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Saavedra

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NUMANTIA

BY THE SAME TRANSLATOR.

Uniform with this Volume.

JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS.

COMPOSED BY

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA.

IN ENGLISH TERCETS,

WITH PREFACE AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

LONDON: KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO.

NUMANTIA

A TRAGEDY

BY

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

JAMES Y. GIBSON

TRANSLATOR OF THE "JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS"



LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO

MDCCLXXXV

"A death with honour is supremest bliss,
No fate can be more excellent than this."
Act ii. p.27.

To the Memory of
GENERAL GORDON,

THE HERO OF KHARTOUM, THE MODERN PALADIN, OUR CHRISTIAN
THEOGENES, WHOSE SUBLIME FAITH, FORTITUDE, AND SELF-SACRIFICE,
MATCHLESS IN THESE TIMES, HAVE MADE HIS NAME SACRED IN EVERY
HOUSEHOLD, THE TRANSLATOR HUMBLY DEDICATES THIS ENGLISH
VERSION OF ONE OF THE SADDEST TRAGEDIES EVER PENNED;
WHICH NEVERTHELESS IS INSTINCT WITH THAT TRAGIC
PAIN WHICH PURIFIES THE SOUL, AND INCITES TO
SUCH DEEDS OF SELF-DEVOTION AS DISTIN-
GUISHED THE HERO, WHOSE LOSS
BRITAIN MOURNS THIS DAY
WITH A PECULIAR SOR-
ROW, NOT UNMIXED
WITH SHAME.

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[INTRODUCTION.](#)

This is an attempt to render for the first time into readable English verse the one great drama of Cervantes. It was presented on the Madrid stage about the year 1586, during the reign of Philip II., and was received with great applause as a work of national interest. It remained, however, unprinted and was supposed to be lost. In 1784, it was published for the first time by Sancha of Madrid, in a volume which contained also Cervantes' *Viaje del Parnaso*, and his *Trato de Argel*. The Editors, with a carelessness characteristic of the times, do not tell us how it was recovered or where they got it. The literary world, however, received it gladly as a work of peculiar original power, in every way worthy of the name of Cervantes. Strange to say, a number of years afterwards, it sprang to life as an acting drama during the memorable siege of Saragossa by the French, where it had a besieged city for its stage, and patriots and heroes for its actors and audience. A work that has such a history, and has shown such persistent vitality, must have something in it worthy of the study of all lovers of the Drama, and no apology seems needful for presenting it now in an English version, which preserves the original metres, and pays due regard to accuracy and idiomatic expression.

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Rightly to estimate such a production we must take into account the period during which it was written and the purpose for which it was invented. Cervantes was at this time about thirty-nine years of age. He returned from his captivity in Algiers in 1580. He was married in 1584, and with

the gallantry peculiar to his nature he laid at the feet of his bride the first fruits of his genius, a pastoral romance known as *La Galatea*. The newly married pair, who lived at Esquivias, a few miles from Madrid, had the slenderest of fortunes, and as love would not fill the cupboard, Cervantes followed his natural inclination, went to Madrid, and took to writing for the stage. Though the pay was scanty it was better than could be got by writing sentimental romances. He remained at this occupation till he left for Seville in 1588, and wrote, as he tells us, between twenty and thirty plays.

At this period, throughout Europe generally, dramatic art, and tragic art especially, was still in its infancy, and its laws and principles were as yet undetermined. In Italy Tasso had produced his "Aminta" at Ferrara, and Guarini his "Pastor Fido" at Milan (1585), but Italian Tragedy had yet to await the advent of Maffei, Metastasio, and Alfieri in long after years. In France Corneille and Racine were as yet unborn. In England such authors as Marlowe, Greene, and Peele were beginning their careers, and Shakespeare, a youth of twenty-two (he was seventeen years the junior of Cervantes) was perchance only brooding over his "Venus and Adonis." In Spain such writers as Juan del Encina, Torres del Naharro, Gil de Vicente, and the authors of the famous Tragi-Comedy, *Celestina*, at the beginning and middle of the sixteenth century, had done good service to Spanish Literature, but had settled nothing as to the form which the Spanish drama should take. Cervantes himself looked upon Lope de Rueda as the true originator of a genuine national theatre. He died in 1565, and was buried between the choirs of the Cathedral of Cordova (that wonderful Moorish Mosque), an unexampled honour in those days. A man of the people himself (he was a gold-beater by trade) he became the idol of the people both as actor and author. His *pasos* (equivalent to the French *proverbes*), founded on national manners, and flavoured with true Spanish salt, were unrivalled, and wherever his booth-theatre was pitched, in town or country, he was received with acclamation. Cervantes, during his boyhood, was charmed with him, and the impressions he received were never effaced. But that homespun genius could teach him nothing in the highest walks of his art.

When Cervantes, then, began to write for the Tragic stage he had no models before him, and very little critical light to guide him. He was the first genius of commanding power in modern times, whether in Spain or elsewhere, who attempted to compose Tragedies, and he was more or less a law to himself. His *Numantia*, which German critics declare to be the first work of real tragic power that had appeared in Europe since the extinction of the Greek and Roman drama, has therefore a historical value apart altogether from its artistic merit. The genius of Cervantes was Epic rather than Dramatic, and it is interesting to observe that in this play, almost his first and certainly his greatest effort, he adopts the construction of the earlier Greek drama in its severest form, rejecting, however, the Chorus, which he replaces by allegorical figures serving a similar purpose. In the main he is a follower, consciously or unconsciously, of Aeschylus, in such plays as the *Seven against Thebes*, or *The Persians*. Aeschylus (according to Aristophanes) says of his *Persians* that it was the "taking of a theme for poetry of a glorious exploit (κοσμησαι ἔργον ἄριστον)." In like manner the *Numantia* of Cervantes is simply a glorious page in Spanish history converted into sounding verse.

Viewed then as a drama, according to modern ideas, it is manifestly defective. It has neither plot, passion, nor intrigue, and its subject is eminently non-dramatic. The general use, too, of the *Ottava rima*, with its ceaseless recurring rhymes, is more suited to epic description than to dramatic action. But viewed as an attempt to give form and body on the stage to a great national event, with the intent of inspiring patriotic feelings, its success is undoubted. Though the first act, which presents the motive of the play, drags somewhat, the interest deepens with every scene, and the tremendous catastrophe, with all its attendant accessories of mingled horror, despair, and indomitable resolve, is depicted with a skill, pathos, and concentrated power hitherto unattained. In such a pictorial representation even the despised Octave, supple, sonorous, and monotonous, seems not out of keeping. Each speech is uttered as it were to the beat of the drum, or to the prolonged wailings of the Dead March. When more vigorous description is required Cervantes uses the *Terza rima* with great effect; and in almost the only bit of action represented (the scaling of the wall by Caius Marius) he employs blank verse with much fitness. If Cervantes had only invented for Spain a dramatic blank verse as fine and effective as that of Shakespeare for England, and had produced therein a series of plays showing such original power as the *Numantia*, then would the Spanish drama, perhaps, under his guidance have taken a different direction, and reached a higher grade of excellence than it ever attained. But this was not to be. The genius of the Spanish language was against the first effort, and the prevailing taste of the people was equally against the other. The great merit of Cervantes is not that he founded or perfected a national dramatic school. This was reserved for Lope de Vega, who submitted his genius to the taste of the people, and for Calderon de la Barca, who refined and exalted it to the utmost pitch of which it was capable. But this merit he may certainly claim, that he was the first to give a certain form and fulness to what before his time was formless and void. His *Numantia*, if not a perfect drama and a model for imitation, has an unwonted elevation and grandeur. It is free from that turgid declamation, triviality of incident, and presentation of horrors for horrors' sake, which were the curse of the contemporary tragic plays. For simplicity, directness, and truthfulness of delineation his drama was unique in its own age, and may, in regard to those peculiar qualities, prove of some service even in ours.

Those of our readers who desire to pursue the subject further would do well to consult the higher dramatic critics. Hallam, in his succinct "History of the Literature of the Middle Ages," devotes three pages to the analysis and elucidation of this remarkable drama, and his judgment both of its excellences and faults is at once shrewd, candid, and appreciative. Ticknor, while slightly protesting against the unmeasured praise bestowed upon it by the Germans,

acknowledges its unique historical value, and praises especially its lighter portions, condemned by many as an excrescence, for their exquisite simplicity and truthfulness. Amongst the Germans, Bouterwek and Augustus W. Schlegel are especially enthusiastic in their eulogies. We extract from the latter's "History of Dramatic Literature" (Black's translation) the following passage, as just as it is elegantly expressed: "The *Destruction of Numantia* has altogether the elevation of the tragical cothurnus; and, from its unconscious and unlaboured approximation to antique grandeur and purity, forms a remarkable phenomenon in the history of modern poetry.... There is, if I may so speak, a sort of Spartan pathos in the piece; every single and personal consideration is swallowed up in the feeling of patriotism, and by allusions to the warlike fame of his nation in modern times he has contrived to connect the ancient history with the interests of his own day.... When we consider the energetical pathos in this drama we are constrained to consider it as merely accidental that Cervantes did not devote himself to this species of writing, and find room in it for the complete development of his inventive mind."

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Sismondi and such acute critics as Schack and Lemcke corroborate Schlegel's judgment in almost every respect. Among French writers such authorities as M. Royer, who has written an admirable prose translation of the *Numantia*, and M. Emile Chasles, whose Life of Cervantes is the most graphic of all biographies, have given very valuable and laudatory criticism. The list of critics' names might easily be extended, but enough has already been given to justify the importance we have attached to this unique work of Cervantes.

This is not the place to allude to any other of Cervantes' dramatic works, or to estimate their value. We hope yet to have an opportunity of doing so when we present a translation of his selected Comedies and Interludes for the approval of English Cervantistas. Meanwhile we prefer that this translation of his *Numantia* should go forth alone. It was produced at first in stirring times when the Spanish power, that had hitherto held mastery in the world, was showing symptoms of declining vigour. This English translation comes forth in equally stirring times, when the power that supplanted the Spanish domination, and has so long ruled the seas, is called on to make a mighty effort to show that she can do so yet, despite of Teuton, Gaul, or Russ. The enemies of Old England are busily predicting for her a fate like that which overwhelmed Carthage or Numantia. We fear no such fate if England to herself be true. Still the call to patriotism is never out of place, and perhaps the British people who have taken Cervantes to their hearts as the genial, mirth-provoking humourist, may be disposed to show him like regard in his character of poet, soldier, and patriot. It is true the scene he presents, and the heroism he immortalizes are peculiarly Spanish; but Cervantes, though a Spaniard to the backbone, had thoughts that interest humanity, and the patriotic chord which he strikes in this drama may perchance find an echo even in our colder northern bosoms.

[xv]

At all events Cervantes was no dilettante soldier. If he talks of the horrors and glories of war and siege he talks of things he knew and had felt. In his early manhood he was one of those high-spirited youths (*Mozos de gran brio*), of good birth and breeding, who crowded the ranks of the Spanish army in Italy, to do service to their country and gain honour thereby. He had fought and bled at Lepanto, in the affair at Navarino, at the storming of Tunis and La Goleta. He was simply a private soldier and did his duty bravely as hundreds of his comrades did. Strange to say, it was only during his five years' captivity in Algiers that he was enabled to display his higher military qualities and especially his faculty of command. Amongst the 25,000 Spaniards in that den of horrors he at once took the foremost place. He was the leader in every daring plan of escape, and only failed at last through treachery. He was the originator of that desperate scheme for the seizure of Algiers by the uprising of the Christians, which was nipped in the bud by the faint-heartedness of Philip II., who feared to risk his fleet in such a glorious enterprise. But successful or not he was idolized by his comrades, and feared by his enslavers, who nevertheless would not touch his life, such was the charm his heroic spirit exercised. But his bearing as a man was more heroic still than his daring as a soldier. The written testimony of his comrades, still preserved, tells us how gentle he was in manners, how brave in heart; how generous to his needier brethren even out of his poverty; how tender to the captive children and how mindful of their welfare; how proud of his honour as a Spaniard, and steadfast in his faith as a Christian, while hundreds surrendered both in the sheer agony of despair. Cervantes escaped, as by a miracle, from a life-long slavery in Constantinople; but only to wage a life-long battle with adverse fate, and at length to die with a smile on his lips.

[xvi]

[xvii]

In the Dedication we have ventured to link the name of Gordon with that of Cervantes, and in so doing we feel we do no dishonour to the name of either. Though differing in language and creed, and separated by well-nigh three centuries, they are, nevertheless, kindred souls. In both the Quixotic spirit, in its noblest sense, is clearly displayed. Cervantes was the inventor of Quixotism because it lay deep in his nature. This Quixotism, what is it but the sublime of imprudence? To do what the enthusiasm of the soul prompts and compels; to do it with single-hearted unselfishness; without regard to the adequacy or inadequacy of means; without regard even to eventual success or non-success; but with simple regard to the inspired voice of duty within, come what may: that is Quixotism in supreme degree. Of this sublime imprudence Cervantes and Gordon were equally guilty in their day, and both reaped the reward of it, especially from their country's rulers. It was their joint fate during life to be an enigma to most, a wonder to many, and in death or after death to be beloved by all. It is not for us to say more of the noble man whose name is now a household word amongst us. It is to be hoped when his Diaries are brought to light, and the true story of his sufferings and death is known, that one of our gifted poets may do for the Hero of Khartoum what Cervantes has done for the heroes of Numantia, with a higher harp if not with loftier patriotism. Meanwhile we may be permitted to pay, with all humility, this little tribute to his memory.

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In conclusion, we have cordially to thank Don Pascual de Gayangos for the interest he has shown in this venture, and for the pains he has taken to elucidate the errors and imperfections of the original text. We have also to thank our dear Amanuensis, whose delicate taste, and skill in languages ancient and modern, have added materially to any worth this little work may have.

J. Y. G.

SWAYNESTHORPE,
LONG DITTON,
April, 1885.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

[xix]

ROMANS.

SCIPIO, *the Roman General.*
QUINTUS FABIUS, *his Brother.*
JUGURTHA, *a Roman Officer.*
CAIUS MARIUS, *a Roman Soldier.*
Roman Soldiers.

NUMANTINES.

| | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| THEOGENES, <i>Chief Governor of Numantia.</i> | | |
| CORABINO, | } | <i>Governors of Numantia.</i> |
| FOUR NUMANTINES, | | |
| MORANDRO, | } | <i>Numantine Soldiers.</i> |
| LEONCIO, | | |
| MARQUINO, <i>a Wizard.</i> | | |
| MILVIO, <i>his Attendant.</i> | | |
| VIRIATO, | } | <i>Numantine Youths.</i> |
| SERVIO, | | |
| A CORPSE. | | |
| LYRA, <i>affianced to Morandro.</i> | | |
| THE BROTHER OF LYRA. | | |

Numantine wives, priests *with their* attendants, *two* ambassadors, soldiers, children, &c.

ALLEGORICAL PERSONAGES.

SPAIN, *with mural crown.*
DOURO, *with its tributaries.*
WAR.
SICKNESS.
HUNGER.
FAME.

The Scene is laid alternately in the Roman Camp and within the walls of Numantia.

NUMANTIA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter SCIPIO^[1] *and* JUGURTHA.^[2]

SCIPIO.

This hard and heavy task, the brunt of which
The Roman Senate gave me to sustain,
Hath brought me stress and toil to such a pitch
As quite unhinges my o'erburdened brain.
A war so long,—in strange events so rich,—
Wherein so many Romans have been slain,
Who dares presume to bring it to a close?
Who would not tremble to renew its woes?

JUGURTHA.

Who, Scipio? Who can boast the great success,
The untold valour, which in thee abound?
The two combined are equal to the stress,
Thine arms with glorious triumph shall be crowned.

SCIPIO.

The strength, inspired by prudent manliness,
Will bring the loftiest summits to the ground;
While brutal force, moved by a hand insane,
Will change to rugged heaps the smoothest plain.
'Tis needful, then, and firstly, to repress
The flagrant madness of our soldiery,
Who, mindful not of glory and noblesse,
In gross consuming lust do sunken lie.
My sole desire is this, I wish no less,
To raise our men from their debauchery;
For if the friend will first amendment show,
More quickly then will I subdue the foe.
Marius!

[2]

Enter CAIUS MARIUS.^[3]

My Lord?

SCIPIO.

Let notice quick be sent,
To all our warriors let the mandate run,
That without sloth or hindrance to prevent,
They all appear within this place as one;
For I would make to them, with grave intent,
A brief harangue.

CAIUS MARIUS.

At once it shall be done.

SCIPIO.

Go quickly, for 'tis well that all be told
Our novel plans, although the means be old.

[3]

[Exit CAIUS MARIUS.

JUGURTHA.

Be sure, my Lord, there is no soldier here
Who fears not, loves thee not beyond compare;
And since thy valour, in its proud career,
Extends from Southern seas to Northern Bear,
Each man with daring heart, devoid of fear,
Soon as he hears the martial trumpet blare,
Will, in thy service, rush to deeds of glory,
Outstripping far the fabled deeds of story.

SCIPIO.

Our first concern must be this rampant vice,
Which like a canker spreads, to curb and tame;
For should it run unfettered, in a trice
We bid farewell to good repute and fame.
This damage must be cured at any price;
For should we fail to quench its blazing flame,
Such vice alone would kindle fiercer war
Than all the foemen of this land by far.

[*Behind, they publish the edict, having first beat the drum to assemble.*]

Order of our General:
Let the soldiers quartered here
Presently in arms appear
In the chief square, one and all.
And if any man resist
This our summons and decree,
Let his name, as penalty,
Be at once struck off the list.

[4]

JUGURTHA.

No doubt, my Lord, but it is wise and sane
To curb thine army with an iron bit,
And hold the soldier back with tightened rein
When he would plunge into the loathsome pit.
Our army's force would be a thing in vain
If right and virtue do not go with it;
Although it march along in proud array,
With thousand squadrons, and with banners gay.

[*At this point there enter as many soldiers as may be, and CAIUS MARIUS, armed in antique fashion, without arquebuses, and SCIPIO, ascending a small eminence on the stage, glances round at the soldiers and says:*]

SCIPIO.

By that proud gesture, by the lusty swell
Of these rich trappings, with their martial sheen,
My friends, for Romans I do know you well—
Romans in build and gallant port, I mean;
But by the tale these soft white fingers tell,
And that rich bloom which on your cheeks is seen,
Ye seem to have been reared at British fires,
And drawn your parentage from Flemish sires.
My friends, this wide-spread languor and decay,
Which for yourselves hath borne such bitter fruit,
Nerves up your fallen foes to sterner fray,
And brings to nought your valour and repute.
This city's walls, that stand as firm to-day
As battled rock, are witnesses to boot
How all your native strength hath turned to shame,
And bears no stamp of Roman but the name.
Seems it, my sons, a manly thing to own,
That when the Roman name towers far and wide,
Within the land of Spain yourselves alone
Should humble it and level down its pride?
What feebleness is this, so strangely grown?
What feebleness? If I may now decide,
It is a feebleness loose living breeds—
The mortal enemy of manly deeds.
Soft Venus ne'er with savage Mars did start
A paction firm and stable at the core:
She follows pleasures; he pursues the art
That leads to hardships, and to fields of gore.
So let the Cyprian goddess now depart,
And let her son frequent this camp no more;
For he whose life in revelling is spent
Is badly lodged within a martial tent.
Think ye, the battering-ram with iron head
Will of itself break down the battled wall?
Or crowds of armèd men and armour dread
Suffice alone the foemen to appal?
If dauntless strength be not with prudence wed,
Which plans with wisdom and provides for all,
But little fruit will mighty squadrons yield,
Or heaps of warlike stores upon the field.
Let but the smallest army join as one

[5]

[6]

In bonds of martial law, as strict as pure,
 Then will ye see it, radiant as the sun,
 March where it will to victory secure.
 But let an army manly courses shun,
 Were it a world itself in miniature,
 Soon will its mighty bulk be seen to reel
 Before the iron hand, and breast of steel.
 Ye well may be ashamed, ye men of might,
 To see how these few Spaniards, sore distressed,
 With haughty spirit, and to our despite,
 Defend with vigour their Numantian nest.
 Full sixteen years^[4] and more have taken flight,
 And still they struggle on, and well may jest
 At having conquered with ferocious hands,
 And kept at bay, our countless Roman bands.
 Self-conquered are ye; for beneath the sway
 Of base lascivious vice ye lose renown,
 And while with love and wine ye sport and play,
 Ye scarce have strength to take your armour down.
 Blush then with all your might, as well ye may,
 To see how this poor little Spanish town
 Bids bold defiance to the Roman host,
 And smites the hardest when beleaguered most.
 At every hazard let our camp be freed,
 And cleanly purged of that vile harlot race,
 Which are the root and cause, in very deed,
 Why ye have sunk into this foul disgrace.
 One drinking-cup, no more, is all ye need;
 And let your lecherous couches now give place
 To those wherein of yore ye slept so sound—
 The homely brushwood strewn upon the ground.
 Why should a soldier reek of odours sweet,
 When scent of pitch and resin is the best?
 Or why have kitchen-things to cook his meat,
 To give withal his squeamish stomach zest?
 The warrior, who descends to such a treat,
 Will hardly bear his buckler on the breast;
 For me all sweets and dainties I disdain,
 While in Numantia lives one son of Spain.
 Let not, my men, this stern and just decree
 Of mine appear to you as harshly meant;
 For in the end its profit ye will see
 When ye have followed it with good intent.
 'Tis passing hard to do, I well agree,
 To give your habits now another bent;
 But if ye change them not, then look for war
 More terrible than this affront by far.
 From downy couches and from wine and play
 Laborious Mars is ever wont to fly;
 He seeks some other tools, some other way,
 Some other arms to raise his standard high.
 Not luck nor hazard here have any sway,
 Each man is master of his destiny;
 'Tis sloth alone that evil fortune breeds,
 But patient toil to rule and empire leads.
 Though this I say, so sure am I withal
 That now at last ye'll act as Romans do,
 That I do hold as nought the armèd wall
 Of these rude Spaniards, a rebellious crew.
 By this right hand I swear before you all,
 That if your hands be to your spirits true,
 Then mine with recompense will open wide,
 And this my tongue shall tell your deeds with pride.

[7]

[8]

[The soldiers glance at one another, and make signs to one of them, CAIUS MARIUS, who replies for all, and thus says:

CAIUS MARIUS.

If thou hast marked, and with attentive eye,
Illustrious Commander of this force,
The upturned faces of the standers-by,
While listening to thy brief and grave discourse,
From some must thou have seen the colour fly,
In others deepen, stung with quick remorse;
Plain proof that fear and shame have both combined
To trouble and perplex each soldier's mind.
Shame—to behold the abject, low estate
On which with self-abasement they must look,
Without one plea defensive to abate
The wholesome rigour of thy stern rebuke;
Fear—at the dire results of crimes so great;
And that vile sloth, whose sight they cannot brook,
Affects them so, that they would rather die
Than wallow longer in its misery.
But place and time remaineth to them still
To make some slight atonement for this wrong;
And this is reason why such flagrant ill
Doth twine around them with a bond less strong.
So from to-day, with prompt and ready will,
The very meanest of our warlike throng
Will place without reserve, as is most meet,
Their goods and life and honour at thy feet.
Receive with right good-will, O master mine,
This fitting gift their better minds supply,
And think them Romans of the ancient line,
In whom the manly spirit cannot die.
My comrades, raise your right hands as a sign
That ye approve this pledge as well as I.

[9]

Soldiers.

[10]

What thou hast said for us we all declare,
And swear to keep our promise.

All.

Yes, we swear.

SCIPIO.

In such a pledge new confidence I find
This war with greater vigour to pursue,
While glowing ardour burns in every mind
To change the old life and begin the new.
Let not your promise whistle down the wind,
But let your lances prove it to be true,
For mine with truth and clearness shall be shown,
To match the worth and value of your own.

Soldier.

Two Numantines accredited are here,
With solemn message, Scipio, to thee.

SCIPIO.

What keeps them back? Why do they not appear?

Soldier.

They wait behind for thy permission free.

SCIPIO.

[11]

Be they ambassadors, their right is clear.

Soldier.

I judge them so.

SCIPIO.

Then let them come to me;
'Tis always good the enemy to know,
Whether a true heart or a false he show.
For Falsehood never cometh in such wise
Enwrapped in Truth, that we may not descry
Some little cranny in the close disguise,
Through which to gaze upon the secret lie.
To listen to the foe is always wise,
We profit more than we can lose thereby;
In things of war experience shows, in sooth,
That what I say is well-established truth.

Enter the Numantine Ambassadors, First and Second.

First Ambassador.

If, good my lord, thou grant us without fear
To speak the message we have brought this day,
Where now we stand, or to thy private ear,
We shall deliver all we come to say.

SCIPIO.

[12]

Speak freely, then, I grant you audience here.

First Ambassador.

With this permission, in such courteous way
Conceded to us by thy regal grace,
I shall proceed to state our urgent case.
Numantia, to whom my birth I owe,
Hath sent me, noble general, to thee,
As to the bravest Roman Scipio
The night e'er covered, or the day can see;
And begs of thee the friendly hand to show,
In token that thou graciously agree
To cease the struggle that hath raged so long,
And caused to thee and her such cruel wrong.
She says, that from the Roman Senate's law,
And rule, she never would have turned aside,
Had not some brutal Consuls, with their raw
And ruthless hands, done outrage to her pride.
With fiercer statutes than the world e'er saw,
With greedy lust, extending far and wide,
They placed upon our necks such grievous yoke,
As might the meekest citizens provoke.
Throughout the time, with such a lengthened bound,
Wherein both sides have made such cruel sport,
No brave commander have we ever found
Whose kindness or whose favour we could court.
But now, at length, that Fate hath brought it round
To guide our vessel to so good a port,
We joyfully haul in our warlike sails,
Prepared for any treaty—that avails.
Nor think, my lord, that it is fear alone
Which makes us sue for peace at such an hour;
By proofs unnumbered it is widely known
That still Numantia wields an arm of power.
It is thy worth and valour lure us on,
And give assurance that our luck will tower
Far higher than our highest hopes extend,
To have thee for our master and our friend.
On such an errand have we come to-day.
My lord, make answer as it pleaseth thee.

[13]

SCIPIO.

Since but a late repentance ye display,
Your friendship is of small account to me.
Give, give anew the sturdy right arm play,
For what mine own is worth I fain would see;
Since in its might hath fortune deigned to place
My added glory, and your fell disgrace.
To sue for peace will hardly recompense
The shameless doings of so many years.
Let war and rapine come; and in defence
Bring out anew your files of valiant spears

Second Ambassador.

[14]

Take heed, my lord; for this false confidence
Brings in its train a thousand cheats and fears;
And this bold arrogance which thou dost show
But nerves our arms to strike a harder blow.
Our plea for peace, on which thou now hast frowned,
Although we urged it with the best intent,
Will make our righteous cause be wide renowned,
And Heaven itself will give its blest assent.
Mark, ere thou treadest on Numantian ground,
Oft wilt thou prove, and to thy heart's content,
What bolts of wrath the insulted foe can send,
Who wished to be thy vassal, and good friend.

SCIPIO.

Hast thou aught more to say?

First Ambassador.

No, we have more
To do, since thou, my lord, will have it so.
Thou hast refused the just peace we implore,
And hast belied thy better self, I know;
Soon wilt thou see the power we have in store,
When thou hast showed us all thou hast to show,
For prating peace away is easier far
Than breaking through the serried ranks of war.

SCIPIO.

[15]

Thou speakest truth; and now to make it plain
That I can treat in peace, in war command,
Your proffered friendship I do now disdain;
I here remain the sworn foe of your land,
And so with this ye may return again.

Second Ambassador.

Meanst thou, my lord, on this resolve to stand?

SCIPIO.

Yes, I do mean it.

Second Ambassador.

Then, To arms! I say,
And no Numantian voice will answer, Nay!

[*Exeunt the Ambassadors; and QUINTUS FABIVS, brother of
SCIPIO, says:*

QUINTUS FABIVS.

Methinks our indolence, which now is past,
Hath made you bold within our midst to brawl;
But now the wished-for time hath come at last,
When ye will see our glory, and your fall.

SCIPIO.

Vain boasting, Fabius, is beneath the caste
Of valiant men, with honour at their call;
So calm thy threats, to good persuasion yield,
And keep thy courage for the battle-field.
Though, sooth, I do not mean that this proud foe
Should meet us hand to hand in very deed.
Some other way to conquest will I go,
Which promises to bring me better speed.
I mean to curb their pride, their wits o'erthrow,
And on itself to let their fury feed;
For with a deep wide ditch I'll gird them round,
And hunger fierce will bear them to the ground.
No longer shall this soil be coloured red
With Roman blood. Sufficient for the State
Is what these Spaniards have already shed
In this long brutal war, and obstinate.
Now bare your arms for other work instead,—
This hard-bound earth to break and excavate;
They serve us better, foul with dust and mud,
Than when bedabbled with the foeman's blood.
Let no one in the ranks this duty shun,
But join in strife his neighbour to surpass.
Let officer and private work as one,
Without distinction, or respect of class.
Myself will seize the spade, and when begun
Will break the ground as deftly as the mass.
Do all as I, and let what will befall,
This scheme of mine will satisfy you all.

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QUINTUS FABIVS.

[17]

O valiant sir, my brother and my lord,
In this we recognize thy prudent care,
For it were folly, by the wise ignored,
And rash display of valour, past compare,
To face in arms the fury and the sword
Of these wild rebels, frantic with despair;
To shut them in will yield us better fruit,
And wither all their courage at the root.
'Tis easy to surround the city quite,
Save where the river shows an open line.

SCIPIO.

Now let us go, and straightway bring to light
This little-used and novel plan of mine;
Then to the Roman Senate in its might,
(If Heaven's smiles but on our project shine,)
Will complete Spain be subject, far and wide,
By simple conquest of this people's pride.

SCENE II.

Enters a damsel, crowned with a mural crown, bearing heraldic castles in her hand, signifying SPAIN, and says:

SPAIN.

Thou Heaven, the lofty, vast, serenely grand,
Who, with thy fructifying powers, hast crowned
With wealth the chiefest part of this my land,
And made it great above the realms around,
Let my sad dole excite thy pity bland;
And since thou giv'st the wretched calm profound,
To me be gracious in my throes of pain,
For I am she, the lonely, luckless Spain.
Let it suffice thee that, beneath thy care,
My powerful limbs in fiercest fires were tossed,
And through my heart thou to the sun laidst bare
The dark benighted kingdom of the lost.
My wealth 'midst thousand tyrants thou didst share;
Phœnicians, Greeks as well, in countless host
Did part my realms; for thou didst will it so,
Or else my wickedness deserved the blow.
Is't possible that I should always be
Of nations strange the meek and lowly slave,
Nor ever have one glimpse of Liberty,
Nor ever see my native banners wave?
And yet, perchance, it is a just decree,
That I should sink beneath a fate so grave,
Since my most valiant men and sons of fame
Are foes at heart, and brothers but in name.
For public ends they never will unite,
These brilliant spirits—a divided host;
Nay, rather will they stand apart, or fight,
When strength and unity are needed most;
And thus by fatal discords they invite
The wild barbarian hosts, at fearful cost,
Who sack their treasures with a greedy glee,
And shower their cruelties on them and me.
It is Numantia, and only she,
Who with her blood her life will dearly sell;
Who with her sword unsheathed, and flashing free,
Defends the Liberty she loves so well.
But now her race is over, woe is me!
The hour, the fated hour is on the knell,
When she must part with life, but not with fame,
Like Phœnix rising fresh from out the flame.
Those Romans there, a countless timid band,
Who in a thousand ways their conquests seek,
Decline to measure swords, and hand to hand,
With these brave Numantines, so few and weak.
O might their plans be buried in the sand,
And all their fancies turn to crazy freak,
And this Numantia, this little spot,
Regain once more its free and happy lot!
But now, alas! the foe hath girt it round,
Not with confronting arms, foreboding ill
To its weak walls, but with a wit profound
And ready hands hath laboured with such skill,
That with a trench deep-hollowed in the ground
The town is circled, over plain and hill—
And only on the side where runs the river
Is there defence against this strange endeavour.
So these poor Numantines are close confined
And rooted to the spot, as if by charms;
No man can leave, no man may entrance find;
They have no fear of stormings or alarms;
But as they gaze around, before, behind,
And see no labour for their powerful arms,
With fearful accents, and ferocious breath

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[20]

with fearful accents, and religious breath,
 They cry aloud for war, or else for death!
 And since the side the spacious Douro scours,
 Laving the city in its onward way,
 Is that alone which, in their evil hours,
 May lend the prisoned Numantines some stay,
 Before their grand machines or massive towers
 Be founded in its stream, I fain would pray
 The bounteous river, radiant with renown,
 To aid and succour my beleaguered town.
 Thou gentle Douro,^[5] whose meand'ring stream
 Doth lave my breast, and give it life untold,
 As thou wouldst see thy rolling waters gleam,
 Like pleasant Tagus, bright with sands of gold;
 As thou wouldst have the nymphs, a merry team,
 Light-footed bound from meads and groves of old,
 To pay their homage to thy waters clear,
 And lend thee bounteously their favours dear;
 Then lend, I pray, to these my piteous cries
 Attentive ear, and come to ease my woes.
 Let nothing hinder thee in any wise,
 Although thou leav'st awhile thy sweet repose;
 For thou and all thy waters must arise
 To give me vengeance on these Roman foes;
 Else all is over, 'tis a hopeless case,
 To save from ruin this Numantian race.

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*Enter the river DOURO, with several boys attired as rivers like himself, these
 being the tributary streams which flow into the Douro.*

DOURO.

O Spain, my mother dear, thy piercing cries
 Have struck upon mine ears for many an hour,
 And if I did not haste me to arise,
 It was that succour lay beyond my power.
 That fatal day, that day of miseries,
 Which seals Numantia's doom, begins to lower;
 The stars have willed it so, and well I fear
 No means remain to change a fate so drear.
 Minuesa, Tera, Orvion as well,
 Whose floods increase the volume of mine own,
 Have caused my bosom so to rise and swell
 That all its ancient banks are overflown.
 But my swift current will not break their spell,
 As if I were a brook, their pride has grown
 To do what thou, O Spain, didst never dream,
 To plant their dams and towers athwart my stream.
 But since the course of stern, relentless Fate,
 Brings round the final fall, without avail,
 Of this thy well-beloved Numantian state,
 And closes up its sad and wondrous tale,
 One comfort still its sorrows may abate,
 That never shall Oblivion's sombre veil
 Obscure the bright sun of its splendid deeds,
 Admired by all, while age to age succeeds.
 But though this day the cruel Romans wave
 Their banners o'er thy wide and fertile land,—
 Here beat thee down, there treat thee as a slave,
 With pride ambitious, and a haughty hand,—
 The time will come (if I the knowledge grave
 Which Heaven to Proteus taught do understand)
 When these said Romans shall receive their fall
 From those whom presently they hold in thrall.
 I see them come, the peoples from afar,
 Who on thy gentle breast will seek to dwell,
 When, to thy heart's content, they have made war
 Against the Romans, and have curbed them well.
 Goths shall they be; who, bright with glory's star,
 Leaving their fame through all the world to swell,
 Will in thy bosom seek repose from strife,
 And give their sturdy powers a higher life.
 In coming years will Attila, that man
 Of wrath, avenge thy wrongs with bloody hands;
 Will place the hordes of Rome beneath the ban,
 And make them subject to his stern commands;
 And, forcing way into the Vatican,^[6]
 Thy gallant sons, with some of other lands

[22]

in my gallant sons, with sons of other lands,
Will cause the Pilot of the sacred bark
Take speedy flight, and steer into the dark.
The time will also come, when one may stand
And see the Spaniard brandishing his knife
Above the Roman neck, and stay his hand
At bidding of his chief, from taking life.
The great Albano^[7] he, who gives command
To draw the Spanish army from the strife,
In numbers weak, and yet in courage strong,
A match in valour for a mightier throng.
And when the rightful Lord of heaven and earth
Is recognized as such on every hand,
He, who shall then be established and set forth
As God's viceregent over every land,
Will on thy kings bestow a style of worth
As fitting to their zeal as it is grand;
They all shall bear of Catholic the name,
In true succession to the Goths of fame.
But he, whose hand of vigour best shall bind
In one thine honour, and thy realm's content,
And make the Spanish name, too long confined,
Hold place supreme by general assent,
A king shall be, whose sound and thoughtful mind
On grand affairs is well and wisely bent;
His name through all the world he rules shall run,
The second Philip,^[8] second yet to none.
Beneath his fortunate imperial hand
Three kingdoms once divided under stress
Again beneath one single crown shall stand,
For common welfare, and thy happiness.
The Lusitanian banner, famed and grand,
Which once was severed from the flowing dress
Of fair Castile, will now be knit anew,
And in its ancient place have honour due.
What fear and envy, O beloved Spain,
Shall bear to thee the nations strange and brave;
Whose blood shall serve thy flashing sword to stain,
O'er whom thy banners shall triumphant wave!
Let hopes like these assuage the bitter pain,
Which wrings thy heart in this sad hour and grave,
For what the cruel Fates have willed must be,
Numantia must abide the stern decree.

SPAIN.

Thy words, O famous Douro, have in part
Relieved the poignant anguish of my wrong;
There is no guile in thy prophetic heart,
And so my confidence in thee is strong.

DOURO.

O Spain, thou mayst believe what I impart,
Although these happy days may tarry long.
My nymphs await me now, and so, farewell!

SPAIN.

May heaven thy limpid waters bless and swell!

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ACT II.

SCENE I.

Interlocutors.

THEOGENES and CORABINO, with four other Numantines, Governors of Numantia, MARQUINO, a wizard, and a Corpse which will appear in due time. They are seated in council, and the four nameless Numantines are distinguished by First, Second, Third, and Fourth.

THEOGENES.

Ye valiant men, it seems to me this day
That every adverse fate and direful sign
Conspire to crush us with their baleful sway,
And cause our force and fury to decline.
The Romans shut us in, do what we may,
With cruel craft our strength to undermine.
No vengeance comes to us by death in fight,
Nor, save with wings, can we escape by flight,
Not these alone would crush us to the ground,
Who oft have suffered at our hands defeat;
For Spaniards too, with them in paction bound,
Would cut our throats with treachery complete.
May Heaven such knavish villany confound!
May lightning flashes wound their nimble feet,
Who rush to give their friends a deadly blow,
And lend their succour to our wily foe!
See if ye cannot now devise some plan
To mend our fortunes, and our city save;
For this laborious siege, of lengthened span,
Prepares for us a sure and certain grave.
Across that fearful ditch no single man
May seek the fortune that awaits the brave;
Though valiant arms, at times, in close array
Will sweep a thousand obstacles away.

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CORABINO.

I would that mighty Jove, in sovereign grace,
Might grant our gallant youth this very day
To meet the Roman army face to face,
Where'er their arms might have the freest play.
Not death itself, in such a happy case,
Would keep their Spanish fortitude at bay;
They'd hew a pathway, beat the foemen down,
And succour bring to our Numantian town.
But since we find ourselves in this sad state,
Like women harboured and by force confined,
Then let us do our utmost in the strait,
And show a daring and determined mind;
Let us invite our foes to test their fate
By single combat; haply we shall find
That, worn out by this siege and lengthened fray,
They fain would end it in this simple way.
But if this remedy should not succeed,
And this our just demand should baffled be,
One other plan may bring us better speed,
Though more laborious, as it seems to me:
That ditch and battled trench, which now impede
Our passage to the foeman's camp ye see,
By sudden night assault let us break through,
And march for succour to good friends and true.

[27]

First Numantine.

Be it by ditch or death, we must, 'tis plain,
Free passage force, if we would still survive;
For death is most insufferable pain,
If it should come when life is most alive.
Death is the certain cure for woes that drain
The strength of life, and on it grow and thrive;
For death with honour is supremest bliss;
No fate can be more excellent than this.

Second Numantine.

Can higher honour crown our latest years,
If so our souls must from our bodies part,
Than thus to rush upon the Roman spears,
And dying, strike our foemen at the heart?
Let him who will display the coward's fears,
And stay within the city all apart;
For me, at least, my life I'd rather yield,
Within the ditch, or on the open field.

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Third Numantine.

This cruel hunger, fearsome and malign,
Which tracks our path, and goads us bitterly,
Constrains me to consent to your design,
However rash and hair-brained it may be.
By death in fight this insult we decline;
Who would not die of hunger come with me,
To force the trenches, and with one accord
Cut out a path to safety with the sword.

Fourth Numantine.

It seemeth good to me, before we dare
The desperate act which promises relief,
That we should summon from the rampart there
Our haughty foe, and ask of him in brief:
That he will grant an open field and fair
To one Numantian, and one Roman chief,
And that the death of either in the fight
Shall end our quarrel and decide the right.
These Romans are a people of such pride
That they will sanction what we now propose;
And if by this our challenge they abide,
Then sure am I our griefs will have a close;
For here sits Corabino at our side,
Upon whose mighty valour I repose,
That he alone, in open fight with three,
Will from the Romans snatch the victory.
'Tis also fitting that Marquino here,
Whose fame as sage diviner is so great,
Should note what sign or planet in the sphere
Forbodeth death to us, or glorious fate;
And find some means perchance to make it clear,
If we shall issue from our present strait,
When once this doubtful cruel siege has passed,
The victors or the vanquished at the last.
Be it as well our first and chief concern
To make to Jove a solemn sacrifice;
It well may be that thereby we shall earn
A boon still higher than the proffered price.
If by such aid supernal we shall learn
To staunch the wounds of our deep-rooted vice,
Then haply may our rugged fates relent,
And change to brighter fortune and content.
There never lacketh opportunity to die,
The desperate may have it when inclined;
The fitting time and place are always nigh
To show in dying the determined mind.
But lest the passing hours in vain should fly,
Say if ye now approve what I've designed,
And if ye do not, then devise some plan
Will better suit, and pleasure every man.

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MARQUINO.

There is good reason in thy sage advice;
Its weighty counsel is approved by me;
Prepare the offering and the sacrifice,
And let the challenge quick delivered be.
As for myself, I'll hasten in a trice
To show my science in supreme degree;
For one I'll drag from out the heart of Hell
Our future, be it good or bad, to tell.

[30]

THEOGENES.

I herewith offer me, if so indeed
Ye can but trust my valour and my might,
To sally forth, if it be so decreed,
And be your champion in the single fight.

CORABINO.

Thy valour rare deserves a better meed;
We well may trust—it is thy patent right—
Affairs by far more difficult and grave
To him who is the bravest of the brave.
And since the chiefest place is at thy call,
Due to thy worth, by general assent,
I, who esteem myself the least of all,
Will act as herald of this tournament.

First Numantine.

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Then I, with all the people, great and small,
Will do what gives to Jove the most content;
For prayers and sacrifice have mighty sway,
When purged and contrite hearts prepare the way.

Second Numantine.

Now let us go, with ready wills and free,
To do as we have sworn, whate'er befall,
Before pale hunger's gnawing misery
Hath brought us to the last extreme of all.

Third Numantine.

If Heaven already hath pronounced decree
That we are doomed in dire distress to fall,
May Heaven revoke it now, and aid us soon,
If our contrition meriteth the boon.

SCENE II.

Enter first two Numantine soldiers, MORANDRO and LEONCIO.

LEONCIO.

Where, Morandro, dost thou go?
What strange errand hast thou got?

MORANDRO.

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If myself do know it not
Just as little wilt thou know.

LEONCIO.

Would that amorous whim of thine
I could pluck from out thy pate!

MORANDRO.

Nay, my reason hath more weight
Since I felt this flame of mine.

LEONCIO.

'Tis a fact, undoubted lore,
That the love-devoted swain
Hath, by reason of his pain,
Weightier reason than before.

MORANDRO.

What thou speakest thus to me,
Is it wit, or malice, friend?

LEONCIO.

Thou my wit mayst apprehend,
I, thy pure simplicity.

MORANDRO.

Am I simple, loving well?

LEONCIO.

[33]

Yes, if love will not allow
For the whom, and when, and how;
Ask thy reason, it will tell.

MORANDRO.

Who can bounds assign to love?

LEONCIO.

Reason's self will show them thee.

MORANDRO.

Reasonable will they be,
But of slender value prove.

LEONCIO.

What of reason is there, pray,
In the amorous endeavour?

MORANDRO.

Love 'gainst reason goeth never,
Though it go some other way.

LEONCIO.

Is it not beyond all reason,
Gallant soldier as thou art,
Thus to show a lover's heart,
In this sad and straitened season?
At a time when thou art bound
Round the god of war to rally,
Is it meet with love to dally,
Scatt'ring thousand sweets around?
See thy country in a stir,
Enemies before, behind,
And wilt thou, with troubled mind,
Turn to love, and not to her?

[34]

MORANDRO.

Thus to hear thee idly speak,
Makes my blood with fury dance.
When did love, by any chance,
Make the manly bosom weak?
Do I leave my post to fly
To my lady's side instead,
Or lie sleeping on my bed,
When my captain watches by?
Hast thou seen me fail to move
At the urgent call of duty,
Lured away by wanton beauty,
Or still less by honest love?
If with truth thou canst not tell
Any point wherein I fail,
Wherefore thus against me rail,
Just because I love so well?
If I shun the circles bright,
Brooding o'er my sad condition,
Put thyself in my position,
Thou wilt see that I have right.
Know'st thou not how many years
I was mad for Lyra's sake,
Till at length the clouds did break,
Scatt'ring all my doubts and fears?
For her father gave consent
That we twain should wedded be;
And my Lyra's love for me,
Mine for her, gave full content.
But, alas! thou art aware
How this brutal, cruel war
Came our happiness to mar,
Sunk my glory to despair.
For our marriage may not be
Till the din of war hath ceased;
'Tis no time to wed and feast
Till this land of ours be free.
Think what slender hope is here
That my bliss will ever be,
When our chance of victory
Rests upon the foeman's spear!
Here we are with ruin near us,
Fosse and trench around us lying,
All our men with hunger dying,
And no thought of war to cheer us!
Is it strange, that when I know
All my hopes are but as wind,
I should go with saddened mind,
Just as now thou seest me go?

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LEONCIO.

O Morandro, calm thy breast;
Let me see thine ancient glance;
For by hidden ways, perchance,
Help will reach us—and the best.
Sovereign Jove will doubtless show
To our brave Numantian folk
How to burst this Roman yoke
By some sharp and sudden blow.
Then in calm and sweet repose
Wilt thou seek thy wedded wife,
And in love's endearing strife
Soon forget thy present woes.
For this day, by sage advice,
Will Numantia, all astir,
Unto Jove, the Thunderer,
Make a solemn sacrifice.
See what crowds of people hie
With the victim and the fire!
Mighty Jove, all-powerful sire,
Look upon our misery!

[*There enter two Numantines, clad as ancient priests, leading in between them, fastened by the horns, a big lamb, crowned with olive or ivy and other flowers; also a page with a silver salver and a towel on his shoulder; another with a silver goblet filled with water; another with one filled with wine; another with a silver dish and a little incense; another with fire and wood; another who arranges a table with a coverlet, on which all the aforesaid articles are placed. There enter on the scene all those who have already appeared in the comedy in the dress of Numantines, the priests coming after; and one of them, letting go the lamb, thus says:*

[37]

First Priest.

Most certain signs, foreboding woes unchecked,
Have shown their evil forms across my way,
And my hoar hairs are standing all erect.

Second Priest.

If my divinings lead me not astray,
No good will issue from this enterprise.
Alas, Numantia! Ah, luckless day!

First Priest.

Let us, despite these mournful auguries,
Perform our office with becoming speed.

Second Priest.

Bring hither, friends, this table, and likewise
The incense, wine, and water which we need
Arrange thereon. Now stand ye all apart;
Repent ye of your every evil deed;
The first and best oblation on your part
Is that which heaven regards with chiefest grace,
A chastened spirit and a guileless heart.

First Priest.

The fire upon the ground ye must not place.
There comes a brazier to receive it now,
For so our rites demand in such a case.

Second Priest.

Make clean your hands and necks, and keep your vow.

First Priest.

Bring water here! Is not the fire alight?

One.

No man can kindle it, my lords, I trow.

Second Priest.

O Jove! Will adverse Fate, to our despite,
Pursue us thus to ruin in its ire?
What keeps the kindle-wood from taking light?

One.

It seems, my lord, there is some little fire.

First Priest.

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[39]

Away with thee, thou lurid flame and spare!
The sight of thee makes every hope expire.
Mark how the thickening smoke is curling there,
And to the western side directs its flight;
While that pale flame which quivers in the air
Darts to the east its points of yellow light;
A luckless sign, which hastens to proclaim
That total loss and ruin are in sight.

Second Priest.

Although our death may give the Romans fame,
Their victory, methinks, to smoke will turn,
Our death and glory change to vivid flame.

First Priest.

Since it is fitting, bring the hallowed urn,
And quick bedew the sacred fire with wine;
The incense also it behoves to burn.

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[They besprinkle the fire and its adjuncts with wine, and then place incense on the fire.]

Second Priest.

Great Jupiter, direct thy force benign
For good to sad Numantia in her woe,
And turn to naught the stern opposing sign.

First Priest.

As burns the sacred incense in the glow,
Forced into smoke by virtue of the fire,
So exercise thy virtue on the foe,
That all his wealth and glory, powerful Sire,
May pass away in clouds of murky air,
As thou canst do it, and as I desire.

Second Priest.

May Heaven restrain the foe with arm laid bare,
As now we hold this victim firmly bound,
And may he share the fate *she* hath to share!

First Priest.

Ill bodes the augury; no hope is found
That our beleaguered town will e'er be free
To burst the tightening bonds that gird her round.

[41]

[Under the stage they make a noise with a barrel full of stones, and discharge a rocket.]

Second Priest.

Didst thou not hear a noise, my friend, or see
That flaming bolt which passed with angry flight,
In speedy answer to thy prophecy?

First Priest.

I stand appalled; I quake with very fright;
What fearful signs are hovering in the sky,
Foreboding bitter end, disastrous fight!
Seest not that troop of eagles fierce on high,
Who fight these birds with cruel beak and bill,
And round their quivering prey in circles fly!

Second Priest.

They use alone their strength and cruel will
To drive these birds into some narrow spot,
Then close them in with wily art and skill.

First Priest.

That omen I denounce; I like it not:
Imperial eagles conquering as they go!
Numantia falls,—it is her certain lot.

Second Priest.

[42]

Eagles, the heralds of stupendous woe!
Thine augury is true; it fits the case:
Our hours are numbered,—it is time to go.

First Priest.

Not yet; the sacrifice must now take place
Of this pure victim, destined to appease
The deity who shows the fearful face.
O mighty Pluto, thou whom Fate did please
To grant a dwelling in the realms obscure,
And rule the infernal hosts with thy decrees;
As thou wouldst live in peace, and rest secure
That she, of sacred Ceres daughter fair,
Will greet thy love with an affection pure,
Then listen to this wretched people's prayer;
Do all that lies within thy proper sphere,
And make their welfare thy peculiar care.
Seal up that horrid cave profound and drear
Whence sally forth the direful Sisters three,
To do the damage we have cause to fear,
For much they revel in our misery.

[He takes some flocks of hair from the lamb and throws them into the air.]

So may the wind make all their projects vain,
And as I now proceed to lave and stain
This shining knife with that pure victim's gore,
With guileless spirit and a purpose plain,
So may Numantia's soil be sprinkled o'er
With Roman blood; and may its reddened sands
Serve also for their grave, as oft before.

[43]

[Here enters from under the stage a demon, from the middle of his body upwards, who seizes the lamb and carries it behind. He presently returns again, and scatters and disperses the fire and all the sacrifices.]

But who hath snatched the victim from my hands?
Ye holy gods, what means this fearful thing?
What prodigies are raging in these lands?
Can nothing move your hearts, or pity bring?
Not the sad wailings of our wretched folk,
Or sweetness of the holy songs we sing?

Second Priest.

These rather seem their anger to provoke,
Else why these fearful signs of coming wrath
That press us downward like a hateful yoke!
Our schemes of life are but a passing breath;
Our hardest labour ends in quick decay;
The good of others hastens but our death.

One of the People.

Enough; since Heaven hath now decreed this day
Our bitter end, its misery profound,
Why need we more for pity's sake to pray?

[44]

Another.

Then let us wail with such a doleful sound
Our woeful lot, that coming ages may
Rehearse our hopeless valour round and round.
And let Marquino make a full display
Of all his lore; and tell the sum of fears
And horrors springing from this fateful day,
Which now hath turned our laughter into tears.

[Exeunt omnes, save MORANDRO and LEONCIO, who remain alone.]

MORANDRO.

What, Leoncio, dost thou say?
Shall my sorrows have their cure
'Neath these signs so good and sure,
Which the Heavens now display?
Shall I better fortune have,
When the din of war is o'er?
That will happen, not before,
When this ground becomes my grave.

LEONCIO.

To the gallant soldier, friend,
Auguries can give no pain;
Sturdy heart and steady brain
Bring him fortune in the end.
Passing phantoms vain and dim
Cannot shake or do him harm;
Courage high and manly arm
Are the star and sign for him.
But if thou wouldst still believe
Such a palpable delusion,
We shall have them in profusion,
If my sight doth not deceive.
For Marquino now will show
All the best his lore can borrow,
And the end of all our sorrow,
Good or bad, we soon will know.
Seems to me he comes this way;
In what strange attire he sallies!

[45]

MORANDRO.

Who with ugly beings dallies
Well may ugly be as they!
Shall we follow him, or fly?

LEONCIO.

Better far to follow now,
For if fitting cause allow,
We may serve him by-and-by.

[Here enters MARQUINO, clad with a black robe of wide glazed buckram, and black flowing hair; his feet unshod, and at his girdle he must carry, so as to be seen, three phials full of water, one black, another tinged with saffron, the last clear; in the one hand a lance, black-lacquered, and in the other a book. MILVIO accompanies him, and as they advance, LEONCIO and MORANDRO stand at one side.]

[46]

MARQUINO.

Where say'st thou, Milvio, lies the luckless youth?

MILVIO.

Within this sepulchre interred he lies.

MARQUINO.

Thou know'st the spot; thou dost not err, in sooth?

MILVIO.

No, for this stone, that stands before mine eyes,
I left to mark the place where now doth dwell
The lad we sepulchred with tears and sighs.

MARQUINO.

What died he of?

MILVIO.

Of living not too well.
For withering, wasting hunger laid him low,
That cruel plague, the progeny of Hell.

MARQUINO.

It was no wound, so far as thou dost know,
That pierced his heart and cut the vital thread,
No cancer, nay, nor homicidal blow?
I ask thee this, for to my science dread
It matters that this body be complete,
Entire in all its parts, from foot to head.

MILVIO.

Three hours ago I paid him, as was meet,
The last respects, and bore him to his tomb.
He died of hunger; this I now repeat.

MARQUINO.

[47]

'Tis well; the fitting season is in bloom,
Announced before by each propitious sign,
To summon from the nether realms of gloom
The fallen spirits, fearsome and malign.
Now to my verses give attentive ear:
Fierce Pluto, thou, whom Fate hath called to reign
Within the wide domain of darkness drear,
Amongst the ministers of souls in pain,
Cause that my wishes be respected here,
However much they go against the grain;
And in this dire extreme delay not long,
Nor wait a second summons from my tongue.
I wish that to the corpse, interred by us,
The soul that gave it life thou shouldst restore.
Though Charon yonder, fierce and rigorous,
Should hold it fast upon the blackened shore;
Though, in the triple throat of Cerberus
The grim, it lies ensconced in anguish sore;
Forth let it come to seek our world of light,
Then quick return unto thy realms of night.
Since come it must, let it instructed come,
Anent the issue of this bloody fray.

[48]

In *no* point let the wretched soul be dumb,
Nor aught conceal, but in the plainest way,
Without ambiguous phrase, rehearse the sum,
Lest doubt and dim confusion win the day.
Now send it forth. Why keep me waiting here,
Or must I make my meaning still more clear?
Ye faithless ones, why turn ye not the stone?
Tell me, false ministers, what keeps ye back?
How? Have ye not sufficient portents shown,
That ye will aid me in the thing I lack?
Say, have ye mischievous designs alone?
Or wish ye I should put upon the track,
This very moment, my enchanting arts,
To soften down your fierce and stony hearts?
Well then, ye rabble vile, with falsehood rife,
Prepare yourselves for words of harder grain;
Know that my voice hath power upon your life,
To give you double fury, double pain!
Tell me, thou traitor, husband of the wife
Who six months yearly, to her sweetest gain,
Remains without thee, cuckold as thou art,
Why art thou dumb, when I speak out my heart?
This iron point, bedewed with water clear
Which never touched the ground in month of May,
Will strike this stone, and straightway will appear
The strength and potency of my assay.

[49]

*[With water of the clear phial he bathes the point of the lance,
and then strikes the board; below, rockets are fired off, or
a noise is made with the barrel of stones.]*

Ye rabble, now it seems that ye have fear,
And show by stunning proofs your fell dismay.
What sounds are these, ye people vile and coarse?
Ye come at last, although ye come by force.
Lift up this stone, ye curs, whate'er betide,
And show the body that lies buried here.
What means this sluggishness? Where do ye hide?
Why at my mandate do ye not appear?
Ye infidels, ye put my threats aside,
Because ye think ye have no more to fear;
But this black water of the Stygian lake
Will give your tardiness a speedy shake!
Thou water, drawn upon a dismal night
Of darkness dread, from out the fatal lake,
By that dread power which doth with thee unite,
Before which any other power must quake,
Give forth thy diabolic strength aright!
And him who first the Serpent's form did take
I conjure, I constrain, beseech, command,
To come with speedy wings at my demand!

[50]

[He sprinkles the sepulchre with water, and it opens.]

Come forth, thou ill-starred youth, stay not behind,
Return to see the sun, serene and blest!
Forsake that realm, where thou shalt never find
One single happy day of cloudless rest!
And since thou canst, unbosom now thy mind,
Of all that thou hast seen in its dark breast;
I mean, regarding that which I demand,
And more, if it concerns the case in hand.

*[The body comes forth in its shroud, with masked face,
discoloured like a dead man's, and walks, dragging itself
by little and little, and at length falls flat on the stage,
without moving foot or hand, till its time comes.]*

What! Dost not answer? Dost not live again,
Or haply hast thou tasted death once more?
Then will I quicken thee anew with pain,
And for thy good the gift of speech restore.
Since thou art one of us, do not disdain
To speak and answer, as I now implore;
If thou be dumb, then I'll use measures strong,
To loosen thy most timid, worthless tongue.

[51]

*[He sprinkles the body with the yellow water, and whips it
with a thong.]*

Ye spirits vile, it worketh not, ye trust!
But wait, for soon the enchanted water here
Will show my will to be as strong and just
As yours is treacherous and insincere.
And though this flesh were turned to very dust,
Yet being quickened by this lash austere,
Which cuts with cruel rigour like a knife,
It will regain a new though fleeting life.

[At this point the body moves and shudders.]

Thou rebel soul, seek now the home again
Thou leftest empty these few hours ago!

The Body.^[9]

Restrain the fury of thy reckless pain;
Suffice it, O Marquino, man of woe,
What I do suffer in the realms obscure,
Nor give me pangs more fearful to endure.
Thou errest, if thou thinkest that I crave,
For greater pleasure and for less dismay,
This painful, pinched, and narrow life I have,
Which even now is ebbing fast away.
Nay, rather dost thou cause me dolour grave,
Since Death a second time, with bitter sway,
Will triumph over me in life and soul,
And gain a double palm, beyond control.
For he and others of the dismal band
Who do thy bidding, subject to thy spell,
Are raging round and round, and waiting stand,
Till I shall finish what I have to tell:
The woeful end, most terrible and grand,
Of our Numantia, since I know it well:
For she shall fall, and by the hands austere
Of those who are to her most near and dear.
The Romans ne'er shall victory obtain
O'er proud Numantia; still less shall she
A glorious triumph o'er her foemen gain;
Twixt friends and foes, both brave to a degree,
Think not that settled peace shall ever reign
Where rage meets rage in strife eternally.
The friendly hand, with homicidal knife,
Will slay Numantia, and will give her life.

[52]

[He hurls himself into the sepulchre, and says:]

I say no more, Marquino, time is fleet;
The Fates will grant to me no more delay,
And though my words may seem to thee deceit,
Thou'lt find at last the truth of what I say.

MARQUINO.

O fearful signs! O misery complete!
If such events, my friend, are on the way,
Before I gaze on this my people's doom
I'll end my wretched being in this tomb!

[53]

[*MARQUINO hurls himself into the sepulchre.*

MORANDRO.

Say, Leoncio, am I right,
Are not my forebodings true?
That my hopes and pleasures too
Change into the opposite?
Who can Fate and Fortune brave?
Shut and barred is every way,
Save, and let Marquino say,
Certain death and speedy grave.

LEONCIO.

What are all these strange illusions?
Terrors grim and phantasies.
What are signs and witcheries?
Diabolical delusions.
Thinkest thou such things have worth?
Slender knowledge dost thou show;
Little care the dead below
For the living here on earth.

MILVIO.

Such a monstrous sacrifice
Never had Marquino made,
Could our fate have been delayed,
Which he saw with prophet's eyes.
Let us tell this tale of woe
To the town whose end is near;
But on such an errand drear
Who will stir one step to go?

[54]

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.

[55]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*Enter SCIPIO, QUINTUS FABIUS, and CAIUS MARIUS;
afterwards CORABINO.*

SCIPIO.

In very sooth, I am content to view
How Fortune's wishes tally with mine own;
For this free haughty nation I subdue
Without a struggle, by my wits alone.
The occasion comes, I seize it as my due,
For when it flits and runs, and once hath flown,
Full well I know in war we pay the cost,
Our credit vanishes, and life is lost.
It may be judged a foolish, monstrous thing,
To hold our enemies beleaguered there;
That shame on Roman chivalry we bring,
By using arts of conquest strange and rare.
If such be said, then to this hope I cling,
That shrewd and practised soldiers will declare
That victory to be of most repute,
Which yields with least of blood the most of fruit.
What glory more exalted can we know,
Within the range of war affairs, I mean,
Than thus to conquer and subdue the foe,
Nor let our naked weapons once be seen?
For when the blood of friends is forced to flow,
To gain a triumph when the fight is keen,
I wot the pleasure is not half so high
As that which springs from bloodless victory.

[56]

[Here a trumpet sounds from the wall of Numantia.]

QUINTUS FABIUS.

Listen, my lord, there comes a trumpet's blast
From out Numantia's town, and sure am I
They mean to speak to thee from thence at last,
For this strong wall impedes their coming nigh.
See, Corabino to the tower hath passed,
And waves a peaceful banneret on high.
Let us advance a space.

SCIPIO.

Well, be it so.

CAIUS MARIUS.

This spot is good, we need no further go.

*[CORABINO stands on the battlement, having a white banner on
the point of his lance.]*

CORABINO.

[57]

Ye Romans, say, from my position here
Is't possible my voice your ears can reach?

CAIUS MARIUS.

Be pleased to lower it, speak slow and clear,
And then right well we'll understand your speech.

CORABINO.

Entreat the General that he come near
The entrance of the fosse; I do beseech
That he will hear my message.

SCIPIO.

Tell it now,

For I am Scipio.

CORABINO.

Then listen thou.
Numantia asks thee, prudent general,
To ponder well how many years have flown
Since war hath raged, with its commanding thrall,
Between thy Roman people and our own;
And haply to prevent that worse befall,
When once this warfare to a plague hath grown,
She much desires, if thou shouldst deem it right,
To end it with a short and single fight.
One soldier of her own she offers thee,
To combat in the lists in open fray
With one of yours, as stout and brave as he,
To show their prowess with a full display.
And if the evil Fates should so decree,
That one shall perish in this glorious way,
If it be ours, we shall resign our land;
If it be yours; the war is at a stand.
To make this solemn compact more secure,
We offer thee of hostages the best.
I know thou wilt consent; for thou art sure
Of all the soldiers under thy behest,
And knowest that the least thou canst procure
Will cause to sweat, in face and loins and breast,
Numantia's bravest, most determined son,
And thus thy crowning triumph shall be won.
Make answer now, my lord, if thou agree,
And presently to work we shall proceed.

[58]

SCIPIO.

Your words are jest and mirth and mockery;
None but a fool would think of such a deed!
Employ the means of meek and humble plea,
If ye are eager that your necks be freed,
Nor feel the rigour of the Roman knife,
And from our powerful grip escape with life.
If that brute beast, shut up within its cage,
For savage wildness and ferocious will,
Can there be tamed by dint of cunning sage,
Through lapse of time, and means of crafty skill,
The man who lets him free to vent his rage
Will show himself a madman wilder still.
Wild beasts are ye, as such we hold ye fast,
And right or wrong, we'll tame ye at the last!
In spite of you Numantia shall be mine,
Nor cost me at the worst a single man;
So let the boldest-minded of your line
Break through the ditch and trenches if he can;
And if my valour shows some little sign
Of cowardice in working out this plan,
Let now the gusty wind bear off the shame,
And when I conquer, bear it back—as fame.

[59]

[*Exeunt SCIPIO and his men.*]

CORABINO.

Coward! Wilt hear no more? Wilt hide thy shame?
The just and equal combat dost thou fear?
Thy conduct stamps contempt upon thy name,
By no such means wilt thou sustain it here,
Thine answer is so cowardly and tame.
Ye Romans, cowards are ye, it is clear,
Your trust is only in your teeming host,
Ye fear to raise the doughty arms ye boast!
O cruel, treacherous, of little worth,
Conspirators and tyrants are ye all!
Ungrateful, grasping, low in breed and birth,
Ferocious, obstinate and rustical!
Lascivious, base, renowned through all the earth
For toiling hands whose bravery is small!
What glory hope ye from our death and doom,
While thus ye hold us in a living tomb?
Ye squadrons close, or single files that scour
The open field, where neither ditch nor wall
Can offer hindrance to your rampant power,
Or check the fatal fierce assault at all,
'Twere well, instead of turning tail this hour,
And keeping these your useless blades in thrall,
That your vast army, boastful of its powers,
Should grapple with this feeble band of ours.
But as it is your long accustomed trade,
To conquer men with numbers and with guile,
These compacts, which for valiant men are made,
Are ill-adapted to your crafty style.
Ye timid hares, in savage skins arrayed,
Go, trumpet forth your deeds, for in a while,
I trust in mighty Jove to see you all
Beneath Numantia's sovereignty and thrall.

[60]

[He descends from the wall, and presently enter the Numantines who were present at the beginning of the Second Act, except MARQUINO, who threw himself into the sepulchre; and MORANDRO also enters.]

THEOGENES.

[61]

Our fate, dear friends, hath brought us to such stress,
Our woes hang o'er us with such deepening gloom,
That death would be supremest happiness.
Ye saw; prophetic of our coming doom,
The sacrifice with all its omens dread;
Ye saw Marquino swallowed in the tomb;
Our bold defiance hath to nothing led;
What more remains to do I cannot tell,
Except to speed our passage to the dead.
This night let each Numantian bosom swell
With ardour suited to our past renown,
And let our actions match our purpose well;
Let us with might the hostile wall break down,
And on the field die fighting with the foe,
And not like cowards in this straitened town.
This deed will only serve, full well I know,
To change the mode in which we have to die,
For Death will march with us where'er we go.

CORABINO.

In this thy bold resolve agreed am I,
I fain would perish breaking down that wall,
And single-handed breach it manfully.
But one thing giveth me concern not small,
For if our wives should hear of our design,
Then sure am I that nothing will befall.
For once, of old we had a purpose fine
To sally forth and leave our wives behind.
We each were ready horsed, and all in line,
When they, who thought our purpose most unkind,
Within an instant snatched our reins away,
Nor left a single one. So, close confined,
We had perforce within the walls to stay.
So will it happen, and with ease, again,
If so their tears their inmost thoughts betray.

[62]

MORANDRO.

Our present plan to every one is plain,
They all do know it, and in accents sad
They pour their wailings forth with bitter pain;
And cry: that be our fortunes good or bad,
They all will go with us in woe or weal,
Though of their company we be not glad.

[*Here enter four or more women of Numantia, and LYRA with them. The women carry certain figures of children in their arms, and some lead them by the hand, with the exception of LYRA, who carries none.*]

See, how they come to make a fond appeal,
That ye will leave them not in this sad case,
And mean to soften down your hearts of steel.
Within their arms they bear, with tearful face,
Your tender sons; and to the loving breast
They press them close, and give them last embrace.

[63]

First Wife.

Sweet lords of ours, if 'mid the woes increased
Which shower their sorrows on Numantia's head—
Of which the mortal sufferings are the least—
Or in those better days which now are fled,
We ever showed ourselves your spouses true,
And ye our husbands kind and honourèd,
Why, at this mournful time, when we may view
The wrath of heaven poured out to our distress,
Are all your proofs of love so scant and few?
We long have known, what now your looks express,
That on the Roman spears ye mean to bound;
Because their cruelty affects you less
Than that fell hunger-plague which rages round;
From out whose lean and clutching hands, I say,
No refuge nor escape can now be found.
If so ye mean to die in open fray,
And leave us here forsaken in these lands,
To foul dishonour and to death a prey,
Then first within our bosoms sheathe your brands;
For this were better far in every wise,
Than see us outraged in the foemen's hands.
I am resolved, so far as in me lies,
And fixed in this resolve I mean to dwell:
To die at last where'er my husband dies.
The same plain tale each one of us will tell,
That not the fear of death, however great,
Will keep her from the man who loves her well,
In good or bad, in sweet or bitter fate.

[64]

Another.

Tell me, noble warriors, say,
Have ye still the thought unkind
Thus to leave us all behind,
And go forward to the fray?
Will ye leave, by any chance,
These, Numantia's virgins pure,
Keener anguish to endure
From the Roman arrogance?
And our sons, in freedom born,
Will ye leave them to be slaves?
Better far to find their graves
In your arms, than bear this scorn.
Will ye sate the Roman greed,
Pander to the Roman lust,
On our cherished rights and just
Let their rank injustice feed?
Shall our homes by villany
Be despoiled of every treasure,
And the Romans have the pleasure
Of the weddings yet to be?
Much and sorely have ye erred,
Thousand ills will travel faster,
If without a dog and master
Thus ye leave the helpless herd.
But if such a course ye try
Bear us with you to the strife;
Each will hold it as her life
By her husband's side to die.
Shorten not the road, I pray,
Leading onward to the dead;
Watchful hunger holds its thread,
Which it lessens every day.

[65]

Another.

Sons of mothers, sad in lot,^[10]
What is this? Where is your speech?
Will ye not with tears beseech
These your sires to leave you not?
'Tis enough that hunger fell
With its pain should bring ye low;
Why await a rougher blow
From the Roman's hand as well?
Tell them they begot you free,
And in freedom were ye born;
And your mothers, now forlorn,
Brought ye up free men to be!
Tell them, with unbated breath,
All is over with the strife,
And that they who gave you life
Now are bound to give you death.
Walls, that form our city's lines,
If ye can, speak, I entreat,
And with thousand tongues repeat:
Liberty, ye Numantines!
By our homes and sacred fanes,
Reared in peace for happier lives,
These your tender sons and wives
Plead for pity in their pains!
Soften down, ye warriors bold,
These hard breasts, as well ye may,
And like Numantines display
Hearts as loving as of old!
Not by breaking down the wall
Will ye cure so great an ill;
Fate as stern, and nearer still,
Lies within for one and all.

[66]

LYRA.

All the tender maids as well
Place their urgent case before ye,
And for pity's sake implore ye
All their rising fears to quell.
Do not leave so rich a prey
To the grasping hands ye see;
Think what all these Romans be,
Hungry wolves, and fierce are they.
'Tis an act most desperate
Thus to sally from the town;
Speedy death and wide renown—
That will be your certain fate.
But suppose your chivalry
Turn out better in the main,
Is there any town in Spain
Ready now to welcome ye?
My poor wit may waste its breath,
But the issue of this strife
Will but give the foemen life,
And to all Numantia death.
At your gallant deed and rare,
Think, the Romans will but mock;
Can three thousand stand the shock
Of the eighty thousand there?
Though these walls be overpassed,
Battered down, without a guard,
Still the issue will be hard,
Sorry vengeance, death at last.
Better take the fate we have,
Which the will of heaven gives;
Be it safety for our lives,
Or a summons to the grave.

[67]

THEOGENES.

Assuage your grief, and dry your tearful eyes,
Ye tender wives, and let it now be known
That we do feel your anguish in such wise,
That love within our hearts hath overflown.
Whether your pain to higher pitch shall rise,
Or else be lessened by our kindly tone,
We ne'er shall leave you now in life or death,
But serve you truly to our latest breath.
We thought, indeed, to sally from the town
To meet with certain death, but not to fly;
Though death it would not be, but live renown,
To deal out glorious vengeance as we die.
But since our plan is subject to your frown,
And it were folly other plans to try,
O sons beloved, and ye, our honoured wives,
From this time forth we knit in one our lives.
One thing alone is needful, that the foe
Shall reap from us no triumph and no fame,
Nay, rather shall he serve, in this our woe,
As witness to immortalize our name.
If now with me ye hand in hand will go,
Through thousand ages shall your glory flame,
For nothing in Numantia shall remain
Which these proud foes can garner to their gain.
Make now a fire in middle of the square,
Whose tongues of flame shall to the heavens swell,
And hurl therein our goods, without a care,
The poorest and the richest things as well.
This will ye judge a simple, light affair,
When to your listening ears I have to tell
What ye must do, with honour to your names,
When once your wealth is swallowed in the flames.
Meanwhile to stay, but for a single hour,
The hunger which devours us as its prey,
Cause that these wretched Romans^[11] in our power
Be slain and quartered without more delay,
And then distributed from hut to tower,
To all both great and small, this very day.
So shall our banquet through the country ring,
A cruel, strange, and necessary thing!
My friends, what think ye? Are ye all agreed?

[68]

[69]

CORABINO.

For me, I hold myself as well content;
So let us put in action with due speed
This strange and just design with one consent.

THEOGENES.

When ye have done what I have now decreed,
I shall disclose the rest of my intent.
So let us forth to do what all desire,
And kindle up the rich consuming fire.

First Wife.

With right good will we shall begin this day
To gather up our jewels for the fire;
And yield our lives, to use them as ye may,
As ye have yielded to our joint desire.

LYRA.

[70]

Quick, let us hasten all! Away, away,
To burn our treasures, and our rich attire,
Which might the Romans' hands make rich indeed,
And fill to overflow their grasping greed.

[Exeunt omnes, and as MORANDRO departs, he takes LYRA by the arm, and detains her.]

MORANDRO. [12]

Lyra, why so swiftly fly?
Let me now enjoy the pleasure
Which within my heart I'll treasure
While I live, and when I die.
Let mine eyes with rapture rest
On thy beauty for a space;
Since my fortune, void of grace,
Turns my passion into jest.
Thou, sweet Lyra, art the dream
Ever to my fancy given,
With such music sweet of heaven,
That my pains like rapture seem.
Why so sad, with thought o'er-cast,
Thou, my heart's delight and treasure?

LYRA.

I am thinking how my pleasure
And thine own are fading fast.
Not the siege, and not the strife,
Give it homicidal blows;
For before the war shall close
I shall end my hapless life.

[71]

MORANDRO.

What, my love, what dost thou say?

LYRA.

That this hunger gnaws me so,
Dulls my strength and vital glow,
And my life ebbs fast away.
Canst thou bliss and marriage-bed
Seek from one in such extreme?
Much I fear it, 'tis no dream,
One short hour, and I am dead.
Yesterday my brother died,
With the pangs of hunger worn;
And my mother, left forlorn,
Died of hunger by his side.
If till now my health and life
Have not yielded to its rigour,
'Tis because my youthful vigour
Kept the mast'ry in the strife.
But these many days ago
All the weary strife is o'er,
I have strength and power no more
To contend with such a foe.

[72]

MORANDRO.

Lyra, dry thy saddened eyes,
And let mine with tears of woe
Like to mighty rivers flow,
Swollen by thy griefs and sighs.
Though this hunger, raging high,
Grasp thee firm in deadly strife,
While I have one spark of life,
Thou shalt not of hunger die.
In an instant will I flee,
Leap the ditch, and break the wall,
And will Death himself appal,
Till he loose his grasp of thee.
From the Romans' mouth, alone,
If my vigour hath not fled,
I will snatch the very bread,
And will place it in thine own.
With my arm, in deadly fight,
From the jaws of Death I'll free thee
For it kills me more to see thee,
Lady dear, in such a plight.
Bread to eat I'll bring to thee,
Spite of all the Romans do,
If my hands are strong and true,
As of old they used to be.

LYRA.

[73]

Thou dost speak like one distraught;
But, Morandro, 'tis not just
That I taste a single crust
With thy fearful peril bought.
Such a spoil, if gained by thee,
Would be little to my mind;
And more truly wilt thou find
Loss to thee, than gain to me.
In its freshness and its bloom
Still enjoy thy youth divine;
Better is thy life than mine,
To avert the city's doom.
Better will thine arm and blade
Shield it in its evil hour,
Than the weak and puny power
Of a tender, saddened maid.
Wert thou able to prolong
This my life a single day,
Hunger still would have its way,
And the strife will not be long.

MORANDRO.

Lyra, all thy words are vain,
Nothing now my way can bar;
Steadfast will, and lucky star
Light my path and make it plain.
Meanwhile pray the gods divine
Now to bless my hardy toil,
Bring me back with fitting spoil
To assuage thy griefs and mine.

[74]

LYRA.

O Morandro, sweet and good,
Do not go; I am afraid,
For I see the foeman's blade
Stained and reddened with thy blood.
O Morandro, dearest life,
Do not make this journey sad;
If the going-forth be bad,
Worse the issue from the strife.
If thine ardour I restrain,
I have witness there in Heaven,
That my heart with fear is riven,
For my loss, and not my gain.
But, dear friend, if it must be,
If this venture must take place,
Take as pledge this fond embrace,
That my spirit goes with thee.

MORANDRO.

Heaven, sweet Lyra, be thy guard!
See, Leoncio comes to me.

LYRA.

May'st thou be from danger free,
And thy hopes be thy reward!

[LEONCIO has been listening to all that passed between his
friend MORANDRO and LYRA.]

LEONCIO.

Morandro, 'tis a fearful sacrifice
To make for her; and well dost thou declare
That lover's breast hath nought of cowardice.
Though from thy manliness and valour rare
Still more we hope to gain, yet much I fear
That Fate unkind will prove a miser there.
To Lyra's tale I gave a listening ear,
And know her dire extreme and dismal plight,
So foreign to the worth we all revere.
I heard thee pledge thine honour and thy might
To free her from her present strait, and brave
The cruel Roman spears in reckless fight.
In such an urgent case, dear friend, I crave
To be thy comrade, for it is my due,
And aid thee with the little strength I have.

MORANDRO.

Half of my heart! O Friendship leal and true,
Unsevered in the hardships of the fray,
Or in the happiest days we ever knew!
Enjoy sweet life, Leoncio, whilst thou may;
Remain within the town, for I would spurn
By act of mine thy blooming youth to slay.
Alone I have to go, alone return,
Beladen with the richest spoil and rare,
Which constant faith and fervent love can earn.

LEONCIO.

If so, Morandro, thou art well aware
How my desires, in good or evil fate,
Go hand in hand with thine in equal share,
Then wilt thou feel, no fears however great,
Not Death itself, nor other power malign,
Can keep me from thy fortunes separate.
With thee have I to go, with thee in fine
Return, unless the will of Heaven ordain
That I must lose my life in shielding thine.

MORANDRO.

Remain, my friend, for pity's sake, remain!
For should I finish now my hapless life
In this emprise of peril and of pain,
Thou may'st, at ending of the fatal strife,
Console my weeping mother, sore distressed,
And her, so much beloved—my promised wife.

LEONCIO.

It is, my friend, a very sorry jest,
To think that I, if haply thou be slain,
Would have such calm and quiet in my breast,
As to console, in this their urgent pain,
Thy grieving mother, and thy tearful bride.
Thy death and mine are linked, and it is plain
That I must follow thee, whate'er betide;
Morandro, friend, it is, it must be so,
No word of thine will keep me from thy side.

MORANDRO.

If go thou must, let us together go,
And in the silence of the gloomy night
Make sudden fierce assault upon the foe.
Bear nothing with thee but thine armour light,
For lucky chance and daring will combined
Will serve us more than hardest mail in fight.
Bear also this fix'd purpose in thy mind,
To seize and carry off with daring hand
Whatever good provision thou canst find.

LEONCIO.

[75]

[76]

[77]

SCENE II.

Two Numantines.

First.

Dear brother, let our spirits through our eyes
Pour forth their wailings changed to bitter tears;
Let Death approach, and bear away as prize
Our hapless life of misery and fears.

Second.

A little space will end our griefs and sighs,
For Death stands ready armed, and now appears
To bear on speedy wings as welcome spoil
Whatever dwells upon Numantian soil.
I see most truly what the tokens are
That our dear land must sink in awful gloom;
Nor need these Roman ministers of war
Decree our ruin and adjudge our doom:
Our own, who reckon it more fearful far
That we should drag out life within a tomb,
Have given sentence that we end our days,
A stern decree, but worthy of all praise.
They now have raised within the public square
A monstrous, greedy, all-consuming fire,
Whose flames, replenished by our riches rare,
Assail the very heavens in their ire.
To this, with quickened speed, pricked on by care,
Or else, with timid feet, which sufferings tire,
Come all, as to a holy sacrifice,
And feed its flames with all the wealth they prize.
The pearl of beauty from the rosy East,
The gold into a thousand vessels made,
The diamond and ruby bright, increased
With stores of purple fine and rich brocade,
Are hurled into the blazing fire, to feast
Its fierce luxurious flames, with grand parade;
Spoils these, which might have served the Roman bands
To fill their bosoms, and enrich their hands.

[79]

[Here enter certain people laden with robes, who go in by one door, and out by the other.]

Turn thee to see a sight of misery!
See, how our swarming folk of every name
With quickened steps and eager faces fly
To feed the fury of the maddened flame!
And not with faggots green, or fodder dry,
Or any worthless fuel like the same,
But with their garnered wealth, and luckless treasure,
Which in its burning gives them greater pleasure.

First.

If such a deed as this would end our woe,
We well might see and bear it patiently,
But ah! it is decreed, as well I know,
O cruel sentence, that we all must die;
Before the barbarous rigour of the foe
Upon our necks with cruel grip shall lie,
Ourselves our executioners must be,
And not these Romans steeped in perfidy.
Think, every woman, child, and old man here,
By stern decree to death must straightway go,
Since in the end the pangs of hunger drear
Will take their lives, and with a fiercer blow.
But, brother, mark the woman drawing near,
Who, once upon a time, as thou dost know,
Was loved by me, and with a love as great
As is the sorrow which is now her fate.

[80]

[A woman enters with a child in her arms, and leading another by the hand, who carries robes to be burned.]

Mother.

O this life, so hard and dread,
Agony intense and drear!

Son.

Mother, is there no one here,
Who for this will give us bread?

Mother.

Neither bread, nor other thing
Fit for thee to eat, my son!

Son.

Then, indeed, am I undone,
Hunger kills me with its sting;
Give me bread, one little jot,
Mother, I will ask no more!

Mother.

Son, thy words do pain me sore!

Son.

Mother, then thou wishest not?

Mother.

Yes, I wish; but know not where
Bread to get, though oft I try it.

Son.

Mother, thou may'st surely buy it,
If not, let me buy it there.
Yet to quit me of my dread,
If on any one I fall,
I will give him clothes and all
For one little bit of bread.

Mother (to her Infant).

Suckest thou, thou hapless brood?
Feel'st not, that to my unrest
Thou from out my withered breast
Draw'st not milk, but simple blood?
Take the flesh, and bit by bit
May it give thee much content,
For my feeble arms and spent
Thee to carry are not fit!
O ye children of my heart,
Can I give ye life afresh,
If scarce with my very flesh
I can nourishment impart?
Hunger, with thy biting breath,
How thou cuttest short my life?
O thou hard and cruel strife,
Sent alone to cause me death!

Son.

Mother mine, I cannot stay,
Back and homeward let us go;
Hunger only seems to grow,
As we journey on the way.

Mother.

Here, my son, the house must be,
Whence we presently shall throw
Down into the fiery glow
All the load that presses thee!

[*Exeunt.*]

[81]

[82]

[83]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

They sound to arms with great vehemence, and at the alarm there enter on the stage SCIPIO, JUGURTHA, and CAIUS MARIUS.

SCIPIO.

What meaneth this? Who sounds the call to arm
At such a time, my captains? Have ye found
Some maddened straggling men, who to their harm
Would seek a sepulchre within this ground?
Or hath some mutiny the war alarm
Provoked with such an urgent, deafening sound?
For this proud foe I hold so firmly now
I have more terror of the friend, I vow.

Enter QUINTUS FABIUS, with sword unsheathed.

QUINTUS FABIUS.

Calm, prudent general, thine angry mood,
For this my blade doth know the cause right well,
Which now hath cost thee many a soldier good,
Of those who most in manliness excel.
Two Numantines, with pride and daring rude,
Whose deeds of courage my applause compel,
O'erleaping the wide ditch and battled height,
Have waged within thy camp a cruel fight.
They sallied through our guards and pickets first,
To face a thousand spears in open fray,
And dealt their blows with such a fury curst,
That to our very camp they hewed their way;
Into Fabricius' tent with rage they burst,
And made of strength and valour such display,
That in an instant six stout men and true
Were by their deadly steel pierced through and through.
Ne'er did the burning bolt with speedier flight
Cleave in its onward course the smitten air;
Ne'er did the meteor, with its stream of light,
More quickly pass athwart the heavens fair;
Than passed these two, exulting in their might,
Through middle of thy host, and soaked the bare
Hard ground with Roman blood, which forth did stream
Where'er their flashing swords were seen to gleam.
With breast pierced through the bold Fabricius lay;
Horatius fell with head cleft to the brain;
Olmida lost his right arm in the fray,
And little hope of life doth now remain;
Our brave Estatius made a full display
Of all his lithesome vigour, but in vain,
For as he ran the Numantine to meet,
His passage on to death was still more fleet.
With speed of lightning, hurrying where they may,
They ran from tent to tent, until they found
Some scraps of biscuit, which they seized as prey.
With fury, still unquenched, they turned them round;
The one escaped by flight and got away,
A thousand swords made t'other bite the ground;
Whence I infer that hunger made them bold,
And raised their daring to a pitch untold.

SCIPIO.

If worn with hunger, shut in utterly,
They show such daring and such martial ire,
What would they not have done, remaining free,
With all their strength and ardour still entire?
Unvanquished now, yet vanquished shall ye be,
For all your reckless fury will expire,
When matched against our prudence and our skill,
Which have the power to crush the proudest will.

[Exeunt SCIPIO and his men, and presently they sound to arms in the town, and MORANDRO enters wounded and streaming with blood, with a little white basket on his left arm, containing a small piece of biscuit stained with blood, and says:

[84]

[85]

[86]

MORANDRO.

Com'st them not, Leoncio, say?
Friend, what hath befallen thee?
If thou comest not with me,
How can I without thee stay?
Friend, where art thou, tell me, where?
Dying? dead? Alas! to grieve me,
Never, never wouldst thou leave me,
It was I who left thee there!
Can it be that thou art lost,
All thy flesh in pieces torn,
Tokens of the price forlorn
Which this bread of mine hath cost?
Why did not that fatal blow,
Which hath laid thee with the dead,
Rather fall upon my head,
Take my life, and end my woe?
But the Fates, in cruel mood,
Would not have me thus to die;
Gave me greater misery,
Gave to thee the higher good!
Thou wilt bear the palm for ever,
Of the lealest, truest friend;
And to thee my soul I'll send,
To excuse my rash endeavour;
Quickly, for a craving dread
Lures me on my death to meet
At my dearest Lyra's feet,
Giving her this bitter bread;
Bread, which from the foe was taken,—
Taken? 'Tis more precious food,
Purchased with the very blood
Of two friends, by luck forsaken.

[87]

*[LYRA enters with some robes, which she is taking to be
burned, and says:*

LYRA.

What is this mine eyes behold?

MORANDRO.

Him, whom soon no more thou'lt see,
For my pains are crushing me
With a speed I cannot hold.
Ended, Lyra, is the strife,
And my promise kept have I,
That thou shouldst not have to die
While I have one spark of life.
Even better might I say,
That thou soon wilt come to know,
How thy strength with food will grow,
And my life will pass away.

LYRA.

What say'st thou, Morandro dear?

MORANDRO.

[88]

Lyra, thou wilt lose thy hunger
While, by fate in cruel anger,
Life I lose, and end it here.
But my blood so freely poured,
Mingled with the bread ye eat,
Will, belovèd one and sweet,
But a bitter meal afford.
Here thou hast the bread well-guarded
By full eighty thousand fiends;
And which cost two faithful friends
Life, and all they most regarded.
Love, that so for thee hath bled,
Well, my lady, may'st thou cherish;
I, that love thee so, must perish,
And Leoncio lieth dead.
My affection pure and bright,
Take it with thy hand of love,
That is food all price above,
And will give thee most delight.
Since in hours of joy and dole
Thou hast been my love, I vow,
Take, O take my body now,
As thou hast received my soul.

[89]

[He falls dead, and LYRA gathers him in the folds of the robes.]

LYRA.

O Morandro, sweetest one,
How art thou, what dost thou feel?
How hath all thy strength of steel
Passed away, and been undone?
Woe is me, and is it true
That my spouse is lying dead?
O event of direst dread,
That misfortune ever knew!
Who hath made thee, sweetest friend,
Having excellence supreme,
Valiant lover to extreme,
Luckless soldier at the end?
Thou didst sally to the strife,
Husband mine, in such a way,
That to give my death delay
Thou hast robbed me of my life!
O thou bread, with blood bestained,
Which for me was freely shed,
I do not esteem thee bread,
It is poison I have gained!
To my mouth I'll carry thee,
Not to give me nourishment,
But to kiss, to my content,
That dear blood which flowed for me!

[90]

[At this point there enters a youth, speaking in an exhausted way, who is the brother of LYRA.]

Brother.

Lyra, sister, pained am I,
For my sire is dead and gone,
And my mother, left alone,
Dieth now as I must die!
Hunger fell hath laid them low;
Sister mine, and hast thou bread?
Bread, how slowly hast thou sped,
For I cannot taste thee now!
Hunger makes my throat to shrink
With such rigour, though the bread
Were as water pure instead,
Not one droplet could I drink!
Take it to thee, sister dear,
For, my senses to confound,
Now I see the bread abound,
Whilst my life is ebbing here!

[He falls down dead.]

LYRA.

Brother dear, and art thou gone?
Neither breath nor life hath he;
Ill is good in some degree
When it cometh all alone.
Fortune, wherefore dost thou grieve me,
With one loss and then another?
Wherefore at one time together
Orphan, widow, dost thou leave me?
O thou cruel Roman host!
How thy sword doth gird me round
With two corpses on the ground,
Spouse and brother, both are lost!
Sweetest husband, tender brother,
You I'll match in loving well,
For in heaven or in hell
Soon I'll see the one and other!
In the manner of my death
I to part from you am loath;
For the sword and hunger both
Have to take my latest breath.
Rather will I give my breast
Point of dagger, than this bread;
For to one who lives in dread
Death is gain and sweetest rest.
Am I coward, can it be?
Arm of mine, what dost thou fear?
Sweetest husband, brother dear,
I am coming, wait for me!

[91]

[At this point there enters a woman flying, and behind her a Numantian soldier with a short sword in his hand to kill her.]

[92]

Woman.

Eternal Sire! O Jove compassionate!
Protect me in this dire extremity! *Soldier.*
Although thou hurry with a speed more great,
Beneath my ruthless hand thou hast to die!

[Exit the woman, and LYRA says:

LYRA.

Thy cutting sword, thy warlike arm of weight,
On *me* their fatal power, good soldier, try;
Let her who prizes life with life remain,
And take mine own, for it is full of pain!

Soldier.

Although it is the Senate's stern command,
That not one woman shall in life abide,
Where shall we find the bold audacious hand
Who would not from thy beauty turn aside?
I, lady, am not one of such a band,
Nor do I wish to be thy homicide;
Some other hand and sword must strike for me,
For I was born alone to worship thee.

LYRA.

[93]

This mercy which to me thou dost extend,
O valiant soldier, I do swear to thee,
And Heaven above its seal to this will lend,
That I esteem it harshest cruelty!
I would have held thee as a very friend,
If with a steady hand and courage free
Thou hadst transpierced my heart, so full of woes,
And brought my wretched being to a close.
But since thou wilt thy pity now bestow,
Against my wish, and to increase my gloom,
Then to my wretched spouse like pity show,
And help me now to bear him to his tomb:
Take thou my brother too, who lieth low
Upon the ground, cut off with life in bloom;
My husband went to death to save my life,
While hunger bore my brother from the strife.

Soldier.

To all that thou requirest I adhere,
Provided on the way thou wilt relate
What brought thy loving spouse, and brother dear,
To this the last extremity of fate.

LYRA.

My friend, I have no strength to speak, I fear.

Soldier.

Art thou exhausted? Is thy pain so great?
Bear thou thy brother, for the load is less;
And I thy spouse; it giveth more distress.

[*Exeunt, bearing the two bodies.*

[94]

SCENE II.

Here enters a woman armed with a shield on the left arm, and a short lance in her hand, who represents WAR; along with her comes SICKNESS, leaning on a crutch, her head swathed with bandages, wearing a yellow mask; and HUNGER follows, clad in a robe of yellow buckram, wearing a yellow or discoloured mask; these figures may be represented by men, as they wear masks.

WAR.

Hunger and Sickness, ministers most dire
Of my commands, which make the world to quail!
Of life and health devourers in your ire,
With whom nor cries, nor threats, nor rights avail!
Since ye are cognisant of my desire,
It needs not that again I tell the tale,
How pleasure and content will fill my breast,
If quickly ye fulfil my stern behest.
The Fates, with that inexorable might,
Whose energy none living can impair,
Constrain me now my forces to unite
With these sagacious Roman soldiers there,
Who for a time will rise to glory's height,
While those poor Spaniards perish in despair;
But time will come when I shall change it all,
Will smite the mighty, and assist the small.
For I, who am the great and powerful War,
(By countless mothers all in vain abhorred,
Though he who curses me at times errs far,
Unconscious of the worth that owns me lord)
Do know right well that through all lands that are
Shall flash the valour of the Spanish sword,
At that sweet season when shall rule the land
A Charles, a Philip, and a Ferdinand.

[95]

SICKNESS.

If Hunger now, our true and trusty friend,
Had not so swiftly done her work and well,
And made her homicidal power extend
O'er all the folk that in Numantia dwell,
Thy will through me would have secured its end,
In such an easy manner as to swell
The rich reward the Roman will obtain,
Much better far than what he hopes to gain.
Though Hunger, in so far as she hath sway,
Now holds the Numantines in such a strait,
That shut and barred is every open way
Of happy exit from their adverse fate,
Yet Fury's falchion, with its fearful play,
The adverse sign with its tremendous weight,
Within their midst with such a rigour reign,
There is no need of hunger or of pain.
Fierce rage and madness, thy attendant brood,
Have taken foul possession of each breast,
And thirst with equal relish for their blood,
As if they did the Roman's grim behest.
Fire, fury, slaughter are their chiefest good,
To die—they reckon of all fates the best;
To snatch the triumph from the Roman bands,
Themselves will perish by their very hands.

[96]

HUNGER.

Now turn your eyes, and see the flaming fire,
That blazes from the tall roofs of the town!
List to the fearful sighings that expire
From thousand breasts, while they their terror drown!
Hark to the wailings terrible and dire
Of beauteous women, who to death go down;
Their tender limbs in flame and ashes lie,
No father, friend, or love to heed their cry!
As timid sheep, upon their careless way,
Whom some ferocious wolf attacks and drives,
Go hurrying hither, thither, all astray,
With panting dread to lose their simple lives;
So, fleeing from the swords upraised to slay,
Do these poor children, and these tender wives,
Run on from street to street, O fate insane!
To lengthen out their certain death, in vain.
Within the breast of his beloved bride
The husband sheathes his keen and glittering brand;
Devoid of pity, and of filial pride,
The son against the mother turns his hand;
The father, casting clemency aside,
Against his very offspring takes his stand,
And while with furious thrusts to death they bleed,
He finds a piteous pleasure in the deed!
No square, or street, or mansion can be found,
That is not filled with blood and with the dead;
The sword destroys, the fierce fire blazes round,
And Cruelty with fearsome step doth tread!
Soon will ye see upon the level ground
The strongest and the loftiest turrets spread,
The humble dwellings, and the temples high,
Shall turn to dust and ashes by and by!
Come, ye shall see how in the bosoms dear
Of tender children and beloved wife
Theogenes, with courage all austere,
Doth prove the temper of his cruel knife;
And when the deadly work is over here,
So little recks he of his wearied life,
He seeks for Death, and by a mode unknown,
Which causes other ruin than his own!

WAR.

Now let us go; and see that each prepare
To do his proper work within this spot;
To what I say give undivided care,
Nor swerve from my intention by one jot.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

[*THEOGENES enters with two young SONS and a daughter and their MOTHER.*]

THEOGENES.

[97]

[98]

If love paternal hath no longer sway
To check the fearful deed which I intend;
Think, O my sons, if I can now give way,
When thoughts of honour with my purpose blend!
O poignant is the grief, the sore dismay,
We feel when Life must have a sudden end;
But mine is more, since I by Fate's decree
Your cruel executioner must be!
Ye shall not live, O children of my soul,
To be the Romans' slaves, nor shall their power,
However much it rage beyond control,
Above our lives and yours in triumph tower.
The shortest road which leadeth to the goal
Of our dear Liberty in this sad hour,
Which Heaven offers us with piteous breath,
Conducts us only to the arms of Death.
Nor thou, dear consort, sweetest of thy race,
Shalt suffer peril from the Roman bands;
Nor shall they soil thy modesty and grace
With eyes lascivious, or with ruthless hands!
My sword shall snatch thee from this foul disgrace,
Their schemes shall baffled be by my commands,
And this shall be the guerdon of their lust,
To triumph o'er Numantia in the dust!
Thou, dear, beloved consort, it was I
Who first advised that we, with one accord,
Should rather perish than as cravens lie
Beneath the terror of the Roman sword;
I will not therefore be the last to die,
Nor shall my children here.

[99]

Wife.

If, good my lord,
There were some other way to set us free,
Then Heaven knows how happy I should be!
But since it cannot be, to my regret,
And since my road to death is near and plain,
Keep back the brutal Roman sword, and let
The trophy of our lives with thee remain.
Though death be sure, it is my pleasure yet
To die within Diana's sacred fane;
Good husband, lead us, and in loving ire
Consign us to the sword, the rope, the fire!

[100]

THEOGENES.

So may it be, nor let our steps be slow,
For cruel Fate doth urge me on to death.

Son.

Why weepst, mother? Whither do we go?
Stay, stay, I am so faint, I have no breath!
My mother, let us eat, 'tis better so,
For me this bitter hunger wearyeth.

Mother.

Come to my arms, my darling sweet and good,
And I to thee will give thy death for food!

*[Exeunt, and two lads enter flying, one of whom is he who will
hurl himself from the tower, called VIRIATO, the other
SERVIO.]*

VIRIATO.

Servio, whither shall we fly?

SERVIO.

I will go the way thou shewest.

VIRIATO.

Come, how lazily thou goest!
Dost thou wish that both should die?
Sad one, look behind, before,
Thousand swords pursue to slay!

[101]

SERVIO.

Never can we get away,
'Tis for us a task too sore.
Tell me, what dost thou desire?
Tell me, and I shall decide.

VIRIATO.

I shall run, and straightway hide
In the turret of my sire.

SERVIO.

Friend, 'tis well for thee to go,
But I cannot, worn and weary,
And the road so long and dreary,
Hunger gnaws and pains me so.

VIRIATO.

Wilt thou not?

SERVIO.

O leave me here.

VIRIATO.

If thou canst no longer fly,
Here, alas, thou hast to die,
Slain by hunger, sword, or fear!
Go I must, for much I dread
All that robs me of my life;
Be it fire or cruel knife
Which would lay me with the dead!

[*Exit, and THEOGENES enters with two drawn swords, his hands bloody, and as SERVIO sees him come he flees and goes behind.*]

THEOGENES.

O blood, that from my very bosom flows,
Since thou belongest to my children dear;
O hand, which wounds thyself with deadly blows,
Replete with honour and with might austere;
Thou Fortune, who art privy to our woes;
Ye Heavens, devoid of pity or of cheer,
Afford me now, in this my bitter lot,
Some glorious, speedy death upon the spot!
O valiant Numantines, take ye account
That some perfidious Roman foe am I,
Avenge within my bosom your affront,
And in its blood your hands and weapons dye!

[*He hurls one sword from his hand.*]

Of these two swords take one, and quick confront
My fury wild, my grief that rageth high;
For, dying in the fight, we will not know
The keenest rigour of the final blow!
And he who cuts the other's vital thread,
Let him, in token of the favour free,
Entomb within the flame the wretched dead,
A duty this of highest charity!
Come quick, come now! O whither have ye sped?
My life the highest sacrifice will be;
That sweet compassion, which to friends ye show,
Change now to rabid rage against the foe!

A Numantine.

Whom, brave Theogenes, dost thou invoke?
What novel mode of dying dost thou seek?
Why dost thou urge us onward, and provoke
To such a strange and lamentable freak?

THEOGENES.

O valiant Numantine, if terror's yoke
Hath not unnerved thine arm and made it weak,
Take now this sword, and prove its point on me,
As if I were thy mortal enemy!
This mode of dying better pleaseth me,
Than any other in this time of woe.

Numantine.

It suits me too, and I will pleasure thee,
Since evil Fortune seems to will it so.
On to the square, where now the fire we see
Which burns to have our lives within its glow!
Who conquers there may, without fear or shame,
Consign the vanquished to the furious flame.

THEOGENES.

[102]

[103]

[104]

Thou speakest well; make haste, for my desire
Outruns Fate's tardy step with panting breath;
Let sword devour me, or the furious fire,
I see our glory in whatever death!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

SCIPIO, JUGURTHA, QUINTUS FABIVS, CAIVS MARIIVS, and some Roman Soldiers.

SCIPIO.

Unless my thoughts be guilty of deceit,
Or these be lying signs which ye have marked
Within Numantia's walls—the horrid din,
The lamentable cries, the blazing fires—
I fear and dread, and scarcely have a doubt,
That these our barbarous foemen, brought to bay,
Have turned their reckless rage against themselves.
There are no people seen to man the towers,
The watchmen give no customary calls,
A death-like silence reigns within the town,
As if these fierce and fiery Numantines
Were living there in peace, and at their ease.

[105]

CAIVS MARIIVS.

Thou may'st at once be quit of such a doubt,
For if thou wishest it, I offer me
To scale the battlements, although in sooth
It is a somewhat perilous risk to run;
And solely to observe what our proud foes
Are doing now within Numantia's walls.

SCIPIO.

Plant then some ladder firm against the wall,
And, Marius, make thy present promise good!

CAIVS MARIIVS.

Go, bring the ladder, and, Ermilius, you
Give orders that my buckler quick be fetched,
And eke my helmet with the snow-white plume;
For, faith, I mean this day to lose my life,
Or end the doubtings which possess the camp.

ERMILIIVS.

Thy buckler and thy helmet both are brought;
And see, Olympius brings the ladder here.

[106]

CAIVS MARIIVS.

Commend me now to great and mighty Jove,
For I am ready to fulfil my pledge.

[*He ascends the ladder.*]

SCIPIO.

Raise, Marius, raise the knee a little more,
Contract thy body, and protect thy head!
Courage! for thou hast reached the top at last.
What see'st thou?

CAIVS MARIIVS.

Holy gods! and what is this?

JUGURTHA.

What startles thee?

CAIVS MARIIVS.

It startles me to see
A ruddy lake of blood, and on the ground
In every street a thousand corpses lying!

SCIPIO.

And is there none alive?

[107]

CAIVS MARIIVS.

I reckon not;
So far, at least, as my own vision goes,
There is no living being in the town.

SCIPIO.

Leap then within, and look thee well around!

[*CAIVS MARIIVS leaps into the town.*]

My friend, Jugurtha, follow him as well;
We all shall follow thee.

JUGURTHA.

It doth not suit
Thy weighty office to take such a step;
Assuage thy feelings, good my lord, and wait
Till Marius or myself return to bring
The latest tidings of this haughty town.
Hold firm the ladder there! Ye righteous heavens!
O what a saddening spectacle and grim
Is offered to my sight! O strange event!
The smoking blood is bathing all the soil,
The square and streets are crowded with the dead!
I mean to leap within and see the whole.

[JUGURTHA leaps into the city, and QUINTUS FABIVS says:

QUINTUS FABIVS.

[108]

Without a doubt these fiery Numantines,
By their barbaric fury goaded on,
Have chosen rather to consign their lives
Unto the sharp edge of their very swords,
Than yield them up to our victorious hands,
Whose sight and touch are horrible to them.

SCIPIO.

If but one living being had remained,
In Rome they had not me the triumph grudged
Of having curbed and crushed this haughty race,
The fierce and mortal foemen of our name;
In will determined, ready aye to face
The greatest peril and the direst risk;
Whom not a Roman here can ever boast
Of having challenged with the naked sword;
Whose valour, whose dexterity in arms,
Have forced me, and with reason, to surround
And pen them in like fierce untamed beasts,
And gain that triumph with my art and skill
Which was impossible by dint of arms.
But Marius now returns, it seems to me.

[MARIUS enters by descending from the wall, and says:

CAIVS MARIUS.

In vain, illustrious, prudent General,
 Have we expended all our strength and might;
 In vain hast thou been diligent withal;
 Thy hopes of victory, that seemed so bright,
 Assured thee by thy martial skill and lore,
 Have changed to smoke, and vanished out of sight!
 The mournful story, and the end full sore
 Of proud Numantia's unconquered town,
 Deserve to be remembered evermore.
 Their loss and fall have gained them good renown;
 Their dying, which displayed their firmness most,
 Hath snatched from thee the triumph and the crown.
 Our schemes are vain, and all our labour lost;
 Their death with honour better issue shews
 That all the power the Roman arms can boast.
 This people, wearied with their countless woes,
 Have snatched themselves from life and misery,
 And given their long account a sudden close.
 Numantia now is changed into a sea
 Of ruby blood, encumbered with the slain,
 Who fell by self-inflicted cruelty.
 Escaped have they from slav'ry's grinding chain,
 Whose load unequalled they declined to bear,
 With swift audacity that feared no pain.

I saw within the middle of the square,^[13]
 Exposed to view, a fiercely blazing fire,
 Fed with their corpses and their riches rare.
 And as I gazed, there came with kindling ire
 Theogenes, that valiant Numantine,
 Intent on death with an insane desire;
 And as he cursed his fate and luckless sign,
 He sprang into the middle of the flame,
 With fury suited to his mad design;
 And as he sprang, he cried: "O brilliant Fame,
 Come hither with thy countless tongues and eyes,
 Behold a deed it fits thee to proclaim!
 Approach, ye Romans, and receive the prize
 Of this rich town, to dust and ashes changed,
 Its fruits and flowers to thistles turned likewise!"
 I went away, with steps and thoughts deranged,
 And paced the chief part of the city round.
 Through all the ruined streets and lanes I ranged,
 But not one single Numantine I found,
 Whom I could seize alive and bear away,
 To bring thee tidings with a certain sound,
 For what grave reason, in what fearful way,
 They hurried on to ruin utterly,
 With such a grand and terrible display.

[110]

SCIPIO.

And was, mayhap, my breast filled full and high
 With barbarous arrogance and deaths combined,
 And clean devoid of righteous cruelty?
 Is it, perchance, quite foreign to my mind
 To treat the vanquished with the mercy due,
 As fits the victor who is brave and kind?
 Right badly in Numantia's town ye knew
 The manly valour reigning in my breast,
 Which burns to conquer and to pardon too!

[111]

QUINTUS FABIVS.

My lord, Jugurtha may have news the best
 Concerning that which thou desir'st to know,
 For see, he now returns with much unrest.

[JUGURTHA returns by the same wall.

JUGURTHA.

O prudent General, 'tis vain to shew
 Thy valour further here; some otherwhere
 Thy matchless skill and industry bestow.
 Thy work is over in Numantia there;
 They all are dead and gone, save one, I ween,
 Who still doth live to give thee triumph rare.
 Within that very tower, as I have seen,
 There right in front of us, doth lurk a youth,
 Alarm'd and timid, but of gentle mien.

SCIPIO.

This is enough to make, if it be truth,
In Rome my triumph o'er Numantia sure,
For more I do not now desire, in sooth.
Let us go straightway thither, and procure
Some means to get the youth within our hands,
Alive, for that is needful to secure.

VIRIATO^[14] [*from the tower*].

[112]

What come ye here to seek? Ye Roman bands,
If ye would fain within Numantia go,
There's nought to hinder ye in all these lands!
But with my tongue I give you here to know,
That I possess this city's ill-kept keys,
Which Death hath triumphed over as a foe!

SCIPIO.

O youth, I come desirous to have these;
But more to let thee know what lies for thee
Of pity in this bosom, if thou please.

VIRIATO.

Too late is all thy tardy clemency,
When there are none to claim it, since I go
To face the rigour of our stern decree;
For that resolve, so full of grief and woe,
Made by my kinsmen and my country dear,
Hath caused the fearful, final end ye know.

QUINTUS FABIVS.

This rash endeavour dazzles thee, I fear;
Say, dost thou hold it as a dreadful fate
To keep thy life in all its bloom and cheer?

SCIPIO.

[113]

Assuage, O tender youth, thine ardour great,
Subject the slender valour thou hast stored
To mine, which hath more honour and more weight;
For from this day I pledge my faith and word
That thou wilt be, what more canst thou require,
Thine only master, and thy proper lord;
And thou wilt jewels have and rich attire,
And live a life as happy and as free
As I can give thee, and thou canst desire,
If thou surrender with good-will to me!

VIRIATO.

The complete fury of the countless dead
 Within this city, now reduced to dust;
 Their fear of pactions with the foeman made;
 Their horror of subjection all unjust;
 Numantia's hatreds and her rancours dread,
 I hold them all within this heart as trust;
 I am the heir of all her bravery:
 What folly then to think of conquering me!
 Belovèd land, O town unfortunate,
 Fear not that I, reared in thy bosom dear,
 Do rave about my duty in this strait,
 Or e'er will flinch through promise or through fear!
 Though country fail me now, and Heaven and Fate,
 Though all the world conspire to crush me here,
 It cannot be that I will ever do
 What is not worthy of thy valour true!
 If to this hiding-place I ran through fear,
 The fear of speedy death and desperate,
 I'll sally forth, with mind and courage clear,
 Impelled to follow and to share thy fate.
 Vile dread hath passed, and I will offer here
 Amends as daring as the fault was great;
 And this the error of my guileless age
 I'll pay by dying with a manly rage!
 O valiant citizens, I here maintain
 That I do hold your grand resolve as trust,
 That these base Romans shall no triumph gain,
 Unless it be above our very dust!
 Their scheming plans with me shall prove in vain,
 If so they deal at me a deadly thrust,
 Or wile me on, with promises of weight,
 To life and pleasure, that wide-opened gate!
 Hold, Romans, let your burning ardour cease,
 To break the wall ye have no need to move;
 For though your mighty power should more increase,
 Ye shall not conquer me, as I shall prove!
 My firm resolve ye now may view in peace,
 And if ye doubt the pure and perfect love
 Which I have cherished for my country dear,
 This fall of mine will straightway make it clear!

[114]

[He hurls himself from the tower.]

SCIPIO.

[115]

O matchless action, worthy of the meed
 Which old and valiant soldiers love to gain!
 Thou hast achieved a glory by thy deed
 Not only for Numantia, but for Spain!
 Thy valour strange, heroical indeed,
 Hath robbed me of my rights, and made them vain,
 For with thy fall thou hast upraised thy fame,
 And levelled down my victories to shame!
 O could Numantia gain what she hath lost,
 I would rejoice, if but to see thee there!
 For thou hast reaped the gain and honour most
 Of this long siege, illustrious and rare!
 Bear then, O stripling, bear away the boast,
 Enjoy the glory which the Heavens prepare,
 For thou hast conquered, by thy very fall,
 Him who in rising falleth worst of all!

[A trumpet sounds and FAME enters.]

FAME.

From land to land let my clear voice extend,
 And, with its sweetest, most melodious sound,
 To every soul an ardent longing lend
 To make this deed eternally renowned!
 Raise, Romans, raise your heads, which lowly bend,
 Bear off this body, which such vigour found,
 In green and tender age, to snatch from you
 The glorious triumph which you thought your due!
 For I, who am the far-resounding Fame,
 For ever on, while moves the orb of light
 With step majestic through the heavenly frame,
 And gives this lower world new strength and might,
 Will give good heed to publish and proclaim
 With tongue of truth, with wingèd words and right,
 Numantia's valiant worth, unique and sole,
 From Nile to Baltic and from pole to pole.
 This peerless deed hath given proofs most plain
 What valour, in the ages yet to be,
 Shall dwell within the sons of mighty Spain,
 The heirs of such ancestral bravery!
 The cruel scythe of death shall work in vain,
 And eke the flight of time, to hinder me
 From sounding forth in song, without control,
 Numantia's powerful arm, and constant soul!
 In her alone I find such worth extreme
 As claims a record in the proudest lays;
 Such wealth of matter for the poet's theme,
 I That thousand ages may rehearse always
 Her deathless courage, and her strength supreme,
 Which claim in prose and verse the loftiest praise;
 'Tis mine, in trust, to garner so much glory,
 And so give happy ending to our story!

[116]

END OF THE TRAGEDY.

[117]

NOTES.

NOTE 1, PAGE 1.

S*cipio*. This general was the famous Publius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor. His first campaign in Spain was in the year B.C. 151, when he acted as "legatus" to the Consul Lucius Licinius Lucullus, who was then engaged in the conquest of the Celtiberians. He greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Intercacia, where he was the first to scale the battlements, and received for his exploit a mural crown. He also displayed his personal courage in fighting single-handed and slaying a mighty Spanish giant, who used to insult and defy the whole Roman camp. He was then about thirty-four years of age. In the year B.C. 147 he was elected Consul and sent to Africa, where he fulfilled the stern mandate of the Senate: "Delenda est Carthago!" and became the most renowned warrior of his age. In the year B.C. 134, when affairs in Spain were at the lowest ebb, and the Numantines had thoroughly cowed the Romans, Scipio was again made Consul, and sent to do what no one else was thought competent to do—to bring the siege of Numantia to a final end. The result is well-known, and details may be found in the pages of Floras, Appian, Plutarch, and Livy. A very graphic summary of these is given in the third book of Mariana's *Historia de España*. The vivid picture presented in this tragedy of Cervantes may suffice, however, for the present generation. Though Scipio is therein represented simply as the chief minister of Fate, yet his personality stands boldly out; and his character as accomplished scholar, stern disciplinarian, and cautious tactician, is very skilfully portrayed. His stirring address to the soldiers is a perfect epitome of his whole military creed. The fall of Numantia was the sensation of the day throughout the empire, and the last great military feat of Scipio. It settled the fate of Spain for many a long year. Scipio entered Rome in triumph, and the Senate added to his other titles that of "Numantinus."

[118]

NOTE 2, PAGE 1.

Jugurtha. This notorious Numidian prince, the illegitimate son of Manastabal, grandson of Masanissa, and the nephew of Mecipsa, king of Numidia, was sent by his uncle to give succour to Scipio during the siege of Numantia. He arrived there with a train of ten elephants, and a goodly array of horse and foot. His uncle's secret design, however, was to get rid of him, as a dangerous rival to his own sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, in the succession to the crown. This, however, was

not to be. Jugurtha not only survived the campaign, but so distinguished himself, that he became a prime favourite of Scipio, and returned to his native country with added lustre to his name, and stores of military experience. His after-career, adventurous, reckless, and unfortunate, which led him at last to the Mamertine prisons in Rome, does not concern us. It is to be found, as every schoolboy knows, in the brilliant pages of Sallustius, *De bello Jugurthino*.

[NOTE 3](#), PAGE 2.

Caius Marius. This man, whom Cervantes represents as a bluff, quick-witted, daring soldier, was the celebrated Caius Marius, a plebeian by birth, and the cruel scourge of the patricians in after times. He was only twenty-three years of age at the date of the siege, and was still in the ranks. His peculiar military qualities gained him the good-will of Scipio, who used often to invite him to his table. On one occasion, when the question was asked where a similar general to Scipio could be found when he was gone, Scipio placed his hand on the shoulder of Marius and said smilingly, "There, perhaps!" The glory and experience he gained under Scipio's auspices were the foundation of his future fortunes. Strange to say, when twenty years afterwards he rode in triumphal procession through the streets of Rome on account of his victories in Africa, the principal captive who graced his triumph was his old Numantian comrade, Jugurtha, in chains. The prince and the peasant had met again, but under what altered circumstances!

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[NOTE 4](#), PAGE 6.

Full sixteen years and more. According to the Latin historians, the war with Numantia lasted fourteen years, and the close siege under Scipio, a year and three months. The ruins of Numantia are still to be seen at Puente de Garray, near the source of the Duero, about five miles from Soria, an ancient town of Old Castile. The present remains, however, are principally imperial, and prove that the town must afterwards have been rebuilt. Numantia was a stronghold by nature. It was situated on a little hill precipitous on three sides, and on the fourth, looking towards the north, sloping down to a spacious plain, covered with thick forests and fertile fields, watered by the Tera, a tributary of the Duero. From its commanding position in the centre of northern Spain, it served as a bulwark to check the advance of the Roman legions, and also as a city of refuge for the oppressed tribes. According to Cervantes its warriors amounted only to three thousand:—

[120]

"Can three thousand stand the shock
Of the eighty thousand there?"

Some historians estimate the number at eight thousand, and even this seems too small for the grandeur of their achievements. On one occasion (three years before the advent of Scipio) when the Consul, Caius Hostilius Mancinus, raised the siege in despair, and attempted to escape through the defiles of the mountain by night, the Numantines sallied forth in force, slaughtered 20,000 of the Roman troops, and allowed the rest to capitulate, under condition of signing a perpetual peace with Numantia, and retiring to Rome. The Roman Senate repudiated the transaction, and sent back the disgraced Consul to submit to the mercy of the Numantines. Thereafter it was found necessary to concentrate the whole military talent of Rome on the reduction of this proud city. The siege of Numantia, like that of Saguntum, displayed in a marvellous way the tenacity, vigour, and reckless heroism of the aboriginal tribes of Spain. It was, therefore, with a pardonable pride that Cervantes, intent on rousing the patriotic feeling of his countrymen, addressed them as:—

"Los hijos de la fuerte España,
Hijos de tales padres herederos."

[NOTE 5](#), PAGE 20.

Thou gentle Douro. This passage in the original is admired for its exquisite sweetness. We give it as a specimen of the melodious octaves of Cervantes:—

"Duero gentil, que con torcidas vueltas
Humedeces gran parte de mi seno,
Ansi en tus aguas siempre veas envueltas
Arenas de oro qual el Tajo ameno,
Y ansi las ninfas fugitivas sueltas,
De que está el verde prado y bosque lleno,
Vengan humildes á tus aguas claras
Y en prestarte favor no sean avaras:

[121]

"Que prestes á mis asperos lamentos
Atento oido, ó que á escucharlas vengas,
Y aunque dexes un rato tus contentos,
Suplicote que en nada te detengas:
Si tu con tus continuos crecimientos
Destos fieros Romanes no me vengas,
Cerrado veo ya qualquier camino
A la salud del pueblo Numantino."

This famous river (the *Durius* of the Romans) we prefer calling, in Portuguese fashion, the Douro, as being a name more familiar to English ears, and more amenable, too, to the laws of rhythm.

[NOTE 6](#), PAGE 22.

And, forcing way into the Vatican. The event here alluded to is the fearful sack of Rome, in 1527, perpetrated by a portion of the army of Charles V. under the command of the Constable de Bourbon, when the Pope took refuge, and was besieged, in the castle of St. Angelo. The "Pilot of the Sacred Bark" was Clement VII.

[NOTE 7](#), PAGE 23.

The great Albano he. This is a poetical name for Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alva, who was famous for many things and infamous for more. The exploit referred to is the siege of Rome by Alva, after the battle of St. Quentin, 1557, when the French, who were allies of Pope Paul IV. against the Spaniards, had to leave Italy to save their own capital and country. In the time of Cervantes, no doubt, this siege was looked upon with pride as a "brandishing of the Spanish knife above the Roman neck," but in the light of history we see nothing more than a mock siege, a mock defence, and a mock withdrawal. Alva's hands were thoroughly fettered by his devout master, Philip II., who feared to humiliate the Pope too much, lest he should lose his title of "Most Catholic Majesty." This event is narrated with sarcastic brevity by Motley in the third book of his "History of the Netherlands."

[122]

[NOTE 8](#), PAGE 23.

The second Philip, second yet to none. No doubt Philip II., at this period, had more power in his hand than had ever been held by a purely Spanish king. Motley, in his characteristic way, thus sums up his many titles: "He was king of all the Spanish kingdoms, and of both the Sicilies. He was titular king of England, France, and Jerusalem. He was 'Absolute Dominator' in Asia, Africa, and America. He was Duke of Milan, and both the Burgundies, and Hereditary Sovereign of the Seventeen Netherlands." To all this mighty inheritance he himself added the crown of Portugal. Cervantes took a part, maimed as he was, in this conquest, and it is, therefore, with legitimate pride that he speaks of the "Lusitanian banner that had been knit anew to the stately robes of Castile." Sixty years, however, sufficed to tear it asunder again. What Cervantes thought of Philip as a man and a ruler we can only conjecture. Twelve years after, in 1598, when the life of this monster of cruel bigotry had come to an end, and pompous funeral rites were everywhere being celebrated, we find Cervantes standing in the cathedral of Seville gazing on the astounding catafalque raised in honour of the deceased, and reciting with a roguish air that famous sonnet of his, beginning, "*I vow to God this grandeur stuns my brain!*" This sonnet, which Cervantes prized as the prime honour of his writings (*honra principal de mis escritos*), and which his countrymen regard as a model of exquisite raillery, was certainly not intended to do honour to the dead. Philip was no friend of poets, players, or outspoken thinkers, and literature breathed again when he expired. For a translation of the sonnet, see Gibson's translation of the "Journey to Parnassus," p. 375.

[123]

[NOTE 9](#), PAGE 51.

The Body. Ticknor, who is certainly not over-lavish at any time in his praise of Cervantes, declares that the incantations of Marquino surpass in dignity those of the Faustus of Marlowe, who was a contemporary of Cervantes. He also affirms, that not even Shakespeare, when he presents on the stage the armed head raised up, under constraint, to reply to the criminal enquiries of Macbeth, excites so much our sympathy and horror as does Cervantes with that tormented spirit, which returns to life only to suffer a second time the pangs of dissolution and death. We give here the original of the speech of the resuscitated corpse, which Bouterwek describes as terrific:—

EL CUERPO.

Cese la furia del rigor violento
Tuyo, Marquino; baste, triste, baste
La que yo paso en la region oscura,
Sin que tu crezcas mas mi desventura.
Engañaste si piensas que recibo
Contento de volver á esta penosa,
Misera y corta vida que ahora vivo,
Que ya me va faltando presurosa;
Antes me causas un dolor esquivo,
Pues otra vez la muerte rigurosa
Triunfará de mi vida y de mi alma
Mi enemigo tendrá doblada palma.
El cual, con otros del oscuro bando
De los que son sujetos á aguardarte,
Está con rabia en torno aqui esperando
A que acabe, Marquino, de informarte
Del lamentable fin, del mal nefando
Que de Numancia puedo asegurarte,
La cual acabará a las mismas manos
De los que son á ella mas cercanos.

[124]

Throughout this scene, the pompous solemnity of the regular priests and the mock-heroic fury of Marquino are cleverly contrasted. Cervantes, who from his readings was familiar with all sorts of wizards and enchanters, makes Marquino a kind of old-world Merlin, kept, however, under necessary tragic restraint. The time had not yet come for the humours of "Don Quixote."

Sons of mothers, sad in lot. This spirited speech of one of the Numantine wives has the true Spartan ring in it, of which our translation is but a feeble echo. We give the most effective part of it in the original:—

Hijos destas tristes madres,
 Qué es esto? Como no hablais?
 Y con lagrimas rogais
 Que no os dexen vuestros padres?
 Basta, que la hambre insana
 Os acabe con dolor,
 Sin esperar el rigor
 De la aspereza Romana.
 Decildes que os engendraron
 Libres, y libres nacistes,
 Y que vuestras madres tristes
 Tambien libres os criaron.
 Decildes que pues la suerte
 Nuestra va tan de caida,
 Que como os dieron la vida,
 Ansi mismo os den la muerte.
 O muros desta ciudad,
 Si podeis hablad, decid,
 Y mil veces repetid:
 Numantinos, libertad!

[125]

NOTE 11, PAGE 69.

Cause that these wretched Romans. The *morale* of the tragedy as a whole is so perfect, and the character of Theogenes, as represented, is so noble and chivalrous, that this savage decree of his seems strange and out of keeping. There are, it is true, more brutal things presented in "Titus Andronicus," but that is hardly a model of tragic dignity and decorum. The Latin historians tell us that when the crisis arrived the Numantine citizens ate raw flesh, and drugged themselves with a liquor called *Celia*, to madden themselves for the unnatural slaughter; but, artistically speaking, there was no necessity to give such things prominence especially in the mouth of Theogenes.

NOTE 12, PAGE 70.

Morandro. Bouterwek says: "The transition into light *redondillas*, for the purpose of interweaving with the serious business of the fable the loves of a young Numantine, named Morandro, and his mistress, is certainly a fault in the composition of the tragedy. But to this fault we are indebted for some of the finest scenes in the drama." We agree with the latter assertion, but not with the former. Neither Nature nor Art forbids the combination; and if love was to be introduced at all into such a play, the *redondilla* measure, on the Spanish stage at least, was *de rigueur*. It seems to us that the little ray of sunshine let into the surrounding gloom, and then suddenly extinguished, gives a deeper intensity to the supervening darkness. These love-scenes, moreover, if such they may be called, for they are very saddening, lead up to some of the most tragic scenes of the drama. Ticknor has rendered the whole scene with much spirit, but not in the metre, nor with the simplicity, of the original. We give two short extracts. The first contains the opening stanzas:—

MORANDRO.

No vayas tan de corrida,
 Lira; déjame gozar
 Del bien que me puede dar
 En la muerte alegre vida;
 Deja que miren mis ojos
 Un rato tu hermosura
 Pues tanto mi desventura
 Se entretiene en mis enojos.
 O dulce Lira, que sueñas
 Contino en mi fantasía
 Con tan suave armonía
 Que vuelve en gloria mis penas!
 Qué tienes? Qué estás pensando,
 Gloria de mi pensamiento?

[126]

The second extract is the parting scene, which is justly praised for its pathetic tenderness:—

LIRA.

Morandro, mi dulce amigo,
No vayas; que se me antoja
Que de tu sangre veo roja
La espada del enemigo.
No hagas esta jornada,
Morandro, bien de mi vida,
Que si es mala la salida
Es muy peor la tornada.
Si quiero aplacar tu brio,
Por testigo pongo al cielo,
Que de mi daño recelo
Y no del provecho mio.
Mas si acaso, amado amigo,
Prosigues esta contienda,
Lleva este abrazo por prenda
De que me llevas contigo.

[NOTE 13](#), PAGE 109.

I saw within the middle of the square. This fine description of the end of Theogenes, as seen and described by Marius, may fitly wind up our extracts from the original. It is written in very vigorous Tercets, a form of verse in which Cervantes was more expert than in any other:— [127]

En medio de la plaza levantado
Está un ardiente fuego temeroso,
De sus cuerpos y haciendas sustentado.
A tiempo llegué á verle, que el furioso
Teogenes, valiente Numantino,
De fenecer su vida deseoso,
Maldiciendo su corto amargo signo,
En medio se arrojaba de la llama
Lleno de temerario desatino.
Y al arrojarse dijo: O clara fama,
Ocupa aqui tus lenguas y tus ojos
En esta hazaña que a cantar te llama!
Venid, Romanos, ya por los despojos
Deste ciudad en polvo y humo envueltos,
Y sus floras y frutos en abrojos!

[NOTE 14](#), PAGE 112.

Viriato. It is a touch of genius, on Cervantes' part, to give this youth, who concentrates at last in his own person all the heroism of his nation, the name of the illustrious Lusitanian hero, Viriatus, the William Wallace of his age and country, who for more than a decade was the terror of the Romans and the pride of his nation, and who, like the Scottish hero, was at last done to death by treachery.

END OF THE NOTES.

[128]

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Obvious typographical errors and punctuation errors have been corrected after careful comparison with other occurrences within the text and consultation of external sources.

Footnotes are collected in a '[NOTES](#)' section at the end of the play, as in the original book.

Except for those changes noted below, all misspellings in the text, and inconsistent or archaic usage, have been retained. For example, good-will, good will; pourtrayed; energetical; fulness; leal.

[Pg 23](#), 'vicegerent' replaced by 'viceregent'.

[Pg 94](#), 'stern hehest' replaced by 'stern behest'.

[Pg 95](#), 'who am the the great' replaced by 'who am the great'.

[Pg 111](#), 'go straighway' replaced by 'go straightway'.

[Pg 121](#), 'continos crecimientos' replaced by 'continuos crecimientos'.

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