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Title: Gebir, and Count Julian

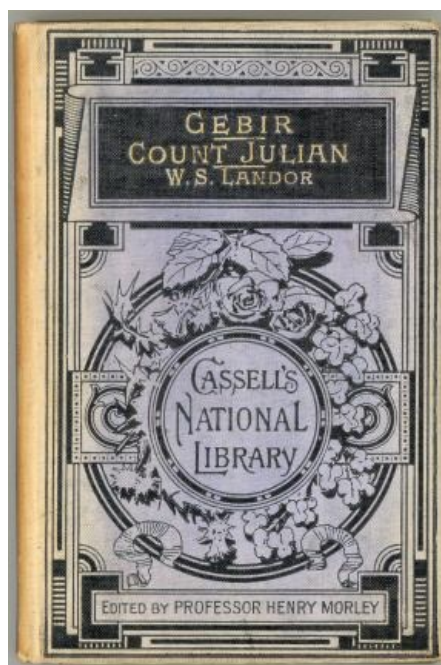
Author: Walter Savage Landor

Release date: May 1, 2003 [EBook #4007]
Most recently updated: August 15, 2014

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GEBIR, AND COUNT JULIAN ***

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GEBIR AND COUNT JULIAN.

BY
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.



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INTRODUCTION.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR was born on the 30th of January, 1775, and died at the age of eighty-nine in September, 1864. He was the eldest son of a physician at Warwick, and his second name, Savage, was the family name of his mother, who owned two estates in Warwickshire—Ipsley Court and Tachbrook—and had a reversionary interest in Hughenden Manor, Buckinghamshire. To this property, worth £80,000, her eldest son was heir. That eldest son was born a poet, had a generous nature, and an ardent impetuous temper. The temper, with its obstinate claim of independence, was too much for the head master of Rugby, who found in Landor the best writer of Latin verse among his boys, but one ready to fight him over difference of opinion about a Latin quantity. In 1793 Landor went to Trinity College, Oxford. He had been got rid of at Rugby as unmanageable. After two years at Oxford, he was rusticated; thereupon he gave up his chambers, and refused to return. Landor's father, who had been much tried by his unmanageable temper, then allowed him £150 a year to live with as he pleased, away from home. He lived in South Wales—at Swansea, Tenby, or elsewhere—and he sometimes went home to Warwick for short visits. In South Wales he gave himself to full communion with the poets and with Nature, and he fastened with particular enthusiasm upon Milton. Lord Aylmer, who lived near Tenby, was among his friends. Rose Aylmer, whose name he has made through death imperishable, by linking it with a few lines of perfect music, [6] lent Landor "The Progress of Romance," a book published in 1785, by Clara Reeve, in which he found the description of an Arabian tale that suggested to him his poem of "Gebir."

Landor began "Gebir" in Latin, then turned it into English, and then vigorously condensed what he had written. The poem was first published at Warwick as a sixpenny pamphlet in the year 1798, when Landor's age was twenty-three. Robert Southey was among the few who bought it, and he first made known its power. In the best sense of the phrase, "Gebir" was written in classical English, not with a search for pompous words of classical origin to give false dignity to style, but with strict endeavour to form terse English lines of apt words well compacted. Many passages appear to have been half thought out in Greek or Latin, some, as that on the sea-shell (on page 19), were first written in Latin, and Landor re-issued "Gebir" with a translation into Latin three or four years after its first appearance.

"Gebir" was written nine years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, and at a time when the victories of Napoleon were in many minds associated with the hopes of man. In the first edition of the poem there were, in the nuptial voyage of Tamar, prophetic visions of the triumph of his race, in march of the French Republic from the Garonne to the Rhine—

"How grand a prospect opens! Alps o'er Alps
Tower, to survey the triumphs that proceed.
Here, while Garumna dances in the gloom
Of larches, mid her naiads, or reclined
Leans on a broom-clad bank to watch the sports
Of some far-distant chamois silken haired,
The chaste Pyrené, drying up her tears,
Finds, with your children, refuge: yonder, Rhine
Lays his imperial sceptre at your feet."

The hope of the purer spirits in the years of revolution, expressed by Wordsworth's

"War shall cease,
Did ye not hear, that conquest is abjured?"

was in the first design of "Gebir," and in those early years of hope Landor joined to the vision of the future for the sons of Tamar that,

"Captivity led captive, war o'erthrown,
They shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend
Empire that seas alone and skies confine,
And glory that shall strike the crystal stars."

Landor was led by the failure of immediate expectation to revise his poem and omit from the third and the sixth books about one hundred and fifty lines, while adding fifty to heal over the wounds made by excision. As the poem stands, it is a rebuke of tyrannous ambition in the tale of Gebir, prince of Boetic Spain, from whom Gibraltar took its name. Gebir, bound by a vow to his dying father in the name of ancestral feud to invade Egypt, prepares invasion, but yields in Egypt to the touch of love, seeks to rebuild the ruins of the past, and learns what are the fruits of ambition. This he learns in the purgatory of conquerors, where he sees the figures of the Stuarts, of William the Deliverer, and of George the Third, "with eyebrows white and slanting brow," intentionally confused with Louis XVI. to avoid a charge of treason. But the strength of Landor's sympathy with the French Revolution and of his contempt for George III. was more evident in the first form of the poem. Parallel with the quenching in Gebir of the conqueror's ambition, and

with the ruin of his life and its new hope by the destroying powers that our misunderstandings of the better life bring into play, runs that part of the poem which shows Tamar, his brother, preparing to dwell with the sea nymph, the ideal, far away from all the struggle of mankind.

Recognition of the great beauty of Landor's "Gebir" came first from Southey in "The Critical Review." Southey found that the poem grew upon him, and became afterwards Landor's lifelong friend. When Shelley was at Oxford in 1811, there were times when he would read nothing but "Gebir." His friend Hogg says that when he went to Shelley's rooms one morning to tell him something of importance, he could not draw his attention away from "Gebir." Hogg impatiently threw the book out of window. It was brought back by a servant, and Shelley immediately fastened upon it again.

At the close of 1805 Landor's father died, and the young poet became a man of property. In 1808 Southey and Landor first met. Their friendship remained unbroken. When Spain rose to throw off the yoke of Napoleon, Landor's enthusiasm carried him to Corunna, where he paid for the equipment of a thousand volunteers, and joined the Spanish army of the North. After the Convention of Cintra he returned to England. Then he bought a large Welsh estate—Llanthony Priory—paid for it by selling other property, and began costly improvements. But he lived chiefly at Bath, where he married, in 1811, when his age was thirty-six, a girl of twenty. It was then that he began his tragedy of "Count Julian." The patriotic struggle in Spain commended at the same time to Scott, Southey, and Landor the story of Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings, against whom, to avenge wrong done to his daughter, Count Julian called the Moors in to invade his country. In 1810 Southey was working at his poem of "Roderick the Last of the Goths," in fellowship with his friend Landor, who was treating the same subject in his play. Scott's "Roderick" was being printed so nearly at the same time with Landor's play, that Landor wrote to Southey early in 1812 while the proof-sheets were coming to him: "I am surprised that Upham has not sent me Mr. Scott's poem yet. However, I am not sorry. I feel a sort of satisfaction that mine is going to the press first, though there is little danger that we should think on any subject alike, or stumble on any one character in the same track." De Quincey spoke of the hidden torture shown in Landor's play to be ever present in the mind of Count Julian, the betrayer of his country, as greater than the tortures inflicted in old Rome on generals who had committed treason. De Quincey's admiration of this play was more than once expressed. "Mr. Landor," he said, "who always rises with his subject, and dilates like Satan into Teneriffe or Atlas when he sees before him an antagonist worthy of his powers, is probably the one man in Europe that has adequately conceived the situation, the stern self-dependency, and the monumental misery of Count Julian. That sublimity of penitential grief, which cannot accept consolation from man, cannot bear external reproach, cannot condescend to notice insult, cannot so much as *see* the curiosity of bystanders; that awful carelessness of all but the troubled deeps within his own heart, and of God's spirit brooding upon their surface and searching their abysses; never was so majestically described."

H. M.

GEBIR.

FIRST BOOK.

I SING the fates of Gebir. He had dwelt
Among those mountain-caverns which retain
His labours yet, vast halls and flowing wells,
Nor have forgotten their old master's name
Though severed from his people here, incensed
By meditating on primeval wrongs,
He blew his battle-horn, at which arose
Whole nations; here, ten thousand of most might
He called aloud, and soon Charoba saw
His dark helm hover o'er the land of Nile,
 What should the virgin do? should royal knees
Bend suppliant, or defenceless hands engage
Men of gigantic force, gigantic arms?
For 'twas reported that nor sword sufficed,
Nor shield immense nor coat of massive mail,
But that upon their towering heads they bore
Each a huge stone, refulgent as the stars.
This told she Dalica, then cried aloud:
"If on your bosom laying down my head
I sobbed away the sorrows of a child,
If I have always, and Heaven knows I have,
Next to a mother's held a nurse's name,
Succour this one distress, recall those days,
Love me, though 'twere because you loved me then."
 But whether confident in magic rites

Or touched with sexual pride to stand implored,
Dalica smiled, then spake: "Away those fears.
Though stronger than the strongest of his kind,
He falls—on me devolve that charge; he falls.
Rather than fly him, stoop thou to allure;
Nay, journey to his tents: a city stood
Upon that coast, they say, by Sidad built,
Whose father Gad built Gadir; on this ground
Perhaps he sees an ample room for war.
Persuade him to restore the walls himself
In honour of his ancestors, persuade—
But wherefore this advice? young, unespoused,
Charoba want persuasions! and a queen!"

"O Dalica!" the shuddering maid exclaimed,
"Could I encounter that fierce, frightful man?
Could I speak? no, nor sigh!"

"And canst thou reign?"

Cried Dalica; "yield empire or comply."
Unfixed though seeming fixed, her eyes downcast,
The wonted buzz and bustle of the court
From far through sculptured galleries met her ear;
Then lifting up her head, the evening sun
Poured a fresh splendour on her burnished throne—
The fair Charoba, the young queen, complied.

But Gebir when he heard of her approach
Laid by his orbéd shield, his vizor-helm,
His buckler and his corset he laid by,
And bade that none attend him; at his side
Two faithful dogs that urge the silent course,
Shaggy, deep-chested, crouched; the crocodile,
Crying, oft made them raise their flaccid ears
And push their heads within their master's hand.
There was a brightening paleness in his face,
Such as Diana rising o'er the rocks
Showered on the lonely Latmian; on his brow
Sorrow there was, yet nought was there severe.
But when the royal damsel first he saw,
Faint, hanging on her handmaids, and her knees
Tottering, as from the motion of the car,
His eyes looked earnest on her, and those eyes
Showed, if they had not, that they might have loved,
For there was pity in them at that hour.
With gentle speech, and more with gentle looks
He soothed her; but lest Pity go beyond,
And crossed Ambition lose her lofty aim,
Bending, he kissed her garment and retired.

He went, nor slumbered in the sultry noon
When viands, couches, generous wines persuade
And slumber most refreshes, nor at night,
When heavy dews are laden with disease,
And blindness waits not there for lingering age.
Ere morning dawned behind him, he arrived
At those rich meadows where young Tamar fed
The royal flocks entrusted to his care.

"Now," said he to himself, "will I repose
At least this burthen on a brother's breast."
His brother stood before him. He, amazed,
Reared suddenly his head, and thus began:
"Is it thou, brother! Tamar, is it thou!
Why, standing on the valley's utmost verge,
Lookest thou on that dull and dreary shore
Where many a league Nile blackens all the sand.
And why that sadness? when I passed our sheep
The dew-drops were not shaken off the bar;
Therefore if one be wanting 'tis untold."

"Yes, one is wanting, nor is that untold."

Said Tamar; "and this dull and dreary shore
Is neither dull nor dreary at all hours."
Whereon the tear stole silent down his cheek,
Silent, but not by Gebir unobserved:
Wondering he gazed awhile, and pitying spake:
"Let me approach thee; does the morning light
Scatter this wan suffusion o'er thy brow,
This faint blue lustre under both thine eyes?"

"O brother, is this pity or reproach?"

Cried Tamar; "cruel if it be reproach,
If pity, oh, how vain!"

"Whate'er it be

That grieves thee, I will pity: thou but speak
And I can tell thee, Tamar, pang for pang."

"Gebir! then more than brothers are we now!
Everything, take my hand, will I confess.
I neither feed the flock nor watch the fold;
How can I, lost in love? But, Gebir, why
That anger which has risen to your cheek?
Can other men? could you?—what, no reply!
And still more anger, and still worse concealed!
Are these your promises, your pity this?"

"Tamar, I well may pity what I feel—
Mark me aright—I feel for thee—proceed—
Relate me all."

"Then will I all relate,"

Said the young shepherd, gladdened from his heart.
"Twas evening, though not sunset, and springtide
Level with these green meadows, seemed still higher.
'Twas pleasant; and I loosened from my neck
The pipe you gave me, and began to play.
Oh, that I ne'er had learnt the tuneful art!
It always brings us enemies or love!
Well, I was playing, when above the waves
Some swimmer's head methought I saw ascend;
I, sitting still, surveyed it, with my pipe
Awkwardly held before my lips half-closed.
Gebir! it was a nymph! a nymph divine!
I cannot wait describing how she came,
How I was sitting, how she first assumed
The sailor; of what happened there remains
Enough to say, and too much to forget.
The sweet deceiver stepped upon this bank
Before I was aware; for with surprise
Moments fly rapid as with love itself.
Stooping to tune afresh the hoarsened reed,
I heard a rustling, and where that arose
My glance first lighted on her nimble feet.
Her feet resembled those long shells explored
By him who to befriend his steed's dim sight
Would blow the pungent powder in the eye.
Her eyes too! O immortal gods! her eyes
Resembled—what could they resemble? what
Ever resemble those! E'en her attire
Was not of wonted woof nor vulgar art:
Her mantle showed the yellow samphire-pod,
Her girdle the dove-coloured wave serene.
'Shepherd,' said she, 'and will you wrestle now
And with the sailor's hardier race engage?'
I was rejoiced to hear it, and contrived
How to keep up contention; could I fail
By pressing not too strongly, yet to press?
'Whether a shepherd, as indeed you seem,
Or whether of the hardier race you boast,
I am not daunted, no; I will engage.
But first,' said she, 'what wager will you lay?'
'A sheep,' I answered; 'add whate'er you will.'
'I cannot,' she replied, 'make that return:
Our hid vessels in their pitchy round
Seldom, unless from rapine, hold a sheep.
But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
In the sun's palace porch, where when unyoked
His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave:
Shake one and it awakens, then apply
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.
And I have others given me by the nymphs,
Of sweeter sound than any pipe you have.
But we, by Neptune, for no pipe contend—
This time a sheep I win, a pipe the next.'
Now came she forward eager to engage,
But first her dress, her bosom then surveyed,

And heaved it, doubting if she could deceive.
 Her bosom seemed, enclosed in haze like heaven,
 To baffle touch, and rose forth undefined:
 Above her knees she drew the robe succinct,
 Above her breast, and just below her arms.
 'This will preserve my breath when tightly bound,
 If struggle and equal strength should so constrain.'
 Thus, pulling hard to fasten it, she spake,
 And, rushing at me, closed: I thrilled throughout
 And seemed to lessen and shrink up with cold.
 Again with violent impulse gushed my blood,
 And hearing nought external, thus absorbed,
 I heard it, rushing through each turbid vein,
 Shake my unsteady swimming sight in air.
 Yet with unyielding though uncertain arms
 I clung around her neck; the vest beneath
 Rustled against our slippery limbs entwined:
 Often mine springing with eluded force
 Started aside, and trembled till replaced:
 And when I most succeeded, as I thought,
 My bosom and my throat felt so compressed
 That life was almost quivering on my lips,
 Yet nothing was there painful! these are signs
 Of secret arts and not of human might—
 What arts I cannot tell—I only know
 My eyes grew dizzy, and my strength decayed.
 I was indeed o'ercome! with what regret,
 And more, with what confusion, when I reached
 The fold, and yielding up the sheep, she cried:
 'This pays a shepherd to a conquering maid.'
 She smiled, and more of pleasure than disdain
 Was in her dimpled chin and liberal lip,
 And eyes that languished, lengthening, just like love.
 She went away; I on the wicker gate
 Leant, and could follow with my eyes alone.
 The sheep she carried easy as a cloak;
 But when I heard its bleating, as I did,
 And saw, she hastening on, its hinder feet
 Struggle and from her snowy shoulder slip—
 One shoulder its poor efforts had unveiled—
 Then all my passions mingling fell in tears;
 Restless then ran I to the highest ground
 To watch her—she was gone—gone down the tide—
 And the long moonbeam on the hard wet sand
 Lay like a jasper column half-upreared."

"But, Tamar! tell me, will she not return?"

"She will return, yet not before the moon
 Again is at the full; she promised this,
 Though when she promised I could not reply."

"By all the gods I pity thee! go on—
 Fear not my anger, look not on my shame;
 For when a lover only hears of love
 He finds his folly out, and is ashamed.
 Away with watchful nights and lonely days,
 Contempt of earth and aspect up to heaven,
 Within contemplation, with humility,
 A tattered cloak that pride wears when deformed,
 Away with all that hides me from myself,
 Parts me from others, whispers I am wise—
 From our own wisdom less is to be reaped
 Than from the barest folly of our friend.
 Tamar! thy pastures, large and rich, afford
 Flowers to thy bees and herbage to thy sheep,
 But, battered on too much, the poorest croft
 Of thy poor neighbour yields what thine denies."

They hastened to the camp, and Gebir there
 Resolved his native country to forego,
 And ordered, from those ruins to the right
 They forthwith raise a city: Tamar heard
 With wonder, though in passing 'twas half-told,
 His brother's love, and sighed upon his own.

SECOND BOOK.

THE Gadite men the royal charge obey.
Now fragments weighed up from th' uneven streets
Leave the ground black beneath; again the sun
Shines into what were porches, and on steps
Once warm with frequentation—clients, friends,
All morning, satchelled idlers all mid-day,
Lying half-up and languid though at games.

Some raise the painted pavement, some on wheels
Draw slow its laminous length, some intersperse
Salt waters through the sordid heaps, and seize
The flowers and figures starting fresh to view.
Others rub hard large masses, and essay
To polish into white what they misdeem
The growing green of many trackless years.
Far off at intervals the axe resounds
With regular strong stroke, and nearer home
Dull falls the mallet with long labour fringed.
Here arches are discovered, there huge beams
Resist the hatchet, but in fresher air
Soon drop away: there spreads a marble squared
And smoothened; some high pillar for its base
Chose it, which now lies ruined in the dust.
Clearing the soil at bottom, they espy
A crevice: they, intent on treasure, strive
Strenuous, and groan, to move it: one exclaims,
"I hear the rusty metal grate; it moves!"
Now, overturning it, backward they start,
And stop again, and see a serpent pant,
See his throat thicken, and the crisped scales
Rise ruffled, while upon the middle fold
He keeps his wary head and blinking eye,
Curling more close and crouching ere he strike.
Go mighty men, invade far cities, go—
And be such treasure portions to your heirs.

Six days they laboured: on the seventh day
Returning, all their labours were destroyed.
'Twas not by mortal hand, or from their tents
'Twere visible; for these were now removed
Above, here neither noxious mist ascends
Nor the way wearies ere the work begin.
There Gebir, pierced with sorrow, spake these words:

"Ye men of Gades, armed with brazen shields,
And ye of near Tartessus, where the shore
Stoops to receive the tribute which all owe
To Boetis and his banks for their attire,
Ye too whom Durius bore on level meads,
Inherent in your hearts is bravery:
For earth contains no nation where abounds
The generous horse and not the warlike man.
But neither soldier now nor steed avails:
Nor steed nor soldier can oppose the gods:
Nor is there ought above like Jove himself;
Nor weighs against his purpose, when once fixed,
Aught but, with supplicating knee, the prayers.
Swifter than light are they, and every face,
Though different, glows with beauty; at the throne
Of mercy, when clouds shut it from mankind,
They fall bare-bosomed, and indignant Jove
Drops at the soothing sweetness of their voice
The thunder from his hand; let us arise
On these high places daily, beat our breast,
Prostrate ourselves and deprecate his wrath."

The people bowed their bodies and obeyed:
Nine mornings with white ashes on their heads,
Lamented they their toil each night o'erthrown.
And now the largest orbit of the year,
Leaning o'er black Mocattam's rubied brow,
Proceeded slow, majestic, and serene,
Now seemed not further than the nearest cliff,
And crimson light struck soft the phosphor wave.
Then Gebir spake to Tamar in these words:
"Tamar! I am thy elder and thy king,
But am thy brother too, nor ever said,
'Give me thy secret and become my slave:'
But haste thee not away; I will myself

Await the nymph, disguised in thy attire."

Then starting from attention Tamar cried:

"Brother! in sacred truth it cannot be!

My life is yours, my love must be my own:

Oh, surely he who seeks a second love

Never felt one, or 'tis not one I feel."

But Gebir with complacent smile replied:

"Go then, fond Tamar, go in happy hour—

But ere thou partest ponder in thy breast

And well bethink thee, lest thou part deceived,

Will she disclose to thee the mysteries

Of our calamity? and unconstrained?

When even her love thy strength had to disclose.

My heart indeed is full, but witness heaven!

My people, not my passion, fills my heart."

"Then let me kiss thy garment," said the youth,

"And heaven be with thee, and on me thy grace."

Him then the monarch thus once more addressed:

"Be of good courage: hast thou yet forgot

What chaplets languished round thy unburnt hair,

In colour like some tall smooth beech's leaves

Curled by autumnal suns?"

How flattery

Excites a pleasant, soothes a painful shame!

"These," amid stifled blushes Tamar said,

"Were of the flowering raspberry and vine:

But, ah! the seasons will not wait for love;

Seek out some other now."

They parted here:

And Gebir bending through the woodlands culled

The creeping vine and viscous raspberry,

Less green and less compliant than they were;

And twisted in those mossy tufts that grow

On brakes of roses when the roses fade:

And as he passes on, the little hinds

That shake for bristly herds the foodful bough,

Wonder, stand still, gaze, and trip satisfied;

Pleased more if chestnut, out of prickly husk

Shot from the sandal, roll along the glade.

And thus unnoticed went he, and untired

Stepped up the acclivity; and as he stepped,

And as the garlands nodded o'er his brow,

Sudden from under a close alder sprang

Th' expectant nymph, and seized him unaware.

He staggered at the shock; his feet at once

Slipped backward from the withered grass short-grazed;

But striking out one arm, though without aim,

Then grasping with his other, he enclosed

The struggler; she gained not one step's retreat,

Urging with open hands against his throat

Intense, now holding in her breath constrained,

Now pushing with quick impulse and by starts,

Till the dust blackened upon every pore.

Nearer he drew her and yet nearer, clasped

Above the knees midway, and now one arm

Fell, and her other lapsing o'er the neck

Of Gebir swung against his back incurved,

The swoll'n veins glowing deep, and with a groan

On his broad shoulder fell her face reclined.

But ah, she knew not whom that roseate face

Cooled with its breath ambrosial; for she stood

High on the bank, and often swept and broke

His chaplets mingled with her loosened hair.

Whether while Tamar tarried came desire,

And she grown languid loosed the wings of love,

Which she before held proudly at her will,

And nought but Tamar in her soul, and nought

Where Tamar was that seemed or feared deceit,

To fraud she yielded what no force had gained—

Or whether Jove in pity to mankind,

When from his crystal fount the visual orbs

He filled with piercing ether and endued

With somewhat of omnipotence, ordained

That never two fair forms at once torment

The human heart and draw it different ways,

And thus in prowess like a god the chief
Subdued her strength nor softened at her charms—
The nymph divine, the magic mistress, failed.
Recovering, still half resting on the turf,
She looked up wildly, and could now descry
The kingly brow, arched lofty for command.

“Traitor!” said she, undaunted, though amaze
Threw o’er her varying cheek the air of fear,
“Thinkest thou thus that with impunity
Thou hast forsooth deceived me? dar’st thou deem
Those eyes not hateful that have seen me fall?
O heaven! soon may they close on my disgrace.
Merciless man, what! for one sheep estranged
Hast thou thrown into dungeons and of day
Amerced thy shepherd? hast thou, while the iron
Pierced through his tender limbs into his soul,
By threats, by tortures, torn out that offence,
And heard him (oh, could I!) avow his love?
Say, hast thou? cruel, hateful!—ah my fears!
I feel them true! speak, tell me, are they true?”

She blending thus entreaty with reproach
Bent forward, as though falling on her knee
Whence she had hardly risen, and at this pause
Shed from her large dark eyes a shower of tears.

Th’ Iberian king her sorrow thus consoled.
“Weep no more, heavenly damsel, weep no more:
Neither by force withheld, or choice estranged
Thy Tamar lives, and only lives for thee.
Happy, thrice happy, you! ’tis me alone
Whom heaven and earth and ocean with one hate
Conspire on, and throughout each path pursue.
Whether in waves beneath or skies above
Thou hast thy habitation, ’tis from heaven,
From heaven alone, such power, such charms, descend.
Then oh! discover whence that ruin comes
Each night upon our city, whence are heard
Those yells of rapture round our fallen walls:
In our affliction can the gods delight,
Or meet oblation for the nymphs are tears?”

He spake, and indignation sank in woe.
Which she perceiving, pride refreshed her heart,
Hope wreathed her mouth with smiles, and she exclaimed:
“Neither the gods afflict you, nor the nymphs.
Return me him who won my heart, return
Him whom my bosom pants for, as the steeds
In the sun’s chariot for the western wave,
The gods will prosper thee, and Tamar prove
How nymphs the torments that they cause assuage.
Promise me this! indeed I think thou hast,
But ’tis so pleasing, promise it once more.”

“Once more I promise,” cried the gladdened king,
“By my right hand and by myself I swear,
And ocean’s gods and heaven’s gods I adjure,
Thou shalt be Tamar’s, Tamar shalt be thine.”

Then she, regarding him long fixed, replied:
“I have thy promise, take thou my advice.
Gebir, this land of Egypt is a land
Of incantation, demons rule these waves;
These are against thee, these thy works destroy.
Where thou hast built thy palace, and hast left
The seven pillars to remain in front,
Sacrifice there, and all these rites observe.
Go, but go early, ere the gladsome Hours,
Strew saffron in the path of rising Morn,
Ere the bee buzzing o’er flowers fresh disclosed
Examine where he may the best alight
Nor scatter off the bloom, ere cold-lipped herds
Crop the pale herbage round each other’s bed,
Lead seven bulls, well pastured and well formed,
Their neck unblemished and their horns unringed,
And at each pillar sacrifice thou one.
Around each base rub thrice the black’ning blood,
And burn the curling shavings of the hoof;
And of the forehead locks thou also burn:
The yellow galls, with equal care preserved,

Pour at the seventh statue from the north."

He listened, and on her his eyes intent
Perceived her not, and she had disappeared—
So deep he pondered her important words.

And now had morn arisen and he performed
Almost the whole enjoined him: he had reached
The seventh statue, poured the yellow galls,
The forelock from his left he had released
And burnt the curling shavings of the hoof
Moistened with myrrh; when suddenly a flame
Spired from the fragrant smoke, nor sooner spired
Down sank the brazen fabric at his feet.
He started back, gazed, nor could aught but gaze,
And cold dread stiffened up his hair flower-twined;
Then with a long and tacit step, one arm
Behind, and every finger wide outspread,
He looked and tottered on a black abyss.
He thought he sometimes heard a distant voice
Breathe through the cavern's mouth, and further on
Faint murmurs now, now hollow groans reply.
Therefore suspended he his crook above,
Dropped it, and heard it rolling step by step:
He entered, and a mingled sound arose
Like one (when shaken from some temple's roof
By zealous hand, they and their fretted nest)
Of birds that wintering watch in Memnon's tomb,
And tell the halcyons when spring first returns.

THIRD BOOK.

OH, for the spirit of that matchless man
Whom Nature led throughout her whole domain,
While he embodied breathed etherial air!

Though panting in the play-hour of my youth
I drank of Avon too, a dangerous draught,
That roused within the feverish thirst of song,
Yet never may I trespass o'er the stream
Of jealous Acheron, nor alive descend
The silent and unsearchable abodes
Of Erebus and Night, nor unchastised
Lead up long-absent heroes into day.
When on the pausing theatre of earth
Eve's shadowy curtain falls, can any man
Bring back the far-off intercepted hills,
Grasp the round rock-built turret, or arrest
The glittering spires that pierce the brow of Heaven?
Rather can any with outstripping voice
The parting sun's gigantic strides recall?

Twice sounded *Gebir!* twice th' Iberian king
Thought it the strong vibration of the brain
That struck upon his ear; but now descried
A form, a man, come nearer: as he came
His unshorn hair grown soft in these abodes
Waved back, and scattered thin and hoary light.
Living, men called him Aroar, but no more
In celebration or recording verse
His name is heard, no more by Arnon's side
The well-walled city which he reared remains.

Gebir was now undaunted—for the brave
When they no longer doubt no longer fear—
And would have spoken, but the shade began,

"Brave son of Hesperus! no mortal hand
Has led thee hither, nor without the gods
Penetrate thy firm feet the vast profound.
Thou knowest not that here thy fathers lie,
The race of Sidad; theirs was loud acclaim
When living, but their pleasure was in war;
Triumphs and hatred followed: I myself
Bore, men imagined, no inglorious part:
The gods thought otherwise, by whose decree
Deprived of life, and more, of death deprived,
I still hear shrieking through the moonless night
Their discontented and deserted shades.
Observe these horrid walls, this rueful waste!

Here some refresh the vigour of the mind
With contemplation and cold penitence:
Nor wonder while thou hearest that the soul
Thus purified hereafter may ascend
Surmounting all obstruction, nor ascribe
The sentence to indulgence; each extreme
Has tortures for ambition; to dissolve
In everlasting languor, to resist
Its impulse, but in vain: to be enclosed
Within a limit, and that limit fire;
Severed from happiness, from eminence,
And flying, but hell bars us, from ourselves.

Yet rather all these torments most endure
Than solitary pain and sad remorse
And towering thoughts on their own breast o'er-turned
And piercing to the heart: such penitence,
Such contemplation theirs! thy ancestors
Bear up against them, nor will they submit
To conquering Time the asperities of Fate;
Yet could they but revisit earth once more,
How gladly would they poverty embrace,
How labour, even for their deadliest foe!
It little now avails them to have raised
Beyond the Syrian regions, and beyond
Phoenicia, trophies, tributes, colonies:
Follow thou me—mark what it all avails."

Him Gebir followed, and a roar confused
Rose from a river rolling in its bed,
Not rapid, that would rouse the wretched souls,
Nor calmly, that might lull them to repose;
But with dull weary lapses it upheaved
Billows of bale, heard low, yet heard afar.
For when hell's iron portals let out night,
Often men start and shiver at the sound,
And lie so silent on the restless couch
They hear their own hearts beat. Now Gebir breathed
Another air, another sky beheld.
Twilight broods here, lulled by no nightingale
Nor wakened by the shrill lark dewy-winged,
But glowing with one sullen sunless heat.
Beneath his foot nor sprouted flower nor herb
Nor chirped a grasshopper. Above his head
Phlegethon formed a fiery firmament:
Part were sulphurous clouds involving, part
Shining like solid ribs of molten brass;
For the fierce element which else aspires
Higher and higher and lessens to the sky,
Below, earth's adamantine arch rebuffed.

Gebir, though now such languor held his limbs,
Scarce aught admired he, yet he this admired;
And thus addressed him then the conscious guide.
"Beyond that river lie the happy fields;
From them fly gentle breezes, which when drawn
Against yon crescent convex, but unite
Stronger with what they could not overcome.
Thus they that scatter freshness through the groves
And meadows of the fortunate, and fill
With liquid light the marble bowl of earth,
And give her blooming health and spritely force,
Their fire no more diluted, nor its darts
Blunted by passing through thick myrtle bowers,
Neither from odours rising half dissolved,
Point forward Phlegethon's eternal flame;
And this horizon is the spacious bow
Whence each ray reaches to the world above."

The hero pausing, Gebir then besought
What region held his ancestors, what clouds,
What waters, or what gods, from his embrace.
Aroar then sudden, as though roused, renewed.

"Come thou, if ardour urges thee and force
Suffices—mark me, Gebir, I unfold
No fable to allure thee—on! behold
Thy ancestors!" and lo! with horrid gasp
The panting flame above his head recoiled,
And thunder through his heart and life blood throbbed.

Such sound could human organs once conceive,
Cold, speechless, palsied, not the soothing voice
Of friendship or almost of Deity
Could raise the wretched mortal from the dust;
Beyond man's home condition they! with eyes
Intent, and voice desponding, and unheard
By Aroar, though he tarried at his side.

"They know me not," cried Gebir, "O my sires,
Ye know me not! they answer not, nor hear.
How distant are they still! what sad extent
Of desolation must we overcome!

Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with eyebrows white, and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder who bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there engine-hung;
He too among my ancestors?"

"O King!

Iberia bore him, but the breed accursed
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east."

"He was a warrior then, nor feared the gods?"

"Gebir, he feared the Demons, not the Gods;
Though them indeed his daily face adored,
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squandered as stones to exercise a sling!
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice—
Oh, madness of mankind! addressed, adored!
O Gebir! what are men, or where are gods!
Behold the giant next him, how his feet
Plunge floundering mid the marshes yellow-flowered,
His restless head just reaching to the rocks,
His bosom tossing with black weeds besmeared,
How writhes he twixt the continent and isle!
What tyrant with more insolence e'er claimed
Dominion? when from the heart of Usury
Rose more intense the pale-flamed thirst for gold?
And called forsooth *Deliverer!* False or fools
Who praised the dull-eared miscreant, or who hoped
To soothe your folly and disgrace with praise!

Hearst thou not the harp's gay simpering air
And merriment afar? then come, advance;
And now behold him! mark the wretch accursed
Who sold his people to a rival king—
Self-yoked they stood two ages unredeemed."

"Oh, horror! what pale visage rises there?"

Speak, Aroar! me perhaps mine eyes deceive,
Inured not, yet methinks they there descry
Such crimson haze as sometimes drowns the moon.
What is yon awful sight? why thus appears
That space between the purple and the crown?"

"I will relate their stories when we reach
Our confines," said the guide; "for thou, O king,
Differing in both from all thy countrymen,
Seest not their stories and hast seen their fates.
But while we tarry, lo again the flame
Riseth, and murmuring hoarse, points straighter, haste!
'Tis urgent, we must hence."

"Then, oh, adieu!"

Cried Gebir, and groaned loud, at last a tear
Burst from his eyes turned back, and he exclaimed,
"Am I deluded? O ye powers of hell,
Suffer me—Oh, my fathers!—am I torn—"
He spake, and would have spoken more, but flames
Enwrapped him round and round intense; he turned,
And stood held breathless in a ghost's embrace.
"Gebir, my son, desert me not! I heard
Thy calling voice, nor fate withheld me more:
One moment yet remains; enough to know
Soon will my torments, soon will thine, expire.
Oh, that I e'er exacted such a vow!
When dipping in the victim's blood thy hand,
First thou withdrew'st it, looking in my face
Wondering; but when the priest my will explained,
Then swarest thou, repeating what he said,
How against Egypt thou wouldst raise that hand
And bruise the seed first risen from our line.

Therefore in death what pangs have I endured!
Racked on the fiery centre of the sun,
Twelve years I saw the ruined world roll round.
Shudder not—I have borne it—I deserved
My wretched fate—be better thine—farewell.”

“Oh, stay, my father! stay one moment more.
Let me return thee that embrace—’tis past—
Aroar! how could I quit it unreturned!
And now the gulf divides us, and the waves
Of sulphur bellow through the blue abyss.
And is he gone for ever! and I come
In vain?” Then sternly said the guide, “In vain!
Sayst thou? what wouldst thou more? alas, O prince,
None come for pastime here! but is it nought
To turn thy feet from evil? is it nought
Of pleasure to that shade if they are turned?
For this thou camest hither: he who dares
To penetrate this darkness, nor regards
The dangers of the way, shall reascend
In glory, nor the gates of hell retard
His steps, nor demon’s nor man’s art prevail.
Once in each hundred years, and only once,
Whether by some rotation of the world,
Or whether willed so by some power above,
This flaming arch starts back, each realm descries
Its opposite, and Bliss from her repose
Freshens and feels her own security.”

“Security!” cried out the Gadite king,
“And feel they not compassion?”

“Child of Earth,”
Calmly said Aroar at his guest’s surprise,
“Some so disfigured by habitual crimes,
Others are so exalted, so refined,
So permeated by heaven, no trace remains
Graven on earth: here Justice is supreme;
Compassion can be but where passions are.
Here are discovered those who tortured Law
To silence or to speech, as pleased themselves:
Here also those who boasted of their zeal
And loved their country for the spoils it gave.
Hundreds, whose glitt’ring merchandise the lyre
Dazzled vain wretches drunk with flattery,
And wafted them in softest airs to Heav’n,
Doomed to be still deceived, here still attune
The wonted strings and fondly woo applause:
Their wish half granted, they retain their own,
But madden at the mockery of the shades.
Upon the river’s other side there grow
Deep olive groves; there other ghosts abide,
Blest indeed they, but not supremely blest.
We cannot see beyond, we cannot see
Aught but our opposite, and here are fates
How opposite to ours! here some observed
Religious rites, some hospitality:
Strangers, who from the good old men retired,
Closed the gate gently, lest from generous use
Shutting and opening of its own accord,
It shake unsettled slumbers off their couch:
Some stopped revenge athirst for slaughter, some
Sowed the slow olive for a race unborn.
These had no wishes, therefore none are crowned;
But theirs are tufted banks, theirs umbrage, theirs
Enough of sunshine to enjoy the shade,
And breeze enough to lull them to repose.”

Then Gebir cried: “Illustrious host, proceed.
Bring me among the wonders of a realm
Admired by all, but like a tale admired.
We take our children from their cradled sleep,
And on their fancy from our own impress
Ethereal forms and adulating fates:
But ere departing for such scenes ourselves
We seize their hands, we hang upon their neck,
Our beds cling heavy round us with our tears,
Agony strives with agony—just gods!
Wherefore should wretched mortals thus believe,

Or wherefore should they hesitate to die?"

Thus while he questioned, all his strength dissolved
Within him, thunder shook his troubled brain,
He started, and the cavern's mouth surveyed
Near, and beyond his people; he arose,
And bent toward them his bewildered way.

FOURTH BOOK.

THE king's lone road, his visit, his return,
Were not unknown to Dalica, nor long
The wondrous tale from royal ears delayed.
When the young queen had heard who taught the rites
Her mind was shaken, and what first she asked
Was, whether the sea-maids were very fair,
And was it true that even gods were moved
By female charms beneath the waves profound,
And joined to them in marriage, and had sons—
Who knows but Gebir sprang then from the gods!
He that could pity, he that could obey,
Flattered both female youth and princely pride,
The same ascending from amid the shades
Showed Power in frightful attitude: the queen
Marks the surpassing prodigy, and strives
To shake off terror in her crowded court,
And wonders why she trembles, nor suspects
How Fear and Love assume each other's form,
By birth and secret compact how allied.
Vainly (to conscious virgins I appeal),
Vainly with crouching tigers, prowling wolves,
Rocks, precipices, waves, storms, thunderbolts,
All his immense inheritance, would Fear
The simplest heart, should Love refuse, assail:
Consent—the maiden's pillowed ear imbibes
Constancy, honour, truth, fidelity,
Beauty and ardent lips and longing arms;
Then fades in glimmering distance half the scene,
Then her heart quails and flutters and would fly—
'Tis her beloved! not to her! ye Powers!
What doubting maid exacts the vow? behold
Above the myrtles his protesting hand!
Such ebbs of doubt and swells of jealousy
Toss the fond bosom in its hour of sleep
And float around the eyelids and sink through.

Lo! mirror of delight in cloudless days,
Lo! thy reflection: 'twas when I exclaimed,
With kisses hurried as if each foresaw
Their end, and reckoned on our broken bonds,
And could at such a price such loss endure:
"Oh, what to faithful lovers met at morn,
What half so pleasant as imparted fears!"
Looking recumbent how love's column rose
Marmoreal, trophied round with golden hair,
How in the valley of one lip unseen
He slumbered, one his unstrung low impressed.
Sweet wilderness of soul-entangling charms!
Led back by memory, and each blissful maze
Retracing, me with magic power detain
Those dimpled cheeks, those temples violet-tinged,
Those lips of nectar and those eyes of heaven!

Charoba, though indeed she never drank
The liquid pearl, or twined the nodding crown,
Or when she wanted cool and calm repose
Dreamed of the crawling asp and grated tomb,
Was wretched up to royalty: the jibe
Struck her, most piercing where love pierced before,
From those whose freedom centres in their tongue,
Handmaidens, pages, courtiers, priests, buffoons.
Congratulations here, there prophecies,
Here children, not repining at neglect
While tumult sweeps them ample room for play,
Everywhere questions answered ere begun,
Everywhere crowds, for everywhere alarm.
Thus winter gone, nor spring (though near) arrived,

Urged slanting onward by the bickering breeze
That issues from beneath Aurora's car,
Shudder the sombrous waves; at every beam
More vivid, more by every breath impelled,
Higher and higher up the fretted rocks
Their turbulent refulgence they display.
Madness, which like the spiral element
The more it seizes on the fiercer burns,
Hurried them blindly forward, and involved
In flame the senses and in gloom the soul.

Determined to protect the country's gods
And asking their protection, they adjure
Each other to stand forward, and insist
With zeal, and trample under foot the slow;
And disregarding of the Sympathies
Divine, those Sympathies whose delicate hand
Touching the very eyeball of the heart,
Awakens it, not wounds it nor inflames,
Blind wretches! they with desperate embrace
Hang on the pillar till the temple fall.
Oft the grave judge alarms religious wealth
And rouses anger under gentle words.
Woe to the wiser few who dare to cry
"People! these men are not your enemies,
Inquire their errand, and resist when wronged."
Together childhood, priesthood, womanhood,
The scribes and elders of the land, exclaim,
"Seek they not hidden treasure in the tombs?
Raising the ruins, levelling the dust,
Who can declare whose ashes they disturb!
Build they not fairer cities than our own,
Extravagant enormous apertures
For light, and portals larger, open courts
Where all ascending all are unconfined,
And wider streets in purer air than ours?
Temples quite plain with equal architraves
They build, nor bearing gods like ours embossed.
Oh, profanation! Oh, our ancestors!"

Though all the vulgar hate a foreign face,
It more offends weak eyes and homely age,
Dalica most, who thus her aim pursued.
"My promise, O Charoba, I perform.
Proclaim to gods and men a festival
Throughout the land, and bid the strangers eat;
Their anger thus we haply may disarm."

"O Dalica," the grateful queen replied,
"Nurse of my childhood, soother of my cares,
Preventer of my wishes, of my thoughts,
Oh, pardon youth, oh, pardon royalty!
If hastily to Dalica I sued,
Fear might impel me, never could distrust.
Go then, for wisdom guides thee, take my name,
Issue what most imports and best beseems,
And sovereignty shall sanction the decree."

And now Charoba was alone, her heart
Grew lighter; she sat down, and she arose,
She felt voluptuous tenderness, but felt
That tenderness for Dalica; she praised
Her kind attention, warm solicitude,
Her wisdom—for what wisdom pleased like hers!
She was delighted; should she not behold
Gebir? she blushed; but she had words to speak,
She formed them and re-formed them, with regret
That there was somewhat lost with every change;
She could replace them—what would that avail?—
Moved from their order they have lost their charm.
While thus she strewed her way with softest words,
Others grew up before her, but appeared
A plenteous rather than perplexing choice:
She rubbed her palms with pleasure, heaved a sigh,
Grew calm again, and thus her thoughts revolved—

"But he descended to the tombs! the thought
Thrills me, I must avow it, with affright.
And wherefore? shows he not the more beloved
Of heaven? or how ascends he back to day?"

Then has he wronged me? could he want a cause
Who has an army and was bred to reign?
And yet no reasons against rights he urged,
He threatened not, proclaimed not; I approached,
He hastened on; I spake, he listened; wept,
He pitied me; he loved me, he obeyed;
He was a conqueror, still am I a queen."

She thus indulged fond fancies, when the sound
Of timbrels and of cymbals struck her ear,
And horns and howlings of wild jubilee.
She feared, and listened to confirm her fears;
One breath sufficed, and shook her refluent soul.
Smiting, with simulated smile constrained,
Her beauteous bosom, "Oh, perfidious man!
Oh, cruel foe!" she twice and thrice exclaimed,
"Oh, my companions equal-aged! my throne,
My people! Oh, how wretched to presage
This day, how tenfold wretched to endure!"

She ceased, and instantly the palace rang
With gratulation roaring into rage—
'Twas her own people. "Health to Gebir! health
To our compatriot subjects! to our queen!
Health and unfaded youth ten thousand years!"
Then went the victims forward crowned with flowers,
Crowned were tame crocodiles, and boys white-robed
Guided their creaking crests across the stream.
In gilded barges went the female train,
And hearing others ripple near, undrew
The veil of sea-green awning: if they found
Whom they desired, how pleasant was the breeze!
If not, the frightful water forced a sigh.
Sweet airs of music ruled the rowing palms,
Now rose they glistening and aslant reclined,
Now they descended, and with one consent
Plunging, seemed swift each other to pursue,
And now to tremble wearied o'er the wave.
Beyond and in the suburbs might be seen
Crowds of all ages: here in triumph passed
Not without pomp, though raised with rude device,
The monarch and Charoba; there a throng
Shone out in sunny whiteness o'er the reeds.
Nor could luxuriant youth, or lapsing age
Propped by the corner of the nearest street,
With aching eyes and tottering knees intent,
Loose leathery neck and worm-like lip outstretched,
Fix long the ken upon one form, so swift
Through the gay vestures fluttering on the bank,
And through the bright-eyed waters dancing round,
Wove they their wanton wiles and disappeared.

Meantime, with pomp august and solemn, borne
On four white camels tinkling plates of gold,
Heralds before and Ethiop slaves behind,
Each with the signs of office in his hand,
Each on his brow the sacred stamp of years,
The four ambassadors of peace proceed.
Rich carpets bear they, corn and generous wine,
The Syrian olive's cheerful gift they bear,
With stubborn goats that eye the mountain tops
Askance and riot with reluctant horn,
And steeds and stately camels in their train.
The king, who sat before his tent, descried
The dust rise reddened from the setting sun.
Through all the plains below the Gadite men
Were resting from their labour; some surveyed
The spacious site ere yet obstructed—walls
Already, soon will roofs have interposed;
Some ate their frugal viands on the steps
Contented; some, remembering home, prefer
The cot's bare rafters o'er the gilded dome,
And sing, for often sighs, too, end in song:
"In smiling meads how sweet the brook's repose,
To the rough ocean and red restless sands!
Where are the woodland voices that increased
Along the unseen path on festal days,
When lay the dry and outcast arbutus

On the fane step, and the first privet-flowers
Threw their white light upon the vernal shrine?"
Some heedless trip along with hasty step
Whistling, and fix too soon on their abodes:
Haply and one among them with his spear
Measures the lintel, if so great its height
As will receive him with his helm unlowered.

But silence went throughout, e'en thoughts were hushed,
When to full view of navy and of camp
Now first expanded the bare-headed train.
Majestic, unpresuming, unappalled,
Onward they marched, and neither to the right
Nor to the left, though there the city stood,
Turned they their sober eyes; and now they reached
Within a few steep paces of ascent
The lone pavilion of the Iberian king.
He saw them, he awaited them, he rose,
He hailed them, "Peace be with you:" they replied,
"King of the western world, be with you peace."

FIFTH BOOK.

ONCE a fair city, courted then by king,
Mistress of nations, thronged by palaces,
Raising her head o'er destiny, her face
Glowing with pleasure and with palms refreshed,
Now pointed at by Wisdom or by Wealth,
Bereft of beauty, bare of ornaments,
Stood in the wilderness of woe, Masar.
Ere far advancing, all appeared a plain;
Traucherous and fearful mountains, far advanced.
Her glory so gone down, at human step
The fierce hyena frightened from the walls
Bristled his rising back, his teeth unsheathed,
Drew the long growl and with slow foot retired.
Yet were remaining some of ancient race,
And ancient arts were now their sole delight:
With Time's first sickle they had marked the hour
When at their incantation would the Moon
Start back, and shuddering shed blue blasted light.
The rifted rays they gathered, and immersed
In potent portion of that wondrous wave,
Which, hearing rescued Israel, stood erect,
And led her armies through his crystal gates.

Hither (none shared her way, her counsel none)
Hied the Masarian Dalica: 'twas night,
And the still breeze fell languid on the waste.
She, tired with journey long and ardent thoughts
Stopped; and before the city she descried
A female form emerge above the sands.
Intent she fixed her eyes, and on herself
Relying, with fresh vigour bent her way;
Nor disappeared the woman, but exclaimed,
One hand retaining tight her folded vest,
"Stranger, who loathest life, there lies Masar.
Begone, nor tarry longer, or ere morn
The cormorant in his solitary haunt
Of insulated rock or sounding cove
Stands on thy bleached bones and screams for prey.
My lips can scatter them a hundred leagues,
So shrivelled in one breath as all the sands
We tread on could not in as many years.
Wretched who die nor raise their sepulchre!
Therefore begone."

But Dalica unawed
(Though in her withered but still firm right-hand
Held up with imprecations hoarse and deep
Glimmered her brazen sickle, and enclosed
Within its figured curve the fading moon)
Spake thus aloud. "By yon bright orb of Heaven,
In that most sacred moment when her beam
Guided first thither by the forked shaft,
Strikes through the crevice of Arishtah's tower—"
"Sayst thou?" astonished cried the sorceress,

“Woman of outer darkness, fiend of death,
From what inhuman cave, what dire abyss,
Hast thou invisible that spell o’erheard?
What potent hand hath touched thy quickened corse,
What song dissolved thy cerements, who unclosed
Those faded eyes and filled them from the stars?
But if with inextinguished light of life
Thou breathest, soul and body unamerced,
Then whence that invocation? who hath dared
Those hallowed words, divulging, to profane?”

Dalica cried, “To heaven, not earth, addressed,
Prayers for protection cannot be profane.”

Here the pale sorceress turned her face aside
Wildly, and muttered to herself amazed;
“I dread her who, alone at such an hour,
Can speak so strangely, who can thus combine
The words of reason with our gifted rites,
Yet will I speak once more.—If thou hast seen
The city of Charoba, hast thou marked
The steps of Dalica?”

“What then?”

“The tongue

Of Dalica has then our rites divulged.”

“Whose rites?”

“Her sister’s, mother’s, and her own.”

“Never.”

“How sayst thou never? one would think,
Presumptuous, thou wert Dalica.”

“I am,

Woman, and who art thou?”

With close embrace,

Clung the Masarian round her neck, and cried:

“Art thou then not my sister? ah, I fear

The golden lamps and jewels of a court

Deprive thine eyes of strength and purity.

O Dalica, mine watch the waning moon,

For ever patient in our mother’s art,

And rest on Heaven suspended, where the founts

Of Wisdom rise, where sound the wings of Power;

Studies intense of strong and stern delight!

And thou too, Dalica, so many years

Weaned from the bosom of thy native land,

Returnest back and seekest true repose.

Oh, what more pleasant than the short-breathed sigh

When laying down your burden at the gate,

And dizzy with long wandering, you embrace

The cool and quiet of a homespun bed.”

“Alas,” said Dalica, “though all commend
This choice, and many meet with no control,

Yet none pursue it! Age by Care oppressed

Feels for the couch, and drops into the grave.

The tranquil scene lies further still from Youth:

Frenzied Ambition and desponding Love

Consume Youth’s fairest flowers; compared with Youth

Age has a something something like repose.

Myrthyr, I seek not here a boundary

Like the horizon, which, as you advance,

Keeping its form and colour, yet recedes;

But mind my errand, and my suit perform.

Twelve years ago Charoba first could speak:

If her indulgent father asked her name,

She would indulge him too, and would reply

‘What? why, Charoba!’ raised with sweet surprise,

And proud to shine a teacher in her turn.

Show her the graven sceptre; what its use?

’Twas to beat dogs with, and to gather flies.

She thought the crown a plaything to amuse

Herself, and not the people, for she thought

Who mimic infant words might infant toys:

But while she watched grave elders look with awe

On such a bauble, she withheld her breath;

She was afraid her parents should suspect

They had caught childhood from her in a kiss;

She blushed for shame, and feared—for she believed.

Yet was not courage wanting in the child.

No; I have often seen her with both hands
 Shake a dry crocodile of equal height,
 And listen to the shells within the scales,
 And fancy there was life, and yet apply
 The jagged jaws wide open to her ear.
 Past are three summers since she first beheld
 The ocean; all around the child await
 Some exclamation of amazement here:
 She coldly said, her long-lashed eyes abased,
 'Is this the mighty ocean? is this all!'
 That wondrous soul Charoba once possessed,
 Capacious then as earth or heaven could hold,
 Soul discontented with capacity,
 Is gone, I fear, for ever. Need I say
 She was enchanted by the wicked spells
 Of Gebir, whom with lust of power inflamed
 The western winds have landed on our coast?
 I since have watched her in each lone retreat,
 Have heard her sigh and soften out the name,
 Then would she change it for Egyptian sounds
 More sweet, and seem to taste them on her lips,
 Then loathe them—Gebir, Gebir still returned.
 Who would repine, of reason not bereft!
 For soon the sunny stream of youth runs down,
 And not a gadfly streaks the lake beyond.
 Lone in the gardens, on her gathered vest
 How gently would her languid arm recline!
 How often have I seen her kiss a flower,
 And on cool mosses press her glowing cheek!
 Nor was the stranger free from pangs himself.
 Whether by spell imperfect, or while brewed
 The swelling herbs infected him with foam,
 Oft have the shepherds met him wandering
 Through unfrequented paths, oft overheard
 Deep groans, oft started from soliloquies
 Which they believe assuredly were meant
 For spirits who attended him unseen.
 But when from his illuded eyes retired
 That figure Fancy fondly chose to raise,
 He clasped the vacant air and stood and gazed;
 Then owning it was folly, strange to tell,
 Burst into peals of laughter at his woes.
 Next, when his passion had subsided, went
 Where from a cistern, green and ruined, oozed
 A little rill, soon lost; there gathered he
 Violets, and harebells of a sister bloom,
 Twining complacently their tender stems
 With plants of kindest pliability.
 These for a garland woven, for a crown
 He platted pithy rushes, and ere dusk
 The grass was whitened with their roots nipped off.
 These threw he, finished, in the little rill
 And stood surveying them with steady smile:
 But such a smile as that of Gebir bids
 To Comfort a defiance, to Despair
 A welcome, at whatever hour she please.
 Had I observed him I had pitied him;
 I have observed Charoba, I have asked
 If she loved Gebir.
 'Love him!' she exclaimed
 With such a start of terror, such a flush
 Of anger, 'I love Gebir? I in love?'
 And looked so piteous, so impatient looked—
 And burst, before I answered, into tears.
 Then saw I, plainly saw I, 'twas not love;
 For such her natural temper, what she likes
 She speaks it out, or rather she commands.
 And could Charoba say with greater ease
 Bring me a water-melon from the Nile,
 Than, if she loved him, 'Bring me him I love.'
 Therefore the death of Gebir is resolved."
 "Resolved indeed," cried Myrthyr, nought surprised,
 "Precious my arts! I could without remorse
 Kill, though I hold thee dearer than the day,
 E'en thee thyself, to exercise my arts.

Look yonder! mark yon pomp of funeral!
 Is this from fortune or from favouring stars?
 Dalica, look thou yonder, what a train!
 What weeping! Oh, what luxury! Come, haste,
 Gather me quickly up these herbs I dropped,
 And then away—hush! I must unobserved
 From those two maiden sisters pull the spleen:
 Dissemblers! how invidious they surround
 The virgin's tomb, where all but virgins weep."
 "Nay, hear me first," cried Dalica; "'tis hard
 To perish to attend a foreign king."
 "Perish! and may not then mine eye alone
 Draw out the venom drop, and yet remain
 Enough? the portion cannot be perceived."
 Away she hastened with it to her home,
 And, sprinkling thrice flesh sulphur o'er the hearth,
 Took up a spindle with malignant smile,
 And pointed to a woof, nor spake a word;
 'Twas a dark purple, and its dye was dread.
 Plunged in a lonely house, to her unknown,
 Now Dalica first trembled: o'er the roof
 Wandered her haggard eyes—'twas some relief.
 The massy stones, though hewn most roughly, showed
 The hand of man had once at least been there:
 But from this object sinking back amazed,
 Her bosom lost all consciousness, and shook
 As if suspended in unbounded space.
 Her thus entranced the sister's voice recalled.
 "Behold it here dyed once again! 'tis done."
 Dalica stepped, and felt beneath her feet
 The slippery floor, with mouldered dust bestrewn;
 But Myrthyr seized with bare bold-sinewed arm
 The grey cerastes, writhing from her grasp,
 And twisted off his horn, nor feared to squeeze
 The viscous poison from his glowing gums.
 Nor wanted there the root of stunted shrub
 Which he lays ragged, hanging o'er the sands,
 And whence the weapons of his wrath are death:
 Nor the blue urchin that with clammy fin
 Holds down the tossing vessel for the tides.
 Together these her scient hand combined,
 And more she added, dared I mention more.
 Which done, with words most potent, thrice she dipped
 The reeking garb; thrice waved it through the air:
 She ceased; and suddenly the creeping wool
 Shrunk up with crispèd dryness in her hands.
 "Take this," she cried, "and Gebir is no more."

SIXTH BOOK.

Now to Aurora borne by dappled steeds,
 The sacred gate of orient pearl and gold,
 Smitten with Lucifer's light silver wand,
 Expanded slow to strains of harmony:
 The waves beneath in purpling rows, like doves
 Glancing with wanton coyness tow'rd their queen,
 Heaved softly; thus the damsel's bosom heaves
 When from her sleeping lover's downy cheek,
 To which so warily her own she brings
 Each moment nearer, she perceives the warmth
 Of coming kisses fanned by playful dreams.
 Ocean and earth and heaven was jubilee.
 For 'twas the morning pointed out by Fate
 When an immortal maid and mortal man
 Should share each other's nature knit in bliss.
 The brave Iberians far the beach o'erspread
 Ere dawn with distant awe; none hear the mew,
 None mark the curlew flapping o'er the field;
 Silence held all, and fond expectancy.
 Now suddenly the conch above the sea
 Sounds, and goes sounding through the woods profound.
 They, where they hear the echo, turn their eyes,
 But nothing see they, save a purple mist
 Roll from the distant mountain down the shore:

It rolls, it sails, it settles, it dissolves—
 Now shines the nymph to human eye revealed,
 And leads her Tamar timorous o'er the waves.
 Immortals crowding round congratulate
 The shepherd; he shrinks back, of breath bereft:
 His vesture clinging closely round his limbs
 Unfelt, while they the whole fair form admire,
 He fears that he has lost it, then he fears
 The wave has moved it, most to look he fears.
 Scarce the sweet-flowing music he imbibes,
 Or sees the peopled ocean; scarce he sees
 Spio with sparkling eyes, and Beroe
 Demure, and young Ione, less renowned,
 Not less divine, mild-natured; Beauty formed
 Her face, her heart Fidelity; for gods
 Designed, a mortal too Ione loved.
 These were the nymphs elected for the hour
 Of Hesperus and Hymen; these had strewn
 The bridal bed, these tuned afresh the shells,
 Wiping the green that hoarsened them within:
 These wove the chaplets, and at night resolved
 To drive the dolphins from the wreathéd door.
 Gebir surveyed the concourse from the tents,
 The Egyptian men around him; 'twas observed
 By those below how wistfully he looked,
 From what attention with what earnestness
 Now to his city, now to theirs, he waved
 His hand, and held it, while they spake, outspread.
 They tarried with him, and they shared the feast.
 They stooped with trembling hand from heavy jars
 The wines of Gades gurgling in the bowl;
 Nor bent they homeward till the moon appeared
 To hang midway betwixt the earth and skies.
 'Twas then that leaning o'er the boy beloved,
 In Ocean's grot where Ocean was unheard,
 "Tamar!" the nymph said gently, "come awake!
 Enough to love, enough to sleep, is given,
 Haste we away." This Tamar deemed deceit,
 Spoken so fondly, and he kissed her lips,
 Nor blushed he then, for he was then unseen.
 But she arising bade the youth arise.
 "What cause to fly?" said Tamar; she replied,
 "Ask none for flight, and feign none for delay."
 "Oh, am I then deceived! or am I cast
 From dreams of pleasure to eternal sleep,
 And, when I cease to shudder, cease to be!"
 She held the downcast bridegroom to her breast,
 Looked in his face and charmed away his fears.
 She said not "Wherefore leave I then embraced
 You a poor shepherd, or at most a man,
 Myself a nymph, that now I should deceive?"
 She said not—Tamar did, and was ashamed.
 Him overcome her serious voice bespake.
 "Grief favours all who bear the gift of tears!
 Mild at first sight he meets his votaries
 And casts no shadow as he comes along:
 But after his embrace the marble chills
 The pausing foot, the closing door sounds loud,
 The fiend in triumph strikes the roof, then falls
 The eye uplifted from his lurid shade.
 Tamar, depress thyself, and miseries
 Darken and widen: yes, proud-hearted man!
 The sea-bird rises as the billows rise;
 Nor otherwise when mountain floods descend
 Smiles the unsullied lotus glossy-haired.
 Thou, claiming all things, leanest on thy claim
 Till overwhelmed through incompiancy.
 Tamar, some silent tempest gathers round!"
 "Round whom?" retorted Tamar; "thou describe
 The danger, I will dare it."
 "Who will dare
 What is unseen?"
 "The man that is unblest."
 "But wherefore thou? It threatens not thyself,
 Nor me, but Gebir and the Gadite host."

"The more I know, the more a wretch am I."
Groaned deep the troubled youth, "still thou proceed."

"Oh, seek not destined evils to divine,
Found out at last too soon! cease here the search,
'Tis vain, 'tis impious, 'tis no gift of mine:
I will impart far better, will impart
What makes, when winter comes, the sun to rest
So soon on ocean's bed his paler brow,
And night to tarry so at spring's return.
And I will tell sometimes the fate of men
Who loosed from drooping neck the restless arm
Adventurous, ere long nights had satisfied
The sweet and honest avarice of love;
How whirlpools have absorbed them, storms o'erwhelmed,
And how amid their struggles and their prayers
The big wave blackened o'er the mouths supine:
Then, when my Tamar trembles at the tale,
Kissing his lips half open with surprise,
Glance from the gloomy story, and with glee
Light on the fairer fables of the gods.

Thus we may sport at leisure where we go
Where, loved by Neptune and the Naiad, loved
By pensive Dryad pale, and Oread
The spritely nymph whom constant Zephyr woos,
Rhine rolls his beryl-coloured wave; than Rhine
What river from the mountains ever came
More stately! most the simple crown adorns
Of rushes and of willows intertwined
With here and there a flower: his lofty brow
Shaded with vines and mistletoe and oak
He rears, and mystic bards his fame resound.
Or gliding opposite, th' Illyrian gulf
Will harbour us from ill." While thus she spake,
She touched his eyelashes with libant lip,
And breathed ambrosial odours, o'er his cheek
Celestial warmth suffusing: grief dispersed,
And strength and pleasure beamed upon his brow.
Then pointed she before him: first arose
To his astonished and delighted view
The sacred isle that shrines the queen of love.
It stood so near him, so acute each sense,
That not the symphony of lutes alone,
Or coo serene or billing strife of doves,
But murmurs, whispers, nay the very sighs
Which he himself had uttered once, he heard.
Next, but long after and far off, appear
The cloud-like cliffs and thousand towers of Crete,
And further to the right, the Cyclades:
Phoebus had raised and fixed them, to surround
His native Delos and aërial fane.
He saw the land of Pelops, host of gods,
Saw the steep ridge where Corinth after stood
Beckoning the serious with the smiling arts
Into the sunbright bay; unborn the maid
That to assure the bent-up hand unskilled
Looked oft, but oftener fearing who might wake.
He heard the voice of rivers; he descried
Pindan Peneus and the slender nymphs
That tread his banks but fear the thundering tide;
These, and Amphrysos and Apidanus
And poplar-crowned Spercheus, and reclined
On restless rocks Enipeus, whore the winds
Scattered above the weeds his hoary hair.
Then, with Pirene and with Panope,
Evenus, troubled from paternal tears,
And last was Achelous, king of isles.
Zacynthus here, above rose Ithaca,
Like a blue bubble floating in the bay.
Far onward to the left a glimmering light
Glanced out oblique, nor vanished; he inquired
Whence that arose, his consort thus replied—
"Behold the vast Eridanus! ere long
We may again behold him and rejoice.
Of noble rivers none with mightier force
Rolls his unwearied torrent to the main."

And now Sicilian Etna rose to view:
Darkness with light more horrid she confounds,
Baffles the breath and dims the sight of day.
Tamar grew giddy with astonishment
And, looking up, held fast the bridal vest;
He heard the roar above him, heard the roar
Beneath, and felt it too, as he beheld,
Hurl, from earth's base, rocks, mountains, to the skies.

Meanwhile the nymph had fixed her eyes beyond,
As seeing somewhat, not intent on aught.

He, more amazed than ever, then exclaimed,

"Is there another flaming isle? or this
Illusion, thus passed over unobserved?"

"Look yonder," cried the nymph, without reply,
"Look yonder!" Tamar looked, and saw afar
Where the waves whitened on the desert shore.
When from amid grey ocean first he caught
The heights of Calpé, saddened he exclaimed,
"Rock of Iberia! fixed by Jove and hung
With all his thunder-hearing clouds, I hail
Thy ridges rough and cheerless! what though Spring
Nor kiss thy brow nor cool it with a flower,
Yet will I hail thee, hail thy flinty couch,
Where Valour and where Virtue have reposed."

The nymph said, sweetly smiling, "Fickle man
Would not be happy could he not regret!
And I confess how, looking back, a thought
Has touched and tuned or rather thrilled my heart,
Too soft for sorrow and too strong for joy:
Fond foolish maid, 'twas with mine own accord
It soothed me, shook me, melted, drowned, in tears.
But weep not thou; what cause hast thou to weep?
Wouldst thou thy country? wouldst those caves abhorred,
Dungeons and portals that exclude the day?
Gebir, though generous, just, humane, inhaled
Rank venom from these mansions. Rest, O king
In Egypt thou! nor, Tamar! pant for sway.
With horrid chorus, Pain, Diseases, Death,
Stamp on the slippery pavement of the proud,
And ring their sounding emptiness through earth.
Possess the ocean, me, thyself, and peace."

And now the chariot of the Sun descends,
The waves rush hurried from his foaming steeds,
Smoke issues from their nostrils at the gate,
Which when they enter, with huge golden bar
Atlas and Calpe close across the sea.

SEVENTH BOOK.

WHAT mortal first by adverse fate assailed,
Trampled by tyranny or scoffed by scorn,
Stung by remorse or wrung by poverty,
Bade with fond sigh his native laud farewell?
Wretched! but tenfold wretched who resolved
Against the waves to plunge th' expatriate keel
Deep with the richest harvest of his land!

Driven with that weak blast which Winter leaves
Closing his palace gates on Caucasus,
Oft hath a berry risen forth a shade;
From the same parent plant another lies
Deaf to the daily call of weary hind;
Zephyrs pass by and laugh at his distress.
By every lake's and every river's side
The nymphs and Naiads teach Equality;
In voices gently querulous they ask,
"Who would with aching head and toiling arms
Bear the full pitcher to the stream far off?
Who would, of power intent on high emprise,
Deem less the praise to fill the vacant gulf
Then raise Charybdis upon Etna's brow?"
Amid her darkest caverns most retired,
Nature calls forth her filial elements
To close around and cruel that monster *Void*:
Fire, springing fierce from his resplendent throne,

And Water, dashing the devoted wretch
Woundless and whole with iron-coloured mace,
Or whirling headlong in his war-belt's fold.
Mark well the lesson, man! and spare thy kind.
Go, from their midnight darkness wake the woods,
Woo the lone forest in her last retreat:
Many still bend their beauteous heads unblest
And sigh aloud for elemental man.
Through palaces and porches evil eyes
Light upon e'en the wretched, who have fled
The house of bondage or the house of birth;
Suspensions, murmurs, treacheries, taunts, retorts,
Attend the brighter banners that invade;
And the first horn of hunter, pale with want,
Sounds to the chase, the second to the war.

The long awaited day at last arrived,
When, linked together by the seven-armed Nile,
Egypt with proud Iberia should unite.
Here the Tartesian, there the Gadite tents
Rang with impatient pleasure: here engaged
Woody Nebrissa's quiver-bearing crew,
Contending warm with amicable skill;
While they of Durius raced along the beach
And scattered mud and jeers on all behind.
The strength of Bætis too removed the helm
And stripped the corslet off, and stanch'd the foot
Against the mossy maple, while they tore
Their quivering lances from the hissing wound.
Others push forth the prows of their compeers,
And the wave, parted by the pouncing beak,
Swells up the sides, and closes far astern:
The silent oars now dip their level wings,
And weary with strong stroke the whitening wave.
Others, afraid of tardiness, return:

Now, entering the still harbour, every surge
Runs with a louder murmur up their keel,
And the slack cordage rattles round the mast.
Sleepless with pleasure and expiring fears
Had Gebir risen ere the break of dawn,
And o'er the plains appointed for the feast
Hurried with ardent step: the swains admired
What so transversely could have swept the dew;
For never long one path had Gebir trod,
Nor long, unheeding man, one pace preserved.
Not thus Charoba: she despaired the day:
The day was present; true; yet she despaired.
In the too tender and once tortured heart
Doubts gather strength from habit, like disease;
Fears, like the needle verging to the pole,
Tremble and tremble into certainty.
How often, when her maids with merry voice
Called her, and told the sleepless queen 'twas morn,
How often would she feign some fresh delay,
And tell them (though they saw) that she arose.
Next to her chamber, closed by cedar doors
A bath of purest marble, purest wave,
On its fair surface bore its pavement high:
Arabian gold enchased the crystal roof,
With fluttering boys adorned and girls unrobed:
These, when you touch the quiet water, start
From their aërial sunny arch, and pant
Entangled mid each other's flowery wreaths,
And each pursuing is in turn pursued.
Here came at last, as ever wont at morn,
Charoba: long she lingered at the brink,
Often she sighed, and, naked as she was,
Sat down, and leaning on the couch's edge,
On the soft inward pillow of her arm
Rested her burning cheek: she moved her eyes;
She blushed; and blushing plunged into the wave.

Now brazen chariots thunder through each street,
And neighing steeds paw proudly from delay.
While o'er the palace breathes the dulcimer,
Lute, and aspiring harp, and lisp'ing reed;
Loud rush the trumpets bursting through the throng

And urge the high-shouldered vulgar; now are heard
Curses and quarrels and constricted blows,
Threats and defiance and suburban war.
Hark! the reiterated clangour sounds!
Now murmurs, like the sea or like the storm,
Or like the flames on forests, move and mount
From rank to rank, and loud and louder roll,
Till all the people is one vast applause.
Yes, 'tis herself, Charoba—now the strife
To see again a form so often seen!
Feel they some partial pang, some secret void,
Some doubt of feasting those fond eyes again?
Panting imbibe they that refreshing sight
To reproduce in hour of bitterness?
She goes, the king awaits her from the camp:
Him she descried, and trembled ere he reached
Her car, but shuddered paler at his voice.
So the pale silver at the festive board
Grows paler filled afresh and dewed with wine;
So seems the tenderest herbage of the spring
To whiten, bending from a balmy gale.
The beauteous queen alighting he received,
And sighed to loose her from his arms; she hung
A little longer on them through her fears:
Her maidens followed her, and one that watched,
One that had called her in the morn, observed
How virgin passion with unfueled flame
Burns into whiteness, while the blushing cheek
Imagination heats and Shame imbues.

Between both nations drawn in ranks they pass:
The priests, with linen ephods, linen robes,
Attend their steps, some follow, some precede,
Where clothed with purple intertwined with gold
Two lofty thrones commanded land and main.
Behind and near them numerous were the tents
As freckled clouds o'erfloat our vernal skies,
Numerous as wander in warm moonlight nights,
Along Meander's or Cayster's marsh,
Swans pliant-necked and village storks revered.
Throughout each nation moved the hum confused,
Like that from myriad wings o'er Scythian cups
Of frothy milk, concreted soon with blood.
Throughout the fields the savoury smoke ascends,
And boughs and branches shade the hides unbroached.
Some roll the flowery turf into a seat,
And others press the helmet—now resounds
The signal—queen and monarch mount the thrones.
The brazen clarion hoarsens: many leagues
Above them, many to the south, the heron
Rising with hurried croak and throat outstretched,
Ploughs up the silvering surface of her plain.

Tottering with age's zeal and mischief's haste
Now was discovered Dalica; she reached
The throne, she leant against the pedestal,
And now ascending stood before the king.
Prayers for his health and safety she preferred,
And o'er his head and o'er his feet she threw
Myrrh, nard, and cassia, from three golden urns;
His robe of native woof she next removed,
And round his shoulders drew the garb accursed,
And bowed her head and parted: soon the queen
Saw the blood mantle in his manly cheeks,
And feared, and faltering sought her lost replies,
And blessed the silence that she wished were broke.
Alas! unconscious maiden! night shall close,
And love and sovereignty and life dissolve,
And Egypt be one desert drenched in blood.

When thunder overhangs the fountain's head,
Losing its wonted freshness every stream
Grows turbid, grows with sickly warmth suffused:
Thus were the brave Iberians when they saw
The king of nations from his throne descend.
Scarcely, with pace uneven, knees unnerved,
Reached he the waters: in his troubled ear
They sounded murmuring drearily; they rose

Wild, in strange colours, to his parching eyes;
 They seemed to rush around him, seemed to lift
 From the receding earth his helpless feet.
 He fell—Charoba shrieked aloud—she ran—
 Frantic with fears and fondness, mazed with woe,
 Nothing but Gebir dying she beheld.
 The turban that betrayed its golden charge
 Within, the veil that down her shoulders hung,
 All fallen at her feet! the furthest wave
 Creeping with silent progress up the sand,
 Glided through all, and raised their hollow folds.
 In vain they bore him to the sea, in vain
 Rubbed they his temples with the briny warmth:
 He struggled from them, strong with agony,
 He rose half up, he fell again, he cried
 "Charoba! O Charoba!" She embraced
 His neck, and raising on her knee one arm,
 Sighed when it moved not, when it fell she shrieked,
 And clasping loud both hands above her head,
 She called on Gebir, called on earth, on heaven.
 "Who will believe me? what shall I protest?
 How innocent, thus wretched! God of gods,
 Strike me—who most offend thee most defy—
 Charoba most offends thee—strike me, hurl
 From this accursed land, this faithless throne.
 O Dalica! see here the royal feast!
 See here the gorgeous robe! you little thought
 How have the demons dyed that robe with death.
 Where are ye, dear fond parents! when ye heard
 My feet in childhood pat the palace-floor,
 Ye started forth and kissed away surprise:
 Will ye now meet me! how, and where, and when?
 And must I fill your bosom with my tears,
 And, what I never have done, with your own!
 Why have the gods thus punished me? what harm
 Have ever I done them? have I profaned
 Their temples, asked too little, or too much?
 Proud if they granted, grieved if they withheld?
 O mother! stand between your child and them!
 Appease them, soothe them, soften their revenge,
 Melt them to pity with maternal tears—
 Alas, but if you cannot! they themselves
 Will then want pity rather than your child.
 O Gebir! best of monarchs, best of men,
 What realm hath ever thy firm even hand
 Or lost by febleness or held by force!
 Behold thy cares and perils how repaid!
 Behold the festive day, the nuptial hour!"
 Thus raved Charoba: horror, grief, amaze,
 Pervaded all the host; all eyes were fixed;
 All stricken motionless and mute: the feast
 Was like the feast of Cepheus, when the sword
 Of Phineus, white with wonder, shook restrained,
 And the hilt rattled in his marble hand.
 She heard not, saw not, every sense was gone;
 One passion banished all; dominion, praise,
 The world itself was nothing. Senseless man!
 What would thy fancy figure now from worlds?
 There is no world to those that grieve and love.
 She hung upon his bosom, pressed his lips,
 Breathed, and would feign it his that she resorbed;
 She chafed the feathery softness of his veins,
 That swelled out black, like tendrils round their vase
 After libation: lo! he moves! he groans!
 He seems to struggle from the grasp of death.
 Charoba shrieked and fell away, her hand
 Still clasping his, a sudden blush o'erspread
 Her pallid humid cheek, and disappeared.
 'Twas not the blush of shame—what shame has woe?—
 'Twas not the genuine ray of hope, it flashed
 With shuddering glimmer through unscattered clouds,
 It flashed from passions rapidly opposed.
 Never so eager, when the world was waves,
 Stood the less daughter of the ark, and tried
 (Innocent this temptation!) to recall

With folded vest and casting arm the dove;
 Never so fearful, when amid the vines
 Rattled the hail, and when the light of heaven
 Closed, since the wreck of Nature, first eclipsed,
 As she was eager for his life's return,
 As she was fearful how his groans might end.
 They ended: cold and languid calm succeeds;
 His eyes have lost their lustre, but his voice
 Is not unheard, though short: he spake these words:
 "And weepst thou, Charoba! shedding tears
 More precious than the jewels that surround
 The neck of kings entombed! then weep, fair queen,
 At once thy pity and my pangs assuage.
 Ah! what is grandeur, glory—they are past!
 When nothing else, not life itself, remains,
 Still the fond mourner may be called our own.
 Should I complain of Fortune? how she errs,
 Scattering her bounty upon barren ground,
 Slow to allay the lingering thirst of toil?
 Fortune, 'tis true, may err, may hesitate,
 Death follows close nor hesitates nor errs.
 I feel the stroke! I die!" He would extend
 His dying arm; it fell upon his breast:
 Cold sweat and shivering ran o'er every limb,
 His eyes grew stiff, he struggled and expired.

COUNT JULIAN.

CHARACTERS.

COUNT JULIAN.

RODERIGO, *King of Spain.*

OPAS, *Metropolitan of Seville.*

SISABERT, *betroted to COVILLA.*

MUZA, *Prince of Mauritania.*

ABDALAZIS, *Son of MUZA.*

TARIK, *Moorish Chieftain.*

COVILLA, *Daughter of JULIAN.*

EGILONA, *Wife of RODERIGO.*

HERNANDO, OSMA, RAMIRO, &c. } *Officers.*

FIRST ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Camp of JULIAN.

OPAS. JULIAN.

Opas. See her, Count Julian: if thou lovest God,
 See thy lost child.

Jul. I have avenged me, Opas,
 More than enough: I only sought to hurl
 The brands of war on one detested head,
 And die upon his ruin. O my country!
 O lost to honour, to thyself, to me,
 Why on barbarian hands devolves thy cause,
 Spoilers, blasphemers!

Opas. Is it thus, Don Julian,
 When thy own offspring, that beloved child,
 For whom alone these very acts were done
 By them and thee, when thy Covilla stands
 An outcast and a suppliant at thy gate,
 Why that still stubborn agony of soul,
 Those struggles with the bars thyself imposed?
 Is she not thine? not dear to thee as ever?

Jul. Father of mercies! shew me none, whene'er
The wrongs she suffers cease to wring my heart,
Or I seek solace ever, but in death.

Opas. What wilt thou do then, too unhappy man?

Jul. What have I done already? All my peace
Has vanished; my fair fame in after-times
Will wear an alien and uncomely form,
Seen o'er the cities I have laid in dust,
Countrymen slaughtered, friends abjured!

Opas. And faith?

Jul. Alone now left me, filling up in part
The narrow and waste intervals of grief:
It promises that I shall see again
My own lost child.

Opas. Yes, at this very hour.

Jul. Till I have met the tyrant face to face,
And gained a conquest greater than the last;
Till he no longer rules one rood of Spain,
And not one Spaniard, not one enemy,
The least relenting, flags upon his flight;
Till we are equal in the eyes of men,
The humblest and most wretched of our kind,
No peace for me, no comfort, no—no child!

Opas. No pity for the thousands fatherless,
The thousands childless like thyself, nay more,
The thousands friendless, helpless, comfortless—
Such thou wilt make them, little thinking so,
Who now perhaps, round their first winter fire,
Banish, to talk of thee, the tales of old,
Shedding true honest tears for thee unknown:
Precious be these, and sacred in thy sight,
Mingle them not with blood from hearts thus kind.
If only warlike spirits were evoked
By the war-demon, I would not complain,
Or dissolute and discontented men;
But wherefore hurry down into the square
The neighbourly, saluting, warm-clad race,
Who would not injure us, and cannot serve;
Who, from their short and measured slumber risen,
In the faint sunshine of their balconies,
With a half-legend of a martyrdom
And some weak wine and withered grapes before them,
Note by their foot the wheel of melody
That catches and rolls on the sabbath dance.
To drag the steady prop from failing age,
Break the young stem that fondness twines around,
Widen the solitude of lonely sighs,
And scatter to the broad bleak wastes of day
The ruins and the phantoms that replied,
Ne'er be it thine.

Jul. Arise, and save me, Spain!

FIRST ACT: SECOND SCENE.

MUZA enters.

Muza. Infidel chief, thou tarriest here too long,
And art perhaps repining at the days
Of nine continued victories, o'er men
Dear to thy soul, tho' reprobate and base.
Away!

[*He retires.*]

Jul. I follow. Could my bitterest foes
Hear this! ye Spaniards, this! which I foreknew
And yet encountered; could they see your Julian
Receiving orders from and answering
These desperate and heaven-abandoned slaves,
They might perceive some few external pangs,

Some glimpses of the hell wherein I move,
Who never have been fathers.

Opas. These are they
To whom brave Spaniards must refer their wrongs!

Jul. Muza, that cruel and suspicious chief,
Distrusts his friends more than his enemies,
Me more than either; fraud he loves and fears,
And watches her still footfall day and night.

Opas. O Julian! such a refuge! such a race!

Jul. Calamities like mine alone implore.
No virtues have redeemed them from their bonds;
Wily ferocity, keen idleness,
And the close cringes of ill-whispering want,
Educate them to plunder and obey;
Active to serve him best whom most they fear,
They show no mercy to the merciful,
And racks alone remind them of the name.

Opas. O everlasting curse for Spain and thee!

Jul. Spain should have vindicated then her wrongs
In mine, a Spaniard's and a soldier's wrongs.

Opas. Julian, are thine the only wrongs on earth?
And shall each Spaniard rather vindicate
Thine than his own? is there no Judge of all?
Shall mortal hand seize with impunity
The sword of vengeance, from the armoury
Of the Most High? easy to wield, and starred
With glory it appears: but all the host
Of the archangels, should they strive at once,
Would never close again its widening blade.

Jul. He who provokes it hath so much to rue.
Where'er he turn, whether to earth or heaven,
He finds an enemy, or raises one.

Opas. I never yet have seen where long success
Hath followed him who warred upon his king.

Jul. Because the virtue that inflicts the stroke
Dies with him, and the rank ignoble heads
Of plundering faction soon unite again,
And prince-protected share the spoil at rest.

FIRST ACT: THIRD SCENE.

Guard announces a herald. OPAS departs.

Guard. A messenger of peace is at the gate,
My lord, safe access, private audience,
And free return, he claims.

Jul. Conduct him in.

RODERIGO enters as a herald.

A messenger of peace! audacious man!
In what attire appearest thou? a herald's?
Under no garb can such a wretch be safe.

Rod. Thy violence and fancied wrongs I know,
And what thy sacrilegious hands would do,
O traitor and apostate!

Jul. What they would
They cannot: thee of kingdom and of life
'Tis easy to despoil, thyself the traitor,
Thyself the violator of allegiance.
Oh would all-righteous Heaven they could restore
The joy of innocence, the calm of age,
The probity of manhood, pride of arms,
And confidence of honour! the august
And holy laws trampled beneath thy feet.
And Spain! O parent, I have lost thee too!
Yes, thou wilt curse me in thy latter days,

Me, thine avenger. I have fought her foe,
Roderigo, I have gloried in her sons,
Sublime in hardihood and piety:
Her strength was mine: I, sailing by her cliffs,
By promontory after promontory,
Opening like flags along some castle-towers,
Have sworn before the cross upon our mast
Ne'er shall invader wave his standard there.

Rod. Yet there thou plantest it, false man, thyself.

Jul. Accursed he who makes me this reproach,
And made it just! Had I been happy still,
I had been blameless: I had died with glory
Upon the walls of Ceuta.

Rod. Which thy treason
Surrendered to the Infidel.

Jul. 'Tis hard
And base to live beneath a conqueror:
Yet, amid all this grief and infamy,
'Twere something to have rushed upon the ranks
In their advance; 'twere something to have stood
Defeat, discomfiture; and, when around
No beacon blazes, no far axle groans
Through the wide plain, no sound of sustenance
Or succour soothes the still-believing ear,
To fight upon the last dismantled tower,
And yield to valour, if we yield at all.
But rather should my neck lie trampled down
By every Saracen and Moor on earth,
Than my own country see her laws o'erturned
By those who should protect them: Sir, no prince
Shall ruin Spain; and, least of all, her own.
Is any just or glorious act in view,
Your oaths forbid it: is your avarice,
Or, if there be such, any viler passion,
To have its giddy range, and to be gorged,
It rises over all your sacraments,
A hooded mystery, holier than they all.

Rod. Hear me, Don Julian; I have heard thy wrath
Who am thy king, nor heard man's wrath before.

Jul. Thou shalt hear mine, for thou art not my king.

Rod. Knowest thou not the altered face of war?
Xeres is ours; from every region round
True loyal Spaniards throng into our camp:
Nay, thy own friends and thy own family,
From the remotest provinces, advance
To crush rebellion: Sisabert is come,
Disclaiming thee and thine; the Asturian hills
Opposed to him their icy chains in vain:
But never wilt thou see him, never more,
Unless in adverse war, and deadly hate.

Jul. So lost to me! So generous, so deceived!
I grieve to hear it.

Rod. Come, I offer grace,
Honour, dominion: send away these slaves,
Or leave them to our sword, and all beyond
The distant Ebro to the towns of France
Shall bless thy name, and bend before thy throne.
I will myself accompany thee, I,
The king, will hail thee brother.

Jul. Ne'er shalt thou
Henceforth be king: the nation in thy name
May issue edicts, champions may command
The vassal multitudes of marshalled war,
And the fierce charger shrink before the shouts,
Lowered as if earth had opened at his feet,
While thy mailed semblance rises toward the ranks,
But God alone sees thee.

Rod. What hopest thou?

To conquer Spain, and rule a ravaged land?
To compass me around, to murder me?

Jul. No, Don Roderigo: swear thou, in the fight
That thou wilt meet me, hand to hand, alone,
That, if I ever save thee from a foe—

Rod. I swear what honour asks—first, to Covilla
Do thou present my crown and dignity.

Jul. Darest thou offer any price for shame?

Rod. Love and repentance.

Jul. Egilona lives:
And were she buried with her ancestors,
Covilla should not be the gaze of men,
Should not, despoiled of honour, rule the free.

Rod. Stern man! her virtues well deserve the throne.

Jul. And Egilona—what hath she deserved,
The good, the lovely?

Rod. But the realm in vain
Hoped a succession.

Jul. Thou hast torn away
The roots of royalty.

Rod. For her, for thee.

Jul. Blind insolence! base insincerity!
Power and renown no mortal ever shared,
Who could retain or grasp them to himself:
And, for Covilla? patience! peace! for her?
She call upon her God, and outrage Him
At His own altar! she repeat the vows
She violates in repeating! who abhors
Thee and thy crimes, and wants no crown of thine.
Force may compel the abhorrent soul, or want
Lash and pursue it to the public ways;
Virtue looks back and weeps, and may return
To these, but never near the abandoned one
Who drags religion to adultery's feet,
And rears the altar higher for her sake.

Rod. Have then the Saracens possessed thee quite,
And wilt thou never yield me thy consent?

Jul. Never.

Rod. So deep in guilt, in treachery!
Forced to acknowledge it! forced to avow
The traitor!

Jul. Not to thee, who reignest not,
But to a country ever dear to me,
And dearer now than ever: what we love
Is loveliest in departure! One I thought,
As every father thinks, the best of all,
Graceful, and mild, and sensible, and chaste:
Now all these qualities of form and soul
Fade from before me, nor on anyone
Can I repose, or be consoled by any.
And yet in this torn heart I love her more
Than I could love her when I dwelt on each,
Or clasped them all united, and thanked God,
Without a wish beyond.—Away, thou fiend!
O ignominy, last and worst of all!
I weep before thee—like a child—like mine—
And tell my woes, fount of them all, to thee!

FIRST ACT: FOURTH SCENE.

ABDALAZIS enters.

Abd. Julian, to thee, the terror of the faithless,
I bring my father's order, to prepare
For the bright day that crowns thy brave exploits:

Our enemy is at the very gate!
And art thou here, with women in thy train,
Crouching to gain admittance to their lord,
And mourning the unkindness of delay!

Jul. [*much agitated, goes towards the door, and returns.*]

I am prepared: Prince, judge not hastily.

Abd. Whether I should not promise all they ask,
I too could hesitate, though earlier taught
The duty to obey, and should rejoice
To shelter in the universal storm
A frame so delicate, so full of fears,
So little used to outrage and to arms,
As one of these; so humble, so uncheered
At the gay pomp that smoothes the track of war.
When she beheld me from afar dismount,
And heard my trumpet, she alone drew back,
And, as though doubtful of the help she seeks,
Shuddered to see the jewels on my brow,
And turned her eyes away, and wept aloud.
The other stood awhile, and then advanced:
I would have spoken, but she waved her hand
And said, "Proceed, protect us, and avenge,
And be thou worthier of the crown thou wearest."
Hopeful and happy is indeed our cause,
When the most timid of the lovely hail
Stranger and foe—

Rod. [*unnoticed by ABDALAZIS.*]

And shrink but to advance.

Abd. Thou tremblest? whence, O Julian! whence this change?
Thou lovest still thy country.

Jul. Abdalazis!

All men with human feelings love their country.
Not the highborn or wealthy man alone,
Who looks upon his children, each one led
By its gay handmaid, from the high alcove,
And hears them once a day: not only he
Who hath forgotten, when his guest inquires
The name of some far village all his own;
Whose rivers bound the province, and whose hills
Touch the last cloud upon the level sky:
No; better men still better love their country.
'Tis the old mansion of their earliest friends,
The chapel of their first and best devotions;
When violence or perfidy invades,
Or when unworthy lords hold wassail there,
And wiser heads are drooping round its moats,
At last they fix their steady and stiff eye
There, there alone—stand while the trumpet blows,
And view the hostile flames above its towers
Spire, with a bitter and severe delight.

Abd. [*taking his hand.*]

Thou feelest what thou speakest, and thy Spain
Will ne'er be sheltered from her fate by thee.
We, whom the prophet sends o'er many lands,
Love none above another; Heaven assigns
Their fields and harvests to our valiant swords,
And 'tis enough—we love while we enjoy.
Whence is the man in that fantastic guise?
Suppliant? or herald? he who stalks about,
And once was even seated while we spoke:
For never came he with us o'er the sea.

Jul. He comes as herald.

Rod. Thou shalt know full soon,
Insulting Moor.

Abd. He cannot bear the grief
His country suffers; I will pardon him.
He lost his courage first, and then his mind;
His courage rushes back, his mind still wanders.
The guest of heaven was piteous to these men,

And princes stoop to feed them in their courts.

FIRST ACT: FIFTH SCENE.

RODERIGO *is going out when MUZA enters with EGILONA; RODERIGO starts back.*

Muza [*sternly to EGILONA.*]
Enter, since 'tis the custom in this land.

Egi. [*passing MUZA disdainfully, points to ABDALAZIS, and says to JULIAN.*]
Is this our future monarch, or art thou?

Jul. 'Tis Abdalazis, son of Muza, prince
Commanding Africa, from Abyla
To where Tunisian pilots bend the eye
O'er ruined temples in the glassy wave.
Till quiet times and ancient laws return,
He comes to govern here.

Rod. To-morrow's dawn
Proves that.

Muza. What art thou?

Rod. [*drawing his sword.*] King.

Abd. Amazement!

Muza. Treason!

Egi. O horror!

Muza. Seize him.

Egi. Spare him! fly to me!

Jul. Urge me not to protect a guest, a herald—
The blasts of war roar over him unfelt.

Egi. Ah fly, unhappy!

Rod. Fly! no, Egilona—
Dost thou forgive me? dost thou love me? still?

Egi. I hate, abominate, abhor thee—go,
Or my own vengeance—

Rod. [*taking JULIAN'S hand, and inviting him to attack MUZA and ABDALAZIS.*]
Julian!

Jul. Hence, or die.

SECOND ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Camp of JULIAN.

JULIAN and COVILLA.

Jul. Obdurate! I am not as I appear.
Weep, my beloved child, Covilla, weep
Into my bosom; every drop be mine
Of this most bitter soul-empoisoning cup:
Into no other bosom than thy father's
Canst thou, or wouldst thou, pour it.

Cov. Cease, my lord,
My father, angel of my youth, when all
Was innocence and peace.

Jul. Arise, my love,
Look up to heaven—where else are souls like thine!
Mingle in sweet communion with its children,
Trust in its providence, its retribution,
And I will cease to mourn; for, O my child,
These tears corrode, but thine assuage the heart.

Cov. And never shall I see my mother too,
My own, my blessed mother!

Jul. Thou shalt see
Her and thy brothers.

Cov. No! I cannot look

On them, I cannot meet their lovely eyes,
I cannot lift mine up from under theirs.
We all were children when they went away;
They now have fought hard battles, and are men,
And camps and kings they know, and woes and crimes.
Sir, will they never venture from the walls
Into the plain? Remember, they are young,
Hardy and emulous and hazardous;
And who is left to guard them in the town?

Jul. Peace is throughout the land: the various tribes
Of that vast region sink at once to rest,
Like one wide wood when every wind lies hushed.

Cov. And war, in all its fury, roams o'er Spain.

Jul. Alas! and will for ages: crimes are loose
At which ensanguined War stands shuddering;
And calls for vengeance from the powers above,
Impatient of inflicting it himself.
Nature in these new horrors is aghast
At her own progeny, and knows them not.
I am the minister of wrath; the hands
That tremble at me, shall applaud me too,
And seal their condemnation.

Cov. O kind father,
Pursue the guilty, but remember Spain.

Jul. Child, thou wert in thy nursery short time since,
And latterly hast passed the vacant hour
Where the familiar voice of history
Is hardly known, however nigh, attuned
In softer accents to the sickened ear;
But thou hast heard, for nurses tell these tales,
Whether I drew my sword for Witiza
Abandoned by the people he betrayed,
Though brother to the woman who of all
Was ever dearest to this broken heart,
Till thou, my daughter, wert a prey to grief,
And a brave country brooked the wrongs I bore.
For I had seen Rusilla guide the steps
Of her Theodofred, when burning brass
Plunged its fierce fang into the founts of light,
And Witiza's the guilt! when, bent with age,
He knew the voice again, and told the name,
Of those whose proffered fortunes had been laid
Before his throne, while happiness was there,
And strained the sightless nerve tow'rd where they stood
At the forced memory of the very oaths
He heard renewed from each, but heard afar,
For they were loud, and him the throng spurned off.

Cov. Who were all these?

Jul. All who are seen to-day
On prancing steeds richly caparisoned
In loyal acclamation round Roderigo;
Their sons beside them, loving one another
Unfeignedly, through joy, while they themselves
In mutual homage mutual scorn suppress.
Their very walls and roofs are welcoming
The king's approach, their storied tapestry
Swells its rich arch for him triumphantly
At every clarion blowing from below.

Cov. Such wicked men will never leave his side.

Jul. For they are insects which see nought beyond
Where they now crawl; whose changes are complete,
Unless of habitation.

Cov. Whither go
Creatures unfit for better, or for worse?

Jul. Some to the grave—where peace be with them! some
Across the Pyrenean mountains far,
Into the plains of France; suspicion there
Will hang on every step from rich and poor,

Grey quickly-glancing eyes will wrinkle round,
And courtesy will watch them day and night.
Shameless they are, yet will they blush, amid
A nation that ne'er blushes: some will drag
The captive's chain, repair the shattered bark,
Or heave it from a quicksand to the shore,
Among the marbles of the Libyan coast;
Teach patience to the lion in his cage,
And, by the order of a higher slave,
Hold to the elephant their scanty fare,
To please the children while the parent sleeps.

Cov. Spaniards? must they, dear father, lead such lives?

Jul. All are not Spaniards who draw breath in Spain;
Those are, who live for her, who die for her,
Who love her glory and lament her fall.
Oh, may I too—

Cov. But peacefully, and late,
Live and die here!

Jul. I have, alas! myself
Laid waste the hopes where my fond fancy strayed,
And view their ruins with unaltered eyes.

Cov. My mother will at last return to thee.
Might I once more, but—could I now behold her,
Tell her—ah me! what was my rash desire?
No, never tell her these inhuman things,
For they would waste her tender heart away
As they waste mine; or tell when I have died,
Only to show her that her every care
Could not have saved, could not have comforted.
That she herself, clasping me once again
To her sad breast, had said, Covilla! go,
Go, hide them in the bosom of thy God!
Sweet mother, that far-distant voice I hear,
And passing out of youth and out of life,
I would not turn at last, and disobey.

SECOND ACT: SECOND SCENE.

SISABERT enters.

Sis. Uncle, and is it true, say, can it be,
That thou art leader of these faithless Moors?
That thou impeachest thy own daughter's fame
Through the whole land, to seize upon the throne
By the permission of those recreant slaves?
What shall I call thee? art thou—speak, Count Julian—
A father, or a soldier, or a man?

Jul. All—or this day had never seen me here.

Sis. O falsehood! worse than woman's!

Cov. Once, my cousin,
Far gentler words were uttered from your lips.
If you loved me, you loved my father first,
More justly and more steadily, ere love
Was passion and illusion and deceit.

Sis. I boast not that I never was deceived,
Covilla, which beyond all boasts were base,
Nor that I never loved; let this be thine.
Illusions! just to stop us, not delay;
Amuse, not occupy! Too true! when love
Scatters its brilliant foam, and passes on
To some fresh object in its natural course,
Widely and openly and wanderingly,
'Tis better! narrow it, and it pours its gloom
In one fierce cataract that stuns the soul.
Ye hate the wretch ye make so, while ye choose
Whoever knows you best and shuns you most.

Cov. Shun me then: be beloved, more and more.
Honour the hand that showed you honour first,

Love—O my father! speak, proceed, persuade,
Thy voice alone can mutter it—another—

Sis. Ah lost Covilla! can a thirst of power
Alter thy heart thus to abandon mine,
And change my very nature at one blow?

Cov. I told you, dearest Sisabert, 'twas vain
To urge me more, to question, or confute.

Sis. I know it, for another wears the crown
Of Witiza my father; who succeeds
To king Roderigo will succeed to me.
Yet thy cold perfidy still calls me dear,
And o'er my aching temples breathes one gale
Of days departed to return no more.

Jul. Young man, avenge our cause.

Sis. What cause avenge?

Cov. If I was ever dear to you, hear me,
Not vengeance; Heaven will give that signal soon.
O Sisabert, the pangs I have endured
On your long absence—

Sis. Will be now consoled.
Thy father comes to mount my father's throne;
But though I would not a usurper king,
I prize his valour and defend his crown:
No stranger and no traitor rules o'er me,
Or unchastised inveigles humbled Spain.
Covilla, gavest thou no promises?
Nor thou, Don Julian? Seek not to reply—
Too well I know, too justly I despise,
Thy false excuse, thy coward effrontery;
Yes, when thou gavest them across the sea,
An enemy wert thou to Mahomet,
And no appellant to his faith or leagues.

Jul. 'Tis well: a soldier hears throughout in silence.
I urge no answer: to those words, I fear,
Thy heart with sharp compunction will reply.

Sis. [*to COVILLA.*] Then I demand of thee before thou reign,
Answer me—while I fought against the Frank
Who dared to smite thee? blazoned in the court,
Not trailed through darkness, were our nuptial bands;
No: Egilona joined our hands herself,
The peers applauded, and the king approved.

Jul. Hast thou yet seen that king since thy return?

Cov. Father! O father!

Sis. I will not implore
Of him or thee what I have lost for ever.
These were not when we parted thy alarms;
Far other, and far worthier of thy heart
Were they; which Sisabert could banish then.
Fear me not now, Covilla! thou hast changed—
I am changed too—I lived but where thou livedst,
My very life was portioned off from thine.
Upon the surface of thy happiness
Day after day I gazed, I doted—there
Was all I had, was all I coveted;
So pure, serene, and boundless it appeared:
Yet, for we told each other every thought,
Thou knowest well, if thou rememberest,
At times I feared; as though some demon sent
Suspicion without form into the world,
To whisper unimaginable things.
Then thy fond arguing banished all but hope,
Each wish, and every feeling, was with thine,
Till I partook thy nature, and became
Credulous, and incredulous, like thee.
We, who have met so altered, meet no more.
Mountains and seas! ye are not separation:
Death! thou dividest, but unitest too,

In everlasting peace and faith sincere.
Confiding love! where is thy resting-place?
Where is thy truth, Covilla? where!—Go, go,
I should adore thee and believe thee still.

[Goes.

Cov. O Heaven! support me, or desert me quite,
And leave me lifeless this too trying hour!
He thinks me faithless.

Jul. He must think thee so.

Cov. Oh, tell him, tell him all, when I am dead—
He will die too, and we shall meet again.
He will know all when these sad eyes are closed.
Ah, cannot he before? must I appear
The vilest?—O just Heaven! can it be thus?
I am—all earth resounds it—lost, despised,
Anguish and shame unutterable seize me.
'Tis palpable, no phantom, no delusion,
No dream that wakens with o'erwhelming horror:
Spaniard and Moor fight on this ground alone,
And tear the arrow from my bleeding breast
To pierce my father's, for alike they fear.

Jul. Invulnerable, unassailable
Are we, alone perhaps of human kind,
Nor life allures us more, nor death alarms.

Cov. Fallen, unpitied, unbelieved, unheard!
I should have died long earlier: gracious God!
Desert me to my sufferings, but sustain
My faith in Thee! O hide me from the world,
And from thyself, my father, from thy fondness,
That opened in this wilderness of woe
A source of tears—it else had burst my heart,
Setting me free for ever: then perhaps
A cruel war had not divided Spain,
Had not o'erturned her cities and her altars,
Had not endangered thee! Oh, haste afar
Ere the last dreadful conflict that decides
Whether we live beneath a foreign sway—

Jul. Or under him whose tyranny brought down
The curse upon his people. O child! child!
Urge me no further, talk not of the war,
Remember not our country.

Cov. Not remember!
What have the wretched else for consolation!
What else have they who pining feed their woe?
Can I, or should I, drive from memory
All that was dear and sacred, all the joys
Of innocence and peace? when no debate
Was in the convent, but what hymn, whose voice,
To whom among the blessed it arose,
Swelling so sweet; when rang the vesper-bell
And every finger ceased from the guitar,
And every tongue was silent through our land;
When, from remotest earth, friends met again
Hung on each other's neck, and but embraced,
So sacred, still, and peaceful was the hour.
Now, in what climate of the wasted world,
Not unmolested long by the profane,
Can I pour forth in secrecy to God
My prayers and my repentance? where besides
Is the last solace of the parting soul?
Friends, brethren, parents—dear indeed, too dear
Are they, but somewhat still the heart requires,
That it may leave them lighter, and more blest.

Jul. Wide are the regions of our far-famed land:
Thou shalt arrive at her remotest bounds,
See her best people, choose some holiest house;
Whether where Castro from surrounding vines
Hears the hoarse ocean roar among his caves,
And, through the fissure in the green churchyard,

The wind wail loud the calmest summer day;
Or where Santona leans against the hill,
Hidden from sea and land by groves and bowers.

Cov. Oh! for one moment in those pleasant scenes
Thou placest me, and lighter air I breathe:
Why could I not have rested, and heard on!
My voice dissolves the vision quite away,
Outcast from virtue, and from nature too!

Jul. Nature and virtue! they shall perish first.
God destined them for thee, and thee for them,
Inseparably and eternally!
The wisest and the best will prize thee most,
And solitudes and cities will contend
Which shall receive thee kindest—sigh not so;
Violence and fraud will never penetrate
Where piety and poverty retire,
Intractable to them, and valueless,
And looked at idly, like the face of heaven.
If strength be wanted for security,
Mountains the guard, forbidding all approach
With iron-pointed and uplifted gates,
Thou wilt be welcome too in Aguilar,
Impenetrable, marble-turreted,
Surveying from aloft the limpid ford,
The massive fane, the sylvan avenue;
Whose hospitality I proved myself,
A willing leader in no impious war
When fame and freedom urged me; or mayst dwell
In Reynosa's dry and thriftless dale,
Unharvested beneath October moons,
Among those frank and cordial villagers.
They never saw us, and, poor simple souls!
So little know they whom they call the great,
Would pity one another less than us,
In injury, disaster, or distress.

Cov. But they would ask each other whence our grief,
That they might pity.

Jul. Rest then just beyond,
In the secluded scenes where Ebro springs
And drives not from his fount the fallen leaf,
So motionless and tranquil its repose.

Cov. Thither let us depart, and speedily.

Jul. I cannot go: I live not in the land
I have reduced beneath such wretchedness:
And who could leave the brave, whose lives and fortunes
Hang on his sword?

Cov. Me thou canst leave, my father;
Ah yes, for it is past; too well thou seest
My life and fortunes rest not upon thee.
Long, happily—could it be gloriously!—
Still mayst thou live, and save thy country still!

Jul. Unconquerable land! unrivalled race!
Whose bravery, too enduring, rues alike
The power and weakness of accursed kings—
How cruelly hast thou neglected me!
Forcing me from thee, never to return,
Nor in thy pangs and struggles to partake!
I hear a voice—'tis Egilona—come,
Recall thy courage, dear unhappy girl,
Let us away.

SECOND ACT: THIRD SCENE.

EGILONA *enters.*

Egi. Remain, I order thee.
Attend, and do thy duty: I am queen,
Unbent to degradation.

Cov. I attend

Ever most humbly and most gratefully
My too kind sovereign, cousin now no more;
Could I perform but half the services
I owe her, I were happy for a time;
Or dared I show her half my love, 'twere bliss.

Egi. Oh! I sink under gentleness like thine.
Thy sight is death to me; and yet 'tis dear.
The gaudy trappings of assumptive state
Drop at the voice of nature to the earth,
Before thy feet—I cannot force myself
To hate thee, to renounce thee; yet—Covilla!
Yet—oh distracting thought! 'tis hard to see,
Hard to converse with, to admire, to love—
As from my soul I do, and must do, thee—
One who hath robbed me of all pride and joy,
All dignity, all fondness. I adored
Roderigo—he was brave, and in discourse
Most voluble; the masses of his mind
Were vast, but varied; now absorbed in gloom,
Majestic, not austere; now their extent
Opening, and waving in bright levity—

Jul. Depart, my daughter—'twere as well to bear
His presence as his praise—go—she will dream
This phantasm out, nor notice thee depart.

[COVILLA *goes.*

Egi. What pliancy! what tenderness! what life!
Oh for the smiles of those who smile so seldom,
The love of those who know no other love!
Such he was, Egilona, who was thine.

Jul. While he was worthy of the realm and thee.

Egi. Can it be true, then, Julian, that thy aim
Is sovereignty? not virtue, nor revenge?

Jul. I swear to Heaven, nor I nor child of mine
Ever shall mount to this polluted throne.

Egi. Then am I still a queen. The savage Moor
Who could not conquer Ceuta from thy sword,
In his own country, not with every wile
Of his whole race, not with his myriad crests
Of cavalry, seen from the Calpian heights
Like locusts on the parched and gleamy coast,
Will never conquer Spain.

Jul. Spain then was conquered
When fell her laws before the traitor king.

SECOND ACT: FOURTH SCENE.

Officer announces OPAS.

O queen, the metropolitan attends
On matters of high import to the state,
And wishes to confer in privacy.

Egi. [to JULIAN.] Adieu then; and whate'er betide the country,
Sustain at least the honours of our house.

[JULIAN *goes before OPAS enters.*

Opas. I cannot but commend, O Egilona,
Such resignation and such dignity.
Indeed he is unworthy; yet a queen
Rather to look for peace, and live remote
From cities, and from courts, and from her lord,
I hardly could expect in one so young,
So early, widely, wondrously admired.

Egi. I am resolved: religious men, good Opas,
In this resemble the vain libertine;
They find in woman no consistency,
No virtue but devotion, such as comes
To infancy or age, or fear or love,
Seeking a place of rest, and finding none

Until it soar to heaven.

Opas. A spring of mind
That rises when all pressure is removed,
Firmness in pious and in chaste resolves,
But weakness in much fondness; these, O queen,
I did expect, I own.

Egi. The better part
Be mine; the worst hath been—and is no more.

Opas. But if Roderigo have at length prevailed
That Egilona willingly resigns
All claim to royalty, and casts away,
Indifferent or estranged, the marriage-bond
His perjury tore asunder, still the church
Hardly can sanction his new nuptial rites.

Egi. What art thou saying! what new nuptial rites?

Opas. Thou knowest not?

Egi. Am I a wife; a queen?
Abandon it! my claim to royalty!
Whose hand was on my head when I arose
Queen of this land? whose benediction sealed
My marriage vow? who broke it? was it I?
And wouldst thou, virtuous Opas, wouldst thou dim
The glorious light of thy declining days?
Wouldst thou administer the sacred vows,
And sanction them, and bless them, for another,
And bid her live in peace while I am living?
Go then; I execrate and banish him
For ever from my sight: we were not born
For happiness together; none on earth
Were ever so dissimilar as we.
He is not worth a tear, a wish, a thought—
Never was I deceived in him—I found
No tenderness, no fondness, from the first:
A love of power, a love of perfidy,
Such is the love that is returned for mine.
Ungrateful man! 'twas not the pageantry
Of regal state, the clarions, nor the guard,
Nor loyal valour, nor submissive beauty,
Silence at my approach, awe at my voice,
Happiness at my smile, that led my youth
Toward Roderigo! I had lived obscure,
In humbleness, in poverty, in want,
Blest, oh supremely blest! with him alone:
And he abandons me, rejects me, scorns me,
Insensible! inhuman! for another!
Thou shalt repent thy wretched choice, false man!
Crimes such as thine call loudly for perdition;
Heaven will inflict it, and not I—but I
Neither will fall alone, nor live despised.

[*A trumpet sounds.*]

Opas. Peace, Egilona, he arrives; compose
Thy turbid thoughts, meet him with dignity.

Egi. He! in the camp of Julian! trust me, sir,
He comes not hither, dares no longer use
The signs of state, and flies from every foe.

[*Retires some distance.*]

SECOND ACT: FIFTH SCENE.

Enter MUZA and ABDALAZIS.

Muza [*to ABDALAZIS.*] I saw him but an instant, and disguised,
Yet this is not the traitor; on his brow
Observe the calm of wisdom and of years.

Opas. Whom seekest thou?

Muza. Him who was king I seek.
He came arrayed as herald to this tent.

Abd. Thy daughter! was she nigh? perhaps for her
Was this disguise.

Muza. Here, Abdalazis, kings
Disguise from other causes; they obtain
Beauty by violence, and power by fraud.
Treason was his intent: we must admit
Whoever come; our numbers are too small
For question or selection, and the blood
Of Spaniards shall win Spain for us to-day.

Abd. The wicked cannot move from underneath
Thy ruling eye.

Muza. Right! Julian and Roderigo
Are leagued against us, on these terms alone,
That Julian's daughter weds the Christian king.

Egi. [*rushing forward.*] 'Tis true—and I proclaim it—

Abd. Heaven and earth!
Was it not thou, most lovely, most high-souled,
Who wishedst us success, and me a crown?

[*OPAS goes abruptly.*]

Egi. I give it—I am Egilona, queen
Of that detested man.

Abd. I touch the hand
That chains down fortune to the throne of fate;
And will avenge thee; for 'twas thy command,
'Tis Heaven's—My father! what retards our bliss?
Why art thou silent?

Muza. Inexperienced years
Rather would rest on the soft lap, I see,
Of pleasure, after the fierce gusts of war.
O Destiny! that callest me alone,
Hapless, to keep the toilsome watch of state;
Painful to age, unnatural to youth,
Adverse to all society of friends,
Equality, and liberty, and ease,
The welcome cheer of the unbidden feast,
The gay reply, light, sudden, like the leap
Of the young forester's unbended bow;
But, above all, to tenderness at home,
And sweet security of kind concern
Even from those who seem most truly ours.
Who would resign all this, to be approached,
Like a sick infant by a canting nurse,
To spread his arms in darkness, and to find
One universal hollowness around?
Forego, a little while, that bane of peace.
Love may be cherished.

Abd. 'Tis enough; I ask
No other boon.

Muza. Not victory?

Abd. Farewell,
O queen! I will deserve thee; why do tears
Silently drop, and slowly, down thy veil?
I shall return to worship thee, and soon;
Why this affliction? Oh, that I alone
Could raise or could repress it!

Egi. We depart,
Nor interrupt your counsels, nor impede;
Oh, may they prosper, whatso'er they be,
And perfidy soon meet its just reward!
The infirm and peaceful Opas—whither gone?

Muza. Stay, daughter; not for counsel are we met,
But to secure our arms from treachery,
O'erthrow and stifle base conspiracies,
Involve in his own toils our false ally—

Egi. Author of every woe I have endured!

Ah, sacrilegious man! he vowed to Heaven
None of his blood should ever mount the throne.

Muza. Herein his vow indeed is ratified:
Yet faithful ears have heard this offer made,
And weighty was the conference that ensued,
And long, not dubious; for what mortal e'er
Refused alliance with illustrious power?
Though some have given its enjoyments up,
Tired and enfeebled by satiety.
His friends and partisans, 'twas his pretence,
Should pass uninterrupted; hence his camp
Is open every day to enemies.
You look around, O queen, as though you feared
Their entrance—Julian I pursue no more;
You conquer him—return we; I bequeath
Ruin, extermination, not reproach.
How we may best attain your peace and will
We must consider in some other place,
Not, lady, in the midst of snares and wiles
How to supplant your charms and seize your crown.
I rescue it, fear not: yes, we retire.
Whatever is your wish becomes my own,
Nor is there in this land but who obeys.

[*He leads her away.*]

THIRD ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Palace in XERES.

RODERIGO *and* OPAS.

Rod. Impossible! she could not thus resign
Me, for a miscreant of Barbary,
A mere adventurer: but that citron face
Shall bleach and shrivel the whole winter long
There, on yon cork-tree by the sallyport.
She shall return.

Opas. To fondness and to faith?
Dost thou retain them, if she could return?

Rod. Retain them? she has forfeited by this
All right to fondness, all to royalty.

Opas. Consider, and speak calmly: she deserves
Some pity, some reproof.

Rod. To speak then calmly,
Since thine eyes open and can see her guilt—
Infamous and atrocious! let her go—
Chains

Opas. What! in Muza's camp?

Rod. My scorn supreme!

Opas. Say pity.

Rod. Ay, ay, pity—that suits best.
I loved her, but *had* loved her; three whole years
Of pleasure, and of varied pleasure too,
Had worn the soft impression half away.
What I once felt, I would recall; the faint
Responsive voice grew fainter each reply:
Imagination sank amid the scenes
It laboured to create; the vivid joy
Of fleeting youth I followed, and possessed.
'Tis the first moment of the tenderest hour,
'Tis the first mien on entering new delights,
We give our peace, our power, our souls, for these.

Opas. Thou hast; and what remains?

Rod. Myself—Roderigo—
Whom hatred cannot reach, nor love cast down.

Opas. Nor gratitude nor pity nor remorse
Call back, nor vows nor earth nor heaven control.

But art thou free and happy? art thou safe?
By shrewd contempt the humblest may chastise
Whom scarlet and its ermine cannot scare,
And the sword skulks for everywhere in vain,
Thee the poor victim of thy outrages,
Woman, with all her weakness, may despise.

Rod. But first let quiet age have intervened.

Opas. Ne'er will the peace or apathy of age
Be thine, or twilight steal upon thy day.
The violent choose, but cannot change, their end:
Violence, by man or nature, must be theirs:
Thine it must be, and who to pity thee?

Rod. Behold, my solace! none. I want no pity.

Opas. Proclaim we those the happiest of mankind
Who never knew a want? Oh, what a curse
To thee this utter ignorance of thine!
Julian, whom all the good commiserate,
Sees thee below him far in happiness:
A state indeed of no quick restlessness,
No glancing agitation, one vast swell
Of melancholy, deep, impassable,
Interminable, where his spirit alone
Broods and o'ershadows all, bears him from earth,
And purifies his chastened soul for heaven.
Both heaven and earth shall from thy grasp recede.
Whether on death or life thou arguest,
Untutored savage or corrupted heathen
Avows no sentiment so vile as thine.

Rod. Nor feels?

Opas. O human nature! I have heard
The secrets of the soul, and pitied thee.
Bad and accursed things have men confessed
Before me, but have left them unarrayed.
Naked, and shivering with deformity.
The troubled dreams and deafening gush of youth
Fling o'er the fancy, struggling to be free,
Discordant and impracticable things:
If the good shudder at their past escapes,
Shall not the wicked shudder at their crimes?
They shall—and I denounce upon thy head
God's vengeance—thou shalt rule this land no more.

Rod. What! my own kindred leave me and renounce me!

Opas. Kindred? and is there any in our world
So near us, as those sources of all joy,
Those on whose bosom every gale of life
Blows softly, who reflect our images
In loveliness through sorrows and through age,
And bear them onward far beyond the grave.

Rod. Methinks, most reverend Opas, not inapt
Are these fair views; arise they from Seville?

Opas. He, who can scoff at them, may scoff at me.
Such are we, that the giver of all good
Shall, in the heart he purifies, possess
The latest love—the earliest—no, not there!
I've known the firm and faithful—even from these
Life's eddying spring shed the first bloom on earth.
I pity them, but ask their pity too.
I love the happiness of men, and praise
And sanctify the blessings I renounce.

Rod. Yet would thy baleful influence undermine
The heaven-appointed throne.

Opas.—the throne of guilt
Obdurate, without plea, without remorse.

Rod. What power hast thou? perhaps thou soon wilt want
A place of refuge.

Opas. Rather say, perhaps

My place of refuge will receive me soon.
Could I extend it even to thy crimes,
It should be open; but the wrath of heaven
Turns them against thee, and subverts thy sway:
It leaves thee not, what wickedness and woe
Oft in their drear communion taste together,
Hope and repentance.

Rod. But it leaves me arms,
Vigour of soul and body, and a race
Subject by law, and dutiful by choice,
Whose hand is never to be holden fast
Within the closing cleft of gnarled creeds;
No easy prey for these vile mitred Moors.
I, who received thy homage, may retort
Thy threats, vain prelate, and abase thy pride.

Opas. Low must be those whom mortal can sink lower,
Nor high are they whom human power may raise.

Rod. Judge now: for, hear the signal.

Opas. And derides
The buoyant heart the dubious gulfs of war?
Trumpets may sound, and not to victory.

Rod. The traitor and his daughter feel my power.

Opas. Just God! avert it!

Rod. Seize this rebel priest.
I will alone subdue my enemies.

[Goes out.]

THIRD ACT: SECOND SCENE.

RAMIRO and OSMA enter from opposite sides.

Ram. Where is the king? his car is at the gate,
His ministers attend him, but his foes
Are yet more prompt, nor will await delay.

Osma. Nor need they—for he meets them as I speak.

Ram. With all his forces? or our cause is lost.
Julian and Sisabert surround the walls.

Osma. Surround, sayst thou? enter they not the gates?

Ram. Perhaps ere now they enter.

Osma. Sisabert
Brings him our prisoner.

Ram. They are friends! they held
A parley; and the soldiers, when they saw
Count Julian, lowered their arms and hailed him king?

Osma. How? and he leads them in the name of king?

Ram. He leads them; but amid that acclamation
He turned away his head, and called for vengeance.

Osma. In Sisabert, and in the cavalry
He led, were all our hopes.

Opas. Woe, woe is theirs
Who have no other.

Osma. What are thine? obey
The just commands of our offended king:
Conduct him to the tower—off—instantly.

[Guard hesitates: OPAS goes.]

Ramiro, let us haste to reinforce—

Ram. Hark! is the king defeated? hark!

Osma. I hear
Such acclamation as from victory
Arises not, but rather from revolt,

Reiterated, interrupted, lost.
Favour like this his genius will retrieve
By time, or promises, or chastisement,
Whiche'er he choose—the speediest is the best—
His danger and his glory let us share;
'Tis ours to serve him.

Ram. While he rules 'tis ours.
What chariot-wheels are thundering o'er the bridge?

Osma. Roderigo's—I well know them.

Ram. Now, the burst
Of acclamation! now! again, again.

Osma. I know the voices; they are for Roderigo.

Ram. Stay, I entreat thee—one hath now prevailed.
So far is certain.

Osma. Ay, the right prevails.

Ram. Transient and vain their joyance, who rejoice
Precipitately and intemperately,
And bitter thoughts grow up where'er it fell.

Osma. Nor vain and transient theirs, who idly float
Down popularity's unfertile stream,
And fancy all their own that rises round?

Ram. If thou still lovest, as I know thou dost,
Thy king—

Osma. I love him; for he owes me much,
Brave soul! and cannot, though he would, repay.
Service and faith, pure faith and service hard,
Throughout his reign, if these things be desert,
These have I borne toward him, and still bear.

Ram. Come, from thy solitary eiry come,
And share the prey, so plenteous and profuse,
Which a less valorous brood will else consume.
Much fruit is shaken down in civil storms:
And shall not orderly and loyal hands
Gather it up? (Loud shouts.) Again! and still refuse?
How different are those citizens without
From thee! from thy serenity! thy arch,
Thy firmament, of intrepidity!
For their new lord, whom they have never served,
Afraid were they to shout, and only struck
The pavement with their ferrules and their feet:
Now they are certain of the great event
Voices and hands they raise, and all contend
Who shall be bravest in applauding most.
Knowest thou these?

Osma. Their voices I know well—
And can they shout for him they would have slain?
A prince untried they welcome; soon their doubts
Are blown afar.

Ram. Yes, brighter scenes arise.
The disunited he alone unites,
The weak with hope he strengthens, and the strong
With justice.

Osma. Wait: praise him when time hath given
A soundness and consistency to praise:
He shares it amply who bestows it right.

Ram. Doubtest thou?

Osma. Be it so: let us away;
New courtiers come—

Ram. And why not join the new?
Let us attend him, and congratulate;
Come on: they enter.

Osma. This is now my post
No longer: I could face them in the field,

I cannot here.

Ram. To-morrow all may change;
Be comforted.

Osma. I want nor change nor comfort.

Ram. The prisoner's voice!

Osma. The metropolitan's?
Triumph he may—not over me forgiven.
This way, and through the chapel—none are there.

[*Goes out.*]

THIRD ACT: THIRD SCENE.

OPAS *and* SISABERT.

Opas. The royal threat still sounds along these halls:
Hardly his foot hath passed them, and he flees
From his own treachery; all his pride, his hopes,
Are scattered at a breath; even courage fails
Now falsehood sinks from under him. Behold,
Again art thou where reigned thy ancestors;
Behold the chapel of thy earliest prayers,
Where I, whose chains are sundered at thy sight
Ere they could close around these aged limbs,
Received and blest thee, when thy mother's arm
Was doubtful if it loosed thee! with delight
Have I observed the promises we made
Deeply impressed and manfully performed.
Now, to thyself beneficent, O prince,
Never henceforth renew those weak complaints
Against Covilla's vows and Julian's faith,
His honour broken, and her heart estranged.
Oh, if thou holdest peace or glory dear,
Away with jealousy; brave Sisabert,
Smite from thy bosom, smite that scorpion down.
It swells and hardens amid mildewed hopes,
O'erspreads and blackens whate'er most delights,
And renders us haters of loveliness,
The lowest of the fiends: ambition led
The higher on, furious to dispossess,
From admiration sprung and frenzied love.
This disingenuous soul-debasing passion,
Rising from abject and most sordid fear,
Stings her own breast with bitter self-reproof,
Consumes the vitals, pines, and never dies.
Love, Honour, Justice, numberless the forms,
Glorious and high the stature, she assumes;
But watch the wandering changeful mischief well,
And thou shalt see her with low lurid light
Search where the soul's most valued treasure lies,
Or, more embodied to our vision, stand
With evil eye, and sorcery hers alone,
Looking away her helpless progeny,
And drawing poison from its very smiles.
For Julian's truth have I not pledged my own?
Have I not sworn Covilla weds no other?

Sis. Her persecutor have not I chastised?
Have not I fought for Julian, won the town,
And liberated thee?

Opas. But left for him
The dangers of pursuit, of ambushade,
Of absence from thy high and splendid name.

Sis. Do probity and truth want such supports?

Opas. Griffins and eagles, ivory and gold,
Can add no clearness to the lamp above;
But many look for them in palaces
Who have them not, and want them not, at home.
Virtue and valour and experience
Are never trusted by themselves alone
Further than infancy and idiocy:

The men around him, not the man himself,
Are looked at, and by these is he preferred.
'Tis the green mantle of the warrener
And his loud whistle, that alone attract
The lofty gazes of the noble herd:
And thus, without thy countenance and help
Feeble and faint is still our confidence,
Brief perhaps our success.

Sis. Should I resign
To Abdalazis her I once adored?
He truly, he must wed a Spanish queen!
He rule in Spain! ah! whom could any land
Obey so gladly as the meek, the humble,
The friend of all who have no friend besides,
Covilla! could he choose, or could he find
Another who might so confirm his power?
And now indeed from long domestic wars
Who else survives of all our ancient house—

Opas. But Egilona.

Sis. Vainly she upbraids
Roderigo.

Opas. She divorces him, abjures,
And carries vengeance to that hideous height
Which piety and chastity would shrink
To look from, on the world, or on themselves.

Sis. She may forgive him yet.

Opas. Ah, Sisabert!
Wretched are those a woman has forgiven:
With her forgiveness ne'er hath love returned.
Ye know not till too late the filmy tie
That holds heaven's precious boon eternally
To such as fondly cherish her; once go
Driven by mad passion, strike but at her peace,
And, though she step aside from broad reproach,
Yet every softer virtue dies away.
Beaming with virtue inaccessible
Stood Egilona; for her lord she lived,
And for the heavens that raised her sphere so high:
All thoughts were on her—all, beside her own.
Negligent as the blossoms of the field,
Arrayed in candour and simplicity,
Before her path she heard the streams of joy
Murmur her name in all their cadences,
Saw them in every scene, in light, in shade,
Reflect her image; but acknowledged them
Hers most complete when flowing from her most.
All things in want of her, herself of none,
Pomp and dominion lay beneath her feet
Unfelt and unregarded: now behold
The earthly passions war against the heavenly!
Pride against love, ambition and revenge
Against devotion and compliancy:
Her glorious beams adversity hath blunted;
And coming nearer to our quiet view
The original clay of coarse mortality
Hardens and flaws around her.

Sis. Every germ
Of virtue perishes, when love recedes
From those hot shifting sands, the female heart.

Opas. His was the fault; be his the punishment
'Tis not their own crimes only, men commit,
They harrow them into another's breast,
And they shall reap the bitter growth with pain.

Sis. Yes, blooming royalty will first attract
These creatures of the desert—now I breathe
More freely—she is theirs if I pursue
The fugitive again—he well deserves
The death he flies from—stay! Don Julian twice
Called him aloud, and he, methinks, replied.

Could not I have remained a moment more,
And seen the end? although with hurried voice
He bade me intercept the scattered foes,
And hold the city barred to their return.
May Egilona be another's wife
Whether he die or live! but oh!—Covilla—
She never can be mine! yet she may be
Still happy—no, Covilla, no—not happy,
But more deserving happiness without it.
Mine never! nor another's—'tis enough.
The tears I shed no rival can deride;
In the fond intercourse, a name once cherished
Will never be defended by faint smiles,
Nor given up with vows of altered love.
And is the passion of my soul at last
Reduced to this? is this my happiness?
This my sole comfort? this the close of all
Those promises, those tears, those last adieus,
And those long vigils for the morrow's dawn?

Opas. Arouse thee! be thyself. O Sisabert,
Awake to glory from these feverish dreams:
The enemy is in our land—two enemies—
We must quell both—shame on us, if we fail.

Sis. Incredible! a nation be subdued
Peopled as ours!

Opas. Corruption may subvert
What force could never.

Sis. Traitors may.

Opas. Alas
If traitors can, the basis is but frail.
I mean such traitors as the vacant world
Echoes most stunningly: not fur-robed knaves
Whose whispers raise the dreaming bloodhound's ear
Against benighted famished wanderers;
While with remorseless guilt they undermine
Palace and shed, their very father's house,
O blind! their own, their children's heritage,
To leave more ample space for fearful wealth.
Plunder in some most harmless guise they swathe,
Call it some very meek and hallowed name,
Some known and borne by their good forefathers,
And own and vaunt it thus redeemed from sin.
These are the plagues heaven sends o'er every land
Before it sink, the portents of the street,
Not of the air, lest nations should complain
Of distance or of dimness in the signs,
Flaring from far to Wisdom's eye alone:
These are the last! these, when the sun rides high,
In the forenoon of doomsday, revelling,
Make men abhor the earth, arraign the skies.
Ye who behold them spoil field after field,
Despising them in individual strength,
Not with one torrent sweeping them away
Into the ocean of eternity,
Arise! despatch! no renovating gale,
No second spring awaits you—up, begone—
If you have force and courage even for flight—
The blast of dissolution is behind.

Sis. How terrible! how true! what voice like thine
Can rouse and warn the nation! if she rise,
Say, whither go, where stop we?

Opas. God will guide.
Let us pursue the oppressor to destruction;
The rest is heaven's: must we move no step
Because we cannot see the boundaries
Of our long way, and every stone between?

Sis. Is not thy vengeance for the late affront,
For threats and outrage and imprisonment—

Opas. For outrage, yes—imprisonment and threats

I pardon him, and whatsoever ill
He could do *me*.

Sis. To hold Covilla from me!
To urge her into vows against her faith,
Against her beauty, youth, and inclination,
Without her mother's blessing, nay without
Her father's knowledge and authority—
So that she never will behold me more,
Flying afar for refuge and for help
Where never friend but God will comfort her—

Opas. These, and more barbarous deeds were perpetrated.

Sis. Yet her proud father deigned not to inform
Me, whom he loved and taught, in peace and war,
Me, whom he called his son, before I hoped
To merit it by marriage or by arms.
He offered no excuse, no plea; expressed
No sorrow; but with firm unfaltering voice
Commanded me—I trembled as he spoke—
To follow where he led, redress his wrongs,
And vindicate the honour of his child.
He called on God, the witness of his cause,
On Spain, the partner of his victories,
And yet amid these animating words
Rolled the huge tear down his unvisored face—
A general swell of indignation rose
Through the long line, sobs burst from every breast,
Hardly one voice succeeded—you might hear
The impatient hoof strike the soft sandy plain:
But when the gates flew open, and the king
In his high car came forth triumphantly,
Then was Count Julian's stature more elate;
Tremendous was the smile that smote the eyes
Of all he passed. "Fathers, sons, and brothers,"
He cried, "I fight your battles, follow me!
Soldiers, we know no danger but disgrace!"
"Father, and general, and king," they shout,
And would proclaim him: back he cast his face,
Pallid with grief, and one loud groan burst forth;
It kindled vengeance through the Asturian ranks,
And they soon scattered, as the blasts of heaven
Scatter the leaves and dust, the astonished foe.

Opas. And doubttest thou his truth?

Sis. I love—and doubt—
Fight—and believe: Roderigo spoke untruths—
In him I place no trust; but Julian holds
Truths in reserve—how should I quite confide!

Opas. By sorrows thou beholdest him oppressed;
Doubt the more prosperous: march, Sisabert,
Once more against his enemy and ours:
Much hath been done, but much there still remains.

FOURTH ACT.—FIRST SCENE.

Tent of JULIAN.

RODERIGO *and* JULIAN.

Jul. To stop perhaps at any wickedness
Appears a merit now, and at the time
Prudence and policy it often is
Which afterward seems magnanimity.
The people had deserted thee, and thronged
My standard, had I raised it, at the first;
But once subsiding, and no voice of mine
Calling by name each grievance to each man,
They, silent and submissive by degrees,
Bore thy hard yoke, and, hadst thou but oppressed,
Would still have borne it: thou hast now deceived;
Thou hast done all a foreign foe could do,
And more, against them; with ingratitude
Not hell itself could arm the foreign foe:

'Tis forged at home, and kills not from afar.
Amid whate'er vain glories fell upon
Thy rainbow span of power, which I dissolve,
Boast not how thou conferredst wealth and rank,
How thou preservedst me, my family,
All my distinctions, all my offices,
When Witiza was murdered, that I stand
Count Julian at this hour by special grace.
The sword of Julian saved the walls of Ceuta,
And not the shadow that attends his name:
It was no badge, no title, that o'erthrew
Soldier, and steed, and engine—Don Roderigo,
The truly and the falsely great here differ:
These by dull wealth or daring fraud advance;
Him the Almighty calls amid his people
To sway the wills and passions of mankind.
The weak of heart and intellect beheld
Thy splendour, and adored thee lord of Spain:
I rose—Roderigo lords o'er Spain no more.

Rod. Now to a traitor's add a boaster's name.

Jul. Shameless and arrogant, dost thou believe
I boast for pride or pastime? forced to boast,
Truth costs me more than falsehood e'er cost thee.
Divested of that purple of the soul,
That potency, that palm of wise ambition,
Cast headlong by thy madness from that height,
That only eminence 'twixt earth and heaven,
Virtue, which some desert, but none despise,
Whether thou art beheld again on earth,
Whether a captive or a fugitive,
Miner or galley-slave, depends on me:
But he alone who made me what I am
Can make me greater, or can make me less.

Rod. Chance, and chance only, threw me in thy power;
Give me my sword again and try my strength.

Jul. I tried it in the front of thousands.

Rod. Death
At least vouchsafe me from a soldier's hand.

Jul. I love to hear thee ask for it—now my own
Would not be bitter; no, nor immature.

Rod. Defy it, say thou rather.

Jul. Death itself
Shall not be granted thee, unless from God;
A dole from his and from no other hand.
Thou shalt now hear and own thine infamy—

Rod. Chains, dungeons, tortures—but I hear no more.

Jul. Silence, thou wretch, live on—ay, live—abhorred.
Thou shalt have tortures, dungeons, chains, enough—
They naturally rise and grow around
Monsters like thee, everywhere, and for ever.

Rod. Insulter of the fallen! must I endure
Commands as well as threats? my vassal's too?
Nor breathe from underneath his trampling feet?

Jul. Could I speak patiently who speak to thee,
I would say more—part of thy punishment
It should be to be taught.

Rod. Reserve thy wisdom
Until thy patience come, its best ally:
I learn no lore, of peace or war, from thee.

Jul. No, thou shalt study soon another tongue,
And suns more ardent shall mature thy mind.
Either the cross thou bearest, and thy knees
Among the silent caves of Palestine
Wear the sharp flints away with midnight prayer;
Or thou shalt keep the fasts of Barbary,
Shalt wait amid the crowds that throng the well

From sultry noon till the skies fade again,
To draw up water and to bring it home
In the cracked gourd of some vile testy knave,
Who spurns thee back with bastinadoed foot
For ignorance or delay of his command.

Rod. Rather the poison or the bowstring.

Jul. Slaves
To other's passions die such deaths as those:
Slaves to their own should die—

Rod. What worse?

Jul. Their own.

Rod. Is this thy counsel, renegade?

Jul. Not mine;
I point a better path, nay, force thee on.
I shelter thee from every brave man's sword
While I am near thee: I bestow on thee
Life: if thou die, 'tis when thou sojournest
Protected by this arm and voice no more;
'Tis slavishly, 'tis ignominiously,
'Tis by a villain's knife.

Rod. By whose?

Jul. Roderigo's.

Rod. O powers of vengeance! must I hear? endure?
Live?

Jul. Call thy vassals? no! then wipe the drops
Of froward childhood from thy shameless eyes.
So! thou canst weep for passion—not for pity.

Rod. One hour ago I ruled all Spain! a camp
Not larger than a sheepfold stood alone
Against me: now, no friend throughout the world
Follows my steps or hearkens to my call.
Behold the turns of fortune, and expect
No better; of all faithless men, the Moors
Are the most faithless: from thy own experience
Thou canst not value nor rely on them.

Jul. I value not the mass that makes my sword,
Yet while I use it I rely on it.

Rod. Julian, thy gloomy soul still meditates—
Plainly I see it—death to me—pursue
The dictates of thy leaders, let revenge
Have its full sway, let Barbary prevail,
And the pure creed her elders have embraced:
Those placid sages hold assassination
A most compendious supplement to law.

Jul. Thou knowest not the one, nor I the other,
Torn hast thou from me all my soul held dear!
Her form, her voice, all, hast thou banished from me;
Nor dare I, wretched as I am! recall
Those solaces of every grief, erewhile.
I stand abased before insulting crime—
I falter like a criminal myself.
The hand that hurled thy chariot o'er its wheels,
That held thy steeds erect and motionless
As molten statues on some palace-gates,
Shakes, as with palsied age, before thee now.
Gone is the treasure of my heart, for ever,
Without a father, mother, friend, or name.
Daughter of Julian—such was her delight—
Such was mine too! what pride more innocent,
What, surely, less deserving pangs like these,
Than springs from filial and parental love!
Debarred from every hope that issues forth
To meet the balmy breath of early life,
Her saddened days, all, cold and colourless,
Will stretch before her their whole weary length
Amid the sameness of obscurity.

She wanted not seclusion, to unveil
Her thoughts to heaven, cloister, nor midnight bell;
She found it in all places, at all hours:
While, to assuage my labours, she indulged
A playfulness that shunned a mother's eye,
Still, to avert my perils, there arose
A piety that, even from *me*, retired.

Rod. Such was she! what am I! those are the arms
That are triumphant when the battle fails.
O Julian, Julian! all thy former words
Struck but the imbecile plumes of vanity;
These, through its steely coverings, pierce the heart.
I ask not life nor death; but, if I live,
Send my most bitter enemy to watch
My secret paths, send poverty, send pain—
I will add more—wise as thou art, thou knowest
No foe more furious than forgiven kings.
I ask not then what thou wouldst never grant:
May heaven, O Julian, from thy hand receive
A pardoned man, a chastened criminal.

Jul. This further curse hast thou inflicted; wretch,
I cannot pardon thee.

Rod. Thy tone, thy mien,
Refute those words.

Jul. No—I can *not* forgive.

Rod. Upon my knee, my conqueror, I implore—
Upon the earth, before thy feet—hard heart!

Jul. Audacious! hast thou never heard that prayer
And scorned it? 'tis the last thou shouldst repeat.
Upon the earth! upon her knees! O God!

Rod. Resemble not a wretch so lost as I:
Be better; Oh! be happier; and pronounce it.

Jul. I swerve not from my purpose: thou art mine,
Conquered; and I have sworn to dedicate,
Like a torn banner on my chapel's roof,
Thee to that power from whom thou hast rebelled.
Expiate thy crimes by prayer, by penances.

Rod. Hasten the hour of trial, speak of peace.
Pardon me not, then—but with purer lips
Implore of God, who *would* hear *thee*, to pardon.

Jul. Hope it I may—pronounce it—O Roderigo!
Ask it of him who can; I too will ask,
And, in my own transgressions, pray for thine.

Rod. One name I dare not—

Jul. Go—abstain from that,
I do conjure thee: raise not in my soul
Again the tempest that has wrecked my fame;
Thou shalt not breathe in the same clime with her.
Far o'er the unebbing sea thou shalt adore
The eastern star, and—may thy end be peace.

FOURTH ACT.—SECOND SCENE.

RODERIGO *goes*: HERNANDO *enters*.

Her. From the prince Tarik I am sent, my lord.

Jul. A welcome messenger, my brave Hernando.
How fares it with the gallant soul of Tarik?

Her. Most joyfully; he scarcely had pronounced
Your glorious name, and bid me urge your speed,
Than, with a voice as though it answered heaven,
"He shall confound them in their dark designs,"
Cried he, and turned away with that swift stride
Wherewith he meets and quells his enemies.

Jul. Alas, I cannot bear felicitation,

Who shunned it even in felicity.

Her. Often we hardly think ourselves the happy
Unless we hear it said by those around.
O my lord Julian, how your praises cheered
Our poor endeavours! sure, all hearts are ope
Lofty and low, wise and unwise, to praise.
Even the departed spirit hovers round
Our blessings and our prayers; the corse itself
Hath shined with other light than the still stars
Shed on its rest, or the dim taper, nigh.
My father, old men say, who saw him dead
And heard your lips pronounce him good and happy,
Smiled faintly through the quiet gloom, that eve,
And the shroud throbb'd upon his grateful breast.
Howe'er it be, many who tell the tale
Are good and happy from that voice of praise.
His guidance and example were denied
My youth and childhood: what I am I owe—

Jul. Hernando, look not back: a narrow path
And arduous lies before thee; if thou stop
Thou fallest; go right onward, nor observe
Closely and rigidly another's way,
But, free and active, follow up thy own.

Her. The voice that urges now my manly step
Onward in life, recalls me to the past,
And from that fount I freshen for the goal.
Early in youth, among us villagers
Converse and ripened counsel you bestowed.
O happy days of (far departed!) peace,
Days when the mighty Julian stooped his brow
Entering our cottage door; another air
Breathed through the house; tired age and lightsome youth
Beheld him, with intensest gaze: these felt
More chastened joy; those, more profound repose.
Yes, my best lord, when labour sent them home
And midday suns, when from the social meal
The wicker window held the summer heat,
Praised have those been who, going unperceived,
Opened it wide, that all might see you well:
Nor were the children blamed, upon the mat,
Hurrying to watch what rush would last arise
From your foot's pressure, ere the door was closed,
And not yet wondering how they dared to love.
Your counsels are more precious now than ever,
But are they—pardon if I err—the same?
Tarik is gallant, kind, the friend of Julian,
Can he be more? or ought he to be less?
Alas! his faith!

Jul. In peace or war, Hernando?

Her. Oh, neither—far above it; faith in God—

Jul. 'Tis God's, not thine—embrace it not, nor hate it.
Precious or vile, how dare we seize that offering,
Scatter it, spurn it, in its way to heaven,
Because we know it not? the Sovereign Lord
Accepts his tribute, myrrh and frankincense
From some, from others penitence and prayer:
Why intercept them from his gracious hand?
Why dash them down? why smite the supplicant?

Her. 'Tis what they do?

Jul. Avoid it thou the more.
If time were left me, I could hear well-pleased
How Tarik fought up Calpé's fabled cliff,
While I pursued the friends of Don Roderigo
Across the plain, and drew fresh force from mine.
Oh! had some other land, some other cause,
Invited him and me, I then could dwell
On this hard battle with unmixed delight.

Her. Eternal is its glory, if the deed
Be not forgotten till it be surpassed:

Much praise by land, by sea much more, he won;
For then a Julian was not at his side,
Nor led the van, nor awed the best before;
The whole, a mighty whole, was his alone.
There might be seen how far he shone above
All others of the day: old Muza watched
From his own shore the richly laden fleet,
Ill-armed and scattered, and pursued the rear
Beyond those rocks that bear St. Vincent's name,
Cutting the treasure, not the strength, away;
Valiant, where any prey lies undevoured
In hostile creek or too confiding isle:
Tarik, with his small barks, but with such love
As never chief from rugged sailor won,
Smote their high masts and swelling rampires down;
And Cadiz wept in fear o'er Trafalgar.
Who that beheld our sails from off the heights,
Like the white birds, nor larger, tempt the gale
In sunshine and in shade, now almost touch
The solitary shore, glance, turn, retire,
Would think these lovely playmates could portend
Such mischief to the world, such blood, such woe;
Could draw to them from far the peaceful hinds,
Cull the gay flower of cities, and divide
Friends, children, every bond of human life;
Could dissipate whole families, could sink
Whole states in ruin, at one hour, one blow.

Jul. Go, good Hernando—who *would* think these things?
Say to the valiant Tarik, I depart
Forthwith: he knows not from what heaviness
Of soul I linger here; I could endure
No converse, no compassion, no approach,
Other than thine, whom the same cares improved
Beneath my father's roof, my foster-brother,
To brighter days and happier end, I hope;
In whose fidelity my own resides
With Tarik and with his compeers and chief.
I cannot share the gladness I excite,
Yet shall our Tarik's generous heart rejoice.

FOURTH ACT.—THIRD SCENE.

EGILONA *enters*: HERNANDO *goes*.

Egi. Oh, fly me not because I am unhappy,
Because I am deserted fly me not.
It was not so before, it cannot be
Ever from Julian.

Jul. What would Egilona
That Julian's power with her new lords can do?
Surely her own must there preponderate.

Egi. I hold no suit to them—restore, restore Roderigo.

Jul. He no longer is my prisoner.

Egi. Escapes he then?

Jul. Escapes he—dost thou say?
O Egilona! what unworthy passion—

Egi. Unworthy, when I loved him, was my passion;
The passion that now swells my heart is just.

Jul. What fresh reproaches hath he merited?

Egi. Deeprooted hatred shelters no reproach.
But whither is he gone?

Jul. Far from the walls.

Egi. And I knew nothing!

Jul. His offence was known
To thee at least.

Egi. Will it be expiated?

Jul. I trust it will.

Egi. This withering calm consumes me.
He marries then Covilla! 'twas for this
His people were excited to rebel,
His sceptre was thrown by, his vows were scorned,
And I—and I—

Jul. Cease, Egilona!

Egi. Cease?
Sooner shalt thou to live, than I to reign.

FIFTH ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Tent of MUZA.

MUZA. TARIK. ABDALAZIS.

Muza. To have first landed on these shores appears
Transcendent glory to the applauded Tarik.

Tarik. Glory, but not transcendent, it appears,
What might in any other.

Muza. Of thyself
All this vain boast?

Tarik. Not of myself—'twas Julian.
Against his shield the refluent surges rolled,
While the sea-breezes threw the arrows wide,
And fainter cheers urged the reluctant steeds.

Muza. That Julian, of whose treason I have proofs,
That Julian, who rejected my commands
Twice, when our mortal foe besieged the camp,
And forced my princely presence to his tent.

Tarik. Say rather, who without one exhortation,
One precious drop from true believer's vein,
Marched, and discomfited our enemies.
I found in him no treachery. Hernando,
Who, little versed in moody wiles, is gone
To lead him hither, was by him assigned
My guide, and twice in doubtful fight his arm
Protected me: once on the heights of Calpé,
Once on the plain, when courtly jealousies
Tore from the bravest and the best his due,
And gave the dotard and the coward command:
Then came Roderigo forth—the front of war
Grew darker—him, equal in chivalry,
Julian alone could with success oppose.

Abd. I doubt their worth who praise their enemies.

Tar. And theirs doubt I who persecute their friends.

Muza. Thou art in league with him.

Tar. Thou wert, by oaths,
I am without them; for his heart is brave.

Muza. Am I to bear all this?

Tar. All this, and more:
Soon wilt thou see the man whom thou hast wronged,
And the keen hatred in thy breast concealed
Find its right way, and sting thee to the core.

Muza. Hath he not foiled us in the field; not held
Our wisdom to reproach?

Tar. Shall we abandon
All he hath left us in the eyes of men?
Shall we again make him our adversary
Whom we have proved so, long and fatally?
If he subdue for us our enemies,
Shall we raise others, or, for want of them,
Convert him into one against his will?

FIFTH ACT: SECOND SCENE.

Here comes Hernando from that prince himself—

Muza. Who scorns himself to come.

Her. The queen detains him.

Abd. How? Egilona?

Muza. 'Twas my will.

Tar. At last

He must be happy; for delicious calm
Follows the fierce enjoyment of revenge.

Her. That calm was never his, no other will be!
Thou knowest not, and mayst thou never know,
How bitter is the tear that fiery shame
Scourges and tortures from the soldier's eye.
Whichever of these bad reports be true,
He hides it from all hearts, to wring his own,
And drags the heavy secret to the grave.
Not victory, that o'er shadows him, sees he!
No airy and light passion stirs abroad
To ruffle or to soothe him; all are quelled
Beneath a mightier, sterner stress of mind:
Wakeful he sits, and lonely and unmoved,
Beyond the arrows, views, or shouts of men;
As oftentimes an eagle, when the sun
Throws o'er the varying earth his early ray,
Stands solitary, stands immovable
Upon some highest cliff, and rolls his eye,
Clear, constant, unobservant, unabased,
In the cold light, above the dews of morn.
He now assumes that quietness of soul
Which never but in danger have I seen
On his staid breast.

Tar. Danger is past, he conquers;
No enemy is left him to subdue.

Her. He sank not, while there was, into himself.
Now plainly see I from his altered tone,
He cannot live much longer—thanks to God!

Tar. What! wishest thou thy once kind master dead?
Was he not kind to thee, ungrateful slave!

Her. The gentlest, as the bravest, of mankind.
Therefore shall memory dwell more tranquilly
With Julian, once at rest, than friendship could,
Knowing him yearn for death with speechless love.
For his own sake I could endure his loss,
Pray for it, and thank God; yet mourn I must
Him above all! so great, so bountiful,
So blessed once! bitterly must I mourn.
'Tis not my solace that 'tis his desire;
Of all that pass us in life's drear descent
We grieve the most for those that wished to die.
A father to us all, he merited,
Unhappy man! all a good father's joy
In his own house, where seldom he hath been,
But, ever mindful of its dear delights,
He formed one family around him, ever.

Tar. Yes, we have seen and known him—let his fame
Refresh his friends, but let it stream afar,
Nor in the twilight of home scenes be lost.
He chose the best, and cherished them; he left
To self-reproof the mutinies of vice;
Avarice, that dwarfs ambition's tone and mien;
Envy, sick nursling of the court; and pride
That cannot bear his semblance nor himself;
And malice, with blear visage half-descried
Amid the shadows of her hiding-place.

Her. What could I not endure, O gallant man,
To hear him spoken of as thou hast spoken!

Oh! I would almost be a slave to him
Who calls me one.

Muza. What? art thou not? begone.

Tar. Reply not, brave Hernando, but retire.
All can revile, few only can reward.
Behold the meed our mighty chief bestows!
Accept it, for thy services, and mine.
More, my bold Spaniard, hath obedience won
Than anger, even in the ranks of war.

Her. The soldier, not the Spaniard, shall obey.

[*Goes.*

MUZA *to* TAR. Into our very council bringest thou
Children of reprobation and perdition?
Darkness thy deeds and emptiness thy speech,
Such images thou raisest as buffoons
Carry in merriment on festivals;
Nor worthiness nor wisdom would display
To public notice their deformities,
Nor cherish them nor fear them; why shouldst thou?

Tar. I fear not them nor thee.

FIFTH ACT: THIRD SCENE.

EGILONA *enters.*

Abd. Advance, O queen.
Now let the turbulence of faction cease.

Muza. Whate'er thy purpose, speak, and be composed.

Egi. He goes; he is afar; he follows her;
He leads her to the altar, to the throne.
For, calm in vengeance, wise in wickedness,
The traitor hath prevailed, o'er him, o'er me,
O'er you—the slaves, the dupes, the scorn, of Julian.
What have I heard! what have I seen!

Muza. Proceed.

Abd. And I swear vengeance on his guilty head
Who intercepts from thee the golden rays
Of sovereignty; who dares rescind thy rights;
Who steals upon thy rest, and breathes around
Empoisoned damps o'er that serenity
Which leaves the world, and faintly lingers here.

Muza. Who shuns thee—

Abd. Whose desertion interdicts
Homage, authority, precedency—

Muza. Till war shall rescue them—

Abd. And love restore.

Egi. O generous Abdalazis! never! never!
My enemies—Julian alone remains—
The worst, in safety, far beyond my reach,
Breathe freely on the summit of their hopes;
Because they never stopped, because they sprang
From crime to crime, and trampled down remorse.
Oh! if her heart knew tenderness like mine!
Grant vengeance on the guilty; grant but that,
I ask no more; my hand, my crown, is thine.
Fulfil the justice of offended heaven,
Assert the sacred rights of royalty,
Come not in vain, crush the rebellious crew,
Crush, I implore, the indifferent and supine.

Muza. Roderigo thus escaped from Julian's tent.

Egi. No, not escaped, escorted, like a king.
The base Covilla first pursued her way
On foot; but after her the royal car,
Which bore me from San Pablos to the throne,

Empty indeed, yet ready at her voice,
Rolled o'er the plain, amid the carcasses
Of those who fell in battle or in flight:
She, a deceiver still, to whate'er speed
The moment might incite her, often stopped
To mingle prayers with the departing breath,
Improvudent! and those with heavy wounds
Groaned bitterly beneath her tottering knee.

Tar. Now, by the clement and the merciful!
The girl did well: when I breathe out my soul,
Oh! if compassion give one pang the more,
That pang be mine; here be it, in this land.
Such women are they in this land alone.

Egi. Insulting man!

Muza. We shall confound him yet.
Say, and speak quickly, whither went the king?
Thou knewest where was Julian.

Abd. I will tell
Without his answer: yes, my friends; yes, Tarik,
Now will I speak, nor thou, for once, reply.
There is, I hear, a poor half-ruined cell
In Xeres, whither few indeed resort;
Green are the walls within, green is the floor
And slippery from disuse; for Christian feet
Avoid it, as half-holy, half accursed.
Still in its dark recess fanatic sin
Abases to the ground his tangled hair,
And servile scourges and reluctant groans
Roll o'er the vault uninterruptedly,
Till, such the natural stillness of the place
The very tear upon the damp below
Drops audible, and the heart's throb replies.
There is the idol maid of Christian creed,
And taller images, whose history
I know not, nor inquired—a scene of blood,
Of resignation amid mortal pangs,
And other things, exceeding all belief.
Hither the aged Opas of Seville
Walked slowly, and behind him was a man
Barefooted, bruised, dejected, comfortless,
In sackcloth; the white ashes on his head
Dropped as he smote his breast; he gathered up,
Replaced them all, groaned deeply, looked to heaven,
And held them, like a treasure, with clasped hands.

Egi. Oh! was Roderigo so abased?

Muza. 'Twas he.
Now, Egilona, judge between your friends
And enemies; behold what wretches brought
The king, thy lord, Roderigo, to disgrace.

Egi. He merited—but not from them—from me
This, and much worse: had I inflicted it,
I had rejoiced—at what I ill endure.

Muza. For thee, for thee alone, we wished him here,
But other hands released him—

Abd. With what aim
Will soon appear to those discerning eyes.

Egi. I pray thee, tell what passed until that hour.

Abd. Few words, and indistinct; repentant sobs
Filled the whole space, the taper in his hand,
Lighting two small dim lamps before the altar,
He gave to Opas; at the idol's feet
He laid his crown, and wiped his tears away:
The crown reverts not, but the tears return.

Egi. Yes, Abdalazis! soon, abundantly.
If he had only called upon my name,
Seeking my pardon ere he looked to heaven's,
I could have—no! he thought not once on me!

Never shall he find peace or confidence;
I will rely on fortune and on thee,
Nor fear my future lot: sure, Abdalazis,
A fall so great can never happen twice,
Nor man again be faithless, like Roderigo.

Abd. Faithless he may be still, never so faithless.
Fainter must be the charms, remote the days,
When memory and dread example die,
When love and terror thrill the heart no more,
And Egilona is herself forgotten.

FIFTH ACT: FOURTH SCENE.

JULIAN *enters.*

Tar. Turn, and behold him! who is now confounded?
Ye who awaited him, where are ye? speak.
Is some close comet blazing o'er your tents?
Muza! Abdalazis! princes, conquerors,
Summon, interrogate, command, condemn.

Muza. Justly, Don Julian—but respect for rank
Allays resentment, nor interrogates
Without due form—justly may we accuse
This absence from our councils, from our camp:
This loneliness in which we still remain
Who come invited to redress your wrongs.
Where is the king?

Jul. The people must decide.

Muza. Imperfectly, I hope, I understand
Those words, unworthy of thy birth and age.

Jul. O chieftain, such have been our Gothic laws.

Muza. Who then amid such turbulence is safe?

Jul. He who observes them: 'tis no turbulence,
It violates no peace: 'tis surely worth
A voice, a breath of air, thus to create
By their high will the man, formed after them
In their own image, vested with their power,
To whom they trust their freedom and their lives.

Muza. They trust! the people! God assigns the charge:
Kings open but the book of destiny
And read their names, all that remains for them
The mystic hand from time to time reveals.
Worst of idolaters! idolater
Of that refractory and craving beast
Whose den is in the city, at thy hand
I claim our common enemy, the king.

Jul. Sacred from justice then! but not from malice!

Tar. Surrender him, my friend: be sure his pains
Will not be softened.

Jul. 'Tis beyond my power.

Tar. To-morrow—if in any distant fort
He lies to-night: send after him.

Jul. My faith
Is plighted, and he lives—no prisoner.

Egi. I knew the truth.

Abd. Now, Tarik, hear and judge.
Was he not in thy camp? and in disguise?

Tar. No: I will answer thee.

Muza. Audacious man!
Had not the Kalif Walid placed thee here,
Chains and a traitor's death should be thy doom.
Speak, Abdalazis! Egilona, speak.
Were ye not present? was not I myself?
And aided not this Julian his escape?

Jul. 'Tis true.

Tar. Away then friendship; to thy fate
I leave thee: thou hast rendered Muza just,
Me hostile to thee. Who is safe! a man
Armed with such power and with such perfidy!

Jul. Stay, Tarik! hear me; for to thee alone
Would I reply.

Tar. Thou hast replied, already.

[*Goes.*

Muza. We, who were enemies, would not inquire
Too narrowly what reasons urged thy wrath
Against thy sovereign lord: beneath his flag
The Christians first assailed us from these shores,
And we seized gladly the first aid we found
To quell a wealthy and a warlike king.
We never held to thee the vain pretence
That 'twas thy quarrel our brave youth espoused,
Thine, who hast wrought us much disgrace and woe.
From perils and from losses, here we rest
And drink of the fresh fountain at our feet,
Not madly following such illusive streams
As overspread the dizzy wilderness,
And vanish from the thirst they have seduced.
Ours was the enterprise, the land is ours:
What gain we by our toils if he escape
Whom we came hither solely to subdue?

Jul. Is there no gain to live in amity?

Muza. The gain of traffickers and idle men:
Courage and zeal expire upon such calms.
Further, what amity can Moors expect
When you have joined your forces?

Jul. From the hour
That he was vanquished I have laid aside
All power, all arms.

Muza. How can we trust thee, once
Deceived, and oftener than this once despised?
Thou camest hither with no other aim
Than to deprive Roderigo of his crown
For thy own brow.

Egi. Julian, base man, 'tis true.
He comes a prince, no warrior, at this hour.

Muza. His sword, O queen, would not avail him now.

Abd. Julian, I feel less anger than regret.
No violence of speech, no obloquy,
No accusation shall escape my lips:
Need there is none, nor reason, to avoid
My questions: if thou value truth, reply.
Hath not Roderigo left the town and camp?
Hath not thy daughter?

Egi. Past the little brook
Toward the Betis—from a tower I saw
The fugitives, far on their way; they went
Over one bridge, each with armed men—not half
A league of road between them—and had joined
But that the olive-groves along the path
Concealed them from each other—not from me:
Beneath me the whole level I surveyed,
And, when my eyes no longer could discern
Which track they took, I knew it from the storks
Rising in clouds above the reedy plain.

Muza. Deny it, if thou canst.

Jul. I ordered it.

Abd. None could besides: lo! things in such a mass
Falling together on observant minds,

Create suspicion and establish proof:
Wanted there fresh—why not employ our arms?
Why go alone?

Muza. To parley, to conspire,
To reunite the Spaniards, which we saw,
To give up treaties, close up enmities,
And ratify the deed with Moorish blood.

Jul. Gladly would Spain procure your safe return,
Gladly would pay large treasures, for the aid
You brought against oppression—

Muza. Pay she shall—
The treasures of her soil, her ports, her youth:
If she resist, if she tumultuously
Call forth her brigands and we lose a man,
Dreadful shall be our justice; war shall rage
Through every city, hamlet, house, and field,
And, universal o'er the gasping land,
Depopulation.

Jul. They shall rue the day
Who dare these things.

Muza. Let order then prevail.
In vain thou sendest far away thy child,
Thy counsellor the metropolitan,
And Sisabert—prudence is mine no less.
Divide with us our conquests, but the king
Must be delivered up.

Jul. Never by me.

Muza. False then were thy reproaches, false thy grief.

Jul. O Egilona! were thine also feigned?

Abd. Say, lovely queen, neglectful of thy charms
Turned he his eyes toward the young Covilla?
Did he pursue her to the mad excess
Of breaking off her vows to Sisabert,
And marrying her, against the Christian law?

Muza. Did he prefer her so?

Abd. Could he prefer
To Egilona—

Egi. Her! the child Covilla?
Eternal hider of a foolish face,
Incapable of anything but shame,
To me? old man! to me? O Abdalazis!
No: he but followed with slow pace my hate.
And cannot pride check these unseemly tears.

[Goes.

Muza. The most offended, an offended woman,
A wife, a queen, is silent on the deed.

Abd. Thou disingenuous and ignoble man,
Spreading these rumours! sending into exile
All those their blighting influence injured most:
And whom? thy daughter and adopted son,
The chieftains of thy laws and of thy faith.
Call any witnesses, proclaim the truth,
And set, at last, thy heart, thy fame, at rest.

Jul. Not, if I purposed or desired to live,
My own dishonour would I e'er proclaim
Amid vindictive and reviling foes.

Muza. Calling us foes, avows he not his guilt?
Condemns he not the action we condemn,
Owning it his, and owning it dishonour?
'Tis well my cares pressed forward, and struck home.

Jul. Why smilest thou? I never saw that smile
But it portended an atrocious deed.

Muza. After our manifold and stern assaults,

With every tower and battlement destroyed,
The walls of Ceuta still were strong enough—

Jul. For what? who boasted now her brave defence,
Or who forbade your entrance, after peace?

Muza. None: for who could? their engines now arose
To throw thy sons into the arms of death.
For this erect they their proud crests again.
Mark him at last turn pale before a Moor.

Jul. Imprudent have they been, their youth shall plead.

Abd. O father, could they not have been detained?

Muza. Son, thou art safe and wert not while they lived.

Abd. I feared them not.

Muza. And therefore wert not safe:
Under their star the blooming Egilona
Would watch for thee the nuptial lamp in vain.

Jul. Never, oh never, hast thou worked a wile
So barren of all good! speak out at once,
What hopest thou by striking this alarm?
It shocks my reason, not my fears or fondness.

Muza. Be happy then as ignorance can be;
Soon wilt thou hear it shouted from our ranks.
Those who once hurled defiance o'er our heads,
Scorning our arms, and scoffing at our faith,
The nightly wolf hath visited, unscared,
And loathed them as her prey; for famine first,
Achieving in few days the boast of year;
Sank their young eyes and opened us the gates:
Ceuta, her port, her citadel, is ours.

Jul. Blessed boys! inhuman as thou art, what guilt
Was theirs?

Muza. Their father's.

Jul. Oh, support me, Heaven!
Against this blow! all others I have borne.
Ermenegild! thou mightest, sure, have lived!
A father's name awoke no dread of thee!
Only thy mother's early bloom was thine!
There dwelt on Julian's brow—thine was serene—
The brightened clouds of elevated souls,
Feared by the most below: those who looked up
Saw, at their season, in clear signs, advance
Rapturous valour, calm solicitude,
All that impatient youth would press from age,
Or sparing age sigh and detract from youth:
Hence was his fall! my hope! myself! my Julian!
Alas! I boasted—but I thought on him,
Inheritor of all—all what? my wrongs—
Follower of me—and whither? to the grave—
Ah, no: it should have been so years far hence!
Him at this moment I could pity most,
But I most prided in him; now I know
I loved a name, I doted on a shade.
Sons! I approach the mansions of the just,
And my arms clasp you in the same embrace,
Where none shall sever you—and do I weep!
And do they triumph o'er my tenderness!
I had forgotten my inveterate foes
Everywhere nigh me, I had half forgotten
Your very murderers, while I thought on you:
For, O my children, ye fill all the space
My soul would wander o'er—O bounteous heaven!
There is a presence, if the well-beloved
Be torn from us by human violence,
More intimate, pervading, and complete,
Than when they lived and spoke like other men;
And there pale images are our support
When reason sinks, or threatens to desert us.
I weep no more—pity and exultation

Sway and console me: are they—no!—both dead?

Muza. Ay, and unsepulchred.

Jul. Nor wept nor seen
By any kindred and far-following eye?

Muza. Their mother saw them, if not dead, expire.

Jul. O cruelty—to them indeed the least!
My children, ye are happy—ye have lived
Of heart unconquered, honour unimpaired,
And died, true Spaniards, loyal to the last.

Muza. Away with him.

Jul. Slaves! not before I lift
My voice to heaven and man: though enemies
Surround me, and none else, yet other men
And other times shall hear: the agony
Of an oppressed and of a bursting heart
No violence can silence; at its voice
The trumpet is o'erpowered, and glory mute,
And peace and war hide all their charms alike.
Surely the guests and ministers of heaven
Scatter it forth through all the elements;
So suddenly, so widely, it extends,
So fearfully men breathe it, shuddering
To ask or fancy how it first arose.

Muza. Yes, they shall shudder—but will that, henceforth,
Molest my privacy, or shake my power?

Jul. Guilt hath pavilions, but no privacy.
The very engine of his hatred checks
The torturer in his transport of revenge,
Which, while it swells his bosom, shakes his power
And raises friends to his worst enemy.

Muza. Where now are thine? will they not curse the day
That gave thee birth, and hiss thy funeral!
Thou hast left none who could have pitied thee.

Jul. Many, nor those alone of tenderer mould,
For me will weep—many alas through me!
Already I behold my funeral.
The turbid cities wave and swell with it,
And wrongs are lost in that day's pageantry:
Oppressed and desolate, the countryman
Receives it like a gift; he hastens home,
Shows where the hoof of Moorish horse laid waste
His narrow croft and winter garden-plot,
Sweetens with fallen pride his children's lore,
And points their hatred; but applauds their tears.
Justice, who came not up to us through life,
Loves to survey our likeness on our tombs,
When rivalry, malevolence, and wrath,
And every passion that once stormed around,
Is calm alike without them as within.
Our very chains make the whole world our own,
Bind those to us who else had passed us by,
Those at whose call brought down to us, the light
Of future ages lives upon our name.

Muza. I may accelerate that meteor's fall,
And quench that idle ineffectual light
Without the knowledge of thy distant world.

Jul. My world and thine are not that distant one.
Is age less wise, less merciful, than grief,
To keep this secret from thee, poor old man?
Thou canst not lessen, canst not aggravate
My sufferings, canst not shorten nor extend
Half a sword's length between my God and me.
I thank thee for that better thought than fame,
Which none, however, who deserve, despise,
Nor lose from view till all things else are lost.

Abd. Julian, respect his age, regard his power.

Many who feared not death have dragged along
A piteous life in darkness and in chains.
Never was man so full of wretchedness
But something may be suffered after all,
Perhaps in what clings round his breast, and helps
To keep the ruin up, which he amid
His agony and frenzy overlooks,
But droops upon at last, and clasps, and dies.

Jul. Although a Muza send far underground,
Into the quarry whence the palace rose,
His mangled prey, climes alien and remote
Mark and record the pang. While overhead
Perhaps he passes on his favourite steed,
Less heedful of the misery he inflicts
Than of the expiring sparkle from a stone;
Yet we, alive or dead, have fellow men
If ever we have served them, who collect
From prisons and from dungeons our remains,
And bear them in their bosom to their sons.
Man's only relics are his benefits;
These, be there ages, be there worlds, between,
Retain him in communion with his kind:
Hence is our solace, our security,
Our sustenance, till heavenly truth descends—
Losing in brightness and beatitude
The frail foundations of these humbler hopes—
And, like an angel guiding us, at once
Leaves the loose chain and iron gate behind.

Muza. Take thou my justice first, then hope for theirs.
I, who can bend the living to my will,
Fear not the dead, and court not the unborn:
Their arm will never reach me, nor shall thine.

Abd. Pity, release him, pardon him, my father.
Forget how much thou hatest perfidy;
Think of him, once so potent, still so brave,
So calm, so self-dependent in distress—
I marvel at him—hardly dare I blame,
When I behold him fallen from so high,
And so exalted after such a fall.
Mighty must that man be who can forgive
A man, so mighty; seize the hour to rise,
Another never comes. Oh, say, my father,
Say, "Julian, be my enemy no more."
He fills me with a greater awe than e'er
The field of battle, with himself the first,
When every flag that waved along our host
Drooped down the staff, as if the very winds
Hung in suspense before him—bid him go
And peace be with him, or let me depart.
Lo! like a god, sole and inscrutable,
He stands above our pity.

Jul. For that wish—
Vain as it is, 'tis virtuous—oh, for that,
However wrong thy censure and thy praise,
Kind Abdalaziz, mayst thou never feel
The rancour that consumes thy father's breast,
Nor want the pity thou hast sought for me.

Muza. Now hast thou sealed thy doom.

Jul. And thou thy crimes.

Abd. O father, heed him not: those evil words
Leave neither blight nor blemish—let him go.

Muza. A boy, a very boy, art thou indeed!
One who in early day would sally out
To chase the lion, and would call it sport,
But, when more wary steps had closed him round,
Slink from the circle, drop the toils, and blanch
Like a lithe plant from under snow in spring.

Abd. He who ne'er shrank from danger might shrink now,
And ignominy would not follow here.

Muza. Peace, Abdalazis! how is this? he bears
Nothing that warrants him invulnerable:
Shall I then shrink to smite him? shall my fears
Be greatest at the blow that ends them all?
Fears? no! 'tis justice—fair, immutable,
Whose measured step, at times, advancing nigh,
Appalls the majesty of kings themselves.
Oh, were he dead! though then revenge were o'er.

FINAL ACT.—FIFTH SCENE.

Off. Thy wife, Count Julian—

Jul. Speak!

Off. —Is dead.

Jul. Adieu,
Earth, and the humblest of all earthly hopes,
To hear of comfort, though to find it vain.
Thou murderer of the helpless! shame of man!
Shame of thy own base nature! 'tis an act
He who could perpetrate could not avow,
Stained, as he boasts to be, with innocent blood,
Deaf to reproach, and blind to retribution.

Off. Julian, be just; 'twill make thee less unhappy.
Grief was her end: she held her younger boy
And wept upon his cheek; his naked breast
By recent death now hardening and inert,
Slipped from her knee; again with frantic grasp
She caught it, and it weighed her to the ground:
There lay the dead.

Jul. She?

Off. And the youth her son.

Jul. Receive them to thy peace, eternal God!
O soother of my hours, while I beheld
The light of day, and thine! adieu, adieu!
And, my Covilla! dost thou yet survive?
Yes, my lost child, thou livest yet—in shame!
Oh, agony past utterance! past thought!
That throwest death, as some light idle thing,
With all its terrors, into dust and air,
I will endure thee; I, whom heaven ordained
Thus to have served beneath my enemies,
Their conqueror, thus to have revisited
My native land with vengeance and with woe.
Henceforward shall she recognise her sons,
Impatient of oppression or disgrace,
And rescue them, or perish; let her hold
This compact, written with her blood, and mine.
Now follow me—but tremble—years shall roll,
And wars rage on, and Spain at last be free.

FOOTNOTE.

[6] "Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

"Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee."

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