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Transcriber's Note:

This e-book contains the text of *André*, extracted from **Representative Plays by American Dramatists: Vol 1, 1765-1819**. Comments and background to all the plays, and links to the other plays are available [here](#).

For your convenience, the transcribers have provided the following links:

[WILLIAM DUNLAP](#)
[PREFACE](#)
[PROLOGUE](#)
[CHARACTERS](#)
[ACT I.](#)
[ACT II.](#)
[ACT III.](#)
[ACT IV.](#)
[ACT V.](#)

Spelling as in the original has been preserved.

ANDRÉ

[Pg 499]

By

WILLIAM DUNLAP

[Pg 500]



WILLIAM DUNLAP

[Pg 501]

WILLIAM DUNLAP: FATHER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE (1766-1839)

The life of William Dunlap is full of colour and variety. Upon his shoulders very largely rests the responsibility for whatever knowledge we have of the atmosphere of the early theatre in America, and of the personalities of the players. For, as a boy, his father being a Loyalist, there is no doubt that young William used to frequent the play-house of the Red Coats, and we would like to believe actually saw some of the performances with which Major André was connected.

He was born at Perth Amboy, then the seat of government for the Province of New Jersey, on February 19, 1766 (where he died September 28, 1839), and, therefore, as an historian of the theatre, he was able to glean his information from first hand sources. Yet, his monumental work on the "History of the American Theatre" was written in late years, when memory was beginning to be overclouded, and, in recent times, it has been shown that Dunlap was not always careful in his dates or in his statements. George Seilhamer, whose three volumes, dealing with the American Theatre before the year 1800, are invaluable, is particularly acrimonious in his strictures against Dunlap. Nevertheless, he has to confess his indebtedness to the Father of the American Theatre.

Dunlap was many-sided in his tastes and activities. There is small reason to doubt that from his earliest years the theatre proved his most attractive pleasure. But, when he was scarcely in the flush of youth, he went to Europe, and studied art under Benjamin West. Throughout his life he was ever producing canvases, and designing, and his interest in the art activity of the country, which connects his name with the establishment of the New York Academy of Design, together with his writing on the subject, make him an important figure in that line of work.

On his return from Europe, as we have already noted, he was fired to write plays through the success of Royall Tyler, and he began his long career as dramatist, which threw him upon his own inventive resourcefulness, and so closely identified him with the name of the German, Kotzebue, whose plays he used to translate and adapt by the wholesale, as did also Charles Smith.

[Pg 502]

The pictures of William Dunlap are very careful to indicate in realistic fashion the fact that he had but one eye. When a boy, one of his playmates at school threw a stone, which hit his right eye. But though he was thus early made single-visioned, he saw more than his contemporaries; for he was a man who mingled much in the social life of the time, and he had a variety of friends, among them Charles Brockden Brown, the novelist, and George Frederick Cooke, the tragedian. He was the biographer for both of them, and these volumes are filled with anecdote, which

throws light, not only on the subjects, but upon the observational taste of the writer. There are those who claim that he was unjust to Cooke, making him more of a drunkard than he really was. And the effect the book had on some of its readers may excellently well be seen by Lord Byron's exclamation, after having finished it. As quoted by Miss Crawford, in her "Romance of the American Theatre," he said: "Such a book! I believe, since 'Drunken Barnaby's Journal,' nothing like it has drenched the press. All green-room and tap-room, drams and the drama. Brandy, whiskey-punch, and, latterly, toddy, overflow every page. Two things are rather marvelous; first, that a man should live so long drunk, and next that he should have found a sober biographer."

Dunlap's first play was called "The Modest Soldier; or, Love in New York" (1787). We shall let him be his own chronicler:

As a medium of communication between the playwright and the manager, a man was pointed out, who had for a time been of some consequence on the London boards, and now resided under another name in New York. This was the Dubellamy of the English stage, a first singer and *walking-gentleman*. He was now past his meridian, but still a handsome man, and was found sufficiently easy of access and full of the courtesy of the old school. A meeting was arranged at the City Tavern, and a bottle of Madeira discussed with the merits of this first-born of a would-be author. The wine was praised, and the play was praised—the first, perhaps, made the second tolerable—that must be good which can repay a man of the world for listening to an author who reads his own play.

In due course of time, the youthful playwright reached the presence of the then all-powerful actors, Hallam and Henry, and, after some conference with them, the play was accepted. But though accepted, it was not produced, that auspicious occasion being deferred whenever the subject was broached. At this time, young Dunlap was introduced to the stony paths of playwriting. He had to alter his manuscript in many ways, only to see it laid upon the shelf until some future occasion. And, according to his confession, the reason the piece did not receive immediate production was because there was no part which Henry, the six-foot, handsome idol of the day, could see himself in to his own satisfaction.

[Pg 503]

Dunlap's next play was "The Father; or, American Shandy-ism,"^[1] which was produced on September 7, 1789. It was published almost immediately, and was later reprinted, under the title of "The Father of an Only Child."

Most historians call attention to the fact that to Dunlap belongs the credit of having first introduced to the American stage the German dialect of the later Comedian. Even as we look to Tyler's "The Contrast" for the first Yankee, to Samuel Low's "Politician Out-witted" for an early example of Negro dialect, so may we trace other veins of American characteristics as they appeared in early American dramas.

But it is to "Darby's Return,"^[2] the musical piece, that our interest points, because it was produced for the benefit of Thomas Wignell, at the New-York Theatre (November 24, 1789), and probably boasted among its first-nighters George Washington. Writes Dunlap:

The eyes of the audience were frequently bent on his countenance, and to watch the emotions produced by any particular passage upon him was the simultaneous employment of all. When Wignell, as *Darby*, recounts what had befallen him in America, in New York, at the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and the inauguration of the President, the interest expressed by the audience in the looks and the changes of countenance of this great man became intense.

And then there follows an indication by Dunlap of where Washington smiled, and where he showed displeasure. And, altogether, there was much perturbation of mind over every quiver of his eye-lash. The fact of the matter is, as a playgoer, the Father of our Country figured quite as constantly as the Father of our Theatre. When the seat of Government changed from New York to Philadelphia, President Washington's love of the theatre prompted many theatrical enterprises to follow in his wake, and we have an interesting picture, painted in words by Seilhamer (ii, 316), of the scene at the old Southwark on such an occasion. He says:

[Pg 504]

[The President] frequently occupied the east stage-box, which was fitted up expressly for his reception. Over the front of the box was the United States coat-of-arms and the interior was gracefully festooned with red drapery. The front of the box and the seats were cushioned. According to John [*sic*] Durang, Washington's reception at the theatre was always exceedingly formal and ceremonious. A soldier was generally posted at each stage-door; four soldiers were placed in the gallery; a military guard attended. Mr. Wignell, in a full dress of black, with his hair elaborately powdered in the fashion of the time, and holding two wax candles in silver candle-sticks, was accustomed to receive the President at the box-door and conduct Washington and his party to their seats. Even the newspapers began to take notice of the President's contemplated visits to the theatre.

This is the atmosphere which must have attended the performance of Dunlap's "Darby's Return."

The play which probably is best known to-day, as by William Dunlap, is his "André,"^[3] in which Washington figures as the General, later to appear under his full name, when Dunlap utilized the old drama in a manuscript libretto, entitled "The Glory of Columbia—Her Yeomanry" (1817). The

play was produced on March 30, 1798, after Dunlap had become manager of the New Park Theatre, within whose proscenium it was given. Professor Matthews, editing the piece for the Dunlap Society (No. 4, 1887), claims that this was the first drama acted in the United States during Washington's life, in which he was made to appear on the stage of a theatre. But it must not be forgotten that in "The Fall of British Tyranny," written in 1776, by Leacock, Washington appears for the first time in any piece of American fiction. Dunlap writes of the performance (American Theatre, ii, 20):

[Pg 505]

The receipts were 817 dollars, a temporary relief. The play was received with warm applause, until Mr. Cooper, in the character of a young American officer, who had been treated as a brother by André when a prisoner with the British, in his zeal and gratitude, having pleaded for the life of the spy in vain, tears the American cockade from his casque, and throws it from him. This was not, perhaps could not be, understood by a mixed assembly; they thought the country and its defenders insulted, and a hiss ensued—it was soon quieted, and the play ended with applause. But the feeling excited by the incident was propagated out of doors. Cooper's friends wished the play withdrawn, on his account, fearing for his popularity. However, the author made an alteration in the incident, and subsequently all went on to the end with applause.

A scene from the last act of "André"^[4] was produced at an American Drama Matinée, under the auspices of the American Drama Committee of the Drama League of America, New York Centre, on January 22nd and 23rd, 1917. There are many Arnold and André plays, some of which have been noted by Professor Matthews.^[5] Another interesting historical study is the stage popularity of Nathan Hale.

We might go on indefinitely, narrating incidents connected with Dunlap as citizen, painter, playwright, author, and theatrical manager, for within a very short time he managed the John Street and New Park Theatres, retiring for a while in 1805.

But this is sufficient to illustrate the pioneer character of his work and influence. Inaccurate he may have been in his "History of the American Theatre," but the atmosphere is there, and he never failed to recognize merit, and to give touches of character to the actors, without which our impression of the early theatre in this country would be the poorer. The name of William Dunlap is intimately associated with the beginnings of American painting, American literary life and the American Theatre. It is for these he will ever remain distinguished.

As a playwright, he wrote so rapidly, and so constantly utilized over and over again, not only his own material, but the materials of others, that it is not surprising to find him often in dispute with dramatic authors of the time. A typical disagreement occurred in the case of the actor John Hodgkinson (1767-1805), whose drama, "The Man of Fortitude; or, the Knight's Adventure," given at the John Street Theatre, on June 7, 1797, was, according to Dunlap, based on his own one-act verse play, "The Knight's Adventure," submitted to the actor some years before.

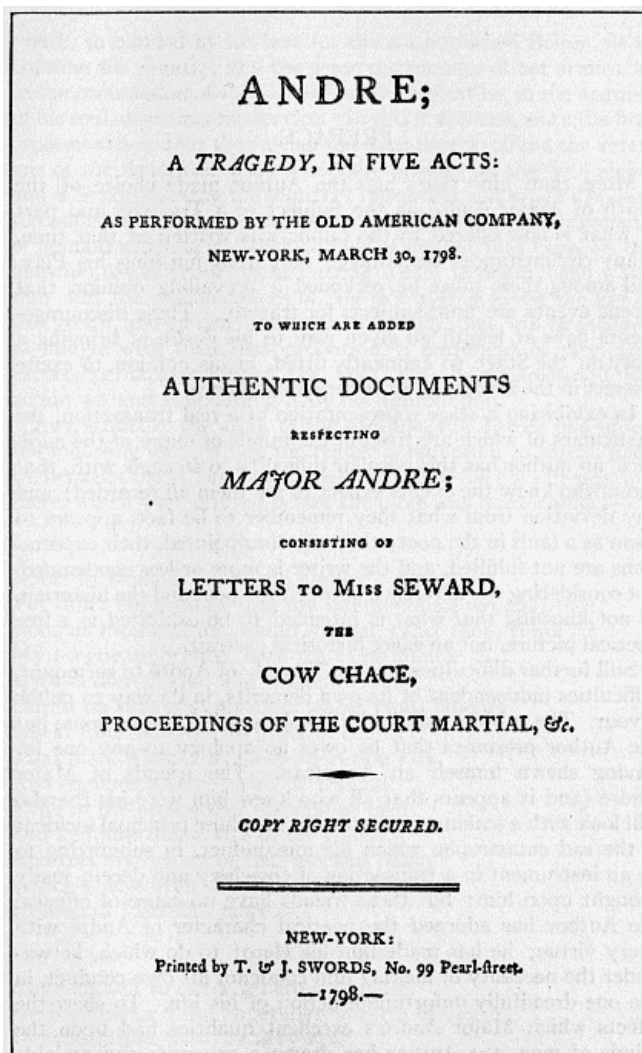
[Pg 506]

Only the play, based on the 1798 edition, is here reproduced. The authentic documents are omitted.

[Pg 507]

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] The/Father;/or,/American Shandy-ism./A Comedy,/As performed at the New-York Theatre,/By the/Old American Company./Written in the year 1788./With what fond hope, through many a blissful hour,/We give the soul to Fancy's pleasing pow'r./Conquest of Canaan./New-York:/Printed by Hodge, Allen & Campbell./ M, DCC, LXXXIX./
- [2] Darby's Return:/A Comic Sketch,/As Performed at the New-York Theatre,/ November 24, 1789,/For the Benefit of Mr. Wignell. Written by William Dunlap./ New-York:/Printed by Hodge, Allen and Campbell./And Sold at their respective Bookstores,/and by Berry and Rogers./M, DCC, LXXXIX./
- [3] André;/A Tragedy, in Five Acts:/As Performed by the Old American Company,/ New-York, March 30, 1798./To which are added,/Authentic Documents/respecting/ Major André;/Consisting of/Letters to Miss Seward,/The/Cow Chace,/Proceedings of the Court Martial, &c./Copy Right Secured./New-York:/Printed by T. & J. Swords, No. 99 Pearl-street./1798./
- [4] One of Dunlap's best-known tragedies was "Leicester," published by David Longworth in 1807.
- [5] Freneau began a play, "The Spy" (Pattee, "Poems of Philip Freneau"), in which André was a character.



FAC-SIMILE TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION

[Pg 508]

PREFACE

More than nine years ago the Author made choice of the death of Major André as the Subject of a Tragedy, and part of what is now offered to the public was written at that time. Many circumstances discouraged him from finishing his Play, and among them must be reckoned a prevailing opinion that recent events are unfit subjects for tragedy. These discouragements have at length all given way to his desire of bringing a story on the Stage so eminently fitted, in his opinion, to excite interest in the breasts of an American audience.

In exhibiting a stage representation of a real transaction, the particulars of which are fresh in the minds of many of the audience, an author has this peculiar difficulty to struggle with, that those who know the events expect to see them *all* recorded; and any deviation from what they remember to be fact, appears to them as a fault in the poet; they are disappointed, their expectations are not fulfilled, and the writer is more or less condemned, not considering the difference between the poet and the historian, or not knowing that what is intended to be exhibited is a free poetical picture, not an exact historical portrait.

Still further difficulties has the Tragedy of André to surmount, difficulties independent of its own demerits, in its way to public favour. The subject necessarily involves political questions; but the Author presumes that he owes no apology to any one for having shewn himself an American. The friends of Major André (and it appears that all who knew him were his friends) will look with a jealous eye on the Poem, whose principal incident is the sad catastrophe which his misconduct, in submitting to be an instrument in a transaction of treachery and deceit, justly brought upon him: but these friends have no cause of offence; the Author has adorned the poetical character of André with every virtue; he has made him his Hero; to do which, he was under the necessity of making him condemn his own conduct, in the one dreadfully unfortunate action of his life. To shew the effects which Major André's excellent qualities had upon the minds of men, the Author has drawn a generous and amiable youth, so blinded by his love for the accomplished Briton, as to consider his country, and the great commander of her armies, as in the commission of such horrid injustice, that he, in the anguish of his soul, disclaims the service. In this it appears, since the first representation, that the Author has gone near to offend the veterans of the American army who were present on the first night, and who not knowing the sequel of the action, felt much disposed to condemn him: but surely they must remember the diversity of opinion which agitated the minds of men at that time, on the question of the propriety of putting André to

[Pg 509]

death; and when they add the circumstances of André's having saved the life of this youth, and gained his ardent friendship, they will be inclined to mingle with their disapprobation, a sentiment of pity, and excuse, perhaps commend the Poet, who has represented the action without sanctioning it by his approbation.

As a sequel to the affair of the cockade, the Author has added the following lines, which the reader is requested to insert, page 55, between the 5th and 15th lines, instead of the lines he will find there, which were printed before the piece was represented.^[6]—

BLAND.

Noble M'Donald, truth and honour's champion!
Yet think not strange that my intemperance wrong'd thee:
Good as thou art! for, would'st thou, canst thou, think it?
My tongue, unbridled, hath the same offence,
With action violent, and boisterous tone,
Hurl'd on that glorious man, whose pious labours
Shield from every ill his grateful country!
That man, whom friends to adoration love,
And enemies revere.—Yes, M'Donald,
Even in the presence of the first of men
Did I abjure the service of my country,
And reft my helmet of that glorious badge
Which graces even the brow of Washington.
How shall I see him more!—

M'DONALD.

Alive himself to every generous impulse,
He hath excus'd the impetuous warmth of youth,
In expectation that thy fiery soul,
Chasten'd by time and reason, will receive
The stamp indelible of godlike virtue.
To me, in trust, he gave this badge disclaim'd,
With power, when thou shouldst see thy wrongful error,
From him, to reinstate it in thy helm,
And thee in his high favour. [Gives the cockade.

[Pg 510]

BLAND [*takes the cockade and replaces it*].

Shall I speak my thoughts of thee and him?
No:—let my actions henceforth shew what thou
And he have made me. Ne'er shall my helmet
Lack again its proudest, noblest ornament,
Until my country knows the rest of peace,
Or Bland the peace of death! [Exit.

This alteration, as well as the whole performance, on the second night, met the warm approbation of the audience.

To the performers the Author takes this opportunity of returning his thanks for their exertions in his behalf; perfectly convinced, that on this, as on former occasions, the members of the Old American Company have anxiously striven to oblige him.

If this Play is successful, it will be a proof that recent events may be so managed in tragedy as to command popular attention; if it is unsuccessful, the question must remain undetermined until some more powerful writer shall again make the experiment. The Poem is now submitted to the ordeal of closet examination, with the Author's respectful assurance to every reader, that as it is not his interest, so it has not been his intention, to offend any; but, on the contrary, to impress, through the medium of a pleasing stage exhibition, the sublime lessons of Truth and Justice upon the minds of his countrymen.

W. DUNLAP.

New-York, April 4th, 1798.

[Pg 511]

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. MARTIN.

A native Bard, a native scene displays,
And claims your candour for his daring lays:
Daring, so soon, in mimic scenes to shew,
What each remembers as a real woe.

Who has forgot when gallant ANDRÉ died?
A name by Fate to Sorrow's self allied.
Who has forgot, when o'er the untimely bier,
Contending armies paus'd, to drop a tear.

Our Poet builds upon a fact tonight;
Yet claims, in building, every Poet's right;
To choose, embellish, lop, or add, or blend,
Fiction with truth, as best may suit his end;
Which, he avows, is pleasure to impart,
And move the passions but to mend the heart.

Oh, may no party-spirit blast his views,
Or turn to ill the meanings of the Muse:
She sings of wrongs long past, Men as they were,
To instruct, without reproach, the Men that are;
Then judge the Story by the genius shewn,
And praise, or damn, it, for its worth alone.

[Pg 512]

CHARACTERS

GENERAL, <i>dress, American staff uniform, blue, faced with buff, large gold epaulets, cocked hat, with the black and white cockade, indicating the union with France, buff waistcoat and breeches, boots,</i>	Mr. Hallam.
M'DONALD, <i>a man of forty years of age, uniform nearly the same of the first,</i>	Mr. Tyler.
SEWARD, <i>a man of thirty years of age, staff uniform,</i>	Mr. Martin.
ANDRÉ, <i>a man of twenty-nine years of age, full British uniform after the first scene,</i>	Mr. Hodgkinson.
BLAND, <i>a youthful but military figure, in the uniform of a Captain of horse—dress, a short blue coat, faced with red, and trimmed with gold lace, two small epaulets, a white waistcoat, leather breeches, boots and spurs; over the coat, crossing the chest from the right shoulder, a broad buff belt, to which is suspended a manageable hussar sword; a horseman's helmet on the head, decorated as usual, and the union cockade affixed,</i>	Mr. Cooper.
MELVILLE, <i>a man of middle age, and grave deportment; his dress a Captain's uniform when on duty; a blue coat, with red facings, gold epaulet, white waistcoat and breeches, boots and cocked hat, with the union cockade,</i>	Mr. Williamson.
BRITISH OFFICER,	Mr. Hogg.
AMERICAN OFFICER,	Mr. Miller.
CHILDREN,	Master Stockwell and Miss Hogg.
AMERICAN SERGEANT,	Mr. Seymour.
AMERICAN OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS, &c.	
MRS. BLAND,	Mrs. Melmoth.
HONORA,	Mrs. Johnson.

SCENE, the Village of Tappan, Encampment, and adjoining Country. Time, ten hours.

[Pg 513]

ANDRÉ

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Wood seen by starlight; an Encampment at a distance appearing between the trees.*

Enter MELVILLE.

MELVILLE.

The solemn hour, "when night and morning meet,"
Mysterious time, to superstition dear,
And superstition's guides, now passes by;
Deathlike in solitude. The sentinels,
In drowsy tones, from post to post, send on
The signal of the passing hour. "All's well,"
Sounds through the camp. Alas! all is not well;
Else, why stand I, a man, the friend of man,
At midnight's depth, deck'd in this murderous guise,
The habiliment of death, the badge of dire,
Necessitous coercion. 'T is not well.
—In vain the enlighten'd friends of suffering man
Point out, of war, the folly, guilt, and madness.
Still, age succeeds to age, and war to war;
And man, the murderer, marshalls out his hosts
In all the gaiety of festive pomp,
To spread around him death and desolation.
How long! how long!—
—Methinks I hear the tread of feet this way.
My meditating mood may work me woe. [Draws.
Stand, whoso'er thou art. Answer. Who's there?

Enter BLAND.

BLAND.

A friend.

MELVILLE.

Advance and give the countersign.

BLAND.

[Pg 514]

Hudson.

MELVILLE.

What, Bland!

BLAND.

Melville, my friend, you *here*?

MELVILLE.

And *well*, my brave young friend. But why do you,
At this dead hour of night, approach the camp,
On foot, and thus alone?

BLAND.

I have but now
Dismounted; and, from yon sequester'd cot,
Whose lonely taper through the crannied wall
Sheds its faint beams, and twinkles midst the trees,
Have I, adventurous, grop'd my darksome way.
My servant, and my horses, spent with toil,
There wait till morn.

MELVILLE.

Why waited not yourself?

BLAND.

Anxious to know the truth of those reports
Which, from the many mouths of busy Fame,
Still, as I pass'd, struck varying on my ear,
Each making th' other void. Nor does delay
The colour of my hasteful business suit.
I bring dispatches for our great Commander;
And hasted hither with design to wait
His rising, or awake him with the sun.

MELVILLE.

You will not need the last, for the blest sun

Ne'er rises on his slumbers; by the dawn
We see him mounted gaily in the field,
Or find him wrapt in meditation deep,
Planning the welfare of our war-worn land.

BLAND.

Prosper, kind heaven! and recompense his cares.

[Pg 515]

MELVILLE.

You're from the South, if I presume aright?

BLAND.

I am; and, Melville, I am fraught with news?
The South teems with events; convulsing ones:
The Briton, there, plays at no mimic war;
With gallant face he moves, and gallantly is met.
Brave spirits, rous'd by glory, throng our camp;
The hardy hunter, skill'd to fell the deer,
Or start the sluggish bear from covert rude;
And not a clown that comes, but from his youth
Is trained to pour from far the leaden death,
To climb the steep, to struggle with the stream,
To labour firmly under scorching skies,
And bear, unshrinking, winter's roughest blast.
This, and that heaven-inspir'd enthusiasm
Which ever animates the patriot's breast,
Shall far outweigh the lack of discipline.

MELVILLE.

Justice is ours; what shall prevail against her?

BLAND.

But as I past along, many strange tales,
And monstrous rumours, have my ears assail'd:
That Arnold had prov'd false; but he was ta'en,
And hung, or to be hung—I know not what.
Another told, that all our army, with their
Much lov'd Chief, sold and betray'd, were captur'd.
But, as I nearer drew, at yonder cot,
'T was said, that Arnold, traitor like, had fled;
And that a Briton, tried and prov'd a spy,
Was, on this day, as such, to suffer death.

MELVILLE.

As you drew near, plain truth advanced to meet you.
'T is even as you heard, my brave young friend.
Never had people on a single throw
More interest at stake; when he, who held
For us the die, prov'd false, and play'd us foul.
But for a circumstance of that nice kind,
Of cause so microscopic, that the tongues
Of inattentive men call it the effect
Of chance, we must have lost the glorious game.

[Pg 516]

BLAND.

Blest, blest be heaven! whatever was the cause!

MELVILLE.

The blow ere this had fallen that would have bruise'd
The tender plant which we have striven to rear,
Crush'd to the dust, no more to bless this soil.

BLAND.

What warded off the blow?

MELVILLE.

The brave young man, who this day dies, was seiz'd
Within our bounds, in rustic garb disguis'd.

He offer'd bribes to tempt the band that seiz'd him;
But the rough farmer, for his country arm'd,
That soil defending which his ploughshare turn'd,
Those laws, his father chose, and he approv'd,
Cannot, as mercenary soldiers may,
Be brib'd to sell the public-weal for gold.

BLAND.

'T is well. Just heaven! O, grant that thus may fall
All those who seek to bring this land to woe!
All those, who, or by open force, or dark
And secret machinations, seek to shake
The Tree of Liberty, or stop its growth,
In any soil where thou hast pleas'd to plant it.

MELVILLE.

Yet not a heart but pities and would save him;
For all confirm that he is brave and virtuous;
Known, but till now, the darling child of Honour.

BLAND [*contemptuously*].

And how is call'd this—honourable spy?

MELVILLE.

André's his name.

[Pg 517]

BLAND [*much agitated*].

André!

MELVILLE.

Aye, Major André.

BLAND.

André! Oh no, my friend, you're sure deceiv'd—
I'll pawn my life, my ever sacred fame,
My General's favour, or a soldier's honour,
That gallant André never yet put on
The guise of falsehood. Oh, it cannot be!

MELVILLE.

How might I be deceiv'd? I've heard him, seen him,
And what I tell, I tell from well-prov'd knowledge;
No second tale-bearer, who heard the news.

BLAND.

Pardon me, Melville. Oh, that well-known name,
So link'd with circumstances infamous!—
My friend must pardon me. Thou wilt not blame
When I shall tell what cause I have to love him:
What cause to think him nothing more the pupil
Of Honour stern, than sweet Humanity.
Rememberest thou, when cover'd o'er with wounds,
And left upon the field, I fell the prey
Of Britain? To a loathsome prison-ship
Confin'd, soon had I sunk, victim of death,
A death of aggravated miseries;
But, by benevolence urg'd, this best of men,
This gallant youth, then favour'd, high in power,
Sought out the pit obscene of foul disease,
Where I, and many a suffering soldier lay,
And, like an angel, seeking good for man,
Restor'd us light, and partial liberty.
Me he mark'd out his own. He nurst and cur'd,
He lov'd and made his friend. I liv'd by him,
And in my heart he liv'd, till, when exchang'd,
Duty and honour call'd me from my friend.—
Judge how my heart is tortur'd.—Gracious heaven!
Thus, thus to meet him on the brink of death—

[Pg 518]

A death so infamous! Heav'n grant my prayer. [Kneels.
That I may save him, O, inspire my heart
With thoughts, my tongue with words that move to pity!

[Rises.

Quick, Melville, shew me where my André lies.

MELVILLE.

Good wishes go with you.

BLAND.

I'll save my friend.

[Exeunt.

SCENE, *the Encampment, by starlight.*

Enter the GENERAL, M'DONALD and SEWARD.

GENERAL.

'T is well. Each sentinel upon his post
Stands firm, and meets me at the bayonet's point;
While in his tent the weary soldier lies,
The sweet reward of wholesome toil enjoying;
Resting secure as erst within his cot
He careless slept, his rural labour o'er;
Ere Britons dar'd to violate those laws,
Those boasted laws by which themselves are govern'd,
And strove to make their fellow-subjects slaves.

SEWARD.

They know to whom they owe their present safety.

GENERAL.

I hope they know that to themselves they owe it:
To that good discipline which they observe,
The discipline of men to order train'd,
Who know its value, and in whom 't is virtue:
To that prompt hardihood with which they meet
Or toil or danger, poverty or death.
Mankind who know not whence that spirit springs,
Which holds at bay all Britain's boasted power,
Gaze on their deeds astonish'd. See the youth
Start from his plough, and straightway play the hero;
Unmurmuring bear such toils as veterans shun;
Rest all content upon the dampsome earth;
Follow undaunted to the deathful charge;
Or, when occasion asks, lead to the breach,
Fearless of all the unusual din of war,
His former peaceful mates. O patriotism!
Thou wond'rous principle of god-like action!
Wherever liberty is found, there reigns
The love of country. Now the self-same spirit
Which fill'd the breast of great Leonidas,
Swells in the hearts of thousands on these plains,
Thousands who never heard the hero's tale.
'T is this alone which saves thee, O my country!
And, till that spirit flies these western shores,
No power on earth shall crush thee!

SEWARD.

'T is wond'rous!

The men of other climes from this shall see
How easy 't is to shake oppression off;
How all resistless is an union'd people:
And hence, from our success (which, by my soul,
I feel as much secur'd, as though our foes
Were now within their floating prisons hous'd,
And their proud prows all pointing to the east),
Shall other nations break their galling fetters,
And re-assume the dignity of man.

M'DONALD.

Are other nations in that happy state,
That, having broke Coercion's iron yoke,
They can submit to Order's gentle voice,
And walk on earth self-ruled? I much do fear it.
As to ourselves, in truth, I nothing see,
In all the wond'rous deeds which we perform,
But plain effects from causes full as plain.
Rises not man for ever 'gainst oppression?
It is the law of life; he can't avoid it.
But when the love of property unites
With sense of injuries past, and dread of future.
Is it then wonderful, that he should brave
A lesser evil to avoid a greater?

[Pg 520]

GENERAL [*sportively*].

'T is hard, quite hard, we may not please ourselves,
By our great deeds ascribing to our virtue.

SEWARD.

M'Donald never spares to lash our pride.

M'DONALD.

In truth I know of nought to make you proud.
I think there's none within the camp that draws
With better will his sword than does M'Donald.
I have a home to guard. My son is—butcher'd—

SEWARD.

Hast thou no nobler motives for thy arms
Than love of property and thirst of vengeance?

M'DONALD.

Yes, my good Seward, and yet nothing wond'rous.
I love this country for the sake of man.
My parents, and I thank them, cross'd the seas,
And made me native of fair Nature's world,
With room to grow and thrive in. I have thriven;
And feel my mind unshackled, free, expanding,
Grasping, with ken unbounded, mighty thoughts,
At which, if chance my mother had, good dame,
In Scotia, our revered parent soil,
Given me to see the day, I should have shrunk
Affrighted. Now, I see in this new world
A resting spot for man, if he can stand
Firm in his place, while Europe howls around him,
And all unsettled as the thoughts of vice,
Each nation in its turn threats him with feeble malice.
One trial, now, we prove; and I have met it.

GENERAL.

And met it like a man, my brave M'Donald.

M'DONALD.

I hope so; and I hope my every act
Has been the offspring of deliberate judgment;
Yet, feeling second's reason's cool resolves.
Oh! I could hate, if I did not more pity,
These bands of mercenary Europeans,
So wanting in the common sense of nature,
As, without shame, to sell themselves for pelf,
To aid the cause of darkness, murder man—
Without inquiry murder, and yet call
Their trade the trade of honour—high-soul'd honour—
Yet honour shall accord in act with falsehood.
Oh, that proud man should e'er descend to play
The tempter's part, and lure men to their ruin!
Deceit and honour badly pair together.

[Pg 521]

SEWARD.

You have much shew of reason; yet, methinks
What you suggest of one, whom fickle Fortune,
In her changeling mood, hath hurl'd, un pitying,
From her topmost height to lowest misery,
Tastes not of charity. André, I mean.

M'DONALD.

I mean him, too; sunk by misdeed, not fortune.
Fortune and chance, Oh, most convenient words!
Man runs the wild career of blind ambition,
Plunges in vice, takes falsehood for his buoy,
And when he feels the waves of ruin o'er him,
Curses, in "good set terms," poor Lady Fortune.

GENERAL [*sportively to SEWARD*].

His mood is all untoward; let us leave him.
Tho' he may think that he is bound to rail,
We are not bound to hear him.
Grant you that?

[*To M'DONALD.*]

M'DONALD.

Oh, freely, freely! you I never rail on.

GENERAL.

No thanks for that; you've courtesy for office.

M'DONALD.

You slander me.

GENERAL.

Slander that would not wound.
Worthy M'Donald, though it suits full well
The virtuous man to frown on all misdeeds;
Yet ever keep in mind that man is frail;
His tide of passion struggling still with Reason's
Fair and favourable gale, and adverse
Driving his unstable Bark upon the
Rocks of error. Should he sink thus shipwreck'd,
Sure it is not Virtue's voice that triumphs
In his ruin. I must seek rest. Adieu!

[*Exeunt GENERAL and SEWARD.*]

M'DONALD.

Both good and great thou art: first among men:
By nature, or by early habit, grac'd
With that blest quality which gives due force
To every faculty, and keeps the mind
In healthful equipoise, ready for action;
Invaluable temperance—by all
To be acquired, yet scarcely known to any.

[*Exit.*]

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE, a *Prison.*

ANDRÉ, *discovered in a pensive posture, sitting at a table; a book by him and candles: his dress neglected, his hair dishevelled: he rises and comes forward.*

ANDRÉ.

Kind heaven be thank'd for that I stand alone
In this sad hour of life's brief pilgrimage!
Single in misery; no one else involving,
In grief, in shame, and ruin. 'T is my comfort.

Thou, my thrice honour'd sire, in peace went'st down
Unto the tomb, nor knew to blush, nor knew
A pang for me! And thou, revered matron,
Couldst bless thy child, and yield thy breath in peace!
No wife shall weep, no child lament, my loss.
Thus may I consolation find in what
Was once my woe. I little thought to joy
In not possessing, as I erst possest,
Thy love, Honora! André's death, perhaps,
May cause a cloud pass o'er thy lovely face;
The pearly tear may steal from either eye;
For thou mayest feel a transient pang, nor wrong
A husband's rights: more than a transient pang
O mayest thou never feel! The morn draws nigh
To light me to my shame. Frail nature shrinks.—
And *is* death then so fearful? I have brav'd
Him, fearless, in the field, and steel'd my breast
Against his thousand horrors; but his cool,
His sure approach, requires a fortitude
Which nought but conscious rectitude can give.
[Retires, and sits leaning.]

[Pg 523]

Enter BLAND *unperceived by* ANDRÉ.

BLAND.

And is that André! Oh, how chang'd! Alas!
Where is that martial fire, that generous warmth,
Which glow'd his manly countenance throughout,
And gave to every look, to every act,
The tone of high chivalrous animation?—
André, my friend! look up.

ANDRÉ.

Who calls *me* friend?

BLAND.

Young Arthur Bland.

ANDRÉ [*rising*].

That name sounds like a friend's. *[With emotion.]*
I have inquir'd for thee—wish'd much to see thee—
I prithee take no note of these fool's tears—
My heart was full—and seeing thee—

BLAND [*embracing him*].

O André!—
I have but now arrived from the south—
Nor heard—till now—of this—I cannot speak.
Is this a place?—Oh, thus to find my friend!

ANDRÉ.

Still dost thou call me friend? I, who dared act
Against my reason, my declared opinion;
Against my conscience, and a soldier's fame?
Oft in the generous heat of glowing youth,
Oft have I said how fully I despis'd
All bribery base, all treacherous tricks in war:
Rather my blood should bathe these hostile shores,
And have it said, "he died a gallant soldier,"
Than with my country's gold encourage treason,
And thereby purchase gratitude and fame.

[Pg 524]

BLAND.

Still mayest thou say it, for thy heart's the same.

ANDRÉ.

Still is my heart the same: still may I say it:
But now my deeds will rise against my words;
And should I dare to talk of honest truth,

Frank undissembling probity and faith,
Memory would crimson o'er my burning cheek,
And actions retrospected choke the tale.
Still is my heart the same. But there has past
A day, an hour—which ne'er can be recall'd!
Unhappy man! tho' all thy life pass pure;
Mark'd by benevolence thy every deed;
The out-spread map, which shews the way thou'st trod,
Without one devious track, or doubtful line;
It all avails thee nought, if in one hour,
One hapless hour, thy feet are led astray;—
Thy happy deeds, all blotted from remembrance;
Cancel'd the record of thy former good.
Is it not hard, my friend? Is 't not unjust?

BLAND.

Not every record cancel'd—Oh, there are hearts,
Where Virtue's image, when 't is once engrav'd,
Can never know erasure.

ANDRÉ.

Generous Bland! *[Takes his hand.*
The hour draws nigh which ends my life's sad story.
I should be firm—

BLAND.

By heaven thou shalt not die!
Thou dost not sure deserve it. Betray'd, perhaps—
Condemn'd without due circumstance made known?
Thou didst not mean to tempt our officers?
Betray our yeoman soldiers to destruction?
Silent. Nay, then 't was from a duteous wish
To serve the cause thou wast in honour bound—

[Pg 525]

ANDRÉ.

Kind is my Bland, who to his generous heart,
Still finds excuses for his erring friend.
Attentive hear and judge me.—
Pleas'd with the honours daily shower'd upon me,
I glow'd with martial heat, my name to raise
Above the vulgar herd, who live to die,
And die to be forgotten. Thus I stood,
When, avarice or ambition Arnold tempted,
His country, fame, and honour to betray;
Linking his name to infamy eternal.
In confidence it was to be propos'd,
To plan with him the means which should ensure
Thy country's downfall. Nothing then I saw
But confidential favour in the service,
My country's glory, and my mounting fame;
Forgot my former purity of thought,
And high-ton'd honour's scruples disregarded.

BLAND.

It was thy duty so to serve thy country.

ANDRÉ.

Nay, nay; be cautious ever to admit
That duty can beget dissimulation.
On ground, unoccupied by either part,
Neutral esteem'd, I landed, and was met.
But ere my conference was with Arnold clos'd,
The day began to dawn: I then was told
That till the night I must my safety seek
In close concealment. Within your posts convey'd,
I found myself involv'd in unthought dangers.
Night came. I sought the vessel which had borne
Me to the fatal spot; but she was gone.
Retreat that way cut off, again I sought
Concealment with the traitors of your army.

[Pg 526]

Arnold now granted passes, and I doff'd
My martial garb, and put on curs'd disguise!
Thus in a peasant's form I pass'd your posts;
And when, as I conceiv'd, my danger o'er,
Was stopt and seiz'd by some returning scouts.
So did ambition lead me, step by step,
To treat with traitors, and encourage treason;
And then, bewilder'd in the guilty scene,
To quit my martial designating badges,
Deny my name, and sink into the spy.

BLAND.

Thou didst no more than was a soldier's duty,
To serve the part on which he drew his sword.
Thou shalt not die for this. Straight will I fly—
I surely shall prevail—

ANDRÉ.

It is in vain.
All has been tried. Each friendly argument—

BLAND.

All has not yet been tried. The powerful voice
Of friendship in thy cause, has not been heard.
My General favours *me*, and loves my father—
My gallant father! would that he were here!
But he, perhaps, now wants an André's care,
To cheer his hours—perhaps, now languishes
Amidst those horrors whence thou sav'd'st his son!
The present moment claims my thought. André—
I fly to save thee!—

ANDRÉ.

Bland, it is in vain.
But, hold—there is a service thou may'st do me.

BLAND.

Speak it.

ANDRÉ.

Oh, think, and as a soldier think,
How I must die—The *manner* of my death—
Like the base ruffian, or the midnight thief,
Ta'en in the act of stealing from the poor,
To be turn'd off the felon's—murderer's cart,
A mid-air spectacle to gaping clowns:—
To run a short, an envied course of glory,
And end it on a gibbet.—

[Pg 527]

BLAND.

Damnation!!

ANDRÉ.

Such is my doom. Oh! have the manner changed,
And of mere death I'll think not. Dost thou think—?
Perhaps thou canst gain *that*—?

BLAND [*almost in a frenzy*].

Thou shalt not die!

ANDRÉ.

Let me, Oh! let me die a soldier's death,
While friendly clouds of smoke shroud from all eyes
My last convulsive pangs, and I'm content.

BLAND [*with increasing emotion*].

Thou shalt not die! Curse on the laws of war!—

If worth like thine must thus be sacrificed,
To policy so cruel and unjust,
I will forswear my country and her service:
I'll hie me to the Briton, and with fire,
And sword, and every instrument of death
Or devastation, join in the work of war!
What, shall worth weigh for nought? I will avenge thee!

ANDRÉ.

Hold, hold, my friend; thy country's woes are full.
What! wouldst thou make me cause another traitor?
No more of this; and, if I die, believe me,
Thy country for my death incurs no blame.
Restrain thy ardour—but ceaselessly intreat,
That André may at least die as he lived,
A soldier.

BLAND.

By heaven thou shalt not die!—

[BLAND *rushes off*: ANDRÉ *looks after him with an expression of love and gratitude, then retires up the stage. Scene closes.*]

[Pg 528]

SCENE, *the GENERAL'S Quarters.*

Enter M'DONALD and SEWARD, in conversation.

M'DONALD [*coming forward*].

Three thousand miles the Atlantic wave rolls on,
Which bathed Columbia's shores, ere, on the strand
Of Europe, or of Afric, their continents,
Or sea-girt isles, it chafes.—

SEWARD.

Oh! would to heaven
That in mid-way between these sever'd worlds,
Rose barriers, all impassable to man,
Cutting off intercourse, till either side
Had lost all memory of the other!

M'DONALD.

What spur now goads thy warm imagination?

SEWARD.

Then might, perhaps, one land on earth be found,
Free from th' extremes of poverty and riches;
Where ne'er a scepter'd tyrant should be known,
Or tyrant lordling, curses of creation;—
Where the faint shrieks of woe-exhausted age,
Raving, in feeble madness, o'er the corse
Of a polluted daughter, stained by lust
Of viand-pamper'd luxury, might ne'er be heard;—
Where the blasted form of much abused
Beauty, by villainy seduced, by knowledge
All unguarded, might ne'er be view'd, flitting
Obscene, 'tween lamp and lamp, i' th' midnight street
Of all defiling city; where the child—

M'DONALD.

Hold! Shroud thy raven imagination!
Torture not me with images so curst!

SEWARD.

Soon shall our foes, inglorious, fly these shores.
Peace shall again return. Then Europe's ports
Shall pour a herd upon us, far more fell
Than those, her mercenary sons, who, now,
Threaten our sore chastisement.

[Pg 529]

M'DONALD.

Prophet of ill,
From Europe shall enriching commerce flow,
And many an ill attendant; but from thence
Shall likewise flow blest Science. Europe's knowledge,
By sharp experience bought, we should appropriate;
Striving thus to leap from that simplicity,
With ignorance curst, to that simplicity,
By knowledge blest; unknown the gulf between.

SEWARD.

Mere theoretic dreaming!

M'DONALD.

Blest wisdom
Seems, from out the chaos of the social world,
Where good and ill, in strange commixture, float,
To rise, by strong necessity, impell'd;
Starting, like Love divine, from womb of Night,
Illuming all, to order all reducing;
And shewing, by its bright and noontide blaze,
That happiness alone proceeds from justice.

SEWARD.

Dreams, dreams! Man can know nought but ill on earth.

M'DONALD.

I'll to my bed, for I have watch'd all night;
And may my sleep give pleasing repetition
Of these my waking dreams! Virtue's incentives. [Exit.

SEWARD.

Folly's chimeras rather: guides to error.

Enter BLAND, preceded by a SERGEANT.

SERGEANT.

Pacquets for the General. [Exit.

BLAND.

Seward, my friend!

[Pg 530]

SEWARD.

Captain! I'm glad to see the hue of health
Sit on a visage from the sallow south.

BLAND.

The lustihood of youth hath yet defied
The parching sun, and chilling dew of even.
The General—Seward—?

SEWARD.

I will lead you to him.

BLAND.

Seward, I must make bold. Leave us together,
When occasion offers. 'T will be friendly.

SEWARD.

I will not cross your purpose. [Exeunt.

SCENE, A Chamber.

Enter MRS. BLAND.

MRS. BLAND.

Yes, ever be this day a festival
In my domestic calendar. This morn
Will see my husband free. Even now, perhaps,
Ere yet Aurora flies the eastern hills,
Shunning the sultry sun, my Bland embarks.
Already, on the Hudson's dancing wave,
He chides the sluggish rowers, or supplicates
For gales propitious; that his eager arms
May clasp his wife, may bless his little ones.
Oh! how the tide of joy makes my heart bound,
Glowing with high and ardent expectation!

Enter two CHILDREN.

1st CHILD.

Here we are, Mama, up, and dress'd already.

MRS. BLAND.

And why were ye so early?

[Pg 531]

1st CHILD.

Why, did not you tell us that Papa was to be
home to-day?

MRS. BLAND.

I said, perhaps.

2nd CHILD [*disappointed*].

Perhaps!

1st CHILD.

I don't like perhaps's.

2nd CHILD.

No, nor I neither; nor "may be so's."

MRS. BLAND.

We make not certainties, my pretty loves;
I do not like "perhaps's" more than you do.

2nd CHILD.

Oh! don't say so, Mama! for I'm sure I hardly
ever ask you anything but you answer me with
"may be so," "perhaps,"—or "very likely."
"Mama, shall I go to the camp to-morrow, and
see the General?" "May be so, my dear." Hang
"may be so," say I.

MRS. BLAND.

Well said, Sir Pertness.

1st CHILD.

But I am sure, Mama, you said, that, to-day,
Papa would have his liberty.

MRS. BLAND.

So, your dear father, by his letters, told me.

2nd CHILD.

Why, then, I *am sure* he will be here to-day.
When he can come *to us*, I'm sure he will not
stay among those strange Englishmen and
Hessians. I often wish'd that I had wings to fly,
for then I would soon be with him.

MRS. BLAND.

Dear boy!

[Pg 532]

Enter SERVANT and gives a letter to MRS. BLAND.

SERVANT.

An express, madam, from New-York to
Headquarters, in passing, delivered this.

2nd CHILD.

Papa's coming home to-day, John.

[*Exeunt* SERVANT *and* CHILDREN.]

MRS. BLAND.

What fears assail me! Oh! I did not want
A letter now! [*She reads in great agitation, exclaiming, while
her eyes are fixed on the paper.*]
My husband! doom'd to die! Retaliation!
[*She looks forward with wildness, consternation and horror.*
To die, if André dies! He dies to-day!—
My husband to be murdered! And to-day!
To-day, if André dies! Retaliation!
O curst contrivance!—Madness relieve me!
Burst, burst, my brain!—Yet—André is not dead:
My husband lives. [*Looks at the letter.*] "One man has power."
I fly to save the father of my children! [*Rushes out.*]

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE, *the GENERAL'S Quarters.*

The GENERAL and BLAND come forward.

GENERAL [*papers in his hand*].

Captain, you are noted here with honourable
Praises. Depend upon that countenance
From me, which you have prov'd yourself so richly
Meriting. Both for your father's virtues,
And your own, your country owes you honour—
The sole return the poor can make for service.

BLAND.

If from my country ought I've merited,
Or gain'd the approbation of her champion,
At any other time, I should not dare,
Presumptuously, to shew my sense of it;
But now, my tongue, all shameless, dares to name
The boon, the precious recompense, I wish,
Which, granted, pays all service, past or future,
O'er pays the utmost I can e'er achieve.

[Pg 533]

GENERAL.

Brief, my young friend, briefly, your purpose.

BLAND.

If I have done my duty as a soldier;
If I have brav'd all dangers for my country;
If my brave father has deserved ought;
Call all to mind—and cancel all—but grant
My one request—mine, and humanity's.

GENERAL.

Be less profuse of words, and name your wish;
If fit, its fitness is the best assurance
That not in vain you sue; but, if unjust,
Thy merits, nor the merits of thy race,
Cannot its nature alter, nor my mind,
From its determined opposition change.

BLAND.

You hold the fate of my most lov'd of friends;

As gallant soldier as e'er faced a foe,
Bless'd with each polish'd gift of social life,
And every virtue of humanity.
To me, a saviour from the pit of death,
To me, and many more my countrymen.
Oh! could my words portray him what he is;
Bring to your mind the blessings of his deeds,
While thro' the fever-heated, loathsome holds,
Of floating hulks, dungeons obscene, where ne'er
The dewy breeze of morn, or evening's coolness,
Breath'd on our parching skins, he pass'd along,
Diffusing blessings; still his power exerting,
To alleviate the woes which ruthless war,
Perhaps, thro' dire necessity, heap'd on us;
Surely, the scene would move you to forget
His late intent—(tho' only serving then,
As duty prompted)—and turn the rigour
Of War's iron law from him, the best of men,
Meant only for the worst.

[Pg 534]

GENERAL.

Captain, no more.

BLAND.

If André lives, the prisoner finds a friend;
Else helpless and forlorn—
All men will bless the act, and bless thee for it.

GENERAL.

Think'st thou thy country would not curse the man,
Who, by a clemency ill-tim'd, ill-judg'd,
Encourag'd treason? That *pride* encourag'd,
Which, by denying us the rights of nations,
Hath caus'd those ills which thou hast now portray'd?
Our prisoners, brave and generous peasantry,
As rebels have been treated, not as men.
'T is mine, brave yeomen, to assert your rights;
'T is mine to teach the foe, that, though array'd
In rude simplicity, ye, yet, are men,
And rank among the foremost. Oft their scouts,
The very refuse of the English arms,
Unquestion'd, have our countrymen consign'd
To death, when captur'd, mocking their agonies.

BLAND.

Curse them! [*Checking himself.*] Yet let not censure fall on
André.
Oh, there are Englishmen as brave, as good,
As ever land on earth might call its own;
And gallant André is among the best!

GENERAL.

Since they have hurl'd war on us, we must shew
That by the laws of war we will abide;
And have the power to bring their acts for trial,
To that tribunal, eminent 'mongst men,
Erected by the policy of nations,
To stem the flood of ills, which else fell war
Would pour, uncheck'd, upon the sickening world,
Sweeping away all trace of civil life.

[Pg 535]

BLAND.

To pardon him would not encourage ill.
His case is singular: his station high;
His qualities admired; his virtues lov'd.

GENERAL.

No more, my good young friend: it is in vain.
The men entrusted with thy country's rights
Have weigh'd, attentive, every circumstance.

An individual's virtue is, by them,
As highly prized as it can be by thee.
I know the virtues of this man, and love them.
But the destiny of millions, millions
Yet unborn, depends upon the rigour
Of this moment. The haughty Briton laughs
To scorn our armies and our councils. Mercy,
Humanity, call loudly, that we make
Our now despised power be felt, vindictive.
Millions demand the death of this young man.
My injur'd country, he his forfeit life
Must yield, to shield thy lacerated breast
From torture. [*To BLAND.*] Thy merits are not overlook'd.
Promotion shall immediately attend thee.

BLAND [*with contemptuous irony*].

Pardon me, sir, I never shall deserve it.
[*With increasing heat.*] The country that forgets to reverence
virtue;

That makes no difference 'twixt the sordid wretch,
Who, for reward, risks treason's penalty,
And him unfortunate, whose duteous service
Is, by mere accident, so chang'd in form,
As to assume guilt's semblance, I serve not:
Scorn to serve. I have a soldier's honour,
But 't is in union with a freeman's judgment,
And when I act, both prompt. Thus from my helm
I tear, what once I proudly thought, the badge
Of virtuous fellowship. [*Tears the cockade from his helmet.*]

My sword I keep. [*Puts on his helmet.*]
Would, André, thou hadst never put thine off!
Then hadst thou through opposers' hearts made way
To liberty, or bravely pierc'd thine own!

[Pg 536]

[*Exit.*]

GENERAL.

Rash, headstrong, maddening boy!
Had not this action past without a witness,
Duty would ask that thou shouldst rue thy folly—
But, for the motive, be the deed forgotten.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE, a Village.

*At a distance some tents. In front muskets, drums, and
other indications of soldiers' quarters.*

Enter MRS. BLAND and CHILDREN, attended by MELVILLE.

MELVILLE.

The General's doors to you are ever open.
But why, my worthy friend, this agitation?
Our Colonel, your husband—

MRS. BLAND [*in tears, gives him the letter*].

Read, Melville.

1st CHILD.

Do not cry, Mama, for I'm sure if Papa said he
would come home to-day he will come yet: for
he always does what he says he will.

MRS. BLAND.

He cannot come, dear love; they will not let
him.

2nd CHILD.

Why, then, they told him lies. Oh, fie upon
them!

MELVILLE [*returning the letter*].

Fear nothing, Madam, 't is an empty threat:
A trick of policy. They dare not do it.

MRS. BLAND.

Alas! alas! what dares not power to do?
What art of reasoning, or what magic words,
Can still the storm of fears these lines have rais'd?
The wife's, the mother's fears? Ye innocents,
Unconscious on the brink of what a perilous
Precipice ye stand, unknowing that to-day
Ye are cast down the gulf, poor babes, ye weep
From sympathy. Children of sorrow, nurst,
Nurtur'd, midst camps and arms; unknowing man,
But as man's fell destroyer; must ye now,
To crown your piteous fate, be fatherless?
O, lead me, lead me to him! Let me kneel,
Let these, my children, kneel, till André, pardon'd,
Ensures to me a husband, them a father.

[Pg 537]

MELVILLE.

Madam, duty forbids further attendance.
I am on guard to-day. But see your son;
To him I leave your guidance. Good wishes
Prosper you!

[Exit MELVILLE.]

Enter BLAND.

MRS. BLAND.

My Arthur, O my Arthur!

BLAND.

My mother!

[Embracing her.]

MRS. BLAND.

My son, I have been wishing
For you— [Bursts into tears, unable to proceed.]

BLAND.

But whence this grief, these tears, my mother?
Why are these little cheeks bedew'd with sorrow?
[He kisses the children, who exclaim, Brother, brother!
Have I done ought to cause a mother's sadness?

MRS. BLAND.

No, my brave boy! I oft have fear'd, but never
Sorrow'd for thee.

BLAND.

High praise!—Then bless me, Madam;
For I have pass'd through many a bustling scene
Since I have seen a father or a mother.

[Pg 538]

MRS. BLAND.

Bless thee, my boy! O bless him, bless him, Heaven!
Render him worthy to support these babes!
So soon, perhaps, all fatherless—dependent.—

BLAND.

What mean'st thou, madam? Why these tears?

MRS. BLAND.

Thy father—

BLAND.

A prisoner of war—I long have known it—
But made so without blemish to his honour,
And soon exchange'd, returns unto his friends,
To guard these little ones, and point and lead,
To virtue and to glory.

MRS. BLAND.

Never, never!

His life, a sacrifice to André's *manes*,^[7]
Must soon be offer'd. Even now, endungeon'd,
Like a vile felon, on the earth he lies,
His death expecting. André's execution
Gives signal for the murder of thy father—
André now dies!—

BLAND [*despairingly*].

My father and my friend!!

MRS. BLAND.

There is but one on earth can save my husband—
But one can pardon André.

BLAND.

Haste, my mother!
Thou wilt prevail. Take with thee in each hand
An unoffending child of him thou weep'st.
Save—save them both! This way—haste—lean on me.

[*Exeunt.*

[Pg 539]

SCENE, *the GENERAL'S Quarters.*

Enter the GENERAL and M'DONALD.

GENERAL.

Here have I intimation from the foe,
That still they deem the spy we have condemn'd,
Merely a captive; by the laws of arms
From death protected; and retaliation,
As they term it, threaten, if we our purpose hold.
Bland is the victim they have singled out,
Hoping his threaten'd death will André save.

M'DONALD.

If I were Bland I boldly might advise
My General how to act. Free, and in safety,
I will now suppose my counsel needless.

Enter an AMERICAN OFFICER.

OFFICER.

Another flag hath from the foe arriv'd,
And craves admittance.

GENERAL.

Conduct it hither.

[*Exit OFFICER.*

Let us, unwearied hear, unbiass'd judge,
Whate'er against our martial court's decision,
Our enemies can bring.

Enter BRITISH OFFICER, conducted by the AMERICAN OFFICER.

GENERAL.

You are welcome, sir.
What further says Sir Henry?

BRITISH OFFICER.

This from him.
He calls on you to think what weighty woes
You now are busy bringing on your country.
He bids me say, that, if your sentence reach
The prisoner's life (prisoner of arms he deems him,
And no spy), on him alone it falls not.
He bids me loud proclaim it, and declare,
If this brave officer, by cruel mockery

[Pg 540]

Of war's stern law, and justice's feign'd pretence,
Be murder'd; the sequel of our strife, bloody,
Unsparring and remorseless, *you* will make.
Think of the many captives in our power.
Already one is mark'd; for André mark'd;—
And when his death, unparallel'd in war,
The signal gives, then Colonel Bland must die.

GENERAL.

'T is well, sir; bear this message in return.
Sir Henry Clinton knows the laws of arms:
He is a soldier, and, I think, a brave one.
The prisoners he retains he must account for.
Perhaps the reckoning's near. I, likewise, am
A soldier; entrusted by my country.
What I shall judge most for that country's good,
That shall I do. When doubtful, I consult
My country's friends; never her enemies.
In André's case there are no doubts: 't is clear:
Sir Henry Clinton knows it.

BRITISH OFFICER.

Weigh consequences.

GENERAL.

In strict regard to consequence I act;
And much should doubt to call that action right,
However specious, whose apparent end
Was misery to man. That brave officer
Whose death you threaten, for himself drew not
His sword—his country's wrongs arous'd his mind;
Her good alone his aim; and if his fall
Can further fire that country to resistance,
He will, with smiles, yield up his glorious life,
And count his death a gain; and tho' Columbians
Will lament his fall, they will lament in blood.

[GENERAL *walks up the stage.*]

M'DONALD.

Hear this! hear this, mankind!

[Pg 541]

BRITISH OFFICER.

Thus am I answered?

Enter a SERGEANT with a letter.

SERGEANT.

Express from Colonel Bland.

[*Delivers it and exit.*]

GENERAL.

With your permission.

[*Opens it.*]

BRITISH OFFICER.

Your pleasure, sir. It may my mission further.

M'DONALD.

O, Bland! my countryman, surely I know thee!

GENERAL.

'T is short: I will put form aside, and read it.

[*Reads.*] "Excuse me, my Commander, for
having a moment doubted your virtue: but you
love me. If you waver, let this confirm you. My
wife and children, to you and my country. Do
your duty." Report this to your General.

BRITISH OFFICER.

I shall, sir.

[*Bows, and exit with AMERICAN OFFICER.*

GENERAL.

O, Bland! my countryman! [Exit with emotion.

M'DONALD.

Triumph of virtue!
Like him and thee, still be Americans.
Then, tho' all-powerful Europe league against us,
And pour in arms her legions on our shores;
Who is so dull would doubt their shameful flight?
Who doubt our safety, and our glorious triumph?

SCENE, *the Prison.*

Enter BLAND.

BLAND.

Lingering, I come to crush the bud of hope
My breath has, flattering, to existence warm'd.
Hard is the task to friendship! hard to say,
To the lov'd object there remains no hope,
No consolation for thee; thou *must* die;
The worst of deaths; no circumstance abated.

[Pg 542]

Enter ANDRÉ *in his uniform, and dress'd.*

ANDRÉ.

Is there that state on earth which friendship cannot cheer?

BLAND.

Little *I* bring to cheer thee, André.

ANDRÉ.

I understand. 'T is well. 'T will soon be past.
Yet, 't was not much I ask'd. A soldier's death.
A trifling change of form.

BLAND.

Of that I spoke not.
By vehemence of passion hurried on,
I pleaded for thy precious life alone;
The which denied, my indignation barr'd
All further parley. But strong solicitation
Now is urg'd to gain the wish'd-for favour.

ANDRÉ.

What is 't o'clock?

BLAND.

'T is past the stroke of nine.

ANDRÉ.

Why, then, 't is almost o'er. But to be hung—
Is there no way to escape that infamy?
What then *is* infamy?—no matter—no matter.

BLAND.

Our General hath received another flag.

ANDRÉ.

Soliciting for me?

BLAND.

On thy behalf.

[Pg 543]

ANDRÉ.

I have been ever favour'd.

BLAND.

Threat'nings, now;
No more solicitations. Harsh, indeed,
The import of the message: harsh, indeed.

ANDRÉ.

I am sorry for it. Would that I were dead,
And all was well with those I leave behind.

BLAND.

Such a threat! Is it not enough, just heaven,
That I must lose this man? Yet there was left
One for my soul to rest on. But, to know
That the same blow deprives them both of life—

ANDRÉ.

What mean'st thou, Bland? Surely my General
Threats not retaliation. In vengeance,
Dooms not some better man to die for me?

BLAND.

The best of men.

ANDRÉ.

Thou hast a father, captive—
I dare not ask—

BLAND.

That father dies for thee.

ANDRÉ.

Gracious heaven! how woes are heap'd upon me!
What! cannot one, so trifling in life's scene,
Fall, without drawing such a ponderous ruin?
Leave me, my friend, awhile—I yet have life—
A little space of life—let me exert it
To prevent injustice:—From death to save
Thy father, thee to save from utter desolation.

BLAND.

What mean'st thou, André?

[Pg 544]

ANDRÉ.

Seek thou the messenger
Who brought this threat. I will my last entreaty
Send by him. My General, sure, will grant it.

BLAND.

To the last thyself!

[Exit.

ANDRÉ.

If, at this moment,
When the pangs of death already touch me,
Firmly my mind against injustice strives,
And the last impulse to my vital powers
Is given by anxious wishes to redeem
My fellowmen from pain; surely my end,
Howe'er accomplished, is not infamous.

[Exit.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE, *the Encampment.*

Enter M'DONALD and BLAND.

BLAND.

It doth in truth appear, that as a—spy—
Detested word!—brave André must be view'd.
His sentence he confesses strictly just.
Yet sure a deed of mercy, from *thy* hand,
Could never lead to ill. By such an act,
The stern and blood-stain'd brow of War
Would be disarm'd of half its gorgon horrors;
More humanized customs be induced;
And all the race of civilized man
Be blest in the example. Be it thy suit:
'T will well become thy character and station.

M'DONALD.

Trust me, young friend, I am alone the judge
Of what becomes my character and station:
And having judg'd that this young Briton's death,
Even 'though attended by thy father's murder,
Is necessary, in these times accurs'd,
When every thought of man is ting'd with blood,
I will not stir my finger to redeem them.
Nay, much I wonder, Bland, having so oft
The reasons for this necessary rigour
Enforced upon thee, thou wilt still persist
In vain solicitations. Imitate
Thy father!

[Pg 545]

BLAND.

My father knew not André.
I know his value; owe to him my life;
And, gratitude, that first, that best of virtues,—
Without the which man sinks beneath the brute,—
Binds me in ties indissoluble to him.

M'DONALD.

That man-created virtue blinds thy reason.
Man owes to man all love; when exercised,
He does no more than duty. Gratitude,
That selfish rule of action, which commands
That we our preference make of men,
Not for their worth, but that they did *us* service,
Misleading reason, casting in the way
Of justice stumbling-blocks, cannot be virtue.

BLAND.

Detested sophistry!—'T was André sav'd me!

M'DONALD.

He sav'd thy life, and thou art grateful for it.
How self intrudes, delusive, on man's thoughts!
He sav'd thy life, yet strove to damn thy country;
Doom'd millions to the haughty Briton's yoke;
The best, and foremost in the cause of virtue,
To death, by sword, by prison, or the halter:
His sacrifice now stands the only bar
Between the wanton cruelties of war,
And our much-suffering soldiers: yet, when weigh'd
With gratitude, for that he sav'd *thy* life,
These things prove gossamer, and balance air:—
Perversion monstrous of man's moral sense!

[Pg 546]

BLAND.

Rather perversion monstrous of all good,
Is thy accurs'd, detestable opinion.

Cold-blooded reasoners, such as thee, would blast
All warm affection; asunder sever
Every social tie of humanized man.
Curst be thy sophisms! cunningly contriv'd
The callous coldness of thy heart to cover,
And screen thee from the brave man's detestation.

M'DONALD.

Boy, boy!

BLAND.

Thou knowest that André's not a spy.

M'DONALD.

I know him one. Thou hast acknowledg'd it.

BLAND.

Thou liest!

M'DONALD.

Shame on thy ruffian tongue! how passion
Mars thee! I pity thee! Thou canst not harm,
By words intemperate, a virtuous man.
I pity thee! for passion sometimes sways
My older frame, through former uncheck'd habit:
But when I see the havoc which it makes
In others, I can shun the snare accurst,
And nothing feel but pity.

BLAND [*indignantly*].

Pity me! [*Approaches him, and speaks in an under voice.*
Thou canst be cool, yet, trust me, *passion* sways thee.
Fear does not *warm* the blood, yet 't is a *passion*.
Hast thou no feeling? I have call'd thee liar!

M'DONALD.

If thou could'st make me one, I then might grieve.

BLAND.

Thy coolness goes to freezing: thou'rt a coward.

M'DONALD.

Thou knowest thou tell'st a falsehood.

[Pg 547]

BLAND.

Thou shalt know
None with impunity speaks thus of me.
That to rouse thy courage. [*Touches him gently, with his open
hand, in crossing him. M'DONALD looks at him unmoved.*]
Dost thou not yet feel?

M'DONALD.

For *thee* I feel. And tho' another's acts
Cast no dishonour on the worthy man,
I still feel for thy father. Yet, remember,
I may not, haply, ever be thus guarded;
I may not always the distinction make.
However just, between the blow intended
To provoke, and one that's meant to injure.

BLAND.

Hast thou no sense of honour?

M'DONALD.

Truly, yes:
For I am honour's votary. Honour, with me,

Is worth: 't is truth; 't is virtue; 't is a thing,
So high pre-eminent, that a boy's breath,
Or brute's, or madman's blow, can never reach it.
My honour is so much, so truly mine,
That none hath power to wound it, save myself.

BLAND.

I will proclaim thee through the camp a coward.

M'DONALD.

Think better of it! Proclaim not thine own shame.

BLAND.

I'll brand thee—Damnation!

[*Exit.*

M'DONALD.

O, passion, passion!
A man who values fame, far more than life;
A brave young man; in many things a good;
Utters vile falsehood; adds injury to insult;
Striving with blood to seal such foul injustice;
And all from impulse of unbridled feeling.—
Here comes the mother of this headstrong boy,
Severely rack'd—What shall allay her torture?
For common consolation, *here*, is insult.

[*Pause.*

[Pg 548]

Enter MRS. BLAND *and* CHILDREN.

MRS. BLAND.

O my good friend!

M'DONALD [*taking her hand*].

I know thy cause of sorrow.
Art thou now from our Commander?

MRS. BLAND [*drying her tears, and assuming dignity*].

I am.

But vain is my entreaty. All unmov'd
He hears my words, he sees my desperate sorrow.
Fain would I blame his conduct—but I cannot.
Strictly examin'd, with intent to mark
The error which so fatal proves to *me*,
My scrutiny but ends in admiration.
Thus when the prophet from the Hills of Moab,
Look'd down upon the chosen race of heaven,
With fell intent to curse; ere yet he spake,
Truth all resistless, emanation bright
From great Adonai, fill'd his froward mind,
And chang'd the curses of his heart to blessings.

M'DONALD.

Thou payest high praise to virtue. Whither now?—

MRS. BLAND.

I still must hover round this spot until
My doom is known.

M'DONALD.

Then to my quarters, lady,
There shall my mate give comfort and refreshment:
One of your sex can best your sorrows soothe.

[*Exeunt.*

[Pg 549]

SCENE, *the Prison.*

Enter BLAND.

BLAND.

Where'er I look cold desolation meets me.
My father—André—and self-condemnation!
Why seek I André now? Am *I* a man,
To soothe the sorrows of a suffering friend?
The weather-cock of passion! fool inebriate!
Who could with ruffian hand strive to provoke
Hoar wisdom to intemperance! who could lie!
Aye, swagger, lie, and brag!—Liar! Damnation!!
O, let me steal away and hide my head,
Nor view a man, condemn'd to harshest death,
Whose words and actions, when by mine compar'd,
Shew white as innocence, and bright as truth.
I now would shun him; but that his shorten'd
Thread of life, gives me no line to play with.
He comes, with smiles, and all the air of triumph;
While I am sinking with remorse and shame:
Yet *he* is doom'd to death, and *I* am free!

Enter ANDRÉ.

ANDRÉ.

Welcome, my Bland! Cheerly, a welcome hither!
I feel assurance that my last request
Will not be slighted. Safely thy father
Shall return to thee. [*Holding out a paper.*] See what
employment
For a dying man. Take thou these verses;
And, after my decease, send them to her
Whose name is woven in them; whose image
Hath controul'd my destiny. Such tokens
Are rather out of date. Fashions
There are in love as in all else; they change
As variously. A gallant Knight, erewhile,
Of Cœur de Lion's day, would, dying, send
His heart home to its mistress; degenerate
Soldier I, send but some blotted paper.

[Pg 550]

BLAND.

If 't would not damp thy present cheerfulness,
I would require the meaning of thy words.
I ne'er till now did hear of André's mistress.

ANDRÉ.

Mine is a story of that common kind,
So often told, with scanty variation,
That the pall'd ear loaths the repeated tale.
Each young romancer chooses for his theme
The woes of youthful hearts, by the cold hand
Of frosty Age, arm'd with parental power,
Asunder torn. But I long since have ceas'd
To mourn; well satisfied that she I love,
Happy in holy union with another,
Shares not my wayward fortunes. Nor would I
Now these tokens send, remembrance to awaken,
But that I know her happy: and the happy
Can think on misery and share it not.

BLAND [*agitated*].

Some one approaches.

ANDRÉ.

Why, 't is near the time.
But tell me, Bland, say—is the manner chang'd?

BLAND.

I hope it—but I yet have no assurance.

ANDRÉ.

Well, well!

HONORA [*without*].

I must see him.

ANDRÉ.

Whose voice was that?
My senses!—Do I dream—? [*Leans on* BLAND.]

Enter HONORA.

HONORA.

Where is he?

[Pg 551]

ANDRÉ.

'T is she!!

[*Starts from* BLAND *and advances towards* HONORA;
she rushes into his arms.]

HONORA.

It is enough! He lives, and *I* shall save him.
[*She faints in the arms of* ANDRÉ.]

ANDRÉ.

She sinks—assist me, Bland! O, save her, save her!
[*Places her in a chair, and looks tenderly on her.*
Yet, why should she awake from that sweet sleep!
Why should she open her eyes—[*Wildly.*—to see me hung!
What does she here? Stand off—[*Tenderly.*—and let her die.
How pale she looks! how worn that tender frame!—
She has known sorrow! Who could injure her?

BLAND.

She revives—André—soft, bend her forward.
[ANDRÉ *kneels and supports her.*

HONORA.

André—!

ANDRÉ.

Lov'd excellence!

HONORA.

Yes, it is André! [*Rises and looks at him.*
No more deceived by visionary forms,
By him supported— [*Leans on him.*

ANDRÉ.

Why is this?
Thou dost look pale, Honora—sick and wan—
Languid thy fainting limbs—

HONORA.

All will be well.
But was it kind to leave me as thou didst—?
So rashly to desert thy vow-link'd wife?—

ANDRÉ.

When made another's both by vows and laws—

[Pg 552]

HONORA [*quitting his support*].

What meanest thou?

ANDRÉ.

Didst thou not marry him?

HONORA.

Marry!

ANDRÉ.

Didst thou not give thy hand away
From me?

HONORA.

O, never, never!

ANDRÉ.

Not married?

HONORA.

To none but thee, and but in will to thee.

ANDRÉ.

O blind, blind wretch!—Thy father told me——

HONORA.

Thou wast deceived. They hurried me away,
Spreading false rumours to remove thy love—
[*Tenderly.*] Thou didst too soon believe them.

ANDRÉ.

Thy father—
How could I but believe Honora's father?
And he did tell me so. I revered age,
Yet knew, age was not virtue. I believed
His snowy locks, and yet they did deceive me!
I have destroy'd myself and thee!—Alas!
Ill-fated maid! why didst thou not forget me?
Hast thou rude seas and hostile shores explor'd
For this? To see my death? Witness my shame?

HONORA.

I come to bless thee, André; and shall do it.
I bear such offers from thy kind Commander,
As must prevail to save thee. Thus the daughter
May repair the ills her cruel sire inflicted.
My father, dying, gave me cause to think
That arts were us'd to drive thee from thy home;
But what those arts I knew not. An heiress left,
Of years mature, with power and liberty,
I straight resolv'd to seek thee o'er the seas.
A long-known friend who came to join her lord,
Yielded protection and lov'd fellowship.—
Indeed, when I did hear of thy estate
It almost kill'd me:—I was weak before—

ANDRÉ.

'T is I have murder'd thee!—

HONORA.

All shall be well.
Thy General heard of me, and instant form'd
The plan of this my visit. I am strong,
Compar'd with what I was. Hope strengthens me;
Nay, even solicitude supports me now;
And when thou shalt be safe, *thou* wilt support me.

ANDRÉ.

Support thee!—O heaven! What!—And must I die?
Die!—and leave her *thus*—suffering—unprotected!—

Enter MELVILLE *and* GUARD.

MELVILLE.

I am sorry that my duty should require
Service, at which my heart revolts; but, sir,
Our soldiers wait in arms. All is prepar'd—

HONORA.

To death!—Impossible! Has my delay,
Then, murder'd him?—A momentary respite—

MELVILLE.

Lady, I have no power.

BLAND.

Melville, my friend,
This lady bears dispatches of high import,
Touching this business:—should they arrive too late—

[Pg 554]

HONORA.

For pity's sake, and heaven's, conduct me to him;
And wait the issue of our conference.
Oh, 't would be murder of the blackest dye,
Sin execrable, not to break thy orders—
Inhuman, thou art not.

MELVILLE.

Lady, thou say'st true;
For rather would I lose my rank in arms,
And stand cashier'd for lack of discipline,
Than, gain 'mongst military men all praise,
Wanting the touch of sweet humanity.

HONORA.

Thou grantest my request?

MELVILLE.

Lady, I do.
Retire! [SOLDIERS *go out*.

BLAND.

I know not what excuse, to martial men,
Thou canst advance for this; but to thy heart
Thou wilt need none, good Melville.

ANDRÉ.

O, Honora!

HONORA.

Cheer up, I feel assur'd. Hope wings my flight,
To bring thee tidings of much joy to come.
[*Exit* HONORA, *with* BLAND *and* MELVILLE.

ANDRÉ.

Eternal blessings on thee, matchless woman!—
If death now comes, he finds the veriest coward
That e'er he dealt withal. I cannot think
Of dying. Void of fortitude, each thought
Clings to the world—the world that holds Honora! [Exit.

End of the Fourth Act.

[Pg 555]

ACT V.

SCENE, *the Encampment.*

Enter BLAND.

BLAND.

Suspense—uncertainty—man's bane and solace!
How racking now to me! My mother comes.
Forgive me, O my father! if in this war,
This wasting conflict of my wildering passions,
Memory of thee holds here a second place!
M'Donald comes with her. I would not meet him:
Yet I will do it. Summon up some courage—
Confess my fault, and gain, if not *his* love,
At least the approbation of *my* judgment.

Enter MRS. BLAND *and* CHILDREN *with* M'DONALD.

BLAND.

Say, madam, is there no change of counsel,
Or new determination?

MRS. BLAND.

Nought new, my son.
The tale of misery is told unheard.
The widow's and the orphans' sighs
Fly up, unnoted by the eye of man,
And mingle, undistinguish'd, with the winds.
My friend [*To* M'DONALD.], attend thy duties. I must away.

2nd CHILD.

You need not cry, Mama, the General will do
it, I am sure; for I saw him cry. He turn'd away
his head from you, but I saw it.

MRS. BLAND.

Poor thing! come let us home and weep. Alas!
I can no more, for war hath made men rocks.

[*Exeunt* MRS. BLAND *and* CHILDREN.]

BLAND.

Colonel, I used thee ill this morning.

[Pg 556]

M'DONALD.

No!

Thyself thou used'st most vilely, I remember.

BLAND.

Myself sustained the injury, most true;
But the intent of what I said and did
Was ill to thee alone: I'm sorry for it.
Seest thou these blushes? They proceed from warmth
As honest as the heart of man e'er felt;—
But not with shame unmingled, while I force
This tongue, debased, to own, it slander'd thee,
And utter'd—I could curse it—utter'd falsehood.
Howe'er misled by passion, still my mind
Retains that sense of honest rectitude
Which makes the memory of an evil deed
A troublesome companion. I was wrong.

M'DONALD.

Why, now this glads me; for thou *now* art right.
Oh, may thy tongue, henceforward, utter nought
But Truth's sweet precepts, in fair Virtue's cause!
Give me thy hand. [*Takes his hand.*] Ne'er may it grasp a
sword
But in defense of justice.

BLAND.

Yet, erewhile,
A few short hours scarce past, when this vile hand
Attempted on *thee* insult; and was raised

Against thy honour; ready to be raised
Against thy life. If this my deep remorse—

M'DONALD.

No more, no more. 'T is past. Remember it
But as thou would'st the action of another,
By thy enlighten'd judgment much condemn'd;
And serving as a beacon in the storms
Thy passions yet may raise. Remorse is vice:
Guard thee against its influence debasing.
Say to thyself, "I am not what I was;
I am not *now* the instrument of vice;
I'm changed; I am a man; Virtue's firm friend;
Sever'd for ever from my former self;
No link, but in remembrance salutary."

[Pg 557]

BLAND.

[How^[8] all men tower above me!

M'DONALD.

Nay, not so.

Above what once thou wast, some few do rise;
None above what thou art.

BLAND.

It shall be so.

M'DONALD.

It is so.

BLAND.

Then to prove it.

For I must yet a trial undergo,
That will require a consciousness of virtue.

[*Exit.*

M'DONALD.

Oh, what a temper doth in man reside!
How capable of yet unthought perfection!

[*Exit.*

SCENE, *the GENERAL'S Quarters.*

Enter GENERAL and SEWARD.

GENERAL.

Ask her, my friend, to send by thee her pacquets.

[*Exit SEWARD.*

Oh, what keen struggles must I undergo!
Unbless'd estate! to have the power to pardon;
The court's stern sentence to remit;—give life;—
Feel the strong wish to use such blessed power;
Yet know that circumstances strong as fate
Forbid to obey the impulse. Oh, I feel
That man should never shed the blood of man!

Enter SEWARD.

[Pg 558]

SEWARD.

Nought can the lovely suitor satisfy,
But conference with thee, and much I fear
Refusal would cause madness.

GENERAL.

Yet to admit,
To hear, be tortur'd, and refuse at last—

SEWARD.

Sure never man such spectacle of sorrow

Saw before. Motionless the rough-hewn soldiers
Silent view her, or walk aside and weep.

GENERAL [*after a pause*].

Admit her. [SEWARD *goes out*.] Oh, for the art, the precious art,
To reconcile the sufferer to his sorrows!

[HONORA *rushes in, and throws herself wildly on her knees
before him; he endeavours to raise her*.

HONORA.

Nay, nay, here is my place, or here, or lower,
Unless thou grant'st his life. All forms away!
Thus will I clasp thy knees, thus cling to thee.—
I am his wife—'tis I have ruin'd him—
Oh, save him! Give him to me! Let us cross
The mighty seas, far, far—ne'er to offend again.—
[*The GENERAL turns away, and hides his eyes with his hand.*

Enter SEWARD and an OFFICER.

GENERAL.

Seward, support her—my heart is torn in twain.
[HONORA *as if exhausted, suffers herself to be raised, and leans on SEWARD.*

OFFICER.

This moment, sir, a messenger arrived
With well confirm'd and mournful information,
That gallant Hastings, by the lawless scouts
Of Britain taken, after cruel mockery
With shew of trial and condemnation,
On the next tree was hung.

[Pg 559]

HONORA [*wildly*].

Oh, it is false!

GENERAL.

Why, why, my country, did I hesitate? [Exit.

[HONORA *sinks, faints, and is borne off by SEWARD and OFFICER.*

SCENE, *the Prison.*

ANDRÉ *meeting* BLAND.

ANDRÉ.

How speeds Honora? [*Pause*.] Art thou silent, Bland?
Why, then I know my task. The mind of man,
If not by vice debas'd, debilitated,
Or by disease of body quite unton'd,
Hath o'er its thoughts a power—energy divine!
Of fortitude the source and every virtue—
A godlike power, which e'en o'er circumstance
Its sov'reignty exerts. Now, from my thoughts,
Honora! Yet she is left alone—expos'd—

BLAND.

O, André, spurn me, strike me to the earth;
For what a wretch am I, in André's mind,
That he can think he leaves his love alone,
And I retaining life!

ANDRÉ.

Forgive me, Bland,
My thoughts glanc'd not on thee. Imagination
Pictur'd only, then, her orphan state, helpless;
Her weak and grief-exhausted frame. Alas!
This blow will kill her!

BLAND [*kneeling*].

Here do I myself
Devote, my fortune consecrate, to thee,
To thy remembrance, and Honora's service!—

ANDRÉ.

Enough! Let me not see her more—nor think of her—
Farewell! farewell, sweet image! Now for death.

[Pg 560]

BLAND.

Yet that you shouldst the felon's fate fulfill—
Damnation! my blood boils. Indignation
Makes the current of my life course wildly
Through its round, and maddens each emotion.

ANDRÉ.

Come, come, it matters not.

BLAND.

I do remember,
When a boy, at school, in our allotted tasks,
We, by our puny acts, strove to portray
The giant thoughts of Otway. I was Pierre.—
O, thou art Pierre's reality! a soldier,
On whose manly brow sits fortitude enamour'd!
A Mars, abhorring vice, yet doom'd to die
A death of infamy; thy corse expos'd
To vulgar gaze—halter'd—distorted—Oh!!
[Pauses, and then adds in a low, hollow voice.
Pierre had a friend to save him from such shame—
And so hast thou.

ANDRÉ.

No more, as thou dost love me.

BLAND.

I have a sword, and arm, that never fail'd me.

ANDRÉ.

Bland, such an act would justly thee involve,
And leave that helpless one thou sworest to guard,
Expos'd to every ill. Oh! think not of it.

BLAND.

If thou wilt not my aid—take it thyself.
[Draws and offers his sword.

ANDRÉ.

No, men will say that cowardice did urge me.
In my mind's weakness, I did wish to shun
That mode of death which error represented
Infamous: Now let me rise superior;
And with a fortitude too true to start
From mere appearances, shew your country,
That she, in me, destroys a man who might
Have liv'd to virtue.

[Pg 561]

BLAND [*sheathing his sword*].

I will not think more of it;
I was again the sport of erring passion.

ANDRÉ.

Go thou and guide Honora from this spot.

HONORA [*entering*].

Who shall oppose his wife? I will have way!

They, cruel, would have kept me from thee, André.
Say, am I not thy wife? *Wilt* thou deny me?
Indeed I am not dress'd in bridal trim.
But I have travel'd far:—rough was the road—
Rugged and rough—that must excuse my dress.
[*Seeing* ANDRÉ'S *distress.*] Thou art not glad to see me.

ANDRÉ.

Break my heart!

HONORA.

Indeed, I feel not much in spirits. I wept but now.

Enter MELVILLE *and* GUARD.

BLAND [*to* MELVILLE].

Say nothing.

ANDRÉ.

I am ready.

HONORA [*seeing the* GUARD].

Are *they* here?

Here again!—The *same*—but they shall not harm me—
I am with *thee*, my André—I am safe—
And *thou* art safe with me. Is it not so? [*Clinging to him.*]

Enter MRS. BLAND.

MRS. BLAND.

Where is this lovely victim?

[Pg 562]

BLAND.

Thanks, my mother.

MRS. BLAND.

M'Donald sent me hither. My woes are past.
Thy father, by the foe releas'd, already
Is in safety. This be forgotten now;
And every thought be turn'd to this sad scene.
Come, lady, home with me.

HONORA.

Go home with thee?

Art thou my André's mother? We will home
And rest, for thou art weary—very weary.

[*Leans on* MRS. BLAND.]

[ANDRÉ *retires to the* GUARD, *and goes off with them,*
looking on her to the last, and with an action of
extreme tenderness takes leave of her. MELVILLE *and*
BLAND *accompany him.*]

HONORA.

Now we will go. Come, love! Where is he?
All gone!—I do remember—I awake—
They have him. Murder! Help! Oh, save him! save him!

[HONORA *attempts to follow, but falls.* MRS. BLAND *kneels to*
assist her. Scene closes.]

SCENE, *the Encampment.*

Procession to the execution of ANDRÉ. *First enter* Pioneers
—*Detachment of Infantry—Military Band of Music—*
Infantry. The Music having passed off, enter ANDRÉ
between MELVILLE *and* AMERICAN OFFICER; *they*
sorrowful, he cheerfully conversing as he passes
over the stage.

It may in me be merely prejudice,
 The effect of young-opinion deep engraved
 Upon the tender mind by care parental;
 But I must think your country has mistook
 Her interests. Believe me, but for this I should
 Not willingly have drawn a sword against her.

[Pg 563]

[*They bow their heads in silence.*]

Opinion must, nay ought, to sway our actions;
 Therefore—

*Having crossed the stage, he goes out as still conversing
 with them. Another detachment of Infantry, with
 muffled and craped drums, close the procession: as
 soon as they are off—*

*Scene draws and discovers the distant view of the
 Encampment.*

*Procession enters in same order as before, proceeds up
 the stage, and goes off on the opposite side.*

Enter M'DONALD, leading BLAND, who looks wildly back.

BLAND.

I dare not *thee* resist. Yet why, O, why
 Thus hurry me away—?—

M'DONALD.

Would'st thou behold—

BLAND.

Oh, name it not!

M'DONALD.

Or would'st thou, by thy looks
 And gestures wild, o'erthrow that manly calmness
 Which, or assum'd or felt, so well becomes thy friend?

BLAND.

What means that cannon's sound?

M'DONALD [*after a pause*].

Signal of death
 Appointed. André, thy friend, is now no more!

BLAND.

Farewell, farewell, brave spirit! O, let my countrymen,
 Henceforward, when the cruelties of war
 Arise in their remembrance; when their ready
 Speech would pour forth torrents in their foe's dispraise,
 Think on this act accurst, and lock complaint in silence.

[BLAND *throws himself on the earth.*]

[Pg 564]

M'DONALD.

Such are the dictates of the heart, not head.
 Oh, may the children of Columbia still
 Be taught by every teacher of mankind,
 Each circumstance of calculative gain,
 Or wounded pride, which prompted our oppressors:
 May every child be taught to lisp the tale:
 And may, in times to come, no foreign force,
 No European influence, tempt to misstate,
 Or awe the tongue of eloquence to silence.
 Still may our children's children deep abhor
 The motives, doubly deep detest the actors;
 Ever remembering, that the race who plan'd,
 Who acquiesced, or did the deeds abhor'd,
 Has pass'd from off the earth; and, in its stead,
 Stand men who challenge love or detestation

But from their proper, individual deeds.
Never let memory of the sire's offence
Descend upon the son.

Curtain drops.

FOOTNOTES:

- [6] [See p. 557.](#)
- [7] Spirit of the dead; shade.
- [8] Insert the lines which were substituted after the first night for the lines here put in brackets. They are given in the Preface, [page 509.](#)

Transcribers' Notes

Variable hyphenation of god(-)like has been preserved as in the original.

Inconsistent inconclusion of acute accent on ANDRÉ as in the original.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ANDRÉ ***

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