think  
You love her more than cousinship demands?

*Arth.* Nay! she is worthy of all love.

*Eliz.* Well, well, sir! I shall know when I see you both together.

*Exeunt ELIZABETH, R., ARTHUR, L.*

## SCENE II.

[*1st Cut.*] [*2nd Grooves.*]

*A Hall in a Manor House.—Discovered SIR SIMON, in an easy chair, supported by servants, BASIL and FLORENCE attending.*

*Sir Sim.* I am thy father. Would'st kill me, girl? O dear! I saw Master Stacker, the court physician that was, to-day. [Coughs.] Oh, I am very ill.

*Flor.* Dear father! what said he?

*Sir Sim.* That I have a disease of the heart. Now I don't agree with him. There he is mistaken. Why I might die instantly with a disease of the heart. He is a clever man, but quite mistaken there. You see, my heart never beats fast, but when I am agitated, and I was out of breath this morning with the stairs—O dear! [*Places his hand to his heart.*] Thou dost agitate me, girl—but there is no disease here—no! no! I am very ill—but I shall not die yet!

*Flor.* Dear father! pray be careful.

*Sir Sim.* Now, had he said 'twas asthma—'tis a long-lived complaint. I have known very old men with asthma. Our chirurgeon, Master Gilead Stubbs, said I was asthmatic, and we have been much together. Many a good flagon of claret have we drank, and should he not know my constitution?

*Basil.* Uncle!

*Sir Sim.* Yes, yes, I know. [*To Florence.*] Come, thou must marry him. Curse on this physician. I never felt so before. [*Places his hand to his heart.*]

*Flor.* Oh, father; do not urge this suit!

*Sir Sim.* Girl! I will leave thee nought if thou dost not—save my curse!

*Flor.* No, no!

*Sir Sim.* All my hopes—'Tis very odd. Stop, stop! I have a pain here, here! Wilt thou promise?

*Basil.* Murderess!

*Flor.* I will do all. O God!

*Enter ARTHUR, L.*

*Sir Sim.* Who is this? 'Tis their father! I promised him that Arthur should wed my daughter. He is come to claim her, and see, he beckons me—

[*Falls back and dies in the chair, servants bear him off, R.*]

*Basil.* Dead, dead! I am frustrated.

*Flor.* Oh, Arthur! look to my father.

*Arth.* [*Returning and supporting her.*] Thou hast no father, Florence! I have a home for thee, with one that's young and gentle like thyself. [*She faints.*]

*Basil.* Mark, thou art my brother! I swear [*Aside.*]  
I will have vengeance! At the moment too  
She yielded. Beggar, thus to thwart me—Oh,  
If I dar'd, I could smite him, as he smiles  
On that unconscious, pretty piece of goods.

[*Retires, L., surly, looking at ARTHUR. Servants come in with BARBARA.*]

*Arth.* Take her unto her chamber 'till we leave.

[*Servants take FLORENCE off, exeunt, R., all but BASIL.*]

*Enter WYCKOFF stealthily to BASIL, L.*

*Wyck.* As for your brother, in these troublesome times, as I said, it were less trouble to put him out of the way in a broil. Colour it with the affectation of party spirit, and, as you are on both sides, in a manner, it matters not on which you disagree. You might draw swords yourselves, and have me and one or two stout fellows near, who would rush in and stab him, as it were, to prevent mischief between you.

*Basil.* I tell you, it will not do. He is a favourite with Cromwell. How often am I to tell you that I would not break with Noll. There are secrets! You see one does not know yet which side will prevail.

*Wyck.* Well, I cannot help you. If, now, it were to circumvent a woman, to betray a saucy piece of virtue—then I would go great lengths in deception; remind me that I tell thee a story will make thee laugh. 'Twas ere my trip to America. I would have sold her to the plantations. 'Sblood, will not that do for him?—

*Basil.* I tell there is better.

*Wyck.* Doth he know that by your father's disposition of the property, his relinquishment of it in your favour is void! I say, the old fellow knew thee well, eh? [*Laughs.*]

*Basil.* Curse on thy ribald jests; keep them for the girls thou betrayest. No, no, he knows nothing.

*Wyck.* Let me tell thee of the girl. She loved a mean fellow that was her father's apprentice, and perspired in good behaving. A tremulous young man; with hissing red cheeks and a clump hand that looked through his fingers during evening prayers at the maid-servants, as they knelt; yet cried "Amen" with a reverence, and had the gift to find his own bedchamber afterward. It was a mercy to pave her from him, for they had surely procreated fools. Yet she liked not the sea, and one night she fell overboard in a calm, and the sharks had a white morsel. She walked in her sleep. I wish, though, she had left her ear-rings behind.

*Basil.* Hush! hush!

*Wyck.* Thus it is to be such a fellow as you. You pretend to be so tender-hearted. Well, I never wished to kill my brother. If I had one I could love him, unless he were a damned scrupulous sinner, that makes faces at doing what he is always wishing. Why, hark you, with your peccadilloes, you resemble a monkey over a hot dish of roasted chestnuts; you keep grinning round with your mouth watering, till they get cold, before you taste.

*Basil.* I tell thee that I hate him and fear him not. Would that his blood might freeze upon my doorstep on a December night! If he were here now, I would stab him before thee.

*Wyck.* Ay, in the back.

*Basil.* But I have a plan that shall undo him most securely. Come in here, and I will tell thee over a stoup of right claret.

*Wyck.* Now you speak reason; for I am but a dry rogue, and am never fit for much early in the morning, without I sit up all night. [*Exeunt, L.*]

### SCENE III.

[*Last Cut.*] [*2nd Grooves.*]

*A handsomely fitted Chamber in London.—A practicable window in F.*

*Enter ARTHUR WALTON, FLORENCE, the LADY ELIZABETH CROMWELL.*

*Eliz.* [*To Arthur.*] Urge not your suit through me, when she is here.  
Give half Love's reasons that to me you gave,  
Why she should not be cruel, and I think  
You'll hardly find her so—[*To Florence.*]  
Nay! be not scornful,  
You know I can betray you—[*Goes to the window.*]

*Flor.* Oh, be silent!

*Arth.* Dear cousin, will you forth to walk? The day is fine.

Eliz. [*Running to the window.*] I do protest it has been raining long.

Arth. To-morrow I must leave—

Flor. To-morrow, really? Shall you be absent long? Adieu, then, sir.

[*Going.*]

Arth. Distraction! I deserve not this unkindness. Florence, why spurn my love thus?—

Flor. Nay, I think But just escaped one brother's persecution, 'tis Too bad another should annoy me.

Arth. Pardon, Madam, my cousin; henceforth I'll not grieve you.

[*Going.*]

Flor. Stay!

Arth. [*Rushing to her.*] What is it?

Flor. Nothing, but I think you promis'd  
To ride my horse; you know she is too gay;  
Nay, 'tis no matter if you have forgotten.  
It is no wonder, since you walked so long  
With those two foreign ladies yesterday:  
The youngest dresses somewhat out of taste  
To suit our English fancy. Did you not  
The other evening speak of English dress  
As something prudish, not quite to your taste?  
Are you going far to-morrow?—

Arth. They are not foreign, I do assure you; I have known them long, The daughters of my honour'd friend, John Milton.

Eliz. [*Aside.*] She knows it well as he does.

Flor. No? Indeed?

Arth. [*Pointing to Elizabeth.*] Ask her.

Flor. I am not curious, sir, to hear  
With whom you walk; but, if you mention them,  
Of course 'tis natural I speak of it—  
Elizabeth!  
Will you come here and answer him! he talks  
Of one old Milton's daughters, when I'd ask  
About the fashions.

Eliz. [*With emotion, at the window.*] See, there goes another  
Doom'd to the block; the excellent Laud scarce cold  
Within his grave—  
It makes me heart-sick, girl!  
To live, when just men die, that love their king,  
And I, his daughter, *his*, that wills it so,  
And does not stir to save them—nay, approves,  
Condemns, and sanctions;  
O 'tis dreadful! dreadful!

Arth. [*To FLORENCE.*] Is she thus often!

Flor. Ay, too often thus  
Of late she suffers. [*Runs to her.*]  
Dear Elizabeth!  
There, Walton, go!

Arth. And may I hope?—

Flor. Is this a time?  
Do you not see she is ill?—  
You will return,



Ere long—go, call a servant!

[*He looks at her, she waves her hand impatiently, he goes out. Exit ARTHUR, L.*]

*Eliz.* [*Points to the window.*] Is it gone?— He was quite young. Think you my father sat In judgment on him?

*Flor.* Know you not he is Now with the army?

*Eliz.* True! true!

[*Passes her hand over her brow.*] It is o'er. Where is your cousin gone?

*Flor.* Who?

*Eliz.* Arthur Walton.

*Flor.* Oh! he has left.

*Eliz.* Your answer to him?

*Flor.* None.

*Eliz.* Out, flirt! I found you weeping, and you told me You lov'd him—

*Flor.* Did I? I'd forgotten it.

*Eliz.* Well, you will lose him thus.

*Flor.* Then, he's not worth The keeping, in my thought.

*Eliz.* You have done wrong. I know the business he is gone upon. You may not see him more—

*Flor.* I don't believe it, Although he said it.

*Eliz.* Girl! he hath to do A secret and most dangerous mission.

*Flor.* What! In truth!—I'll call him back to speak to you.

[*Runs to the window.*]

Ah! he has gallop'd off so fast without  
Once turning. Ah! to danger—Oh, wretch! wretch!  
Fool that I am. [*Weeps.*]

*Eliz.* [*To FLORENCE.*] Poor child! You love him, then?

*Flor.* Oh! yes, I love him all— All, for I am not vain. There is no thought Dividing the wild worship of my soul.

*Eliz.* And yet you spoke so carelessly, and trifled  
With this the noblest and the best oblation,  
A woman—but a poor divinity,  
I fear at best, my Florence!—may receive,  
The heart of a true gentleman. I mean  
No creature of dull circumstance, himself  
A mean incumbrance on his own great wealth.  
How oft before their lovers women try  
To seem what they are not—if true their hearts,  
As thine is, apes not more fantastic show—  
If mean and paltry, frankness is the flag  
'Neath which they trim their pirate, little bark  
To capture their rich prize—

*Flor.* Enough! enough!  
I know it all, I cannot help it, if  
He were here now, I could not choose but do it.  
I have a head-ache. I must weep alone.  
I pray you to excuse me for an hour.

[*She goes out, R.S.E.*]

*Eliz.* Poor girl! how needless is the pain she gives  
Two true and faithful hearts—and I myself,  
That never had the chance to love, or heart  
To give away, yet seem to know so well  
What it must be.—Oh, were I Florence now,  
Could I have dealt so harshly with him?—No!  
Why, one would think I lov'd him. She said so  
But yesterday. Indeed I love them both—  
Him for his love of her. Elizabeth!  
Why burns thy cheek thus?—Yet a transient thought  
Might stain the wanderings of a seraph's dream,  
And thou art mortal woman. Oh, beware!  
Dwell not on "might have," "could;" since "cannot be"  
Points from thy past to thy futurity. [*Exit, L.*]

#### SCENE IV.

[*4th Grooves.*]

*A rustic Garden, with an Arbour in F. A Table, on which are Books, Papers, &c.*

*Enter ARTHUR, U.E.R.*

*Arth.* She's soul-less like the rest, and I am but  
A tame romantic fool to worship her—  
I will not see her more, and thus the faults  
Which, from her beauty, seem'd like others' charms,  
Shall give her semblance of a Gorgon—  
No!  
Rather her beauty will so soften down  
In sweet forgetfulness of all beside,  
That growing frenzied at the loss I find  
E'en shipwreck'd hope were better than despair.  
Here comes my friend.

*Enter MILTON slowly, L.*

*Arth.* Good even, Master Milton.

*Mil.* Ha! is it thou? my poor eyes are grown dim,  
Methinks, with ever gazing back upon  
The glorious deeds of ages long flown by.  
Welcome, dear friend—most welcome to these arms.  
Nay! it is kind to seek me thus—  
Thine eyes  
Are bright still; yet thy cheek is furrow'd more  
Than should be; thou'rt not happy—Nay, I know,  
Like all true hearts that beat in English breasts,  
Thine must be most unhappy in these times—

*Arth.* I am so—

*Mil.* Thou hast fought well. I have heard it—

*Arth.* From Cromwell?

*Mil.* Yes, from him—

*Arth.* It is of him  
That I would speak, as well as of this cause  
That we call Freedom.  
I have doubts of all  
That urge this cruel war—Where is the end?  
I fight against a tyrant, not a king  
To set a tyrant up, or what is worse,  
A hundred tyrants. Think you it may be

A struggle for the power they feign to hate!

*Mil.* What have you seen to make you think so!

*Arth.* Much!

The spirit of a demon host that strives  
Each for himself against the common good,  
Rather than that true patriot zeal of Rome  
We us'd to read of—hatred, jealousy,  
With the black ferment of the hungry mob  
To gain by loss of others; and the aim  
Of one man, more than all, seems set upon  
An elevation high, as Hell is deep;  
For such, if gain'd, the fit comparison.

*Mil.* The common error of a generous mind,  
To do no good, and shrink within itself,  
Sick of the jostling of the wolfish throng.  
Your cause is just; though devils fight for it,  
Heaven with its sworded angels doth enlist them:  
So works a wise and wondrous Providence.

*Arth.* Tell me, what think you then of Cromwell?

Is he  
Ambitious, cruel, eager, cunning, false,  
Slave to himself and master sole of others?  
Is his religion but as puppet-wires,  
To set a hideous idol up of self,  
Like some fierce God of Ind? Or is he but  
A fiery pillar leading the sure way—  
Arriv'd, content to die by his own light,  
As others lived upon his burning truth,  
And struggled to him from surrounding darkness?

*Mil.* There is much good in him, yet not all good;  
And yet believe the cause he seeks divine.  
Listen! this is the worst 'twere possible  
To speak of him. He is a man,  
Whom Heaven hath chosen for an instrument,  
Yet not so sanctified, to such high use,  
That all the evil factions of the heart,  
Ambition, worldly pride, suspicion, wrath,  
Are dead within him—and thus, mark you how  
Wisdom doth shine in this, more than if pure,  
With unavailing; excellent tears and woe,  
He pray'd afar in dim and grottoed haunt  
To quench the kingdom's foul iniquities—  
An interceding angel had not done it  
So well as this fierce superstitious man.

*Arth.* But if the king be prisoner and were slain?

*Mil.* I trust not that; yet kings are not divine—

*Arth.* Nor churches, temples, still ye would not rend The altar vow'd to Heaven.

*Mil.* No, but purge  
The living fire upon it, when the name  
Is brutish and discolour'd.—When kings fail,  
Let's bastardize the craven to his breed,  
And hurl him recreant down!

*Arth.* But not destroy—

*Mil.* 'Twould heal the sight of millions yet unborn.

*Arth.* In this I am not with you; yet I grant  
So far 'tis well. I trust a different end.

The king, that hath much noble feeling in him,  
Will yield; and then we will give back again  
His just prerogative—

*Mil.* It may be so.  
Where is the high-soul'd Stratford?—The same weakness  
That yielded there is obstinacy now,  
To the last drop of the pride-tainted blood  
That through the melancholy Stuart's veins  
Doth creep and curdle—

*Arth.* You do make me sad—

*Mil.* Nay, there is sadness in the noble task  
Appointed us. An hour past came Cromwell here  
As full of sorrow for the king; as thou—  
Hating the sour and surly Presbyter  
And bitter wrath of the fierce Parliament.  
He parted from me in an angry mood  
Because I coldly met his warm desire  
That Charles might reign again—

*Arth.* Indeed! Is't so?

*Enter a Servant to MILTON, R.*

*Serv.* There is a messenger would see you, sir!

*Mil.* I will be back anon, pray rest awhile.

[*Goes out, R. Servant follows MILTON.*]

*Arth.* He should be right, that is so wise and good,  
Living like some angelic visitant,  
Dismay'd not from his purpose and great aim  
By all the fierce and angry discord round.  
So one in sober mood and pale high thought  
Stands in a door-way, whence he sees within  
The riot warm of wassailing, and hears  
All the dwarf Babel of their common talk,  
As each small drunken mind floats to the top  
And general surface of the senseless din;  
Whilst every tuneless knave doth rend the soul  
Of harmony, the more he hath refus'd  
To sing; ere Bacchus set him by the ears  
With common sense, his dull and morning guide;  
And stutters speak fast, and quick men stutter,  
And gleams of fitful mirth shine on the brow  
Of moody souls, and careless gay men look  
Fierce melodrama on their friends around;  
While talk obscene and loyalty mark all;  
Then good or bad emotions meet the eye,  
Like a mosaic floor, whose black and white  
Glistens more keenly, moisten'd by the stain  
Of liquor widely spilt.

*Re-enter Servant, R.*

*Serv.* Sir! will you enter? 'Tis Master Andrew Marvel that is here.

[*Exeunt, R.*]

SCENE V.

[*1st Cut.*] [*3rd Grooves.*]

*A Room in GURTON'S Alehouse. Night.*

*Enter WILLIAM, with a letter in his hand, S.E.R.*

*Will.* So now, a letter from my Master to his cousin, and then, of course, an answer to that. I had need go get myself fitted like Mercury, with wings at his heels. To be the lacquey of a man that hath quarrelled with his mistress! And to know the final issue all the time, that it is sure to be made up between them. And to hear him mutter "the last," between his teeth, while sealing it. He was to have journeyed this evening, too, but the General Cromwell, with a face very red and perturbed, and a nose as it were of lava; his wart being ignited like the pimple of a salamander, hath been desiring to see him instantly. There is something going to happen among them. Well, in these confused days, Since I'm of those that have got nought to lose, Perchance I may step in some richer shoes!

*[Exit, L.]*

*Enter the HOST, partly undressed, in his sleep, with a candle in his hand. He walks carefully about the Room, and then exit, U.E.R. On the other side, as he goes out, enter WYCKOFF and BASIL, S.E.L.*

*Basil.* I thought I heard a noise.

*Wyck.* 'Tis an old house, and probably there is a Parliament of grey rats busy. I mind well aboard ship, as I did once visit the hold, where we had store of ingots and bales of wealthy goods, I saw them sitting. I ordered the long boat to be cast loose and got ready, but said nothing, except to a few; for I knew something would happen; and sure enough in three days was a leak—whew! I hear the bubbling of the water now in my head—here I am, you see—

*Basil.* And the rest?—

*Wyck.* Are there! *[Points downwards.]* In the long-boat we found a very old rat; a tough morsel; but we ate him, and drank sea-water. We were forced to throw the gold overboard! *[Looks around.]* Is there nothing we can get to swig now?—

*Basil.* They are all abed.

*Wyck.* I hate the sound of snoring, when I am about at night. It puts one in mind of groans. Shall I rouse the host?—

*Basil.* No! no! to business—first to hide these papers.

*Wyck.* Ay! and about thy brother.

*Basil.* You see these letters addressed to me in his name by Sir Marmaduke Langdale, touching the rising in the North, I will place them under yon plank in the floor. 'Tis already loosened. Then, when he is accused to Cromwell, who hath strong doubts of him—I have seen to that; besides, I know him, he doth fear for the king, and will incense them all—I will have them found, and then—

*Wyck.* Why thou art Satan's trump-card! Mind I have been thy faithful tool, thy messenger, and love thee—thou mayest as well sign me the paper thou didst speak of—five hundred a year—I will then eschew dice and go live virtuously with a woman and repent my youthful misdeeds. I am not like thee, to sin when I have plenty.

*Basil.* Yes! yes! but come, assist—*[They lift up a plank, U.E.L., in the floor, and deposit papers; as they do so, enter HOST, still asleep, U.E.R. He goes to a cup-board, which he opens, and then pouring out a glass of spirits—drinks, and gives a kind of satisfied grunt.]* Hold! we are seen. *[Draws a dagger.]*

*Wyck.* *[Springing up.]* The devil! where is my knife?—Hist! Do you not see?—he sleeps. I have seen this before. Did I not tell you of the girl?—I have heard them tease him about this. *[To Basil.]* Be quiet, fool! *[They watch the HOST; he takes a pitcher of water and pours into the flask he had been drinking from.]* The damned old thief! I could have sworn it yesterday. He waters his strong drink. That's why I have not been so well here. I have a cursed cholic these three days, and missed the warm nip it should give my stomach. The poisonous old dog!

*Basil.* Are you sure?

*Wyck.* Look at his eyes. You shall see me flourish my blade before them, and he shall not wink. But don't touch him. *[He goes up to him and menaces him.]* 'Tis all safe; he will go now. *[The HOST replaces the things, and goes slowly out, U.E.R. The clock strikes twelve.]* Come, let us see where he puts his keys. *[They steal out after him.]*

## SCENE VI.

[*Last Grooves.*]

*A large apartment dimly lighted. Tables with writing materials. A practicable door and stairs in L.F., practicable doors, R. and L.U.E. 'S, chairs, &c.*

*CROMWELL enters, R., very much agitated, followed by his daughter ELIZABETH. After pacing across and back, he stops short in the middle of the stage and speaks.*

*Crom.* Have I not promis'd thee that I will save him, If he will save himself? [*To his daughter.*]

*Eliz.* Thou hast, dear father.

And then, with blessings on thy righteous name,  
Rejecting all they offer thee, vain titles,  
And selfish, mean, dishonourable honours,  
Thou wilt return unto our natural home  
At Huntingdon, and I will read to thee,  
As I was wont. Thy hair then will not whiten  
So fast, and sometimes thou wilt have a smile  
Upon thy countenance, that grows so stern  
Of late, I hardly dare look up to thee,  
And call thee "dearest father"—  
Shall it be?  
Did the king speak thee fair?

*Crom.* [*Gloomily.*] Too fair, too fair!  
E'en to be honest fair. Our good John Milton  
Speaks bitter words. He saith Lord Strafford grac'd  
Right well the block, that put his trust in him.  
What saith the Scripture of the faith of princes?

*Eliz.* 'Twas not the fault of Charles that Strafford died.

*Crom.* It was his fault to sign—  
He should have died  
Himself first. Daughter! urge me not—I'll do  
What the Lord wills in this. Go! mind the household,  
Thou little Royalist.

*Eliz.* Nay! father, hear me—

*Crom.* Away, puss! Where are Richard and thy husband?

*Eliz.* I will not leave thee, 'till thou promisest—

*Crom.* As the Lord liveth, is it not enough  
To struggle with a royal hypocrite,  
To keep his feet from falling, 'mid dissension,  
On all sides, worse than chaos, liker hell!  
To be thus baited, by one's own pale household,  
Prating of what they may not understand?  
Thy brother Richard with his heavy step,  
Ploughing his way from book-cas'd room to room,  
With eye as dull as huckster's three-day's fish,  
And just as silent; then thy mother with  
Her tearful and beseeching look, that moves  
Like a green widow in a mourning trance,  
The very picture of "God help us all;"  
And thou, with sickly whining worse than they,  
Do ye think I shall do murder?  
Why not go  
At once unto the foe, and there be spurn'd  
By Henrietta, that false Delilah?—  
Or plot my death for loyalty? What is  
A father in your minds weigh'd with a king?  
Yet what is "king" to you? ye were not bred

To lick his moral sores in ecstasy,  
And bay like hounds before the royal gate  
On all the world beside—Go hence! go hence!  
I would be left alone—

*Eliz.* O father, hold!  
And pardon me for my distracted thought.  
Thou knowest best, and I am wrong indeed:  
I did but pine to see thee more with us,  
To see thee happier—

*Crom.* My child, my child!  
Mercy shall look with eyes like thine on me  
Though justice frown beside. [*Takes her hand.*]  
Look up, my child!  
Ask what thou wilt except our country's shame.

[*Cromwell hands Elizabeth off, R., and remains looking after her.*]

*Enter, R.D.U.E., MILTON, IRETON, BRADSHAW, MARTEN, HARRISON (who brings a saddle and places it upon the table), LILBURNE, ARTHUR WALTON, LUDLOW. Enter, L., Sir HARRY VANE, HACKER, same time.*

*Brad.* [*A letter in his hand. To VANE and HACKER, who have just entered.*] So, gentlemen—Had you been here just now, you would have heard at length, this precious information, which our worthy General Cromwell, and Ireton here, have laid before us. A letter to the Queen, and secret intercourse with France—a rare betrayal, and richly worded too. 'Tis well we have friends at court, ere now it had been at Dover.

*Vane.* I thought he did stand pledged to all we ask'd.

*Har.* The royal Judas! [*Cromwell comes forward.*]

*Crom.* O sirs! It is but A king's prerogative to break his faith. We are not fitting judges of this thing.

*Har.* But we will judge. I say, whose dogs are we!

*Crom.* Peace, Harrison. Thou naughty traitor! Peace.

*Ireton.* Away with all, save vengeance on the deed.

*Brad.* [*After placing the letter in the saddle.*]  
There! in that greasy, patch'd and reeking leather,  
Lies a king's royal word, a Stuart's honour,  
The faith of Charles, his most majestic pledge  
Broken, defil'd, dishonour'd evermore.

*Har.* Why cry ye not, "God save our righteous King"?

*Crom.* Through me, he did proclaim, he would accept  
Our army's terms. Alas! had we been cozen'd,  
I, that believed his false tongue, had betray'd  
The hope of Israel—

*Vane.* It is true, indeed, He is the slave of his pernicious Queen.

*Mar.* I say the King of England henceforth is An alien in blood, a bitter traitor— What doth he merit of us?

*Ireton.* This! 'Tis right That one man die for all, and that the nation For one man perish not—

*Crom.* Ho! what? son Ireton.

*Vane.* Alas! indeed he merits not to live.

*Brad.* What say ye?

*Ireton.* Death!

*Mar. Har. Lilb. Lud. Hacker.* [*Severally.*] Death! Death!

*Brad.* I think, Sir Harry,  
You said, "not live," the others all say, "Death,"  
Why then we are agreed—  
Stay! General Cromwell,  
There was no word from you—

*Crom.* I thought to save My breath; ye were so eager.

*Arth.* Hold, a moment. I do desire your ears—

*Crom.* Our *ears*? Your *years*  
Should teach you silence, sir! before your elders,  
Till they have said—  
We would hear Master Milton:  
He hath to speak. [*To Milton.*]  
What think you of the man,  
The king, that arm'd the red, apostate herd  
In Ireland against our English throats?  
Was it well done; deserves it that we crouch?

*Mil.* Oh, it was base, degrading and unhappy,  
To make God's different worship, damning means  
Of an unholy war between his people;  
To be the beggar of his people's blood,  
To set that crown upon his false, weak brow,  
His pale, insolvent, moat dishonour'd brow,  
From which, too wide, it slipp'd into the mire,  
To fit him ne'er again.—

*Crom.* A right good figure! Who'll pluck the crown from out this royal mire?

*Mar.* They say his queen, our foreign, English queen, Doth ofttimes antler him; perchance 'tis reason  
Why his crown fits him not.

*Mil.* Oh, it was base  
To use such means to gain such selfish end!  
So I have heard,  
There *have* been men, in such a hapless clime,  
As this poor Ireland, unctuous, wordy men,  
With slug-like skins, and smiling, cheerful faces,  
That, with their pamper'd families, grew fat,  
By bleeding Famine's well-nigh bloodless frame;  
Lessening the pauper's bitter, scanty bread,  
Season'd with salt tears; shredding finer still  
The blanket huddled to the stone-cold heart  
Of the wild, bigot, ghastly, dying wretch.—  
Thus, for a devilish and unnatural gain,  
Mowing the lean grass of a Golgotha!  
Sitting, like grinning Death, to clutch the toll  
Tortur'd from poverty, disease and crime;  
And this with Liberty upon their lips,  
Bland words, and specious, vulgar eloquence,  
And large oaths, with the tongue thrust in the cheek,  
And promises, as if they were as gods,  
And no God held the forked bolt above!  
Turning all ignorance, disaffection, hatred,  
Religion, and the peasant's moody want,  
To glut themselves with hard-wrung copper coins,  
Verjuic'd with hot tears, thin and watery blood;  
Brazening the conscious lie unto the world  
That it was done for hallowing Freedom's sake,  
Until the names of "Freedom," "Patriot," stank,  
Blown on and poison'd by these beggar lips;  
That men had need to coin fresh words to mean  
The holy things with stale use so defil'd.

*Arth.* But Charles hath not done *this*! Our poet friend, Full of the knowledge of all times, hath painted



A picture all in vain.

*Vane.* But he hath done  
A mischief similar—I see the point—  
Hath he not arm'd the bigot, ghastly wretch,  
To stab our English lives? hath he not sown  
A crop of wild sedition, discord, hate,  
Using the vain creed of the rabble herd  
To wage this war against us?

*Ire.* Hath he not Tamper'd with France, our curst fantastic foe, And natural enemy?

*Brad.* Did he not first  
Unfurl his bloody standard to the winds  
At Nottingham, since when peace hath not smil'd  
On all this tortur'd land?

*Har.* And are we not,  
The servants of the Lord, betray'd, despis'd,  
Insulted, wrong'd, by this false Ahab?—Come,  
Let him stand forth before his peers—the people,  
And die the death!—  
Cromwell, what sayest thou?  
Why dost *thou* lack speech?

*Crom.* I am mute to think  
Of what ye all say—words—ye dare not do it—  
I say ye dare not, though ye were to die  
Not doing, what your gross and eager speech  
Makes easier than to cough, or spit, or cry  
"God save the King;"—but ere your thought hath fled  
A rood, a yard into the empty air,  
Dissolv'd is your high counsel, and Dismay  
Whips all the noble blood that fir'd your cheeks  
To the pale mantle of a creamy fear.  
Fie! fie! ye dare not do it—nay, son Ireton,  
What, Harrison so boisterous? keep your frowns  
To look upon his trial, since 'tis so—

[*Pointing to IRETON.*]

Now hath he not a traitorous brow like his,  
Perchance, that did stab Caesar? those were days  
When men did e'en as much as they dar'd hint at.

*Har.* I said not *stab*, but bring him to the block:  
Let God's eye be upon the multitude,  
Theirs on the scaffold, the attesting sun  
Shine on the bare axe and th' uncover'd head.  
It is no coward act, lest he might sin;  
For he hath sinn'd, until our very dreams  
Bid England's tyrant die.

*Arth.* Oh, hear me yet:  
I had not join'd you, save I thought he sinn'd;  
I had not counselled, fought with you like brothers,  
But that I deem'd your cause was just, and honour'd  
Of good men and of God—I had not given  
My childish prejudice and old belief  
To carry arms against my country's king,  
But for the sake of mercy and of justice,  
And here I take my stand.

*Crom.* Why then stand there, till we come back again. 'Tis time to part—Come, Ludlow!

*Arth.* Hath he not  
Virtues that might rebuke us all?—ay, virtues

More excellent in him than all his subjects, since  
All Sin doth aim at Kings, to be her own.  
'Tis hard for princes to outshine in worth  
The meanest wretch that from his road-side hovel  
Shouts forth with hungry voice, "Long live the King!"

*Crom.* O wise and excellent argument, that  
There should be no more kings.  
Why spoil a man  
That hath a soul, a precious soul, to lose,  
To make a king that cannot help but sin?  
Let there be no more kings.

*Arth.* Then kill not Charles, For Charles the Second, reigns in England then.

*Crom.* Hum, perchance—

*Arth.* *He* hath done us no offence,  
Ye would not slay him, if ye had him here.  
I tell ye, banish Charles, this present man,  
And none shall question, whilst his feeble race  
And name shall dwindle hence, as shall arise  
The fair proportions of our Commonwealth  
On the decay of kings, not on the death  
Of one weak monarch.—  
What! doth any here  
Wish that himself be king?

*Crom.* He raves!

*Vane.* Nay! listen! He hath much reason.

*Crom.* [*Throws a cushion at Ludlow.*] Ho! there regicide! Have at thee! [*Confusion.*]

*Arth.* [*Vainly attempts to speak.*] Gentlemen, I say then—Hear!

[*MILTON and others commence leaving. LUDLOW pursues CROMWELL, who finally runs down stairs, pursued by the former.*]

*Arth.* [*To Milton.*] Nay! nay! my friend.

*Milt.* Another time. This is not seemly.

*Har.* Surely, doth the Lord Need us elsewhere. Who holdeth forth below?

[*They all go but Arthur.*]

*Re-enter CROMWELL from the stairs.*

*Crom.* I do protest that I am out of breath— Yet I commend thy reasoning.

*Arth.* But, my Lord.—

*Crom.* That rascal, Ludlow!

*Arth.* Will the trial be?

*Crom.* 'Twould justify us much.

*Arth.* But if he die—

*Crom.* [*In a hurried tone and walking off.*]  
It is not thy affair, or mine—Why now—  
Let's talk anon, I'm tir'd. Hast thou seen  
My daughter Frances?—fares she well to-day?  
Give me thine arm—I do admire thy reasons.  
You see, these angry fanatics boil over;  
'Twill simmer down anon—The king must live.  
And yet he hath done much—wrought evil work,  
And so—

[*Exeunt. CROMWELL leaning on his arm and talking rapidly.*]

### END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV

### SCENE I.

[*2nd Grooves.*]

*GURTON'S Ale House.*

*Host and Guests.*

*Host.* So they say the king is to die. Well, his head hath swung at my door many a year, and I cannot say but that there was custom. Good day to you, Master Gilead Stubbs, you have a good mile to walk. Shall the boy go with you?

*Mast. Stubbs.* Nay! nay! I thank you, I will with Master Jesson here. You have lost the Captain. Where is he?—

*Host.* What, that Wyckoff? Gone, and his score left unpaid. Moreover, I think 'twas he that hid my keys.

*A Guest.* Ah! how was it?

*Host.* I have never lost them before. It was in my secret place, and yon Wyckoff had to do with it. He was drunk the morning I missed them without being served. I am glad he is gone.

*Guests.* Good day, Master Newborn, good day.

*Host.* The Lord be with ye; [*Exeunt Guests.*] and make sound vessels of ye! [*Aside.*] for the holding of good liquor. This is the best company I have had for long. How restless I feel. I cannot help thinking of my dream, that Wyckoff and the other would have slain me, and 'twas in this very room. Let me see, I dreamt too they hid something—this plank seems loose. I could fancy now this were the fag-end of my dream—[*Lifts the Plank.*] What is here?—As I live, my keys, and a bundle of papers.— [*Reads.*] "To Master Arthur Walton?" Why, he hath not been here, for long. If now it 'twere Basil his brother and the Captain had left them here—from Sir Marmaduke Langdale too. Here is something wrong. I feel choked. Let me put them back. Why now, I could swear I had seen them placed there. It is very odd. And to think of my keys too. I could fancy they were only skeletons. Yet I know their jingle well. I'll to my brewer now, and, as there is no one here, I say [*looks round*] God keep the poor king's head on his shoulders, and may it be long ere he die on his bier! [*Exit, R.*]

### SCENE II.

[*1st Cut.*] [*3rd Grooves.*]

*An Apartment in Hampton Court. The LADY ELIZABETH reading. In an inner chamber are ARTHUR and FLORENCE. Practicable door 2nd E.R.*

[*ARTHUR is heard singing to a lute in the adjoining chamber.*]

### SONG

When thy lover, dear, is nigh thee,  
Look not on the world around,  
In his eyes be thy blue vision,  
In his eyes thy vision bound—  
For thou'lt find all Heaven, I swear,  
By thy gaze reflected there!

In thy ripe lips is his summer,  
Autumn in thy braided hair;  
Jealous is he of spring's snow-drops  
Stolen from thy neck's warm care;  
But the winter of his mind  
Is when thou, love, art unkind:  
In thee rounded, thus, his year,  
Joy, doubt, sweet content, and fear.

*Eliz.* [*Throwing down the book.*] The black print seems all red—I cannot read!

[*Points to the inner room.*]

Mine eyes burn so—And they are happy there  
Together—'twas my work—and now I wish  
That seas convuls'd by tempests were between them;  
And an eternal veil of blackness girded  
The one from the other—each in separate light,  
But still apart! apart! O horror, why  
Doth their communion cast such hopeless gloom  
Upon me, more than all a father's guilt,  
A sovereign's woe?—O daughter of a traitor!  
Traitoress! Thou lovest him thy friend doth love,  
And—he loves her! ay, that is it, he loves her.

[*Laughs hysterically.*]

I am a wedded wife. There is no stain  
Of guilty wish. I ne'er thought to be his:  
No! no! False wretch, thou dost this moment. Hold,  
'Tis past!  
Oh! would that I were far remov'd,  
Not seeing, hearing, knowing all their lore,  
Not feeling their young blest affection jar  
Through every fibre—thus!  
This is the day  
The king's fate is decided—If he die  
Arthur will hate us, hate my father, me,  
The regicide's pale daughter—thus to think  
Of the king's life! that was my only prayer  
Before; and now it fades on my cold lips,  
And startles me to hear it! [*MUSIC is heard within.*]  
O my heart!  
It seems as though a thousand daggers' points  
Would not suffice to stab it, so it might  
Feel some release— [*Falls on her knees.*]  
My God! forsake me not!

*As the music ends, enter the LADY CROMWELL; she approaches her daughter, and, bending over her, lifts her up.*

*Lady Crom.* What is it, child?—I have now heard from Fairfax:  
He saith it will not be—Thy father is  
But stern unto the last—  
He'll pray to God  
And God will aid him—

*Eliz.* But *His* judgments, mother!  
Are awful. Did not Christ condemn the mind  
That is polluted with a guilty thought,  
As if 'twere done?

*Lady Crom.* This weary thought of hers  
About the king hath turn'd her brain.  
Dear daughter,  
Rouse thee, he will not die!

*Enter a Messenger, others of the family, the LADY FAIRFAX in deep mourning.*

*Lady Fairf.* The king is sentenced. Death! [*Bell tolls.*]

*ELIZABETH, raising herself, falls back into her Mother's arms with a sudden scream. They carry her back.*

*Enter ARTHUR and FLORENCE.*

*Arth.* Then, madam, let us part—'tis better.

*Flor.* Yes, I think so, sir.

*Arth.* I cannot brook this treatment—

*Flor.* I do not wish you—

*Arth.* Heartless!

*Flor.* Certainly,  
A heart is troublesome; it oft makes fools  
Of those that own it—  
I should hate a man  
Made me ridiculous.

*Arth.* Farewell!

*Flor.* Farewell!

[*FLORENCE runs to the LADY ELIZABETH.*]

*Arth.* [*Joining the group.*] What is the matter?

*One of the Domestic.* Sir, the king is sentenc'd To death; it is too much for her—

*Arth.* Alas! Is it even so?—

*Flor.* [*To Arthur.*] Arthur! here, lend your aid To bear her hence—Elizabeth! 'Tis Florence—

[*He attempts to raise her.*]

*Eliz.* I tell you I can stand—  
His arm? [*Aside.*]  
Away! [*Aloud.*]  
Sir, do not touch me, you ill-treat my friend!

*Flor.* To think she heard, my folly— Sir, I fancy [*To Arthur.*] She will be better, if you are not here—

[*He bows and is about to retire.*]

*Enter CROMWELL and PEARSON followed by two or three officers.*

*Crom.* Where be ye all?—  
[*To an Officer.*] These to your Colonel Pride—  
[*Exit officer, L.*]  
And thou to Rich; tell him to watch and fast,  
[*To another.*]  
For I have need of him—[*Exit officer, L.*]  
What coil is this?—[*To his Family.*]  
My daughter ill! send a physician, quick:  
Pearson, look to it—  
I am ill myself.  
'Twas a sore trial, ye have heard of it—  
The man must die—

*Eliz.* No! father, as you hope For mercy, no!

*Crom.* Peace, simpleton. It was The voice of all this people.

*Arth.* General, hear me: Thou hadst the power to save—

*Crom.* Ay! Master Walton, Thou thinkest so?—

*Arth.* I do!—

*Crom.* And dar'st to speak it?

*Arth.* Dare! General Cromwell! [*Takes off his sword.*] Here, look, is my sword, I'll never more bear arms with thee or thine.

*Crom.* I do protest thou wilt not—  
Take his sword; [*To an Officer.*]  
I did not think to find this kite so tame.  
Good, honest Master Walton, tell me now  
What news from Langley, virtuous Master Walton?  
Nay, never look with that blank wonderment,  
Friend Arthur Walton—  
[*ARTH. attempts to speak.*] Tush, sir, not a word—  
As the Lord liveth, thou shalt die the death—  
Take him away. I hate his open brow  
More than a dozen dark-fac'd royalists  
In arms against us.

*Arth.* What doth this mean?— Frenzy Hath surely seized him—

*Crom.* No! the sense To know thee, hypocrite!

*Flor.* O Arthur! Arthur!  
What has he done? [*Rushes to his arms.*]  
Forgive me, dearest Arthur!  
Sir, he's not guilty— [*To Cromwell.*]

*Crom.* Silence, woman! Take him Away!

*Eliz.* My veins thrill! Parted?—No! No! No!  
Perish the mean thought—  
Let me aid them, though  
I die; then o'er my quiet grave, my thought  
Doth sculpture them in prayer—  
[*To Cromwell.*] He is innocent,  
My father! Let him go—Do you not see  
They love each other?—

*Crom.* Art thou not ashamed? Thou wanton girl!

*Arth.* My Florence! I am happy Since thou dost love me. I know nought of that With which he charges me—

*Flor.* I know thou dost not:  
Thou shalt not die!  
O man of blood, beware! [*To Cromwell.*]  
If thou'rt deceived, repentance comes too late.  
Is that a traitor's look! Thou canst not quell it  
Back'd by an army.  
Thou hast bitter moments  
E'en now. The king—

*Crom.* I'll hear no more—remove him. [*A pause.*]  
Yet I will give three days, if in that time  
Ye prove him innocent, 'tis well—If not,  
He dies the death!

[*ARTHUR is seized; ELIZABETH clings to her Father, who looks on her with an expression of anger, which gradually softens into affection. Exeunt, on the one side, ARTHUR, L. with his Guards, on the other, CROMWELL, with his Family, &c., R.*]

*Enter WILLIAM and HOST, U.E.R.*

*Will.* Come on, I tell thee they are all gone. Have I not liberty here?

*Host.* Hem! Did'st thou notice how that young imp of a page flouted thee, when thou did'st civilly inquire the hour of the day? Thou wert welcome as a wet Sunday to his new feather. I doubt whether I myself will continue to know thee.

*Will.* Is there no way to save him? If now it were the marriage of his heart something might occur; but I never yet heard of an accident on the road to a gallows.

*Host.* Cheer up! cheer up! we must all die, young and old. I have had my trials. In these wars I have known very estimable men die that owed me money. There is your true trial now.

*Will.* If he had been slain on the right side, and died comely with a love-lock as a gentleman should. But to perish by the false canting rebel that he served. He a traitor! My master! The innocentest youth alive. Why even I, that have some claim, could not find it in my heart to cheat him. It would have been an insult to my understanding to impose upon him that had no suspicions, and would leave out his doublet in the morning to be cleaned unemptied, when he had won uncounted pieces of gold at night—Alas! Alas!

*Host.* Come along, thou mayest as well drink; for weeping will not mend thee. Besides, I have something to tell thee about him and his brother Basil, and one Wyckoff, that hath left his score unpaid; but I cannot remember it just now.

[*He takes him by the arm and leads him out, L.*]

*Enter BASIL, WALTON, and FLORENCE, R.*

*Basil.* He is my half-brother, it is true; but shall he betray the true cause for that? Shall our consanguinity make me so weak?

*Flor.* Oh, Basil! you have said that you can save him— Save him that lov'd you well, that gave you all That was his own—

*Bas.* May curses light on him! Why should his sneaking face thus cross my love?

*Flor.* In Heaven alone I put my trust to save him; Profane my sight no longer, sir. Away!

*Bas.* You are right—Let him die—Tis I am wrong To save a traitor thus, a damned traitor—

*Flor.* Blasphemer, silence!

*Bas.* Oh, a traitor's death! 'Tis none so envious—but as I'm his brother, I thought to save our name from this foul blot.

*Flor.* Oh, agony!

*Bas.* 'Tis true his life Is nothing, and 'tis forfeit—but his name Dishonour'd, tainted—

*Flor.* Hold, hold! Let me think. Have mercy! No? [*Aside.*] Then let me die for him, For thus I could not live. [*Aloud.*] I will be yours, But not yet—

*Bas.* O, I'll give a month. I am A courteous wooer—then, perchance your love May date, ere we are married—"Tis well so—

[*Attempts to take her by the hand.*]

*Flor.* I pray you, leave me now—

*Bas.* You swear then—

*Flor.* Yes!

*Bas.* By all that's holy?

*Flor.* Sir! it is enough, I have said that if you claim me in a month, I will be yours, if living—go! now, go!

*Bas.* Remember that his life alone I promise—

*Flor.* His life, his life! O God! Quick, save his life—

[*He takes her hand, which he kisses; she withdraws it with an expression of pain. Exeunt FLORENCE, L., BASIL, R.*]

### SCENE III.

[*Last Cut.*] [*3rd Grooves.*]

*View of Westminster Abbey. Sunset.*

*Enter three or four Citizens, meeting severally.*

*1st Cit.* The skies weep not, there is no shock to the earth.  
Art thou not Peter Ingram? Yet the king  
Hath been beheaded, lost his head!  
The king  
Of England murther'd, slain in open day!

*2nd Cit.* I did not think they would do it— Who'll be king Now he is dead?

*3rd Cit.* Why some say none.

*4th Cit.* Indeed, The Parliament is king.

*2nd Cit.* They say that Cromwell Had much to do in this. Were you there?

*1st Cit.* No.

*Others.* Nor I.

*2nd Cit.* Here comes another. We shall hear, If he hath seen.

*Enter another Citizen.*

*5th Cit.* Oh, eyes! Oh, ears! Alas!

*1st Cit.* Were you there?

*5th Cit.* Was I not? He died right well, As 'twere a man that nothing had to lose, Save the poor head he gave his enemies.

*1st Cit.* Indeed you're right, he had not much of late.

*2nd Cit.* How was it?

*5th Cit.* Well, they would not let him speak  
Much, for the sound of the drums—are ye this way?  
My wife is waiting, she is curious; come,  
I'll tell you all I saw— [*Exeunt severally.*]

*Enter two Gentlemen, R. and L.*

*1st Gent., L.* All, then, is o'er: the body they have taken To lie in Whitehall—

*2nd Gent., R.* So I heard. Where are The men who order'd it?

*1st Gent.* I know not. Cromwell Was there; I noted him.

*2nd Gent.* How looked he when The king came forth? I had no eyes for aught Except the prisoner.

*1st Gent.* It so happen'd that, Marking his face by chance, I could not keep My eyes from off him.

*2nd Gent.* Ay, how did he seem? For he had much to do in this great matter.

*1st Gent.* Ere all was ready, while 'mid wolfish noise  
The patient pale king lipp'd the deafen'd air,  
O'er Cromwell's face approaching doom grew large  
In stony horror. Then 'twas calm and fix'd.  
Destruction's god, from his broad, wizard throne,  
Might on the front of coming whirlwinds, as  
They near'd his footstool, look unchang'd as he did:  
Sphinx-like!  
But, when the deed was done,  
The flash that left the swift-descending axe  
In triumph fiercely shot into his eyes,



A moment welling quick successive fires,  
Like sudden birth of stars 'tween wintry clouds:  
Then came a look of doubt and wonderment,  
As if it were a thing he knew not of,  
And shudder'd at, amaz'd that it was so.  
His hollow eye wan'd like the moon's eclipse;  
And then he clutch'd his sword, and strove to read  
Men's faces near him, and so, furious, leapt  
On his black war-horse, standing saddled by,  
And unattended, save by that red scene,  
Like an arm'd pestilence, rode swift—away!

*2nd Gent.* You make me tremble with your picture; surely This Cromwell is a great and wondrous man.

*1st Gent.* Unto all fortune doth he shape himself; One knows not where he learnt it.

*2nd Gent.* They do say A something did appear to him in youth, Telling he should be great.

*1st Gent.* I think he hath Whisper'd that round to choke the envious With supernatural awe.

*2nd Gent.* I know not; but He hath great power with the army, gain'd By most corporeal acts.

*1st Gent.* Shall you attend The funeral?

*2nd Gent.* It were not wise, I think; There will be riots. It grows dark. Good evening!

[*They part, 1st Gent. R., 2nd Gent. L., Exeunt.*]

*The stage grows dark. Enter a Drunken Preacher with a Rabble of Soldiers, Artisans, and Women, U.E.L. and R.*

*Preach.* So, my beloved, this Ahab has lost his head, as it might be the froth of thin ale. I am thirsty in the flesh! Will no man be a surety for a poor preacher of the Lord at the sign of Balaam's Ass? 'Tis hard by; and I would speak a few more words of grace on this soul-stirring occasion, but my tongue is parched. Ho! every one that thirsteth, come unto me,—or I will go with you.

*A Soldier.* Hold thy peace; for I would fain speak. This is a great day in Israel.

*Preach.* Hear me, my brethren! This is a false prophet.

*Sold.* Smite him!

*Woman.* Nay, touch him an' you dare. [*To the Soldier.*] 'Tis Master Ephraim Bumling. I would thy head were chopped off, like the sour-faced king's this morning.

*1st Art.* Down with all kings!

*2nd Art.* No taxes!

*3rd Art.* We'll all be kings!

*4th Art.* With our heads on, though.

*1st Art.* Cease quarrelling, and come and play at skittles.

*2nd Art.* With the king's head for a ball?

*A Woman.* Ay, he was a bad man to his wife, and deserved to die.

*3rd Art.* And a pagan Turk.

*2nd Art.* That would have made all us Christians deny pork.

*3rd Art.* And built ships with our houses.

*2nd Art.* Well, it's a rare sight to see a king die. A bishop is something; but a king is a treat for a poor man's holiday.

*1st Art.* But we shall not be poor now.

*All.* Down with all kings! Live Cromwell! live the Parliament, live Fairfax, live everybody!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

*Stage dark. The moon shines brilliantly upon the abbey.*

*Enter CROMWELL, cloaked, U.E.R.*

*Crom.* This night the place looks older than it is,  
As if some future centuries had pass'd,  
Leaving their shadows on it—  
Yon tall towers,  
That pierce the unsettled sky,  
Seem not to point unto the stars that watch  
My coming greatness; but with solemn air  
To frown back on the memory of Cromwell—  
Yon dark cathedral, whose sharp turret spires  
Look like funereal firs on Ararat,  
When the sun setting stream'd in blood upon  
The fast decaying waters—that huge pile  
Of gloomy worship to the God of ages,  
Feels like this age's tomb and monument.  
Would I were buried in it, so I might  
Sleep there—for O, I cannot sleep to-night.  
My molten blood runs singing through my veins.  
It is no wonder: I have known less things  
Disturb my rest; besides, there is a thought  
Hath led me forth—Come, let me deal with it.

'Tis midnight! Now to face him were a deed,  
To feel that one had done it—not to tell.  
To fold the arms and look upon the work  
That I have wrought with stedfast, iron will—  
There's evil fascination in the thought:  
Grows to desire!  
I cannot stay my feet!  
Like one in dreams, or hurried by a storm,  
That hales him on with wild uncertain steps,  
I move on to the thing I dread.  
[*Sighs deeply.*]  
Methought  
A voice stole on mine ears—as if a sword  
[*Sighs again.*]  
Clove the oppressive air. Why do I shrink?  
On Naseby field my bare head tower'd high;  
And now I bend me, though my tingling ears  
Unconscious but drink in the deep-drawn sigh,  
That doth attend on greatness.  
This is folly.  
O coward fancy, lie still in thy grave!  
A king doth keep his coffin, why not thou?  
I'll meet him like a conqueror, whose cheek  
Flushes with manly pity. Could it be  
That he had lived without his country's shame!  
But no! and thus, I come, Charles Stuart! to tell  
Thy bloodless clay, that I repent me *not!*  
No! if a hecatomb of kings were slain,  
I'd own the deed unto their legion'd spirits! [*Exit, L.*]

#### SCENE IV.

[*Last Grooves.*]

*A State Room in Whitehall. The moon shines through the windows.*

*On a large bed with crimson hangings, surmounted with black plumes, is seen a Coffin and pall, richly emblazoned with the royal arms of England. On each side an Ironside keeping guard with a*

*matchlock. They walk to and fro, and speak as they meet.*

*1st Iron.* I tell thee, Bowtell, I would this watch were over.

*2nd Iron.* I would it were a bright morning, with our pike-heads glittering in the sun. I would rather it were a charge of Rupert's best cavalry in our rear.

*1st Iron.* I mind when I saw him once alive, 'twas at the close of the fight, and he would have charged once more, but a false Scotch noble held him back to his ruin. Had I been he, I would have cloven the false Scot to the chine. I was a prisoner, and near him; he had a tall white plume then. His dark face showed very eager beneath it.

*2nd. Iron.* Ay, I have heard good Jepherson tell of it, and how the Lord blinded them all.

*1st Iron.* I mind his very words,— "Charles Stuart begs a little loyal blood To do him right—a charge, but one more charge! Come on, we do command, come on. O cowards! Had I but fifty of my nephew Rupert!" And then he waved his sword, as 'twere the whole cut and thrust exercise in the air at once, and his plume fluttered like a white bird in the eye of a tempest. If he should speak now—*[A footstep is heard, both look round.]*

*2nd Iron.* Didst thou hear nought?

*1st Iron.* O for a stoop of strong waters!

*2nd Iron.* Hist! 'twas like a soldier's tread in the long gallery beyond.

*1st Iron.* Nay, 'tis the echo of thine own feet.

*2nd Iron.* 'Tis a footstep. Hark, it stops!

*1st Iron.* Do thou speak.

*Enter CROMWELL, L.*

*[They bring their matchlocks to bear.]* The word, or else we fire!

*Crom.* *[Muttering.]* Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?

*2nd Iron.* Hold! 'Tis the General.

*Crom.* Ha! how fare you?

*[The Soldiers move towards the door, coming from the coffin.]*

Stay, Bowtell!

Open me yonder coffin, dost not hear?  
Quick, fool! Thy mouth is all agape; as if  
Thou didst lack tidings. What dost quiver for?  
Give me thy sword. *[Wrenches open the coffin.]*  
I would see how he looks:  
Perchance, I may undo the look he sent, *[Aside.]*  
In search of me this morn from off the scaffold.

*Bow.* My Lord! Shall we go?

*Crom.* Ay, I would lift my voice In prayer awhile. Nay, leave your matchlocks. So.

*[Exeunt Soldiers.]*

*[The steps of the Soldiers are heard gradually retreating. CROMWELL following them to the side.]*

It is an hour since I did speak to them!  
The air is life-like and intelligent,  
I seem to fret it as I move along;  
Yet this is Death's abode!

*[Looks cautiously round—calls in another tone.]*

Ho! there—hola!  
We are alone. I do forget me—stay—

*[Advances to the coffin.]*

Like the hot iron to the quivering flesh  
Be this test to my soul, to look on him,  
To set my living face by his dead face;  
Then tax him with the deeds for which I slew him.

*[Opens the coffin very gently.]*

O Thou discrowned and insensible clay!  
Thou beggar corpse!  
Stripp'd, 'midst a butcher'd score, or so, of men,  
Upon a bleak hill-side, beneath the rack  
Of flying clouds torn by the cannon's boom,  
If the red, trampled grass were all thy shroud,  
The scowl of Heaven thy plumed canopy,  
Thou might'st be any one!  
How is it with thee? Man! Charles Stuart! King!  
See, the white, heavy, overhanging lids  
Press on his grey eyes, set in gory death!  
How blanch'd his dusky cheek! that late was flush'd  
Because a people would not be his slaves,  
And now a, worm may mock him—  
This strong frame  
Promis'd long life, 'tis constituted well;  
'Twas but a lying promise, like the rest!  
Dark is the world, of tyranny within  
Yon roofless house, where Silence holds her court  
Before Decay's last revel.  
Yet, O king,  
I would insult thee not. But if thy spirit  
Circle unseen around the guilty clay,  
Till it be buried, and those solemn words  
Give "dust to dust," leaving the soul no home  
On this vain earth,  
O hear me!  
Or if still  
There be a something sentient in the body,  
Through all corruption's stages, till our frames  
Rot, rot, and seem no more,—and thus the soul  
Is cag'd in bones through which the north wind rattles,  
Or haunts the black skull wash'd up by the waves  
Upon the moaning shore—poor weeping skull,  
From whose deep-blotted, eyeless socket-holes  
The dank green seaweed drips its briny tear—  
If it be so, that round the festering grave,  
Where yet some earth-brown, human relic moulders,  
The parting ghost may linger to the last,  
Till it have share in all the elements,  
Shriek in the storm, or glide in summer air,  
O hear me!

Or, if thou hast stood already,  
Shrivell'd, but for His mercy, into nought,  
Before the blaze of Heaven's offended eye,  
And hast receiv'd thy sentence—Hear me, thence!  
There is none with us now!  
Thus then I lay my hand upon thy breast,  
And while my heart is nearly still as thine,  
Swear that I slew thee but to stop thy crimes;  
(O soul of Charles, wilt thou not plead for Cromwell?)  
Swear that I would my head were low as thine,  
Could'st thou have liv'd below'd, and loving England—  
For I have done a deed in slaying thee  
Shall wring the world's heart with its memory;

Men shall believe me not, as they are base,  
Fools shall cry "hypocrite," as they dare judge  
The naked fervour of my struggling soul.  
God judge between us!—I am arm'd in this,  
Could'st thou have reign'd, not crushing English hearts  
With fierce compression of thine iron sway,  
Cromwell had liv'd contented and unknown  
To teach his children loyalty and faith  
Sacred and simple, as the grass-grown mound,  
That should have press'd more lightly on his bones,  
Than ever greatness on his wearied spirit!

*Re-enter the Ironsides, L. They ground their Matchlocks.*

[*CROMWELL starting.*] Another blow? no, no! there was but one: He suffered nothing!

*Bowt.* Worthy General, We are return'd.

*Crom.* [*Replacing his Cloak, after covering the Coffin, as before.*] Ha! have ye drunk well, fellows? I knew not that ye had such cold work here. [*Gives them Money.*] Now, on your lives, no word of this.

*Bowt.* May 't please you, What form of Government shall we have now?

*Crom.* It does not please me, fool! to stand here prating;  
Ask *him* trick'd out in yonder lying state,  
Who shall succeed him. [*Points to the Coffin.*]  
Surely, I know nought,  
That am the meanest servant of the Lord  
To do his work alone. See ye to yours. [*Exit, L.*]

[*The Sentinels resume their walk. The Clock strikes one. As it strikes, the Guard is heard approaching, and whilst it is relieving them the Scene closes.*]

**END OF ACT IV.**

## **ACT V.**

**SCENE I.**

[*Last Grooves.*]

*Table, Chairs, Writing Materials.*

*Whitehall. LADY CROMWELL, R. and FLORENCE, L. Discovered coming forward.*

*Lady Crom.* R. No! There is not one of us he would hear save Elizabeth, and since the day before yesterday, as I tell you, she hath been in a raging fever, and delirious; and, to-morrow, you tell me, it is fixed that your cousin dies. Will not the Protector see you?

*Flor.* L. He will not!

*Lady Crom.* Alas! poor maid. I know not what to do.

*Flor.* Madam, where doth your daughter lie!—

*Lady Crom.* In my room, this way—why, you look sadly yourself—pale as a corpse.

*Flor.* Do I?—I would have it so. Think you it is an easy death when the heart bleeds inwardly?

*Lady Crom.* Hush! cease talking so, child!

*Flor.* I do remember, journeying hither once,  
On horseback, that I saw a poor lad, slain  
In some sad skirmish of these cruel wars;

There seem'd no wound, and so I stay'd by him,  
Thinking he might live still. But, ever, whilst  
I stretch'd to reach some trifling thing for aid,  
His sullen head would slip from off my knee,  
And his damp hair to earth would wander down,  
Till I grew frighten'd thus to challenge Death,  
And with the king of terrors idly play.—  
Yet those pale lips deserted not the smile  
Of froward, gay defiance, lingering there,  
Like a tir'd truant's sleeping on the grass,  
Mid the stray sun-beams of unsadden'd hope,  
Dreaming of one perpetual holiday.

*Lady Crom.* And was he dead?—Tell me what came of him.

*Flor.* The silent marches of the stars had clos'd  
The slow retreat of that calm summer noon,  
Ere I compos'd his gentle limbs to rest,  
And left him where he lay. No crimson wound,  
No dark ensanguin'd stain did sully him:  
Yet had some fatal missile reach'd his heart,  
That bled, as mine does now, within, within!

*Lady Crom.* How sad a tale; yet; all will still be well. Yield not to this wild burst of agony.

*Flor.* O, I was happy and I knew it not,  
But jested with the heart that lov'd me well.  
The sickening echo of each foolish word  
I said to pain him comes to torture me—

*Lady Crom.* Cease, cease! Indeed my heart is sad enough. My daughter needs us.

*Flor.* O forgive me, Madam!  
My grief seem'd thoughtless of another's woe,  
And I that love her so?—I'll go with you  
This instant, watch by her, and pray for all  
This most unhappy world. Come, let us seek her—  
Haste! Will she know me, think you? Lean on me,  
You are fatigued with watching. I am strong.

[*Exeunt, U.E.R.*]

*Enter CROMWELL alone, R.*

*Crom.* How well he died, that liv'd not well—his words  
Strike cold here. Kings have died ere now, whose lives  
Were needless, hurtful to their people's good,  
But none so meek as this. O Cromwell! Cromwell!  
Hast thou done well! O could an angel light  
The deepest corner of thy secret mind,  
And tell thee thou'rt not damned to Hell for this,  
The avenging act of horror—or that, inspir'd,  
Thou wert the minister of Heaven's decree,  
And that ambition drugg'd not thy design  
With soul-consuming poison! I, this I,  
Have done it—for what!—Which is't? To live and reign?  
Or crown the smiling land with good? Well, both!  
If I have sinn'd, it was at least for all.  
The puny stripling calls not his love, lust:  
The passions that we have in us may blend  
With noble purpose and with high design;  
Else men who saw the world had gone astray  
Would only wish it better—and lie down,  
In vain regret to perish.—  
How his head  
Roll'd on the platform with deep, hollow sound!  
Methinks I hear it now, and through my brain

It vibrates like the storm's accusing knell,  
Making the guilty quake. I am not guilty!  
It was the nation's voice, the headsman's axe.  
Why drums it then within my throbbing ear?—  
I slew him not!

*Enter PEARSON, L.*

*Pear.* My Lord! there is one here Would speak with you—

*Crom.* Admit him. Am I not The servant of this country, to see all That come to me?—

[*PEARSON goes out, and returns with BASIL. PEARSON retires, L.*]

*Basil.* Health to the General!

*Crom.* Good Master Basil, welcome.

I am griev'd,  
Most griev'd in spirit for your brother; yet  
I must not pardon him. I have receiv'd  
Your protestation—

*Basil.* I have done much service, Good service to the state; I ask his life, Not liberty.

*Crom.* It cannot be, and yet I lov'd him well myself. It must not be, [*Pause.*] Yet you have done good service. I am glad You do insist on it. I had not yielded To any other—but you have a right To ask this thing, and I am bound to grant it; I am glad it comes from you, his brother, here—

[*Signs a paper and hands it to BASIL.*]

What will you do with him?

*Basil.* I fear, my Lord, There is such treason prov'd—the colonies—

*Crom.* Nay! Let him where he will; but not to stay In England for his head—he dies, if found here Two days hence—

*Basil.* Thanks, my Lord, it shall be seen to. A brother's thanks—farewell— [*He goes out, L.*]

*Crom.* How different is

The aspect of these brethren, most unlike  
The soul of each to his face—The brow of Arthur  
So open and so clear, and yet a traitor.  
Indeed, methinks the countenance, which oft  
Is the mask fitted to the character  
Of gross and eager sensualists, is but  
A lying index to the subtle souls  
Of villains more acute.  
Come hither, Pearson!  
Thou know'st me well. Speak, wherefore doubting thus  
I feel my soul aghast at its own being?  
Methought just now all Hell did cry aloud,  
"Conscience can give no peace, the liar Conscience,  
That knows not what she prates"—Out, out on  
Conscience!  
She that did whisper peace unto my soul,  
But now, before the fearful shadow came  
That since my boyhood often visits me,  
And with dark musings fills my brain perturb'd;  
Making the current of my life-blood stagnate,  
My heart the semblance of a muffled bell,  
Within my ribs, its tomb; my flesh creep like  
The prickly writhings of a new-slough'd snake;  
Each several moment as the awaken'd glare  
Of the doom'd felon starting from his sleep,  
While the slow, hideous meaning of his cell  
Grows on him like an incubus, until  
The truth shoots like an ice-bolt to his brain

From his dull eyeball; then, from brain to heart  
Flashes in sickening tumult of despair—  
As in this bosom.

*Pear.* 'Tis black Melancholy!  
I've read of such, my Lord; it hath no part  
With what men think, or do;—'tis physical—  
A holy preacher feels the self-same thing,  
That ne'er outstepp'd his sacred village round;  
'Tis often nurs'd of this damp, noxious climate:  
Most excellent men have suffer'd it—  
Thou know'st  
I have seen bloody deeds beneath the sun  
Upon the Spanish main, when I was young.

*Crom.* What of them, say?—I thought thou loved'st not To speak thyself a pirate—

*Pear.* 'Twas, my Lord, Ere I knew grace, or my most honour'd master.

*Crom.* I trust thou art forgiven.

*Pear.* I'd not speak  
Of deed of mine, my Lord. I did but think  
That in the sunlit tropics I had known  
The wantonness of cruelty; and seen  
Aged men grown grey in crime, whose hair thus blanch'd  
Show'd white, like sugar by hot blood refin'd.

*Crom.* What of this!—Tell me what thou knew'st of them.

*Pear.* I never knew desponding doubt or fear  
Curdle the healthy current of their veins;  
They never shudder'd at a blood-red kerchief,  
But on their shining knife-blades, as they smok'd  
On deck through the long summer noon, would show  
The dents and notches to their younger fellows,  
As thus—"This cut a Spanish merchant's throat,  
With wealthy ingots laden; this the rib-bone  
Of his lean Rib, that clutch'd an emerald brooch  
Too eagerly, hath rasp'd—and here, d'ye see a chip?  
This paid the reckoning of a skin-flint purser."

*Crom.* What meanest thou by this?—

*Pear.* I mean, my Lord,  
The frequent gloom that clouds thy noble spirit,  
Is born of humours natural to thy body;  
And, as foul vapours blur the honest sun,  
Hangs o'er the face of the high enterprize,  
That hath enrich'd thy name, not harm'd thy soul.

*Enter a Servant, L.*

*Ser.* My Lord, good Master Milton waits without, Desiring presence of you.—

*Crom.* Pearson, go.  
I would see him alone. Perchance his words  
[*Exit PEARSON, L. Servant follows.*]  
May ease my tortur'd breast.  
[*Rings a small bell. Enter a Servant, L.*]  
Ask quickly, how  
My daughter fares, if she be better—  
[*Servant crosses behind and exit, R.*]  
Lo!  
If I should lose her. Nay! it cannot be.  
My thoughts seem driven like the wind-vex'd leaves  
That eddy round in vain: fy, fy upon me!  
Was not Saul doom'd? but David slew him not,



Yet Heaven led him through the winding cave,  
Sealing the watchers' lids, and to his hand  
Gave the bright two-edg'd blade, that in his eyes  
Looked with cold meaning, bloodless it remain'd—  
Would it were so now!

*Servant re-enters, R.*

*Ser.* She is worse, my Lord,  
And raves incessantly; the doctors shook  
Their heads when I did ask, and bade me tell you  
There is no hope—

*Crom.* [*Motions him to go.*] Why comes not Master Milton?

[*Servant crosses behind to L. sees Milton.*]

*Ser.* My Lord, he waits without for aid to enter.

[*Exit Servant, L. and re-enters leading MILTON.*]

*Crom.* Good Milton, I am sick at heart. Think you the world Will judge me very harshly?—

*Mil.* Sir, believe  
By far the nobler half of England's hearts  
Will be yours, when long centuries have nurs'd  
The troubles of these frantic times to rest;  
The feverish strife, the hate and prejudice  
Of these days, soon shall fly, and leave great acts  
The landmarks of men's thoughts, who then shall see  
In these events that shake the world with awe,  
But a great subject, and a base bad king  
Interpreted aright.

*Crom.* [*Aside.*] My child! my child!  
She is dying, and condemns me—[*to Milton*] Thou art wise,  
Prudent, and skill'd in learned rhetorick—  
Think'st thou 'twere sad to gaze upon the look,  
That sudden on the harlot's painted features,  
Set in the stale attraction of forc'd smiles,  
Darkens so wildly—that, like one amaz'd,  
From the crack'd glass she staggers, to her brow  
Lifts her wan, jewell'd finger—tries to think?  
The wanton provocation of her features  
Chang'd all to sickly twilight, blank dismay—  
And when thought comes, to see the poor wretch quiver,  
Her eyes' fire turn'd to water—those blue eyes,  
Where once sweet fancies woven danc'd in fight—  
To see the Present, Future, Past, appal her?—  
The Spectre of her grown up life arise  
Ever between her childhood's innocent dawn,  
And the lost thing, herself—to see her choke  
Upon her scanty food?—see grim Despair  
Clutch her polluted bosom?—see her teeth,  
Pearls that have outliv'd their neglected home,  
Shine whiter in that ruin?—

*Mil.* 'Twere a sight To bid the palsied heart of Lewdness grieve, Youth grow a hermit, Age old vices  
leave!

*Crom.* Yet hast thou ne'er beheld the thing, I say?—  
Thou answerest me not. I know thy life;  
'Twas ever pure; still thou art of this world,  
And so hast read their living epitaph,  
Whose souls being buried in lust's grave, at night  
Their mortal frames walk forth—reversing death.  
I ask thee, then, dost thou not know the thing

That I have painted?

*Mil.* [*Aside.*] Is his mind distraught? [*Aloud.*] I have seen this, and more. What of it?

*Crom.* Thus! Shall he that caus'd it suffer?

*Mil.* On his Mood Vampires should batten—

*Crom.* Yet, 'tis like she met

His guilty thought half-way; 'twas in the course  
Of nature, when the blood is hot. Contention  
Led both to the encounter. When youth sins,  
Reason flies daunted—to return with arms  
Poison'd and terrible.—

*Mil.* The lean excuse Of whirlwind Passion's victims. Homicide, Murder, theft, rapine, plead it—

*Crom.* Think you then,

Should one array'd in reasoning manhood's arms  
Have done this? Were the victim bright and good,  
Round whose young heart sweet household fancies play'd,  
Each natural thought of her enthusiast mind  
Pure as the snow that softly veils the earth  
'Tween Christide eve and morning white-enrob'd;  
And yet her sum of suffering were great  
As that, which I have painted for the child  
Of sin and misery—her silken cheek  
Defil'd by ashen trace of frowning tears,  
Her sinless eye dim as a Magdalen's;  
And he that caus'd it lov'd her as a father,  
Knowing no fiery passion, unchaste thought,  
To rob him of his brain, his heart, and then—

*Mil.* There's no such thing!

*Crom.* There is, I say, here! here!

*Mil.* Lord General, I stand amazed!

*Crom.* Judgment!

The Judgment! my good Milton. O my child!  
My best belov'd, my sweet Elizabeth,  
Is such a sacrifice. The cause how different,  
But the effect the same. Thou think'st it strange  
To pluck such image from remembrance forth—  
And use it thus. There is a chain unseen,  
Linking the human beggar to the king,  
Virtue to vice; whereon doth sympathy  
Like lightning play between the two extremes,  
And so connect them. There is none can say  
"I am not as that man in anything."  
I spoke of one that was a woman, one  
That died repentant, one perchance in Heaven!  
My daughter's face, I tell thee, grows like her's.  
Reason not on it. O! The fault is here  
Why she lies stricken thus. [*Touches his breast.*]  
Her tender frame  
Pines day and night, her young life breeding, sapp'd,  
Curs'd in the tainted thought of my ambition—  
And she will die and sink into the grave,  
Prey'd on by doubt and horror of her father!  
Ere Hampden's death had seal'd the bond of strife,  
Thou knowest not, how oft to quit these shores  
With angel fervour she entreated me,  
And girt by true hearts—all my soul held dear—  
To seek a home in that far western clime—  
Nay, start not at the name—America!\*

Where boundless forests whisper Liberty  
With all their million-musick'd leaves, and blue lakes  
Murmur it, and great cataracts, that light  
With flash of whirling foam the tempest's scowl,  
To souls untam'd as they, roar Freedom!  
[*Crosses the Stage.*] Ay!  
Thus to escape remorse—  
Leaving this work to God and to His will,  
That I perchance too rashly made mine own,  
And noble hearts had follow'd and I had sav'd  
Her, so soon lost for ever! Is not this  
A thought had madden'd Brutus, though all Rome  
Did hail him saviour, while the Capitol  
Rock'd, like a soul-stirr'd Titan, to its base  
With their free acclamation?—

*Mil.* Was there not Another Brutus?—

*Crom.* Tell me not of Rome!  
Why speak not of the warriors of the forest  
Where I had gone, but for black destiny!  
They triumph in the torture of their kind,  
Their grinning honour must be stain'd with blood;  
'Tis their religion to be feelingless.  
Why dost not lead me through yon corridor  
To gaze upon some hawk-nos'd effigy,  
And say, "This Roman slew his friend, his brother,  
His daughter—'Twas a great soul, and he liv'd  
A thousand years ago, and this is reason  
For thy warm daughter's death—that breathes and speaks  
With dainty actions nestling round thy heart,  
Woven in thine existence"—her, I priz'd  
More than the rest, whose gentle voice was as  
The harp of David to my gloomy soul—  
Go! thou art wise; but here thy skill is folly!

*Mil.* I little dreamt, my lord! to hear you speak  
So wildly and so sadly of the course  
Of your most virtuous and ennobling deeds.  
Think not I do not mourn the angel light  
That beam'd upon your path, soon haply fled,  
Flushing the sky with rosy winnowings  
Of dove-like wings, a Spirit, to the God  
Who gave her thee, and so recalls. She is  
A pure devoted woman, and thy child—  
Thus far I understand thy soul's repinings.  
But so to start as shaken by a dream  
From an unquiet couch, to grope in night  
And wailing darkness, thus to storm and rave,  
To mock the God of battles and thy might;  
To let the rod that scourg'd the pestilent land  
Fall from thy tender hold—I had not thought  
Of this, and I had rather died than see it.  
True thou wert less than father, more than man  
To bear no sorrow. Yet should England soar  
Far, far above the sad domestic grave  
Of Cromwell's dearest love of kin or kind;  
And the big tear, that in the eye will gather,  
In him should only halo freedom's sun  
With brighter lustre, holier radiance.

*Crom.* Speak on, the passion passes. Yet be kind,  
Read not thy lesson sternly; for in grief  
There is much tumult and forgetfulness.  
When my son died 'twas different; though his death

Went to my heart, indeed it did, a son  
That might have wielded England's destinies;  
And now I cannot look beyond the night  
Of mine own day (it is late evening with me  
Already) for a soul to guide this people.  
How bravely bare I his young, glorious death,  
And when one died at Marston afterward,  
I wrote his father bidding him rejoice,  
And something boasted of mine own bereavement,  
I said, "Forget your private sorrow, sir,  
In this late public mercy, victory  
Unto the saints." O bitter fool, to chide  
A father so, when I might lose my daughter!

[*A trumpet is heard without.*]

Hear'st thou? [*Walks up and down a moment.*] 'Tis  
Harrison. News from the camp  
Forget this, honour'd friend! [*To Milton.*]

*Mil.* I will, I do!

*Crom.* Now I could hew my way  
Amidst a thousand. Give me my steel cap,  
My sword and iron greaves, my vant-braces:  
I will array in proof.  
What is the shock  
Of living squadrons to the armed thoughts,  
Whose dark battalions I have just now quell'd?  
I would the clouds of battle roll'd around  
This moment. Lo! my spirit is reviv'd  
Like Samson's, when he drank at Ramath-lehi—

*Enter IRETON and IRONSIDES, L.*

What is it?

*Ire.* Mutiny! The soldiers swear That they will have their right—

*Crom.* Their *right*, said'st thou?  
Come, Ireton, you and I will give them it;  
But, by the Lord, they'll wish for wrong again  
Ere I have done with them.

*Ire.* 'Twere best to take Your faithful guard—

*Crom.* I'll take *none*. What! They are  
Mine own. I'll deal with them.  
If thou dost fear,  
Son Ireton, stay behind. What! be afraid  
Of my own rascals I have drill'd and led  
So frequently?

Come on, I did but need  
This pretty farce to stir me. Mutiny!  
I'll strike the leaders' heads off, at the head  
Each of his column—

Follow me, son Ireton!  
No other—

[*Exit CROMWELL and IRETON, L. The guard look amazed.*]

*Mil.* Who thus seeing him, shall say, This man is not Heaven's chosen instrument? [*Exit. L.*]

[*The Ironsides follow Milton.*]

## SCENE II.

[*1st Cut.*] [*3rd Grooves.*]

*Near the Tower. A Street in London.*

*People are seen gazing from windows and balconies. Slow military music is heard behind the scenes. It gradually approaches U.E.L. Enter a procession of Soldiers, in the midst ARTHUR bare-headed. He looks up to a balcony, where FLORENCE is standing—she waves a handkerchief and throws it to him. He kisses it, and placing it in his bosom, smiles, then slowly exeunt, U.E.R.*

*Enter BASIL hurriedly, L. FLORENCE comes from the door of the house to meet him. She is dressed in a white robe.*

*Bas.* Well, madam, how is it! To live or die?

*Flor.* Oh! hasten, hasten. They are gone; you may Fall down, be stopp'd, give me the pardon—quick!

*Basil.* No! I think not. I'll take it. Think you of Your promise—will you keep it?

*Flor.* Yes! yes! if I live A month, I will be thine.

*Basil.* Tis well! I go:

I am a little lame, but shall be there,  
I do protest, in time. They give some moments  
To stale device of prayer; as if they car'd  
For him they slay—What! anxious? So am I,  
That have so great a stake in this event,  
To save a brother and to gain a wife—

[*Kisses the tips of his fingers.*]

A rivederci, as the Italian saith. [*Goes out, U.E.R.*]

*Flor.* The hands of yonder clock do pierce my heart  
Like daggers till he comes. O God! forgive me,  
Let me but know him safe, and die of joy,  
Ere I have time to think upon the rest.

*Enter ELIZABETH, L., as if just risen. At the same time, WILLIAM and the HOST, accompanied by a Guard, pass by, from L. to U.E.R.*

*Will.* This way, this way!

*Eliz.* Do you not hear the hollow bell still tolling? Hark!

*Flor.* There is no sound now—

*Eliz.* If my father said  
He should not die, it was to comfort me;  
Do not believe them, if they tell you so.  
Give me your arm unto the scaffold, girl.

[*Florence hesitates.*]

Jealous?—Is this a time?—What!—

[*Two or three Attendants come in.*]

Then I'll go  
Alone— [*She takes one of her Attendants by the arm.*]

*Flor.* Nay, dear Elizabeth! his life Is sav'd—

*Eliz.* Believe them not; wilt thou not come? Nay, then! [*Exit with Ladies, U.E.R.*]

*Flor.* What means her passion? He comes not!  
My heart grows chill—  
Would I might follow her.  
I promis'd not. Did I not see the pardon.  
O, this is dreadful!

*Re-enter BASIL, U.E.R.*

*Distant shouting is heard.*

*Basil.* Hear you there? He lives!

*Flor.* [*Falls on her knees.*] O Heaven! I thank thy gracious mercy.

*Basil.* Now! Remember thou art pledged to be my bride.

*Flor.* Have I then sav'd his life, to torture him With base destruction of the thing he loves?

*Basil.* Give me thine hand.

*Flor.* No! no! There is a portal  
By which the trembling victim may escape  
From thy fierce tiger gripe—There is a way  
Unto the weak, and though a giant grasp,  
He shall but seize with eager cruel hand  
The white reflection other fluttering robe,  
Leaving her pure and undefil'd to Heaven—  
Angels have whisper'd it to me—

*Basil.* Forsworn?—

*Flor.* Nay! traitor to thy God and king! My hand I've pledg'd thee ere a short month have elaps'd, And thou shalt claim it then, if then thou wilt.

*Basil.* What mean'st thou, maiden? There is a strange light  
In the sweet lustre of thy thrilling eye,  
There is a bright spot on thy velvet cheek;  
Thy throat of arched fall is now thrown back,  
As one had check'd a white Arabian steed;  
Thy nostril wide dilates, Sibylline, grand;  
Thy moist and crimson lip tempts wildly—come!  
For thou art beautiful, and thy light step  
Shall on the hills be glorious, when thou'rt given  
A help-mate unto Israel—

*Flor.* Never!

*Basil.* How?— Hast thou not sworn?

*Flor.* There is a point where all  
That binds the struggling wretch to aught on earth,  
Be it a bond of hate and grief like mine,  
Or sweet communion of young hearts that love,  
Be it a sacrifice to infamy, or pride  
Of mothers in their offspring, or the work  
Of master-spirits' high philosophy,  
Doth rank with things that were—

*Basil.* Thou speakest riddles.

*Flor.* A colder hand than thine is on my heart, I am another's bride! A month must pass Ere thou can'st claim me. Was not that the bond?

*Basil.* In these brisk times, a month goes quickly by.

*Flor.* Within a week I'll wed, but not with thee. Pray, sir, go hence, you do distract my thoughts From my lov'd bridegroom.

*Basil.* Speak, whom mean'st thou?

*Flor.* Death.  
A thousand deaths, ere wed with thee. Dost hear?  
I am faint. Lo! thy cruel, eager gaze  
Grows grimly dark and indistinct. Pray Heaven  
I shall not see it any more. Farewell,  
I pardon thee.

*Basil.* Not so! May curses blight me, If I do lose thee thus. [*Seizes her.*]

*Flor.* Help!

*Basil.* Wilt thou budge Thus from thy promise?—Nay then—

*Flor.* Help! O help!

*Enter ARTHUR, Soldiers, WILLIAM, HOST, &c., U.E.R. After them WYCKOFF, who stands at a little distance. Loud cries of "Pardon, a free pardon from the Protector."*

*Basil.* What does this mean? Look to your prisoner: seize him.

*An Officer.* [*Seizing Basil.*] In the Protector's name, we do!

*Basil.* Away! Let go!

*An Officer.* [*Points to Arthur.*] 'Twere best ask him for mercy. 'Tis For him to say—

*Will.* Ay, ask us, ask me!—Hanging is too good for you. You are found out, and [*points to the Host*] 'twas this blessed old fool that has undone you. Yes, you may look, but your hair will not curl any longer. Your plot is discovered. Noll knows all, and will only spare your life on condition of the colonies. [*During this time Florence and Arthur are locked in each other's arms.*] Look there! There is happiness—there's fish-hooks and broken glass bottles and tin-tacks in your gullet. Stomach that. Tol de rol!

*Host.* While now they are here, I have a great mind to charge that Wyckoff with my little bill!

*Basil.* O guilt, guilt, guilt!

Success ne'er lit yet on thy feeble brow,  
But ever mock'd thee with dissembling leer,  
Whilst at thy feet graves open, at thy heart  
Remorse points daggers, and thou walk'st the world,  
Blood on thine hand and fever in thine eye,  
Friendless, by that thou lovest scorn'd the most.

*Arthur.* [*To Florence.*] Thou wilt live now?

*Flor.* I would have died for thee,  
Joy doth not kill! [*Points to BASIL.*]  
O, order them to free him;  
He is thy brother, would have sav'd thee, though  
For a base guerdon; yet he would have sav'd thee.

*An Officer.* We cannot free him!

*Basil.* [*Points to Wyckoff.*] Why not take him too?— He is guiltier than I am.—

*Wyck.* [*Aloud.*] Traitor! O Thou most pernicious traitor. [*Aside.*] Damn him, coward! He will tell all, unless I stop it thus.

[*Draws his sword.*]

This for the Commonwealth! [*Stabs BASIL.*]

*Basil.* O, I am kill'd! Will ye see this?— [*To Arthur.*] Revenge me, some of you!

[*Falls into the Soldiers arms and is borne off, U.E.R.*]

*Officer.* [*Points to WYCKOFF.*] Seize him, ye have a warrant for his life. The scaffold were defil'd. Unto the gallows!

[*WYCKOFF is borne off struggling.*]

*Wyck.* 'Twas for the state! O mercy! Arthur Walton! He would have slain you! Mercy! mercy—

*Arth.* [*Supporting Florence.*] Heaven! How just and awful these thy punishments.

*Enter CROMWELL attended, L.*

*Crom.* I did you wrong, yet eagerly excused The death I thought you merited.

*Arth.* My Lord,  
I owe no malice, and I wish you well,  
As you shall deal with England, whose sad shores  
I fain would quit awhile with her I love,  
After these heavy griefs.

*Crom.* And you will leave me?  
I would it were not so; for all around  
I am hemm'd in by doubters. Perfidy  
Makes mouths at me. Suspicion rears her head,  
Hissing upon my path. And my friends drop off,  
Leaving a sting behind!  
Stay! Arthur Walton,  
England doth bid thee stay!

*Arth.* I came here, when  
A king did threaten England's liberties,  
Her charter'd rights. He cannot threaten now.  
His power has pass'd to others. I am not  
Ambitious. If they use it well, 'tis well,  
And I am needed not—

*Crom.* [*Crosses to R.*] Farewell, then, Sir;  
But not, I trust, for ever. Go, in peace,  
Amid the voices of the nations hear and note  
What they shall say of England and of Cromwell.  
Farewell, sweet lady, pray for her and me.

[*To FLORENCE.*]

Come, I have business, both of you, farewell!

[*Exeunt all, but WILLIAM and HOST.*]

*Host.* Confess now, I have done well in discovering these villanies.

*Will.* Ay, thou art an Eldorado of cunning.

*Host.* Herein you see the man of experience: I did not rush to tell it all directly.

*Will.* No, indeed, thou didst not, and had I not been there to extract the pearl of discovery from the jaw-bone of ignorance with the forceps of discernment, my Master by this time had been sped.

*Host.* Why, I was in the very nick of time. I am older than thou art.

*Will.* Thy experience did ever squint, and the obliquity of the mind grows worse with years. Yet I grant thee, as it hath happened, thou hast been equal to the occasion, which is true greatness, and that thou art great no one who looks at thee can deny. I am glad that Wyckoff hath at length paid his long reckoning.

*Host.* But he hath not, he hath not!

*Will.* Did you not see them take him?—

*Host.* 'Tis all very well to jest, but I have often seen, that when a poor man is defrauded, first there is no justice whatsoever, and again, if there be any, it is in this wise, that, while the wrong-doer suffers by the Law, the Law swallows up the simple desired thing, which is restitution. The Law takes the money, the Law disposes of the chattels, and finally, Jack Ketch, who is the Law's Ancient and most grim functionary, lays claim to the clothes. There was more real justice, friend Will, in the little finger of the Law of Moses, than in the whole right arm and sword of our boasted English trull, and you may throw her scales and blind-man's-buff frippery into the bargain.

*Will.* Stop, stop, thou art struck with an apoplexy of sense. Wisdom peeps through both thine eyes, like the unexpected apparition of a bed-ridden old woman at a garret window. Thou art the very owl of Minerva, and the little bill, that thou ever carriest with thee, is given thee for this purpose, to peck at man's frailty in the matter of repayment. Come, thou art in danger. I must have thee bled.

*Host.* I tell thee I have bled, as much as e'er a kettle-pated fellow of them all in these wars. I am defunct of nearly all my substance.



*Will.* Substance? Why there is scarcely a doorway thou canst pass through; and if one of Hell's gate-posts be not put back a foot or two, thou wilt be left, at thy latter end, like a huge undelivered parcel in the lumber-room of Charon.

*Host.* I know not any carrier of that name, but 'tis ill twitting a man, when he is in earnest, and did I not love thee, and were this not a day of rejoicing, thou shouldst drink no more out of mine own silver flagon.

*Will.* Nay, I meant not to offend thee. Come, we part soon. My master will pay thee thrice that thou hast lost by this captain.

*Host.* Pish! I care not for ten times the money. Thou understandest not the feelings of a tradesman.

*Will.* Come along, come along. The boat stays under the bridge. Mistress Barbara is already on board the ship, and swears that tar is the perfumery of Satan. Come, I may never see thee again, and although we shall not moisten our parting with tears, it would scarcely, methinks, be appropriate that we should say to each other "God be with you!" thirsting. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III.

[*Last Grooves.*]

*Drawing-room at Whitehall, with practicable folding doors and curtains, in the last Cut, 3rd Grooves. A Nurse discovered in attendance. The Lady ELIZABETH is lying on a Couch, surrounded by the Family of CROMWELL. Her Sisters are kneeling around her.*

*Eliz.* Leave me awhile; I shall be better soon. I would but see my father; pray you seek him, I wish to speak with him.

*Lady Crom.* Nay, my sweet child, You must not be alone.

*Eliz.* Dear mother, pardon, I shall be better.

*Nurse.* The physician said She must not be denied the thing she asks.

*Lady Crom.* Well, then—but let me cover thee, my sweet, The night is cold.

*Eliz.* No! no! I scarce can breathe.

*Lady Crom.* Indeed she mends, her eyes are brighter. Come.

[*They rise, and go out quietly.*]

*Eliz.* [*Raising herself.*] Unbare my beating bosom to the wind,  
And let the breath of Heaven wander through  
The dreary twilight of my tangled hair.  
Mine eyes shall never sparkle any more,  
Save with the fearful glitter of unrest;  
My cheeks flush not with any hope on earth;  
But with the live glow in their ash burn on.  
Death holds his Carnival of winter roses  
Till their last blossom drops within the grave.  
Hush! what was that? I thought I heard a noise:  
He comes, my father comes! Away all thought  
Of self—Away, base passion, that would bind  
My winged soul to earth,—hush! hush! he comes.

[*Pause.*]

'Twas but the night-wind's flagging breath! No sound  
Of mortal footstep, as it hither crept  
Tiptoe and carefully, 'twas like a murderer,  
That in his sleep walks forth. See, how he threads his way  
'Mid all the antique chattels of the room  
Where it was none! Mark, where his careful feet  
Avoid yon blood-stains, though they shrink not when  
The grey rat courses o'er them! Nay, 'tis gone.  
A shape of fancy's painting to the sight.  
'Twas but the wind, I said—whose fleeting voice

The vaulted corridor did syllable aloud,  
Mingling my name with tombs.  
Again, I hear  
It is his heavy footstep—

*Enter CROMWELL, L.*

Father! here  
Come close and press me warmly to thee, quick!  
Lest Death step in between us—'  
Reach me here  
That cup. My voice fails—not that hand! 'tis blood,

*[He lets fall the cup.]*

As in my dreams. I would assoil him. Father!  
'Tis said, upon the giddy verge of life  
The eye grows steady, and the soul sees clear  
Thought guiding action in all human things,  
Not in the busy, whirling masque of life,  
Reality unreal, but in truth.  
Then the eye cuts as the chirurgeon's knife  
Mocks the poor corpse. I saw not when he died:  
Yet last night was a scaffold, there! all black,  
And one stood visor'd by, with glittering axe  
Who struck the bare neck of a kneeling form—  
Methought the head of him that seem'd to die,  
With ghastly face and painful, patient stare,  
Glided along the sable, blood-gilt floor,  
As unseen fiends did pull it by its mass  
Of dank and dabbled hair, and when I turn'd  
Mine eyes to see it not, the headsman's mask  
Had fallen to the ground—  
Thou didst not do it?  
For it was *thy* face. Father, answer me! *[She implores in a very earnest attitude, and gradually falls back.]*

*Crom. [Stands amazed at his daughter's action.]*  
I'll hear no more. 'Twas not my daughter spoke—  
She's dead, and Heaven reproves me with a voice  
From yon pale tenement of clay. My hair's on end.  
She said that fiends dragg'd his, 'tis mine they tug.  
Avaunt! I meant well. *[Shouts are heard without.]*  
Hark! hear without  
A Babel of hoarse demons clamouring loud  
For Cromwell, the Protector!

*[His daughter points upward.]*

No! not there.  
I cannot follow thee. A Spirit stands,  
Anointed, in the breach of Heaven's walls,  
Behind him streams intolerable light,  
His floating locks are crown'd—His look repels—  
I was his murderer on earth—His gaze  
Speaks pity; but not pardon—Let me rise,  
There's mercy on his brow—I fall, I fall.  
I tell ye loose me, ere I see him not:  
His form recedes, clouds hide him from my sight:  
A hand of midnight grasps me by the throat.  
They call'd me Cromwell when I liv'd on earth,  
And said I slew a king. There is no air—

*[He sinks exhausted on a chair.]*

*Enter PEARSON.*

*Eliz.* [To PEARSON.] Pearson, thou lov'st him?

*Pear.* Madam, with a love Born of those moments when men's lives are cheap.

[Looks at CROMWELL.]

The dark fit is upon him. I have found  
'Tis best to leave him to himself;—

*Eliz.* No! no!

There is no time. My breath is short. O Pearson,  
Rouse him from that cold torpor, ere I die.  
Life will not turn my hour-glass any more,  
Whose thin sands, sinking at their centre fast,  
Ebb hollowly away. I would but speak  
A few soft words of comfort, pray him to  
Repent; there is repentance,—for his heart  
Sinn'd not so deeply as the world may think.

*Crom.* [Raising himself.] Who said repentance?  
What's done, is done well.  
I stand acquitted. Daughter, cheer thee, rise.  
Thou shalt recover, my sweet darling. List!  
It was the Lord reveal'd it to me.

*Eliz.* Cease!

Father, blaspheme no longer; with such words  
Feed the wild fever of the enthusiast crew,  
Pander to hypocrites; but not here, now,  
Deceive thyself, or me—

[During this Pearson has slowly withdrawn.]

*Crom.* This is not well;  
As the Lord liveth, those poor lips, my child,  
Speak foolishness. Who taught thee to rebuke  
Thy father? Know, he stands 'twixt thee and God,  
Not thou between the living God and him.

*Eliz.* What was that agony that tore thee now?— Why didst thou swoon and talk of murder, kings, Of hell and sulphur and the mocking fiends?

*Crom.* Must thou now learn that when my soul is dark  
With sorrow, agitation, melancholy,  
I am possess'd with black delirious fits?—  
'Twas so ere thou wert born, ere I was call'd  
Unto a burden heavier, than man  
Unsuffering may bear; but, daughter, listen!  
I am not guilty! if the human mind  
May keep account with its own issuings forth  
To act and do; if thought deceive us not,  
And reason live in man. I am not guilty, if  
The blind chimera of an earth-crown'd king  
Be less than God's truth—not, if it be well  
To love this people; to have drawn the sword  
For mercy's sake alone. I am not guilty!  
(O God! call back her eyes' fast fading light,  
Lest she die judging me.) I am not guilty!  
Except in loving thee too well. My lips  
Shall speak no more at the eternal judgment  
Than this—

*Eliz.* 'Tis truth! It cannot be but truth,  
All things seem different, yet just now I thought  
To see more clearly, whilst I dar'd to judge him—  
How happy am I now—forgive me, oh!  
My father!

*Crom.* It has been, that I have shrunk  
From noble consciousness of the good work,  
For love of thee—seeing thee pine and faint,  
Deeming thy parent guilty of much blood,  
And great deeds for the small base thought of self.  
Thus, like the patriarch, I have cried aloud  
Unto the Lord, rebelling thus against  
His holy will. This is my darkest error.

*Eliz.* Now, let me comfort him and die in peace. O father, 'tis another love that bends This blighted form to earth.

*Crom.* Ha! What is this? Thy husband!

*Eliz.* Fear not, I am pure in thought  
And deed—yet I was married early,  
Ere I had lov'd. I could not choose but love,  
When I saw one—No matter—I am pure;  
But death is welcome. Do not frown on me:  
I ne'er had told thee, but for comfort's sake,  
Lest thou shouldst think that thou hadst slain thy daughter.

*Crom.* Can this be true?  
And she is dying thus!  
Would I had known it sooner; ere, alas!  
It was too late. Come, tell me everything.

[*He kneels down beside her.*]

*Eliz.* Nay, let this thing go by; clasp me unto thee.  
Forgive me all the pain that I have cost thee.  
I feel as if I were again a child  
That prattled by thy side, ere strife had come,  
And sown those wrinkles in thy lofty brow;  
'Bend till my faded fingers reach to smooth them!  
I cannot think but of an evening walk,  
When thou didst tell me of the life of David,  
And how he dwelt with God—'twas on the bench  
Round the oak tree in the fair pasturage,  
[*Organ plays.*]  
Behind the church;—see, see, yon arched window  
Is full of light. Hush! they are singing, hush!  
The sun is cheerful! Nature praises God.  
Leave me not yet, my father, spare one hour  
Unto thy child. Nay, then, we shall meet soon.  
Thou smil'st, sweet Spirit, all the rest grows dim!  
See by yon pale and monumental form,  
The old man kneeling, weeps. I come! I come!

[*Falls back and dies, her hands clasped in the attitude of a recumbent marble effigy. During the latter part, till the interruption, an organ is heard playing solemn music.*]

*Enter a Servant, L.; he makes a sign that some one is coming. CROMWELL bows his head. Enter a PHYSICIAN, LADY CROMWELL, and Sisters, L.*

*Phy.* Doth she sleep?—

*Crom.* Ay, tread softly, for the ground Is holy—

*Phy.* [*Addressing the body.*] Lady!

*Crom.* He, she answereth, Is there! [*Points above.*]

*Lady Crom.* Dead! oh, Elizabeth!

*Crom.* Why griev'st thou, woman!  
Rejoice with the angels rather.  
Did I not hear

But now an organ?— [*To the Physician.*]

*Phy.* 'Twas, I think, my lord, Your secretary, Milton.

*Crom.* Let him come here.

[*Exit PHYSICIAN, U.E.R. During this time, LADY CROMWELL kneels by the body of her daughter, whilst a curtain is drawn round the couch. The folding-doors and curtains close all in as CROMWELL goes, L.*]

*Enter an OFFICER and Officers in Naval Uniform with Despatches, L.*

*Offi.* These to your Highness!

*Crom.* [*Tearing them open.*] C. From our admiral,  
The gallant Blake. Another victory—  
The Hollanders have yielded, that did late  
Insult our English flag.

[*Shouting is heard without.*]

*Milton.* [*Who has entered, U.E.R., unperceived.*] Most humble tenders From France and Spain await  
your Excellency.

*Crom.* Ay! we will treat anon.

*Milton.* The Turks have yielded  
The traitor Hyde—The Vaudois, sav'd, are blessing,  
In their bright peaceful valleys, your great name,  
First in their prayers to Heaven—

*An Usher.* Sir, there are messages From various sects; the enfranchis'd Jews, and all Whose burdens  
you have lighten'd, pray to see you.

*Crom.* Let all come in. I need all grateful hearts Around me now.

*Enter an Officer with IRONSIDES, L.*

*Offi.* [*Speaking softly.*] My lord!

*Crom.* Speak out, I say!  
Thou tear'st my heart-strings with thy whispering.  
It is grown a habit here not wanted more.  
Sir, I am childless. Speak your message out.  
I have no heart now, save for England's glory.

*Offi.* My lord, will't please you to receive these letters? Dunkirk is ceded to the English crown.

*Crom.* Crown, sirrah? Where didst thou teach thy tongue that tinsel word? Go, mend thy speech,  
although thou bear'st good tidings.

*He walks to and fro.*

Had she but liv'd to hear this. Yet, O God,  
Thy will be done!

[*To an officer.*]

Now let the cannon speak,  
And trumpets tell this news unto the nation.

[*Flourish of trumpets and cannon behind the scenes.*]

'Tis well! I'll make the name of England sound  
As great, as glorious, with as full an echo,  
As ever that of Rome in olden time.  
By distant shores, in every creek and sea,  
Her fleets shall lend proud shadows to the waters,  
While their loud salvos silence hostile forts  
With luxury of daring. Englishmen  
Shall carry welcome with their wanderings.

Her name shall be the world's great watchword, fram'd  
To make far tyrants tremble, slaves, rejoicing,  
Unlock their lean arms from their hollow breasts,  
And good men challenge holy brotherhood,  
Where'er that word of pride is heard around.  
For this the shallow name of king be lost  
In the majestic freedom of the age.  
'Tis slaves have need of trappings for their lords.  
By Heaven, I say, a score of kings, each back'd  
By his mean date of twenty rotted sires,  
Could do no more than this. I will be more  
Than all these weak and hireling Stuarts. This  
Let Time and England judge, as years roll on.

[*Flourish as the curtain falls.*]

\*This is a line interpolated, in my last revision of the passage, from Shelley's "Revolt of Islam." It was pointed out to me by a friend, who thought it would give force and clearness to the contest. The noble stanzas on America, from which it is taken, will be found in Ascham's edition of "Shelley's Poems," page 147, commencing with

"There is a people mighty in its youth."

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