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PLAYS AND POEMS  
OF  
THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES



PLAYS AND POEMS  
OF  
THOMAS LOVELL  
BEDDOES

*edited*  
*with an introduction*  
*by*  
H. W. DONNER

*Like the red outline of beginning Adam*

LONDON  
ROUTLEDGE AND KEGAN PAUL LTD

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE present collection of the Plays and Poems of Beddoes is far from complete, yet more than a Selection. It contains two comparative novelties. The early version of *Death's Jest-Book* is here for the first time printed *in toto*, so that it is now possible to read it exactly as Beddoes had intended it to be printed in 1829, whereas all later revisions are presented as Fragments. The second edition of the Anti-Strauss Greeting, also, containing additional notes, is now reprinted for the first time since its publication, the text included in the Oxford edition being in fact the first version, although erroneously described as the second in the Bibliography. It is always gratifying to acknowledge one's errors, and I am glad of this opportunity of correcting another mistake. A manuscript acquired by Colonel Wilkinson, containing the fragmentary *New-Born Star* ('An earth is born') and the *Tree of Life*, shows that these poems should both be given to the Southampton period or the previous year, as indicated by the watermark 1822. Neither is included in the present edition, the publication in one volume necessitating some excisions. Other omissions comprise the whole of the *Juvenilia*. For the rest some of the earlier and feebler attempts at lyrical poetry and fragments consisting of only one or two lines have been omitted. None of these excisions seem to call for an apology. Regrettable, however, is the inevitable omission of later fragments.

With the exceptions mentioned, the text is that of the Oxford edition throughout, and the numbers of the Dramatic Fragments assigned to them in that edition have been retained, except, for obvious reasons, where *Death's Jest-Book* is concerned, the Fragments of which are presented in an arrangement reflecting

## PREFATORY NOTE

the action of the play. Where the titles given by Kelsall differ from Beddoes' own, the poet's have been preferred, but to facilitate reference those of Kelsall's edition may be identified in the Index. The arrangement of the texts is consistently chronological, so that both poems and dramatic fragments composed during the same period appear in juxtaposed sequence. Exceptions are unavoidably made within the different groups and this applies most particularly to the Fragments of *Death's Jest-Book*. I have abstained from all documentation of facts in the Introduction, the references being accessible in the present editor's *T. L. Beddoes; the Making of a Poet*, Blackwells, 1935, *The Works of T. L. Beddoes* and *The Browning Box*, both published by the Oxford University Press, 1935.

I beg to express my sincere thanks to Professor C. A. Weber who has supplied me with photostats of the *Anti-Straussianiseher Graus-Gruss* in Tübingen University Library. I wish to thank also Mr. John Woodward who has been kind enough to read the manuscript of my Introduction. I am greatly indebted to the Oxford University Press for permission to use the Oxford text and equally to Messrs. Blackwell, who have kindly allowed me to quote from my biography of Beddoes. For kind permission to use other copy-right material I beg to thank Sir John Murray for the passage from Browning's letter to Kelsall, Messrs. Chatto and Windus for the extract from Lytton Strachey's *Books and Characters*, and Mr. Edmund Blunden for the quotation from *Votive Tablets*. Finally I beg to offer my thanks to the Master, Fellows and Scholars of Pembroke College for permission to reproduce the photograph of the portrait.

H. W. D.

Oxford  
June 1948

# INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

ON 26 January 1849, at 9.30 in the evening, died at Basle in Switzerland, aged forty-five, Thomas Lovell Beddoes, <sup>4</sup>'de Bristol'—'Gentilhomme Anglais, Rentier'—in his lifetime one of the most obscure but after his death slowly recognized as one of the most remarkable of English poets; in the late Lytton Strachey's phrase, 'the last Elizabethan', but equally, in an age of Romantic exhaustion, the first of the moderns. The official records gave the cause of death as 'apoplexy', and not until forty years later were the real circumstances publicly disclosed as suicide, his death being the result of a poison he had taken, found in his possession. Nor was this the first attempt. A little more than six months earlier Beddoes had been received at the Basle Hospital out of the Cigogne Hotel, where, as the official records affirm, 'he had cut open an artery in his [left] leg'. The story was told in Basle how he kept tearing off the bandages in his determined effort to end a physical existence which had by then become a burden and a hindrance to his spiritual growth and aspirations. Little less than twenty years earlier, on 24 August 1829, the Pro-Rector of Göttingen University had recommended to his colleagues on the University Court that the sentence of relegation, pronounced on Beddoes, should take the most lenient form and be communicated to him as gently as possible, because he had learned from several sources that Beddoes had lately shown a tendency to spleen and even tried to commit suicide. From about this time dates his beautiful philosophy, which teaches that there is one source of all spiritual existence, the soul of the universe itself,

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and that the thirst for knowledge (so ardently sought by Beddoes all his life) is nothing but the desire of the individual to return to the home of his birth. The search for truth is thus identical with the wish to die, and the greater is the spiritual part within us, the more intense must be our wish to be reunited with that spring of spiritual power from which our lives flow like sparkling rivulets.

Beddoes is above all others the poet of death. Nobody has arrayed her (for Death had been revealed to him as a warm and tender mother) in such alluring beauty, nobody has clad physical corruption in such unspeakable horror, nobody spoken with such nostalgic longing of the death he was himself to seek so persistently. Out of their security the Victorians regarded his preoccupation as morbid, but we are gradually learning, in the school of devastating world wars, that

*Life's a single pilgrim.*

*Fighting unarmed amongst a thousand soldiers.*

And the throbbing presence of facts spiritual in his verse forbids any facile condemnation. Exactly because Beddoes viewed the death of the body in such lurid light, a firmer conviction of the immortality of the spirit forced itself upon him, and he became a prophet of a richer life in death. There is an almost threatening note in his latest fragments, as if he meant to say: Beware, the spirit will yet get the better of you. His self-inflicted death, whatever momentary misery may have been the direct cause, was the triumphant close of a career devoted to the discovery of proofs physical and spiritual of man's survival in another sphere. His suicide was an act of faith. For metaphysic as he was in a Germany of the early nineteenth century, dominated by the thought of Schelling, in the Middle Ages he would have been a devout whose visionary powers



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would have received direction towards the inner sources of religion and whose faith might have stood the test of martyrdom, although it is most likely that he would have been burned as a heretic and one not easily submitting to authority.

He knew death early, for he was only five and a half years old, when his father, 'the celebrated Dr. Beddoes', died on Christmas eve 1808. His death drew from Coleridge some of the most deep-felt utterances of grief recorded in his letters, and Southey said that from Dr. Beddoes he had 'hoped for more good to the human race than any other individual'. Both had been his patients, as well as Wordsworth; and Coleridge had wished to become his biographer. John George Lambton, Earl of Durham, lived as an orphan under his roof, and the Doctor was the promoter also of Sir Humphrey Davy, for he was, *in* the latter's words, 'good, great and generous'. James Watt was his early collaborator, and he left his children under the guardianship of Sir Davies Gilbert, M.P., P.R.S., scientist and antiquary. His wife, Anna, was the sister of Maria Edgeworth, daughters among twenty children of another remarkable man, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, educationalist, inventor, and practical philosopher. Nothing short of genius could have earned for Dr. Beddoes such a galaxy of friends and associates. And genius he undoubtedly possessed, universal, though erratic and inconstant.

His university career as Reader in chemistry at Oxford was interrupted from too ardent a zeal for the French revolution and open opposition to the government, but in the five years of his readership he had become known as a stimulating teacher and a pioneer of German learning and philosophy. His experiments had been bold and ingenious though inconclusive. He now turned his energies to the translation of learned foreign works and to authorship in verse and prose,

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His poem on *Alexander's Expedition down the Hydaspes and the Indus to the Indian Ocean*, with copious learned notes, is one on the strangest books in English. His prose served an educational purpose. *The History of Isaac Jenkins, and Sarah his wife, and their three children*, to whose literary merits Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein has drawn attention,<sup>1</sup> was designed to prevent drunkenness by instruction and so improve the physical and mental health of the people. His *Hygeia; or Essays moral and medical, on the causes affecting the personal state of our middling and affluent classes*, in three volumes, was part of his work for the propagation of the knowledge of the elements of medicine among the public, intended to effect the results of modern preventive medicine. In spite of the strangeness of his cures he enjoyed the highest reputation as practitioner, but his services to science were chiefly connected with the Pneumatic Institution which he erected at Bristol Hotwells for novel experiments with 'factitious airs'. Both Coleridge and Southey were among the first to sniff out of the green bag the nitrous oxide now known as 'laughing gas', whose properties, then unexplored, 'converted', says Cottle, the publisher, 'the laboratory into the region of hilarity and relaxation'.

Education interested the Doctor not only as a means of improving the health of the adult population. He was the instigator of the chapter on toys in his father-in-law's book on *Practical Education* and himself took the initiative of a subscription for rational toys. He believed also that instruction on sexual matters should be 'gravely, decently and early imparted to children of a tender age.' It was to start with natural history and the anatomy of animals and proceed through the dissection of pregnant frogs and hens to the witnessing of 'the labour-pains of a domestic quadruped'. As the

<sup>1</sup> *English*, III, 13, 1940, pp. 8-15.

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loving father he was, 'he never secluded himself for the purposes of study', says his biographer, Dr. Stock, but 'it was uniformly his wish that his wife and children should be in the same apartment'. There is no telling what sights fed the observant eyes of the little boy who was later to be 'for ever haunted' by the problem and presence of death.

The Doctor was not universally popular, for he was above all independent and possessed of a proud reserve and coldness of manner when confronted with strangers, but in the society of intimate friends he could, says Richard Warner, the historian of Bath, 'exercise those powers of conversation, with which he was highly endowed, but which he seldom displayed, in general society'. 'Nothing', however, says Sir Humphry Davy, 'could be a stronger contrast to his apparent coldness in discussion, than his wild and active imagination, which was as poetical as Darwin's.'

From his father, it seems, the poet inherited his sense of independence and justice, his passion for truth and universal thirst for knowledge, his keen interest in languages and science, principally medicine; and it seems no accident that it was in comparative anatomy that he 'narrowly escaped becoming professor' at Zürich. From his father also he seems to have derived his visionary cast of mind, combined, however, with his lack of method and sustained effort. His revolutionary pathos and benevolence towards political refugees seem equally part and parcel of his paternal inheritance. But the Doctor's eminent gift for literary composition and poetical pastiche may well have been reinforced by the Edgeworth strain in his son. For, according to Sir Humphry Davy, the poet's mother 'possessed a fancy almost *poetical* in the highest sense of the word, great warmth of affection, and disinterestedness of feeling, and, under favourable circumstances she would have been, even in talents, a

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rival of Maria'. These gentler traits the poet shared, though, unhappily, the strong reserve, inherited from his father, seems to have disabled him from bringing them to bear *on* human relationships.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Church Registers the poet was born on 30 June 1803, at 3 Rodney Place, Clifton, and there he spent his childhood until he was eight years old, when his mother with the elder sister, himself, and a younger brother and sister went to live for three years at Great Malvern. In 1814 the family removed to Bath, and the boys entered the Grammar School. Occasional visits to Edgeworth-Town in Ireland should not be forgotten, because their aunt Maria then entertained the children with theatricals and old Edgeworth probably read, as was his habit, 'from the Arabian Tales to Shakespeare, Milton, Homer and the Greek Tragedians'. What appears to have become annual visits to Cheney Longville, the family seat in Shropshire, commenced in 1816, and in the correspondence of his guardian the poet soon emerges in a strong physical likeness to his father.

At Charterhouse School, where he entered in June 1817, he gained at once a high standing in the fifth form and, before he left, was the second boy of the school, having obtained at least three prizes for Latin and Greek compositions. His school-fellows remembered him too and contributed their impressions to Kclsall's Memoir of the poet more than thirty years later. One of them, Charles Dacres Bevan, had been his fag and thought he was something of a tyrant, but this impression was emphatically contradicted by friends who had known him for many years of his later life as always 'considerate, kind, benevolent, just' in his treatment of others. To the pensioners of the

<sup>1</sup> The best contribution on the subject of the poet's parents has come from the pen of Professor C. C. Abbot, *Durham University Journal*, 34, 1941-2, pp. 159-75.

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Charterhouse, however, he was a terror, and Bevan gives an amusing description of his fights with 'Cod Sine-Breech', who used to hire a drummer of the guards as reinforcement. And when a truce was called, it was habitually celebrated with lobsters, oysters, porter and gin, and young Beddoes entertained his ex-enemies and his compulsory ally Bevan with singing and dancing and parodies of the famous actors he had seen on the stage, particularly, we are told, of Kean and Macready.

Beddoes, who was as little interested in games as his father had been before him at Bridgenorth, had a passion for the theatre and was both a good actor himself and a good judge of it. He performed many old English plays, and Bevan enjoyed them, in spite of being forced into them and having to submit to Beddoes' kicks or caresses, as the part required. He knew Shakespeare well when he came to the Charterhouse, and while he was there made himself familiar with the whole range of British drama. Sometimes he performed little scenes of his own invention. A locksmith, who had overcharged him for a bad lock, was made to regret it when he next came to work and Beddoes staged an interlude 'representing his last moments, disturbed by horror and remorse for his sins in the matter of the lock, his death, and funeral procession, which was interrupted by fiends who bore the body off to accompany the soul to eternal torments'.

No less spectacular was his appearance in defence of the threatened liberties of his fellows. Hockey, that had been played in the cloisters since time out of mind, was suddenly forbidden, and although he had never been seen with a hockey stick in his hand, Beddoes promptly decided to captain one of the teams and turned up looking 'ferociously grave' with feathers in his cap and a cardboard shield with a doubled fist for

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device and inscribed with the proud motto of the republican martyr Algernon Sidney, 'Manus haec inimica tyrannis'. The laughter of the masters ensured the continuance of the traditional game.

Bevan records more practical jokes contrived by Beddoes. He was usually forgiven, partly because his stern judges could not help laughing, partly for the perfect order he kept as prefect of his house. But even more remarkable was the ascendancy he acquired over his fellows. The nicknames he assigned to the 'Cods' were not the only ones he invented, and they stuck like leeches. He invented also a kind of slang which continued being spoken at Charterhouse for years after he had left, not out of love for its author, but from a conviction of its aptness. In the same way he was later to create a domain particularly his own in the realm of English poetry.

It appears to have been quite a fashion with school-boys at that particular time to write tales of terror, and one by Beddoes has survived called *Scaroni, or The Mysterious Cave. A Romantic Fiction*, probably written before he was fifteen. Bevan records another title, *Cynthio and Bugboo*, and there is no reason to believe that Beddoes did not write more than one story while still at school. He certainly published a poem in the *Morning Post* in 1819 on the subject of a *Comet* then seen over London. He probably wrote the greater part of *Leopold*, the least mature of the fyttes of *The Improvisatore*, and perhaps *Alfarabi*. He may even have written a complete tragedy at Charterhouse, as Bevan asserts, but it could not have been *The Brides' Tragedy*, which was certainly not begun before his second year at Oxford. Mere fragments of his dramatic writings during his school days have survived.

In late April 1820 Sir Davies Gilbert accompanied his ward to Oxford, where Beddoes immediately went

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into residence at Pembroke, his father's college as well as his guardian's, not to mention Dr. Johnson. While still a freshman he published, in March 1821, a volume of verse, *The Improvisatore, In three fyttes, With Other Poems*. It is a volume now exceedingly rare, for growing ashamed of his youthful extravaganzas in later years he destroyed every copy on which he could lay his hands, visiting the bookshelves of his friends and cutting out the pages, leaving the binding intact but robbed of its contents. There seem to be no more than six or seven copies extant to-day. The verse tales are as full of death and horror as ever *Scaroni*, but also of a beauty of imagery and loveliness of fancy, a poetical richness, that in a poet not yet eighteen necessarily foreshadowed better things to come. His feeling for nature is conspicuous, and many passages of great beauty evince his familiarity with the evening sky. His descriptive power was better developed than the narrative, and the lyrical poems at the end of the volume are full of happy conceits, woven into arabesque patterns.

His next publication, *The Brides\* Tragedy*, which appeared on the last of November 1822, shares in the same qualities, combined, however, with a visionary boldness of the imagination and a marked love for Elizabethan patterns of diction and phrasing. The dramatic blank verse is almost incredibly good for such a young man, and excited the whole-hearted admiration of his contemporaries. He was lauded by practically all the periodicals of the day, and George Darley in the *London Magazine* hailed him as 'a scion worthy of the stock from which Shakespeare and Marlow sprung'. The private correspondence of literary men echoed his name, and John Forster was to tell us nearly thirty years later that 'it became for a time the town-talk to speak of him'. A successful poetical career seemed to be cut out for him, but apart from *The*

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*Romance of the Lily* in the following year Beddoes published next to nothing for the rest of his life.

Bevan, who followed the poet to Oxford in 1824, tells us of his rebellion against the college authorities, and how he brought his attendance at his tutor's classes to an end by going there with the pages of his book uncut, and when told to open them, disappearing only to get 'the largest butcher's knife he could buy, with which he begun to cut the leaves'. But Bevan had the story from Beddoes himself, and it may have been slightly exaggerated. Bevan also received the impression that he kept aloof from all society, but, if I am right in thinking that another contemporary and college friend, J. G. H. Bourne, has given his impressions of the poet under a fictitious name in one of his novels, this tells a different story. Meeting him in later years, says the author, he was much surprised at his change of manner:

'Now he appeared quiet, thoughtful, and retiring; at that time he had been the gayest of the gay, idle, and apparently thoughtless; yet he had obtained a character for singular talents, both with his tutors and his associates. The former considered that he must learn everything by a species of intuition, as they could never hear of his reading, and yet found him always prepared with his lectures; and the latter never saw him flinch from his glass or from any scheme of mischief; but, on the contrary, always prepared to enter into fresh frolics and fresh excesses. The truth was, that Derwent had a method in his madness. The exuberance of his animal spirits prevented his retiring from that society where he ever found himself so welcome an addition, and the applause that his jokes and his songs, which were always allowed to have more point and wit than those of any other, never failed to obtain, held him fast by those 'adamantine' bonds of vanity, which



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have such a spell over children of riper years. But, when the last echo of mirth had died away, and the last merry companion had staggered from his room, he would retreat from the scene of debauch to the quiet recess of his study, bind a wet towel round his burning temples, and with that head-dress sit down to

*Unsphere the spirit of Plato,*

or pursue the subtle distinctions of the Stagyrte. Nor did he confine his studies to the routine of tutorial guidance, or expect them to lead him to the prize of academical distinction. Such a prize, if worth any thing, he considered merely as the means of introduction, and a testimonial of recommendation. His real aim was to qualify himself for his appearance on the grand stage of life, the theatre of the world.'

The flavour, not even yet quite stale, of his college jokes seems to survive in his *Masque in the Moon*,

His lightheartedness in term-time, however, made it necessary for him to work in vacation, and so he went to spend the summer of 1823 at Southampton to read for his degree, wisely provided with an introduction from one of his kindly reviewers, the poet B. W. Procter, alias Barry Cornwall, to a lawyer's apprentice, Thomas Forbes Kelsall, who was to become the guardian of his manuscripts and literary fame, his future editor and biographer. From the first moment of their acquaintance Kelsall received the strongest possible impression of Beddoes' genius, and to him we owe a characterization of the poet as he was then and appeared later, invaluable to the student of his life and art.

What struck Kelsall most forcibly was Beddoes' 'manly, uncompromising independence' both of bearing and judgement. Looking back many years later to the beginnings of their friendship his admiration

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could not but increase for the precocious maturity of Beddoes' literary and scholastic achievements, for the inexhaustible power and originality of his creative genius, and for the unassailable integrity of his character. He loved literature with the whole ardour of his youthful being, but his aim was of the highest, as that of the young will be, and although he admired Wordsworth and Keats he gave his ungrudging allegiance to Shelley alone among his immediate predecessors and his inmost heart was with Shakespeare and the Elizabethans. With the merely pretty and sentimental, favoured by his contemporaries, he had little patience, and he asserted his views with a downrightness almost shocking even to his admirers. The purely intellectual never lost its fascination for him, and intellect and imagination were to remain to him nothing but different instruments used for the same end, different ways towards the same goal—the discovery of truth. In the combination of intellect and poetry in the Elizabethan dramatists he could see his own aims achieved, and Kelsall was anxious to emphasize that, whatever affinity might be discerned between them, Beddoes was not an imitator of the founders of the British stage but a congenial mind working on living material, not on models 'taken from the marble of the tomb'.

Nobody could be a better companion than Beddoes at this early age, and even if he liked to talk of literature more than anything he would brighten any subject with glimpses of poetic learning or grotesque humour. He adored discussion and would not seldom exaggerate his own views for the sake of argument. Through Kelsall's long-winded lawyer's prose we can hear the 'squeaks' of the Fool himself as he appeared, to Bourne at Pembroke and to Kelsall at Southampton or tasting with congenial companions the 'joys of Joy' at the Grand Hotel in Covent Garden. His good

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temper remained unruffled throughout his life and his dislikes never deteriorated into hatreds, but that he could be often provocative in his younger days and that his cold and reserved manner in after life was not invariably winning, of this Kelsall makes no secret. 'To the sordid vices he was altogether a stranger', and Kelsall makes a special point of the fact that Beddoes never bothered to try and increase the modest fortune that had come down to him from his father, being contented 'to pass through life with a very moderate, almost philosophic competence'. Apart from taking dutiful advantage of his guardian's privilege as an M.P. of free postage during his minority, he never sought to use family connexions for his own ends or his own promotion. Ambition he had none, unless it were that of one day becoming worthy of the praise bestowed on his early production, or, objectively, of enriching the domains of poetry and reviving British drama. His modesty was a model to all, and he never willingly spoke either of himself or of his works or projects.

Not without reason Kelsall was alarmed at the complete indifference with which Beddoes treated his manuscripts, destroying such as did not serve his immediate purpose, and so Kelsall determined to become his keeper and the guardian of his literary output. When going to Germany, two years later, as he thought for a short stay, the poet was to leave his early notebooks and other manuscripts in a trunk in London. Winter coming on, he needed his woolies and requested Kelsall to send them. From the manuscripts he asked to be excused, leaving it to Kelsall's discretion what was to be done with them, 'recommending them however to the dispensation of fire and sword'. Kelsall did no such thing. Poems addressed to Procter or Bourne also during Beddoes' long years of exile he obtained and copied. Every letter to himself he

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preserved. Whatever Beddoes wrote Kelsall's heart was in it. However embarrassing in life such devotion received its due in death. It was to Kelsall that Beddoes was to bequeath his manuscripts, and never did a literary executor tackle his task with more tactful enthusiasm. Devoting all his time to it, within a year of the poet's death Kelsall was to bring out *Death's Jest-Book*, overcoming the scruples of the Beddoes family by publishing anonymously and omitting all that might give offence to 'ears polite'. His discretion was rewarded, and in the following year he was able to issue the *Poems by the Late Thomas Lovell Beddoes ... With a Memoir*. Yet he was not to rest until the safety of the manuscripts seemed provided for. He had not been able to publish everything. The prose passages of *Death's Jest-Book* had been largely suppressed; the tales of *The Ivory Gate* were unprinted; poems and fragments remained in manuscript. Some scraps he had given away to admirers of the poet. The bulk he was to bequeath to Robert Browning whose enthusiasm for Beddoes had led Kelsall to believe that his great friend might rise to fame on the shoulders of the Victorian colossus. But between the decision and the deed was to come the discovery of the suicide. Browning deputed the task to Gosse, and Gosse was to do much for Beddoes. He wrote brilliantly about him; he added to the printed works; he made him loved as far, perhaps, as a poet of Beddoes' 'macabre' genius will ever be loved. But he shied off the labours of editing, and his notorious inaccuracy seems to have for ever endangered the recognition of the truth about Beddoes' life. His superficial inspection ended, the manuscripts were to disappear, never to be traced. Yet Beddoes' spirit of contradiction was to assert itself even in death and Kelsall's faith prove justified. For although Browning had relied on Gosse to edit *Death's Jest-Book* and the other poems as they stood in Bed-

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does' manuscripts, he had not withheld them from earnest inquirers like Dykes Campbell, who with an industry equalled only by Kelsall and with impeccable accuracy had taken copies *quasi facsimile* of Beddoes' holographs and of all the papers bearing on his biography in the 'Browning Box', assembled by Kelsall, so that, triumphing over time, they could be given to the world. In view of after-events the friendship formed with Kelsall in the summer of 1823 thus acquires an importance far in excess of what can have been apparent to either of them on their green rambles along the shores of the Solent.

In Kelsall's Memoir we get as near to the man Beddoes as we are likely ever to do. What incidents from his later life can be adduced in illustration of his character, only serve to complete the picture and to show how deep Kelsall had seen into his friend's nature. The lights and shades will always vary in the portraits of the same model by different artists, but in Kelsall's characterization, I have little doubt, is the essential Beddoes. It is perhaps significant that of the inner struggles, which must have been the lot of Beddoes no less than that of other highly imaginative people, artists and poets, more than other humans, even this devoted friend knew nothing. Even Bourne, the most congenial, I believe, of Beddoes' friends, could say no more in explanation of his erratic genius than the bare statement that 'Derwent' was 'made up of odd notions and wild principles'; again provided that my identification of Derwent with the poet is not mistaken.

The summer of 1823 and the following year or two were the most prolific in Beddoes' authorship. 'His poetic composition', says Kelsall, 'was then exceedingly facile:

'more than once or twice has he taken home with him at night some unfinished act of a drama, in which the

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editor had found much to admire, and, at the next meeting, has produced a new one, similar in design, but filled with other thoughts and fancies, which his teeming imagination had projected, in its sheer abundance, and not from any feeling, right or fastidious, of unworthiness in its predecessor. Of several of these very striking fragments, large and grand in their aspect as they each started into form,

*Like the red outline of beginning Adam,*

and not unworthy indeed to be associated with that Sistine creation of Michael Angelo, the only trace remaining is literally the impression thus deeply cut into their one observer's mind. The fine verse just quoted is the sole remnant, indelibly stamped on the editor's memory, of one of these extinct creations.'

We must share Kelsall's regret at the loss of so much of the easy production of those years, for the time was to come when writing became laborious to a poet estranged from his own language during decades of foreign residence. But Kelsall was right in his high appreciation of Beddoes' early work. There is that rare richness in it of poetic imagery, flowing with the abundance of a soul steeped in poetry, such as Shakespeare had, and Spenser, Marlowe, Shelley. There is imaginative power of the first order, a power to give life to objects dead to ordinary people, a visualization of the abstract, a spiritualization of the concrete, entirely out of the common reach even of poets. He can see 'a pale soul Fluttering in rocky hell' with such vividness that the image goes to illustrate the less immaterial but perhaps more exotic sight of a trochilus picking the teeth of a crocodile. He can compress the universe in a living image, seeing new-born stars bouncing like 'light deer Down a hill',

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*And the interstellar vale,  
Through which some aged patient globe  
(Whose gaunt sides no summers robe),  
Like a prisoner through his grate;  
Shivering in despair doth wait  
For sunbeams broken, old, and pale.*

On the other hand, he can give immensity to the aspirations of man, and describe the feelings of frustration, felt by

*Man's ghost immortal,  
Whom the corpse's earthen fences  
From his vast existence bar.*

There is already that quality in his verse of a fluttering bird beating its wings against the mirror of eternity.

Of the plays which occupied him during this period only fragments survive out of his notebooks. The finished parts of *The Last Man* and *Love's Arrow Poisoned* he took away with him to Germany, and what was not destroyed went into the making of *Death's Jest-Book*. Nowhere is his power more obvious than in these fragments, nowhere\* the imagery bolder or loftier. But what he lacked in dramatic composition was the faculty of sustained creation, the ability to concentrate on essentials in unfolding the story, of making characters credible in a natural situation, and of making them speak like human beings. They are all too Beddoesian, skating as it were on the thinnest of ice, 'that glassy interval 'twixt us and nothing', to use his own phrase, adopted with such satisfaction by Mr. Walter de la Mare.<sup>1</sup> And the plots are crowded with incident until the outlines become confused, each detail being worked out with all the intensity and passion at the command of this singularly gifted poet, but the whole broken irreparably to bits by the very

<sup>1</sup> *Behold, This Dreamer*, Faber and Faber, 1939.

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strength of the single scenes. To that intensity of feeling we owe one of his finest achievements, *Torrismond*, written probably in the autumn of 1824, in which all the poet's pent-up passion had to vent itself in the first act, and he was unable to continue. We may say it was a mercy that the fragment was brought to a close before the whole parade of banquets and masques, conjuring and incest, murder and suicide was unrolled, but such was not Beddoes' intention. In *The Second Brother*, written apparently during the following winter, the full riot is let loose. There is plenty of grand rhetoric, poetry of the most exalted brand, a nervous energy almost unique, plenty of what used to be called 'tragic passion', but of human feeling not an inkling. Neither brother has one word of regret, much less of sorrow, for the death of his own brother; the succession to a petty throne is all that matters. But Beddoes himself knew full well the futility of thrones and was striving after something very much more important. Hence one after the other of his elaborately artificial plots was discarded and abandoned. Nothing but the perfect would satisfy him, and in his constant grappling with the stubborn material of his plots, he did achieve perfection in the creation of a dramatic blank verse, unequalled since the days of Shakespeare. Hence he could sacrifice without regret the unsuccessful plots which had served his apprenticeship. That a great mass of irrecoverable poetry was thrown on the fire at the same time he did not give one thought, for he was looking forward to pour his whole soul into a play of a power sufficient to regenerate the British stage, and he felt himself step by step accumulating that power.

It seems to me most probable that something happened which was to turn his thoughts in a special direction. In order to understand what it was, however, it is necessary to look again to his life of which



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we must not lose sight in analysing his mind. It would seem as if he applied himself fairly regularly to his academic studies even during the days and nights crowded with poetic visions at Southampton; and of his capacity for work\* there is ample proof. He could thus afford to stay away from Oxford, where during his first two years he had been in the habit of spending his Christmas and Easter vacations, perhaps because his family had become more inaccessible, living first in Jersey, then in northern France on account of the elder daughter's health. One such visit away from Oxford must have been to the Vicar of Great Malvern, Henry Card, either during the summer of 1822 or the following Michaelmas Term when he played truant to Oxford, probably while helping his friend, the clergyman, antiquary and playwright, in defining the different conceptions of the character of Caractacus in British drama. After the fruitful summer at Southampton in 1823 he went to Bristol in the New Year 1824 to stay with his aunt Emmeline King, *ne'e* Edgeworth, and her husband, John King, olim König, Swiss by birth, but naturalized British and acclimatized Bristolian, formerly a student of theology, later surgeon, assistant to the poet's father, and a gifted amateur artist. And here again we get a glimpse of the living Beddoes, for Zoe King, his first cousin, was to tell Kelsali in later years that he was deeply attached to his 'godmother' and enjoyed her company. His own letters bear witness to his admiration and respect for his Clifton 'demi-uncle.' With him he frequently discussed literature and art, with his wife he often indulged in verbal contest for fun and in great friendliness, one of the subjects especially remembered by Zoe King being the merits of Pope's poetry, which her mother most particularly admired. Apparently she had a gift of bringing out all that was best in him, and he could give up 'his own strong *Beddoes* dislikes' in order to

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please her, and even submitted to going to evening parties and paying morning calls on his father's friends, although he did not like them himself. She also prevailed upon him to sit for his portrait, and so he was immortalized by the Bristol artist Nathan Branwhite in March 1824 in the 'shorn condition' consequent upon a severe illness which necessitated the cutting of his hair. The visit was to be repeated twelve months later, and in after-years it would seem as if Beddoes looked back occasionally with regret to the happy home-life he had shared with the Kings at Clifton.

On 6 May Beddoes commenced the examination for his degree at Oxford, but had to interrupt it on the 9th, on an urgent summons from his mother's death-bed at Florence. She had actually died four days earlier, although the news did not reach London till the 21st. Beddoes travelled a good deal slower and does not seem to have arrived at Florence much before the middle of June. All he could now do was to escort his sisters back to England, and he may even have accompanied them to Edgeworth-Town. On the way out he had seen opera and ballet in Paris and Milan and made acute comment on the performances in his letters. In Florence he called on Landor to whom he brought a letter of introduction, but now as ever, wherever he wandered in his vagrant life, he found his best recommendation in his father's name and reputation.

I think his mother must have meant much to him, not least because for some years he had been almost entirely separated from her. To her in filial pride he had dedicated *The Improvisatore*. Her poetical nature, charm and liveliness can hardly have failed to make her an object of his youthful adoration, and as far as his feminine characters are drawn from life, and not as was more frequently the case from literature, they

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seem to reflect a filial relationship rather than amorous. However that may be, his mother's death seems to have cut deep into his being. A change seems to come suddenly over his world of thought and feeling, as if a thick cloud had obscured the sun and turned noon into midnight. This change is especially noticeable in his attitude to death, which from now on comes to constitute a problem where before there was none.

It is true that in all his early poems there are corpses and charnelhouses, and even more characteristically loving embraces bestowed on the bodies of the dead. Literary fashion encouraged scenes of horror, and they need be taken no more seriously than Beddoes seems to have taken them himself, except perhaps that the particular incident, so often repeated in his youthful work, of a child literally poking death in the eye may have had something to do with his father's dissections of animals for the highly laudable purpose of familiarizing his children with natural phenomena and the zoological process of generation. It would seem as if Beddoes had become a little too familiar with such scenes. But there is nothing but enjoyment of them in his early verse, and from a different aspect he had viewed delightedly the dead bodies

*Turning to daisies gently in the grave.*

But, if it is not too hazardous to draw conclusions from a correspondence only fragmentarily preserved, the mere thought of the possibility of his mother's death seems to have produced in him an unbearable feeling of loneliness and fear. Once she was dead a horror of death comes over him, and in the forceful *Lines Written at Geneva* on the homeward journey his childish visions and, perhaps, his childish games in his father's zoological laboratory return in the awful aspect of the newly dead beholding

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review, like Marston's. In Romantic fashion it is preceded by an incantation, the purpose of which is to make the spectre discover where his treasures are hidden. In Romantic fashion, again, the conjuring is a fake, and instead of a ghost the real man appears, for while believed to have fallen to his death, he has actually been miraculously saved halfway down the precipice, just like Marston's Altofronto. The scene was sufficiently melodramatic not to be easily forgone by its youthful contriver, and so it appears again and again in various modifications. This, I feel convinced, is how *Torrismond* was planned to end; this was to be the end of *The Second Brother* also. It is not difficult to see that when Valeria is led to the Campo Santo at midnight in the last scene to be completed, she is there going to be made to act the part of her own ghost in order to prove Marcello's power over life and death, and thus help him gain the dominion over men's souls after which he strove. For while Beddoes was grappling with the technical problem of plot-construction, his mind was at the same time occupied with a totally different problem of a spiritual nature, the relationship of mind and matter, a question which, as far as I can understand, he had already tackled in *The Last Man*, although he had found his powers so far insufficient to provide a solution. The temptation must have been strong to unite the theme of his imagination with the plot of his fancy, and in *The Second Brother* we can see him at work.

This is the moment when he wrote to Kelsall, in January 1825, from his Clifton 'demi-uncle's':

I am convinced the man who is to awaken the drama must be a bold trampling fellow—no creeper into worm-holes—no reviser even—however good—With the greatest reverence for the antiquities of the drama, I still think we had better beget than revive—

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attempt to give the literature of this age an idiosyncrasy and spirit of its own, and only raise a ghost to gaze on, not to live with.'

In accordance with this theory Marcello tries to spread his conquests, not like Tamburlane to the farthest corners of the earth, but like a modern Faustus into the inmost crannies of men's minds. The resurrection of Valeria was to prove to Orazio Marcello's divine power and throw him on the mercy of his tyrannical brother. But since Valeria had never been dead, the conjuring must remain a fake, and the real problem of the power of the spirit over lifeless matter must remain unsolved. Yet before completing *The Second Brother* he had actually succeeded in an artistic treatment of this mystery in his beautiful poem *Pygmalion*. Such is the power of man's mind that it can endow the cold marble with the divine spark of life, even if only at the cost of its own extinction.

*Pygmalion* was written about the middle of May 1825, and on 8 June Beddoes wrote to Kelsall: 'I do not intend to finish that 2nd Brother... but am thinking of a very Gothic-styled tragedy for w<sup>h</sup> I have a jewel of a name—DEATH'S JESTBOOK.' The death of *The Second Brother* was the birth of *Death's Jest-Book*, for Beddoes had come to realize that a mere stage-trick, employed for the temporary advancement and final overthrow of a diabolical design, could furnish no adequate illustration of his most cherished notions; and as soon as this became clear to him he abandoned his play in the middle of the fourth act. There was to be conjuring in *Death's Jest-Book* also, but no faked resurrection this time. It was to be a raising into real life of one truly dead, and the play was to prove beyond any shadow of a doubt the immortality of the soul and the power of the mind over matter. Undeniable proof of his thesis thus became an artistic

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as well as a psychological necessity to a poet who was to confess himself 'haunted for ever' by the problem of death. If he really felt himself plagued by the early memories of unwitting desecration of its majesty, then he must also feel compelled to seek for proof spiritual and material that death is no more than an illusion and that in spite of it 'life remains triumphant'. And so while still at work on *The Second Brother* he had reached the decision to take up the study of medicine. While there must have been a strong element of heredity in his choice -and we do not know how seriously he had ever considered becoming a Lawyer- the decision was nevertheless intimately connected with his dramatic authorship, and it is difficult to doubt that it was, at that particular moment, dictated by his determination to find scientific proof of the theory of which his play was to supply imaginative illustration. And so it was in full confidence of success and in the highest of spirits that Beddoes launched himself in a new career.

It was Dr. King who influenced him in the choice of Göttingen rather than Edinburgh as the scene of his medical first steps. He had been staying at Clifton since November 1824 and did not return to London till late in February or early March 1825. In April he went to Oxford where he received an ordinary B.A. degree on 5 May. Here he attended anatomical lectures, translated the *Philosophische Briefe* of Schiller for an undergraduate magazine, and wrote some fine poetry like *Pygmalion*. Here he drank the full draughts of an English spring, walking along the river in that intimacy with nature which is reflected in his verse-letter to Procter. He seems to have been thoroughly happy and poetic creation was easy again in the consciousness of a new power alive within him. [n this mood he set out for Germany about the middle of July.

At Göttingen he worked hard, usually getting up,

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according to his own account, at 5 and working with little relaxation and the shortest possible time set apart for meals until 10 at night, when he took out *Death's Jest-Book* and wrote a little, thus out-labouring 'the laborious Sauerkrauts'. He soon got to like the honesty and seriousness of the Germans and new spheres opened to him in their literature, philosophy and science. His letters are as high-spirited as ever, giving entertaining accounts of university professors and undergraduates. His highly developed sense of fun responded with its usual quickness to the absurdities of the Germans, and while he laughed at them he got to like them even better. For a time all went well. He made progress in his studies—Professor Blumenbach, the Nestor of German medical science, was to say that Beddoes was the best pupil he had had during the fifty years of his professorship—and *Death's Jest-Book* was nearing completion. Then there was a hitch. He could not get on with his play. All his high hopes of finding with the aid of medicine the proof positive of man's survival seemed frustrated. The organ of immortality, which I think it must have been his ambition to discover, still eluded him. What I have called elsewhere the 'skeleton complex' seized him. He sought 'with avidity for every shadow of a proof or probability of an after-existence, both in the material and immaterial nature of man'. Still he found nothing. An ordinary man might have despaired; the world of Beddoes' imagination tottered to its fall, the lofty edifice came crashing down. Although this was not to dawn on the poet until a little later, *Death's Jest-Book* was in the process of becoming *The Fool's Tragedy*.

For a time Beddoes seems to have lost his creative power while the blows of disillusion were raining over him. He sought refuge in cynicism but remained unsatisfied. He had lost his faith, and there was no help for him in the world. But he was young, between

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twenty-three and twenty-four, and gradually under soothing influences his spirits rallied. He had never taken his own person very seriously—his modesty and self-irony are the most endearing traits of that admirable correspondence which Swinburne lauded, like so many other critics after him. So, getting to know the plays and stories of Tieck, Beddoes responded readily to the German poet's theory of 'Romantic irony', and could set to work on his tragedy again in a flippant mood which contrasts sharply against the gruesomeness of what had gone before. He received help from another source as well. A new-found friend of Jewish origin could tell him details of ancient Hebrew belief in an organ of immortality, the bone Luz which 'withstands dissolution after death, out of which the body will be developed at the resurrection'. This served Beddoes' dramatic purpose even if it failed to convince the scientist in him. 'Luz is an excellent joke,' he was to write to Kelsall when the finished play was ultimately dispatched to England.

The new-formed friendship with Bernard Reich cannot have failed to mean something for Beddoes. Silent and unexpressed as I am afraid it remained, yet his affection for his penniless friend brought him a happiness apparently new to him. For one year the two friends shared lodgings, first in a curious octagonal house near the Teich, then during the warm season in a small summer-house. After that they parted company, but the friendship survived, and together they were to perform the migration to Wurzburg in the autumn of 1829. Beddoes, who had never anticipated such a long, uninterrupted stay abroad, in the meanwhile paid a visit to England, staying with the Kings once more at Clifton and receiving his M.A. degree at Oxford on 16 April 1828. In London he met Kelsall and Bourne. On the return journey to Göttingen he visited Amsterdam, where in the autumn he stayed



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again for some weeks after another hurried visit to London, where, however, he did not see his English friends, except possibly Revell Phillips, a lawyer of the Middle Temple who managed his affairs for him during his foreign residence. Returned to Göttingen, he finished the preface to his play, copied the whole out clean, and then, it seems, immediately transcribed it for the press with no more alterations than would naturally suggest themselves in the process of copying it again. Before the end of February he dispatched the packet containing his precious manuscript book to England, the result of nearly four years' work, the mirror of his dreams and high aspirations, of doubt and failure and despair, of accepted disillusion, recovery and renewed hope. For such, if it is possible to compress the complexities of life in a bare formula, I believe to have been the course of Beddoes' spiritual development during those years.

There can be no doubt about it that Beddoes expected his play to cause a sensation in the literary world, and he even expressed his regret that 'so much absurdity in reviews' was likely to escape him where he was. Even in his deepest fits of despondency he cannot have imagined for one moment that it would not reach the press at all and that his best friends, wont to encourage him in his immaturity, would now become instrumental in suppressing his finest effort. On this one gigantic throw now rested all his hopes in the world. He can hardly himself have realized to what extent his work differed from the watered-down Romanticism of his contemporaries, except in his conviction of its superior merits. He was right. Some thirty years later Landor was to say: 'Nearly two centuries have elapsed since a work of the same wealth of genius as *Death's Jest-Book* was given to the world.' Conscious of powers that were to provoke such enthusiasm he cannot very well have made it clear to himself that

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a public that so far had refused to take Shelley and Keats to their bosom and among whom Blake had worked for so long unknown except to a small circle, would reject Beddoes also. And so Procter and Bourne decided against immediate publication, requesting the author in the meanwhile for substantial revision. Only Kelsall, with better knowledge of Beddoes' retiring pride, wanted to see the play published at once, although even he could not withhold his disappointment in the weakness of the character-drawing.

In a sense the critics were right also, from their point of view. *Death's Jest-Book* was not what they had a right to expect from the literary progeny whose début more than six years before had been proclaimed superior to that of Chatterton and Keats. And Procter at any rate must have felt some responsibility for his protégé. The faults of Beddoes' performance were glaring enough. The plot was as complicated and confused as ever. The dialogue as impossible. All the characters seem to declaim into the void, and none answer the others. There is no individualization, and this was the reason why Beddoes had been able seemingly without effort to incorporate parts of older plays. It was all his own drama, his own wrestling with the problems of the spirit, problems unsolved. For Beddoes himself had not noticed that his idea remained at cross-purposes with the action of the play, his elaborate Elizabethan plot at war with the central theme. He had failed to find, in Mr. Eliot's phrase, 'the objective correlative' of his thought. Nor can the 'Romantic irony' borrowed from the Germans have recommended itself to his English critics. It provided no solution, but on the contrary went to spoil one of his finest creations, the resurrected Wolfram; for what might have been appropriate to Mandrake, entertaining as it is, could not serve the spirit of retribution in the execution of an awe-inspiring task. It is undeni-

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able that Beddoes' sense of fun, too, fed on queer food sometimes and is not even yet always recognized by critics except under the name of the grotesque, for from his earliest infancy his mind had so familiarized itself with skulls and crossbones that he derived infinite amusement from tossing them about like custard pies in a slap-stick comedy. His daring naturalism of language, entirely modern in its unavoidsance of the homely and vigorous, was in complete contrast with his age. And to the faults apparent to his contemporaries we might add yet another. Although set in a defined historical milieu the whole spirit of the play is a product of its period and so essentially anachronistic. The ruined cathedral and churchyard were as inappropriate to the thirteenth century as they were congenial to Romanticism or acceptable to the Elizabethans. The same applies to the details. But the play had merits also surpassing anything produced by his contemporaries.

The very plot has a primitive directness commonly avoided in Romantic drama. Whereas contemporary practice ruled that murder could only be committed in a fit of sudden lunacy, a dislocation in the brain—and Beddoes had fallen into this error himself in his more youthful compositions—in *Death's Jest-Book* there is no shirking of the issue. But the plot and all its action is of course only a pretext for the poetry, yet a necessary pretext. In the dialogue arising out of the artificially contrived situations Beddoes could express that drama of the spirit to which the plot had failed to accommodate itself. In the songs sung by the dramatic characters their inmost essence is expressed. In others an epitome of the action and situation is given. In the blank verse of his play he had found the true objective correlative of his thought, and the poetical dialogue embodies the struggles of his mind, oscillating between life and death, time and eternity. It is Beddoes' very self,

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Although he submitted to the verdict of his friends with model modesty and self-effacement, he could not withhold some groans at the thought of having to attempt the rewriting of what seemed the greater part of his play. Even so it never seems to have occurred to him that it would not be published in the following autumn. It was only when the work of revision got him into worse knots than ever, that he seems to have despaired of his play and of himself. Although no details are available this must have been the period of his depression at Göttingen when he tried to take his life. His exodus in fact became less grandiose though hardly less conspicuous.

On 12 August 1829 he seems to have decided to get completely and thoroughly drunk. Needless to say he succeeded, perhaps even beyond expectation, and certainly brought about consequences which he can hardly have foreseen. How he got there we do not know, but by 11.30 in the evening he had made himself such a thorough nuisance at Professor Himly's house and proved himself so intractable that a posse of university police was urgently summoned. Three 'butters' turned up to remove the delinquent, no name having been mentioned in the S O S. On the way they could see a broken window, indicating which way the offender had taken, and another student obligingly informed them that he was still in the professor's house, as he had heard a loud noise inside. The three policemen entered and on the third landing were confronted with the professor's coachman and gardener leading between them a thoroughly soused student whom they immediately recognized as Beddoes. To remove him was not easy, for he defended himself valiantly and kicked them (on the shins, I suspect). So the student they had met outside was called in to help and repeatedly lent them a hand. With the assistance of an additional patrol of police they finally succeeded

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in taking Beddoes home to his lodgings in Weenderstrasse. There he was carried upstairs, but it proved impossible to put him to bed. In fact he hit round with his stick so ferociously that he even cut off the neck of a bottle and sent it crashing through the window-pane into the street. However, they ultimately managed to place him on a sofa where he seemed to calm down, and when he appeared to be dozing off the policemen left. But within half an hour a new call arrived at the police headquarters from his landlord, saying Beddoes was making an awful noise in the house. When the reinforced patrol arrived, however, he was quiet and made no more noise that night. His landlord, nevertheless, could show them his trunk and writing-table and other belongings in the courtyard where he had thrown them out of the window. In so doing he had moreover fatally injured a turkey, so that the owner had been forced to destroy it. On the following morning Beddoes emerged and in the company of a few friends consumed eight bottles of wine in celebration of his deeds.

The next day he was forbidden to leave his lodgings between eight in the evening and six in the morning. Three days later he made his first appearance before the university court. He denied all knowledge of the offences charged against him, because he had been drunk and did not remember what had happened. He did recollect being at Professor Himly's, but could think of no reason why. He also recalled trying to open his trunk and throwing it out of the window when he could not find the key. The court adjourned, and the same evening Beddoes appeared between ten and eleven at a popular open-air restaurant and obstreperously demanded wine, which was refused. At the next meeting of the university court he was necessarily charged with this new offence, sufficiently grave to merit public relegation. Beddoes' excuse was that he

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had believed the period of his 'gating' to be over once the court had met a week before, and until then he had not transgressed.

It was now rumoured in Göttingen that Beddoes had intended leaving the university at Michaelmas and so wanted to have a gay time and plenty of ragging before going down, but this looks to me like a ruse intended to make his exit appear voluntary. The university authorities, however, could not close their eyes to the fact that drunkenness was on the increase among the undergraduates—this was only a year or two before Bismarck made his appearance there—and Beddoes' case had become so widely notorious that something had to be done. On the other hand, Beddoes had an excellent record, never having suffered other punishment than four days' imprisonment for the ragging of a university bedel, whereas his work had won him the respect of his teachers. Hence the charge was reduced to one of deliberate intoxication; it was agreed that in view of Beddoes' known tendency towards spleen even a short term of imprisonment was inadvisable lest greater harm should ensue, and it was decided that he should be sent down without further punishment, the sentence, however, to be conveyed to him with the utmost possible leniency and the stress placed on the fact that the sentence had been dictated not by the offence alone but also by consideration for his own good in the belief that a change of scene would be beneficial to him. On 24 August Beddoes was told to leave Göttingen within twenty-four hours. It was plainly impossible for him to settle all accounts in that \* brief space, and so he was sought at Weende where he was lingering, presumably while making up his mind where to go, by the landlord of the König von Preussen and made to sign an acknowledgement for a substantial sum owing to that innkeeper for wine consumed in his restaurant. Although he had given his

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barber a cherished skeleton in part payment of his bill, the duns may have speeded his departure, and before long he matriculated in the university of Würzburg. His friend Reich was accepted on 22 September, whereas Beddoes did not become a member of the university until 13 October, but I think they must have travelled together, although Beddoes had probably failed to provide himself with the ex-matriculation papers necessary for membership in another university and so had to write to Göttingen for them. His debts in the meanwhile remained unsettled until more than three years later the university took matters into its own hands, declared Beddoes publicly relegated for failure to honour his obligations, sold over 700 books belonging to him which had remained at his landlord's, paid his bills with the proceeds, and probably bagged the balance.

The Beddoes who made his appearance in Würzburg was a very different person from Robert Browning's 'capital skeleton-undergraduate' who had left England more than four years earlier. The Göttingen period had been one of intense struggle, rich experience, acute disappointment, and mortal agony, but Beddoes must have emerged from it a sobered and a more harmonious being, free from the self-torturing ambition of the very young, the skeleton-complex gone that had pursued him long but was now never again to appear in his verse; something of the fire extinguished, but a rich experience gained, and a deep fund of human emotion now at his command. The possibility of losing his younger sister who was dangerously ill at Florence the same autumn may have added to the new seriousness in his outlook. Moreover, after only one term's residence at Würzburg his friend Bernard Reich disappears from our records. His fate is unknown. If the 'loved longlost boy' of the *Dream Pedlary* is to be identified with him, it seems

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that he must have died. Beddoes certainly henceforth did 'consecrate [his] being'

*To that divinest hope, which none can know of  
Who have not laid their dearest in the grave.*

This is only one instance of the new tragic strain which now forced its entrance into Beddoes' poetry and was to recur again and again until he himself was at last ready to enter the 'loved one's home'. Some of his most beautiful poetry was written at Wiirzburg. The quantity is minute, but the quality beyond prize.

At Wurzburg Beddoes completed his medical studies, receiving his degree of M.D. on 10 September 1831. He did not, however, go through the formality of submitting a dissertation, and so his diploma remained unclaimed. As early as the preceding January he had contemplated an early departure from Wurzburg. Perhaps his studies for the degree took longer than he had anticipated, but even after the completion of his examinations he did not leave Bavaria, for he had now become absorbed in politics and was taking an active part in the activities of the radical students' organizations. The German *Burschenschaft* was not open to foreigners, and the case of Beddoes seems to be unique, but in 1831 he was actually accepted as a member of the *Germania* association of the *Burschenschaft*. The circumstances of Wiirzburg were peculiar and that may to some extent explain an otherwise astounding fact. Whereas in all other German universities the *Burschenschaft* kept strictly aloof from other political societies, at Wurzburg they joined forces with the radical party which here worked for the same ideals as they, and on the other hand academic citizenship seems to have been regarded as constituting a right as good as any to take a part in public affairs. Beddoes soon came to play a prominent one. From the autumn of 1831 until the following May he published articles,



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though anonymous, in the *Bayerisches Volksblatt* on Polish, French, and English politics, and he soon became known as a public speaker. We can follow his activities in some detail, for as a democratic Englishman he was an asset to the radical movement and was given a great deal of publicity in the press, and on the other side the Bavarian government agents were on the watch and furnished reports concerning his movements.

One secret report tells us about a meeting of representatives of the university students and members of *Der Grune Bund* at the public-house of one Sebald in Reubeltsgasse, where violent speeches were made by several *Burschenschafter* and it was decided to work together for the annihilation of the Russo-Prussian colossus and the overthrow of all German princes except one, under whom the small states were to be united into one constitutional *Reich*. It appears as if Beddoes had been the most important person present, for he spoke several times and was honoured with a presentation of cigars by the 'greenshirts'. More public was the occasion of a banquet given in honour of General Rybinsky, one of the heroes of the Polish war of liberation, and full reports appeared in the radical press. Beddoes was more fully reported than other speakers, perhaps because as a foreigner he was considered the least vulnerable. After many a candid-word had been spoken and toasts had been called in freedom's cause, the national anthem was played and sung. Its notes had hardly ceased resounding through the hall, when Beddoes rose and spoke directly to the heart of all. He spoke of Freedom, recalling how its progress had been thwarted during the last few years, but with the assurance that it lived in the hearts of men and would emerge victorious. It was a word, he said, which makes human language divine and contains the promise of a happy future for an enslaved

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mankind. In a magnificent image, identifying the scythe of time with the emblem of the Polish Guard, he saw the victorious vision of Saturn commanding their army in triumphant war, and at last, apostrophizing the universe's soul, he sounded the appeal for Freedom.

About two months later Beddoes again made a noted public appearance at the anniversary of the Bavarian constitution, celebrated at Gaibach on 27 May 1832. On no previous occasion had popular feeling run so high, and but for the moderation of the leader of the radicals a political separation from Bavaria would have been effected. Again Beddoes spoke last of all. Again he was complimented in the press for his liberal opinions, fluent delivery, and classical metaphors which both on this and previous occasions had gained for him a warm reception and excited admiration for his rhetorical talents. In excuse for speaking on such an occasion Beddoes had referred to the irrepressible feeling that stirred him as the son of a free country present at such a celebration. Forgetting that the festival took place in the grounds of the Count von Schönborn, he depicted the aristocracy as creatures lacking all soul, whereas the reformers, we understand, were such as partook of emanations of the demiurge. He spoke in fiery metaphors of political freedom and of the happiness of the free citizen, foreseeing a home being prepared for such freedom also in beautiful Bavaria. In his mind's eye he visualized how on that very day, only a few years hence, a Herodotus would at that same column where he was speaking tell the history of the victory of German freedom, an Æschylus recite the tragedy of the overthrow of the tyrants, and an Aristophanes hold up the old aristocracy to ridicule.

Beddoes was now received in the very bosom of the subversive movement, a club named the *Freie Reichsstadt*. Again, this is an almost unbelievable achieve-

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ment for a foreigner, but the facts are not to be doubted. Since the club was a kind of society order on Masonic lines, every *Reichsstädter* had his own *nom de guerre*, and Beddoes was duly identified by the secret police under the name '*des Königs Mörders*\* Oliver Cromwell, or more familiarly 'Nol.' At this stage, however, the government also saw itself forced to take counter-measures unless its authority were to be thoroughly undermined, and one of its first moves was to get rid of Beddoes. A government decree of 10 July 1832 ordered him to leave Würzburg within three days and Bavaria within a week, because he had made a most violent speech at Gaibach. It could not be permitted, the government maintained, for foreigners to abuse the hospitality of the country by meddling with public affairs in order to subvert the régime. The description of his person appended to the expulsion document enables us to visualize him as he appeared to the agents of government, a grotesque figure enough, pouring out his metaphysics in broken German.

'Height 5' 7", hair light-brown, forehead high, eyebrows fair, eyes dark, nose fairly long and pointed, mouth big, chin rather prominent, face oval, complexion pale, build slight, neglected clothing, light-grey coat, white breeches, and either in English fashion or as German hero of Hambach one boot black, the other red, and on one of them a gold or gilt spur, speaks bad German, fair moustache, bad teeth.'

The strange colour scheme was that of the *Bursehenschaft*, adopted as a symbol of a pan-German union, and worn in the manner described because badges had been forbidden.

Notice of the deportation order was given to Beddoes on 15 July in the morning. Determined, however, \*to oppose every possible measure to the arbitrary

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illegality' of the King of Bavaria, Beddoes in his capacity of an academic citizen appealed to the Rector of the university. A special meeting of the senate was immediately summoned, and on 17 July a letter of protest was addressed to the King. The government reply, dated on 21 July, naturally refused to admit the interpretation by the university of the common law of the country so as to exempt academic citizens from its application. Beddoes in the meanwhile had addressed a letter to the British minister in Munich, although this did not reach its destination till 22 July, whereas according to the terms of the deportation order he should have left on the 18th. Apart from a sympathetic answer it does not seem to have effected anything, nor is it known what happened to his remonstrance sent to the Bavarian ministry for the interior.

In the meanwhile his friends were getting anxious, and while waiting for the ruling of the Government decided to secure Beddoes' prolonged stay at Würzburg by somewhat unusual means. One of his creditors, probably genuine, watchmaker Böschl, who was an active radical, ingeniously requested the City Commissary that he should deprive Beddoes of his passport lest he should leave Würzburg without paying his debts. But the authorities were not so easily beguiled. The City Commissary refused, and decided that Beddoes must leave on 21 July. Böschl then brought a summons, and his debtor was duly arrested. So far all seemed well. Yet even his desire by all possible means to oppose 'the absurdity of the King of Bavaria' could not, it seems, overcome Beddoes' distaste for the regional gaol, where, presumably, he was treated no better than common thieves and murderers, and so the next scene of this farce opens with Böschl wanting to withdraw his suit. This, however, the law would not allow, and on 21 June at twelve noon, when he was to have left Würzburg, Beddoes was still in prison. But he

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had never been an easy lodger and seldom stayed long at the same boarding-house, and prison seems to have palled upon him. He decided to offer Böschl security, the watchmaker consequently applied for the release of his prisoner, and Beddoes left that day.

His exit was triumphal. Numerous friends bade him farewell, and some of them, in three chaises, accompanied him on his way as far as Rohrbrunn. Among these were city magistrates, officials of all the political clubs and societies, the actors in the scene at Sebald's public-house, and others, but against each one of them, as far as the information provided by the Bavarian archives goes, a special charge was to be brought in their indictment on the ground that they 'had accompanied Dr. Beddoes when he left Wiirzburg'. The radical papers, on the other hand, abused the government for the arbitrary deportation of a person, 'liked by everybody', whose only crime had been the spending of 5,000 guilders a year in a city, apparently not used to such extravagance, and whose benevolence had been proved on numerous occasions. He was also stated to have many sincere friends in Würzburg.

Fortunately, several of these were able to join him at Zürich, where he betook himself after a short stay at Strassbourg. The new university recruited both its professors and many of its undergraduates from the refugees that came pouring across the frontier. One of the first to matriculate as student was Beddoes, one of the first professors to be appointed was his friend Johann Lucas Schönlein, whose fame had originally lured him to Würzburg. The German refugees in fact became quite influential in the government of Zürich, although there was always a conservative opposition powerful enough to make their existence precarious from time to time. On the whole, his years at Zürich were to become the happiest, I think, in Beddoes' life. He had plenty of friends, enjoyed a general reputation

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for wide and solid scientific learning, could indulge in all the freaks of his disposition, had plenty of leisure for study and writing, and near at hand were lakes on which he rowed and hills and mountains which he climbed and over which he strolled sometimes on extensive walking tours.

Foremost among his friends was Schönlein, with whom he made a visit to England in 1835 and returned with him through France. They did not stay long, and the journey was probably improvised when Schönlein was called to Brussels to assist the Queen of the Belgians in child-birth. On their return to Zürich, however, in June a rumour circulated there that Schönlein was going to be appointed Physician in Ordinary to the King of the Belgians, and we have no difficulty in recognizing Beddoes in the English physician, equally conspicuous for eminent learning and grotesque eccentricity of manners, who emphatically denied such degrading conjectures. 'Schönlein,' he said, 'is a man to have a king in attendance on his own person rather than be himself in attendance on a king.' But not so many years later Schönlein actually became physician to the King of Prussia, and the friendship with Beddoes was then gradually to cool. It seems probable from the parallel case of Keller, the lawyer and virtual dictator of the Zürich Regeneration but later professor at Berlin and trusted adviser of the king, that what amused the free republic among the Alps did not go down so well in Berlin, and the freaks which from all accounts were embarrassing enough at Zürich probably proved intolerable in the Prussian capital.

Through Schönlein Beddoes must have known all the medical professors of Zürich, and in July 1835 the medical faculty informed the Board of Education that it had come to their knowledge that Dr. Beddoes was willing to lecture in the university, particularly on comparative anatomy, and was prepared to pay all ex-

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penses connected with his course. As the faculty considered this proposal wholly advantageous to the university, they unanimously recommended it. The Board, however, required further information which Keller undertook to gather privately. Nothing came of it, the most probable reason being that it was found against the statutes to appoint a 'professor' who had neither published anything nor held another university appointment. This is another of the regrettable failures of Beddoes' life, for he needed now, I think, the steadying influence of a regular job on which to concentrate his universal and erratic genius. And it seems as if the university wanted another professor of comparative anatomy, for when the German doctor-poet Georg Buchner arrived in Zurich exactly fifteen months later, he almost immediately lectured as 'privatdozent' and the intention seems to have been to create a chair in comparative anatomy for him. Even less fortunate than Beddoes, he died only four months later, but it seems more than likely that Beddoes met him, for Schönlein was only one among several common acquaintances, another worthy of especial mention being the poet Herwegh.<sup>1</sup>

If Keller's influence was not sufficient to carry Beddoes' nomination through the Board of Education, which was to thwart his wishes on even more important issues, it was nevertheless enough to secure Beddoes' continued residence at Zürich when late in 1835 all politically active refugees were arrested or expelled. Beddoes undoubtedly enjoyed an established reputation for political radicalism, and it does not seem unlikely that this was what turned the Board of Education against his appointment, although the reason

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, I find it difficult to see the likeness, suggested by Mr. E. Sackville West, between the warm philanthropist Büchner and an intellectual revolutionary like Beddoes or between the thoroughly human *Wozzeck* and the speculative *Death's Jest-Book*. (See the *New Statesman*, 10 May 1947, p. 333.)

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given was purely formal. This would explain why Beddoes could state to Kelsall that he had

'narrowly escaped becoming professor of comparative Anatomy in the University of Zürich...by means of a timely quarrel, in which I engaged, more solito, with several members of the government'.

To Revcll Phillips he seems to have mentioned only that 'a very reasonable regulation' prevented his appointment, unless Phillips himself suppressed further details. On the other hand, Beddoes was not expelled as, in spite of Keller, he probably would have been if political activities could have been proved against him. But he had been careful not formally to join any of the secret societies working on Swiss soil for the liberation of Germany from all her petty princes. At any rate I could not find his name in any of the authentic lists of members preserved in the Swiss archives. German spies, however, in their secret reports did not hesitate to mention him as a member of the *Handwerkerverein*, a widespread organization of students and working men who carried on the aims and principles of the Würzburg *Reichsstadt*. As a secret society it arranged meetings unobtrusively in the open air or at country inns, and since Beddoes was in the habit of stopping on his tours to drink beer and talk politics to the people in the inns he passed, it is not impossible that he fell in with them more than once, and he may even have had an unofficial connexion with them. I do not think that he wrote any political articles or pamphlets during his first years at Zürich, although it seems likely that he did so later.

Beddoes' oddities impressed themselves on people at Zürich very strongly. An acquaintance of his, Ignaz Thomas Scherr, Inspector of Schools in the canton of Zürich, has a passage about him in his memoirs published in 1840. He describes him as 'a young man of



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very comprehensive scientific knowledge', who possessed means in excess of the cost of living at Zürich, and who was, moreover, an incarnation of all the eccentricities of the English, which, even when less pronounced, so forcibly strike the foreigner. For instance, he greatly enjoyed teasing the plodding keepers of the Zürich coffee-houses, and made them victims of curious practical jokes. Unfortunately Scherr gives no concrete examples. Even the highest in the land did not escape merciless ridicule, and Beddoes loved embarrassing them with a 'behaviour à la Falstaff'. Scherr and the Zürich press together help us in reconstructing one such episode. Beddoes had, we are told, made the acquaintance of an exceptionally stout representative of German manhood and it seems as if he had immediately seized the opportunity of making him ridiculous. For several months Beddoes fed this German Chesterton, in bulk if not in talents, Dr. Schmidt, on the strongest of diets in order to make him look the part. He then rented the local theatre for a performance of *Henry IV* in order to show off his prodigy in the part of Falstaff. Beddoes himself took the part of Hotspur and must have enjoyed railing against the futile art of poetry, as indeed Bourne in his novel makes 'Derwent' do. For the part of Lady Percy he engaged the prima donna of the theatre, Mme Birch-Pfeiffer. Most of the other actors also belonged to the regular company, and we are assured that Beddoes rewarded them most liberally and entertained them royally. The performance was to take place on 20 January 1838, and invitations were sent out in advance. As a hoax it was given out that no radicals were to be given tickets. Yet it appears they were to be had for the asking at the bookshop of one of Beddoes' friends, Julius Blaich. Only when a member of the government, who I think must have been Keller, in a dictatorial voice asked for five tickets in Beddoes'

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name, it so happened that the poet heard him from the inner shop where he was talking to Blaich, and he then quickly slipped round the corner of the house, so that when 'the Dictator' was just repeating his demand to Blaich himself, Beddoes could impudently shout over his shoulder: 'I have never seen this person before; he shan't have a ticket.' But Keller was at the performance all the same in the company of another distinguished common friend, David Ulrich, the Public Prosecutor, who had been Keller's right hand in drafting the new constitution of Zürich.

The performance was to commence at six in the evening, and the doors were opened at five. The auditorium was crowded—there was room for 800 people—and the mixture of the classes was complete. Whether Beddoes himself had gone into the seating arrangements or no, they turned out in his spirit right enough, for we are told that the highest in the land were in the most shocking manner made to rub shoulders with the proletariat and that the number of radicals of the lower classes was conspicuous. The two parts of *Henry J F* were given in the German version of one play, and in the intervals the Zürich undergraduate choir sang in the orchestra. According to the *Volksbote*, representing Beddoes' own view, Dr. Schmidt played to perfection the part for which nature had destined him, but the Inspector of Schools in his *Memoirs* maintained that he had not grasped one whit of Falstaff's humour, and while complaining that 'eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me', he leapt about the stage with the agility of a professional dancer. According to the same source Hotspur pronounced his German with a pure English accent, but for a first appearance his acting was acceptable enough. The audience at any rate were pleased, and at the last curtain the shouts for Beddoes were clamorously repeated, but he had it

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given out that he had already left the theatre. Thus did he earn his place in the history of Shakespearian production,<sup>1</sup> and deservedly, because the performances of Shakespeare were certainly encouraged by his example and others were soon to follow on the Zürich stage.

Of a very different nature is a later incident, which happens to be known to us. Returned from an invigorating walking tour in the summer, Beddoes found a well-known and popular, though perhaps slightly ageing singer from the Vienna Opera still in command of public favour, after several months of uninterrupted success. So Beddoes in his idoloclastic manner devised a scheme to undermine her popularity. On 7 December 1838 a hoaxing article appeared in one of the Zürich newspapers, giving full particulars of the formation of a booing society under the leadership of 'the well-known Dr. Beddoes'. As soon as the membership should reach ninety, the popular prima donna was to be greeted with a storm of whistling and booing instead of the wonted enthusiastic applause. The members were already said to number sixty-five. Another organization, the same source informs us, had already been formed for the protection of their idol, and at the first sign of a demonstration the disturbers were to be removed. The law courts were said to have provided tons of paper in anticipation of litigation on a gigantic scale, and Beddoes' friend Ulrich, the Public Prosecutor, was hinted at as destined to be more than usually astute in the eyes of his admirers. Nor did other friends of the poet escape unscathed, and I should be much surprised to learn that Beddoes did not write the

<sup>1</sup> See *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*, I, *Henry IV*, p. x1, and the *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 August 1946, p. 402. I cannot help underlining that this is the performance so grievously misrepresented by the late Sir Edmund Gosse as having taken place in 1848 with Degen in the part of Hotspur and, lamentably unsuccessful, causing Beddoes to commit suicide at Basle.

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article himself or at least in collaboration with the editor.

In the congenial surroundings of Zürich and Switzerland and in 'the pleasant translunary moods' into which he rowed and walked himself, there blossomed once more the flowers of poetry. By 1837 he had accumulated enough material to contemplate the publication of a volume of prose and poetry, *The Ivory Gate*, including of course the inevitable *Death's Jest-Book*. Nothing came of the publication. The prose-tales, alas! have perished. The lyrics are among his finest and, almost without exception, among the pearls of English poetry, some gay, some burlesque, some not a little vulgar, others beautifully melancholy, and some sad and sorrowful beyond description. A great many went into *Death's Jest-Book* which Beddoes now started revising in earnest. Necessarily this was a futile task, because the poet was now a different man who ought to have been doing other things, and some of the proposed revisions were too radical ever to be incorporated in the play. Yet there it was and could 'not be helped', and Beddoes had to try and do his best for it. At moments *The Last Man* played again in his imagination, under the influence, it seems, of *Ixion in Heaven*, but as long as *Death's Jest-Book* remained unprinted he had to return to it and rewrite and revise. At this period it really appears how 'infinitely regrettable', in Robert Browning's words, was the refusal of his friends to forward it to the press in 1829. Beddoes still had it in him to do something great, as the new first act to his still-born play was to show, but he was thwarted by the skeleton in his cupboard which he had to take out to be aired and dusted whenever the mood came and creative power was his.

Nor can it be said that his continued German residence was good for him as an English poet. He had started thinking and writing in German, and I have a

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distinct feeling that English phrasing became increasingly difficult for him. If he had lived in contact with English intellectual life, continued his interchange of ideas with Kelsall and Bourne, developed his relations with Darley and Mrs. Shelley, even with Procter, personally known the young Tennyson and Browning, or Hood and Praed even, what a poet he might have been! In his isolation there was no incitement to write, and what he felt was his great work remained unpublished. So, inevitably in the circumstances, he took to writing in German. We have Degen's evidence that once when there was a paper war among the professors he wrote verses on it so witty and learned that even the academic fathers had to consult their dictionaries. Some of his German poems survive in the Zürich press, and one witticism of exceptional vigour, a poem on the Strauss feud, was printed as a pamphlet over his own signature and quoted by several historians of the downfall of the liberal government of the Zürich Regeneration.

The occasion was one of bitter dissension between the local parties, the beginning of a mortal struggle, which was to end in the revolution of 6 September 1839. It is odd to think that such excitement should have been caused by the question of a university appointment, but this was actually what brought matters to a head, even if it was in itself no more than a sign of wider differences. Since 1836 the Radicals had been pressing for the appointment of D. F. Strauss, the author of *Das Leben Jesu*, to a theological chair in the University, but the faculty had been twice thwarted by the Board of Education. In the autumn of 1838 the Radicals took the offensive again and scored a temporary success when Strauss was actually appointed in January 1839. In the meanwhile, however, the whole nation had come to take part in the feud and become sharply divided into two camps. The protests against Strauss's appointment were so loud and numerous that

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on 18 March the government gave way and pensioned off Dr. Strauss before he had time to occupy his chair. The Radicals now moved the abolition of the University. Although not seriously intended, this gave Schönlein an excuse for resigning in favour of a professorship at Berlin. He was prevailed upon to stay for the time being, and the students honoured him with a torch parade. All these matters are reflected in Beddoes' satire, which was immediately and repeatedly quoted in the press. But there was no concealing the fact that the elections were going against the government, and for Beddoes the happy days at Zürich were drawing to a close.

An amusing episode during the summer offers a sidelight on the party alignment as far as it affected Beddoes himself. On 13 July he applied to the Commissioner of Police for a residence permit. He was then informed that this could only be granted if he fulfilled the necessary formalities of submitting a birth certificate or a caution of 800 francs, a very considerable sum. Beddoes, we are told, at first seemed willing to pay the caution, but then changed his mind and maintained that the police ought to be satisfied with his, 'diplomatic' passport (possibly a diplomatic visa is intended), otherwise he should be forced to complain to the British Ambassador that British passports were not respected in Zürich. He then called on Burgomaster Hess, protesting against the treatment he had received at the hands of the police. The Burgomaster investigated the case, but found that no treaty, similar to those concluded with France and Sardinia regulating the residence of their nationals in the Canton, existed where England was concerned, and Beddoes would have to pay his caution or remove elsewhere. By 17 August, however, the caution was still unpaid, and Beddoes received notice that failure to pay it within fifteen days would result in an order for his

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expulsion. At the same time the police were instructed to take such measures as were usual in the case of the deportation of foreigners. But on 29 August the Executive, of which Beddoes' friend Ulrich was the chief, reported that all the necessary formalities had not been observed by the Town Council, and they did not see their way to deport Beddoes until that was done. The next meeting of the Council did not take place until 19 October, when it was decided to reprimand the Executive and to issue an order for Beddoes' immediate expulsion. Inquiries were further to be made within ten days to ascertain whether the order had been executed. The police consequently made their appearance at Beddoes' lodgings at 1 Rosengasse on 27 October and were received by Beddoes, who, to the confusion of these ministers of justice, produced a certificate of matriculation in the University. Academic citizenship was something which even the Town Council and Burgomaster Hess had to respect, and on 29 October the order for Beddoes' deportation was cancelled and his membership card in the University restored to him. He had learned his lesson at Würzburg, and the University Registers confirm his second matriculation on 4 September 1839. For nearly two months he had been laughing in his sleeve at the angry efforts of the city dignitaries to reduce an independent Englishman to obedience of the letter of the law. But long before the matter was thus settled, the liberal government had been overthrown, Ulrich was in exile with Keller at Baden in the neighbouring canton of Aargau, whereas Burgomaster Hess was confirmed in his position as a member of the new government.

At the revolution on 6 September 1839 most of Beddoes' friends had been compelled to flee, and although normal conditions were soon restored at Zürich, Beddoes' existence cannot have been as free from anxiety as when he enjoyed the protection of

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some of the most powerful members of the government. He stayed on until 9 April 1840, when, by all accounts, he had suddenly to flee the country. The circumstances are mysterious. There was nothing in the general conditions to necessitate such desperate action. Unless he was acting on a sudden impulse, perhaps even under a misapprehension, the only conclusion seems to be that he had been guilty of some exceptionally violent attack on the government or felt himself under grave suspicion and sought safety before arrest—a fate which indeed did overtake other foreign political agitators at that very time. From this unhappy moment Beddoes was to be 'for ever wandering', unable to settle down for more than one or two years at the utmost in the same place.

At last he returned to England for more than a short visit. On Monday, 15 June, he gave a lecture at the Polytechnic Institution, Regent Street, on 'The History, Past and Present, and the Hopes of Future Dramatic Poetry of the Caucasian Race in Europe'. Very few people went, but among the audience was probably Procter and certainly Emmeline King, the poet's cousin. Seeing the rows of empty benches Beddoes suggested cancelling the lecture, but the gallant few insisted on hearing him. He showed signs of age, we are told. Nobody present had seen him for twelve or fifteen years, and he on his part had been through harrowing experiences and more than once lost all that seemed to make life worth living. His lecture was 'a magnificent piece of writing', but he read it without animation. What it contained we do not know, although it seems likely that *The Ivory Gate*, which was to have contained 'critical and cacochemical remarks on the European literature, in specie the hapless drama of our day', had to give up its buried treasure in order to entertain a handful of the poet's acquaintances in a London lecture hall,



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He was probably not a little isolated in London. Procter was married to a wife who 'cordially detested' Beddoes; Bourne was far away in Newfoundland; he did not see Kelsall. English institutions, or I think rather English society as it was then constituted, apparently seemed to him more detestable than ever. It seems as if English people, when they do react against their surroundings, react more strongly than other nations. However that may be, after so many years of vagabondage on the Continent Beddoes could no longer adapt himself to English ways, and his family connexions were all too grand for him now. So he set out for the Continent again and left 'Cantland' for Berlin early in September.

What attracted him there was a new liberal régime which raised high hopes among the radicals, and even more, I suspect, the presence of friends of former days in Wiirzburg and Zürich, foremost among them Schönlein. We know little of his life there. His habits probably remained much the same as at Zürich. He attended lectures at the University from 1 November 1840 to 8 March 1842. His name occurs in the address-book as Doctor of Medicine, but we do not know whether he practised as a physician. For a time he was joined by his cousin William Minton Beddoes, who now studied medicine in his turn, and the poet was able to give him good and kindly advice concerning his studies. He seems to have been familiar with all the medical schools in the German-speaking world and known most of the professors personally or by reputation. It would seem, however, as if he had found the climate trying after so many winters spent in Switzerland, and after a visit to London in the summer of 1842 he spent the winter and following spring at Baden in Aargau, seeking a cure for rheumatism.

In July 1843 he was in Zürich, where he was to spend a whole year in his old rooms in Rennweg. Here by

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force of habit Melpomene visited him again, and I think it must have been during this year that he wrote out the new First Act to *Death's Jest-Book* in a new manuscript book. He wrote poems in German too for the Zürich press, all political, all radical and anti-catholic. His English poems were few and fragmentary but all dictated by emotional necessity. In August 1844 he was back at Baden for a two months' stay, before proceeding to Giessen, where he had hoped to study under Liebig, the greatest chemist of the day. Unfortunately there was no room for Beddoes, and so he went on his way to Frankfort where he had friends in the theatre, and where after a short visit to Berlin in December he was to return. Perhaps through his connexions with the theatre Beddoes here made the acquaintance of Konrad Degen, who for the rest of his life was to remain his best friend. Eight years younger than Beddoes, Degen had as a mere child been apprenticed to his step-father, who was a baker. The boy, however, had shown a decided inclination for the stage and, after trying his hand at amateur acting, had joined a travelling company in 1837. His performances led to engagements at Mainz, Wiesbaden, and Bremen, but they were all brief, and he was soon forced to return to his step-father's profession. Only six years after the poet's death did he finally devote himself to the stage as a regular member of the Frankfort company.

Beddoes seems to have spent the summer in Switzerland. Possibly Degen was with him. Baden still remained his headquarters, and there he stored his wardrobe and books. He was there from September till December 1845, staying at the Lion Hotel, and on one occasion managed to disturb the peace of Baden by the noise proceeding from his room, for which he was fined eight francs. In January 1846 he was back at Frankfort and stayed there until the end of July, when he went to pay a visit to England which turned out to

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be his final one. Perhaps Beddoes himself had some presentiment of this, for he made a point of visiting all his remaining friends. Bourne, his Pembroke fellow-collegiate, was dead. Andrew Phillips, Revell's brother who acted for him in Shropshire, receiving the rents from his farms for him, thus became the first on the list. From Shiffnall he announced his impending arrival to his family and to Kelsall. Yet it seems to have caused no little sensation when he made his appearance at Cheney Longville riding astride a donkey and, apparently, none too sober. But then he did not like 'the society of fine ladies or to dine with three footmen at my back'. I doubt whether it had been his intention to winter in England. It seems more likely that the ailments of an English winter which assail those who are not used to it overtook Beddoes before he had time to get away. His prolonged stay at Cheney Longville was little to his liking, and for six months he remained shut up in his room reading, smoking, and drinking, little to the liking of his hosts. At length he proceeded to William Minton Beddoes at Birkenhead, 'one of the most abominable places this side of Tartarus,' awaiting warmer weather to travel again. In April he visited Kelsall at Fareham and paid him a short call again at the beginning of June before sailing for the Continent. There were few ties now between the former friends, for the poetry that had fascinated Kelsall more than twenty years earlier had ceased to interest its author. He was occupied with graver matters and appeared to Kelsall almost exclusively concerned with his own inner visions. If I am right in thinking that Kelsall on this occasion produced one of Beddoes' early, long-forgotten notebooks for the poet to write in it a souvenir of his stay, we can see, if we did not know it otherwise, what were the visions that so occupied him.

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*Sweet and sweet is their poisoned note,  
The little snakes of silver throat,  
In mossy skulls that nest and lie,  
Ever singing "die, oh! die."*

The lifelong student was contemplating how to attain the very well of truth. Zoë King, who saw him at Bristol, was 'shocked' at his appearance and thought 'he looked as if he could not live long'.

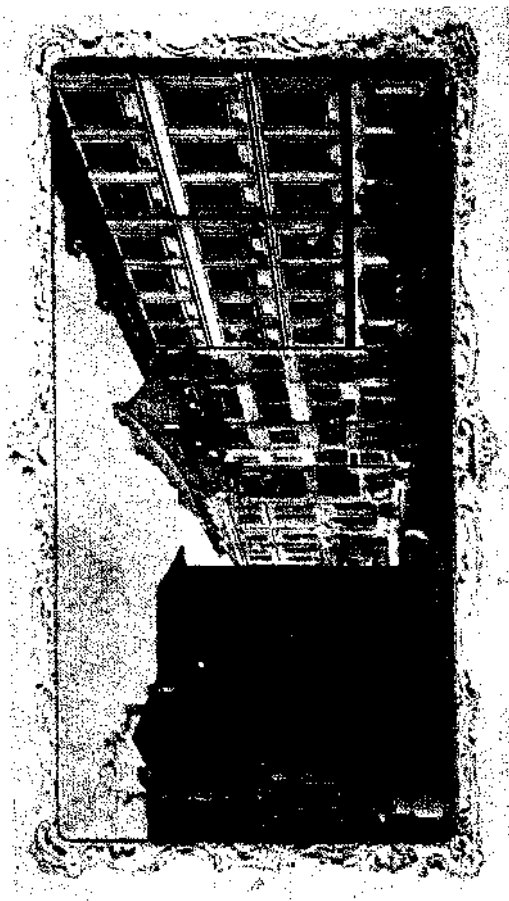
In London he stayed with Revell Phillips at the Middle Temple, and considering how little these two had met and that the firm friendship between them was a direct result of the impression formed by Phillips of Beddoes' character in his correspondence, it is a remarkable tribute to the poet's moral integrity. There was no more upright man than Phillips, and nobody expressed a greater respect for Beddoes or a higher opinion of his character. He did not see the Procters very often, for he was shy of company. He came when he thought he would find them alone, but if he suspected they had guests he, stayed away. One such occasion has become notorious. He had been asked to dinner and afterwards to the theatre. He did not turn up for dinner, but on approaching Drury Lane the Procters found Beddoes arrested by the police for attempting to set the theatre on fire by means of holding a burning five-pound note against a chair. Procter, according to Gosse, had little difficulty in persuading the authorities that such methods were likely to be more injurious to the pocket of the alleged incendiary than to the fabric of the house, but there can be little doubt that this was a genuine demonstration on Beddoes' part against 'the hapless drama of our day', and if his and Isbrand's friend Lord Alcohol supported him in his contention, this makes his gesture none the less significant.

Early in July 1847 Beddoes was back at Frankfort.

## INTRODUCTION

Degen was to tell Zoë King in after-years that on one occasion when he returned after an absence he came into the shop and acted a scene with great spirit and then sat down, his eyes beaming. The two friends may have gone for a short tour to Switzerland in the early autumn. Beddoes habitually travelled stick in hand, but with no luggage whatsoever. He liked the common people and talked to them at the inns along the road, and everywhere he was listened to with respect and attention. One morning they arrived at Zürich early, before people were up, and Degen saw somebody open a window and call to another to come and 'look at Herr Beddoes'. He was entirely at home in Switzerland.

At Frankfort Beddoes pursued his scientific experiments and one day, while dissecting, cut his finger and for six months suffered from the effects of blood-poisoning. One almost wonders whether the accident was genuine. As usual when he was ill, he cut himself off from all company, except Degen, who came to see him at least twice a week. But Gosse's insinuation that he lived with Degen is absolutely without foundation. Whatever his friendships, they were not of a nature to convince Beddoes of anything except 'the absurdity and unsatisfactory nature of human life'. His friendship for Reich had not been sufficient to deter him from trying to commit suicide at Göttingen, nor was his deep and genuine attachment to Degen of a nature to make him wish to prolong his existence now. His philosophy, so far from being that of an inverted Don Giovanni, successful in love-making, is on the contrary that of a man whose inmost heart is with the dead, whose soul is in eternity. I am afraid the 'single and sinfully virtuous' of his letter to Kelsall, 9 March 1837, has to be taken literally and applies not only to the happiest period of his life, but to his last melancholy years of wandering as well,



The Cigogne Hotel, Basle, where, on 18 July 1848, Beddoes cut open an artery in his leg.

*(after lithograph by J. M. Benz)*



## INTRODUCTION

but he sought what he conceived as the source of all poetry.

The irony that is ever on the watch in our lives would so have it that even at his death he was still remembered as the author of *The Brides' Tragedy*, a work of unique promise, some would say only partly fulfilled, Kelsall among them. But as in life he fulfilled his destiny, so in his poetry also he gave permanent expression to the longing in his heart for a love greater than worldly love and a truth deeper than the transitory truth of mortal life.





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## CRITICAL COMMENTS

From *The Album*, May 1823. *On Ancient and Modern Tragedy*, p. 28 and note, pp. 28-9

It will be seen that we have confined ourselves to *acted* plays...and at the present moment when so many poems are thrown into dialogue, it would be endless to give specific consideration to each.

We wish to make one exception to this, and to say a few words concerning a very remarkable production of this sort, which has lately appeared, entitled, *The Bride's [sic] Tragedy*'. We call it a remarkable performance, from its being the work of a very young man, (he states himself, in his preface, to be a minor,) and as conjoining very striking poetical, merits with what we consider the greatest dramatic faults. It is 'brimmed up and running over' with poetry of the wildest imagination and most beautiful fancy—but we have devoted great part of this article to prove that such writing is out of place in a play. The management of the plot is very inartificial and unskilful, as might be expected from so young a writer,—and the dialogue, as we have said, is nearly all entirely inappropriate, as regards the situation of the speaker; but regarded as poetry alone, it is (with the pardonable exception of occasional unsuccessful daring, and, here and there, of a little downright extravagance,) of a degree of originality and beauty which even these most poetical days rarely present... [Quotes *Brides' Tragedy*, I, i, 95-133.]

This is the perfection of graceful and poetical fancy. If Mr. Beddoes would write a poem instead of a play, we have no doubt that he would realize all the expectations which this brilliant first performance has excited,

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From *The Examiner*, 20 July 1850, pp. 461-3. John Forster, *Death's Jest-Book, or the Fool's Tragedy*

The mere title of this dramatic poem recalls a play by Webster, or Cyril Tourneur, and its contents more vividly remind us of those great writers. But not as an imitation. The author of this extraordinary production is no imitator. He is a man of the most original genius. Lawless and unrestrained are his flights of imagination, his outlines of character careless or extravagant, and a madman's dream not more violent or improbable than his ideas of a story or plot. Yet the book is a masterpiece of poetry—a perfect study of style for a young poet. We will recommend it to the best attention of the rising generation of genius ... It is radiant in almost every page with passion, fancy, or thought, set in a most apposite and exquisite language. We have but to discard, in reading it, the hope of any steady interest of story, or consistent development of character: and we shall find a most surprising succession of beautiful passages, unrivalled in sentiment and pathos, as well as in terseness, dignity, and picturesque vigour of language; in subtlety and power of passion, as well as in delicacy and strength of imagination; and as perfect and various, in modulation of verse, as the airy flights of Fletcher or Marlowe's mighty line ...

The reader will have observed throughout our extracts the invariably happy use of the best phrases; and often we have that employment of words suggesting subtle analogies of feeling and thought, painting at once a picture and a passion, in which Shakespeare is fond of indulging ...

*Art thou alone? WHY SO SHOULD BE  
CREATORS AND DESTROYERS.*

The whole range of the Elizabethan drama has not a finer expression than that—nor indeed does any

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single work of the period, out of Shakespeare, exhibit so many rich and precious bars of golden verse, side by side with such poverty and misery of character and plot ... Nothing can be meaner than the design, nothing grander than the execution ...

We must frankly say, in conclusion, that we are not acquainted with any living author who could have written the *Fool's Tragedy*, and, though the publication is unaccompanied by any hint of authorship, we believe that we are correct in stating it to be a posthumous production of the author of the *Bride's [sic] Tragedy*, Mr. Thomas Lovell Beddoes. Speaking of the latter production, now more than a quarter of a century ago (Mr. Beddoes was then, we believe, a student at Pembroke College, Oxford, and a minor), the *Edinburgh Review* ventured upon a prediction of future fame and achievement for the writer, which an ill-chosen and ill-directed subsequent career unhappily interrupted and baffled. But in proof of the noble natural gifts which suggested such anticipation, the production before us remains; and we may judge to what extent a more steady course and regular cultivation would have fertilized a soil, which, neglected and uncared for, has thrown out such a glorious growth of foliage and fruit as this *Fool's Tragedy*.

From *The Examiner*, 27 September 1851, p. 613b.

John Forster, *Poems. By the late Thomas Lovell Beddoes, Author of Death's Jest-Book, or the Fool's Tragedy. With a memoir*

... But surely all we have quoted, fragmentary as it is, proclaims a writer of the highest order—magnificent in diction, terse and close in expression, various and beautiful in modulation, displaying imaginative thoughts of the highest reach, and sweeping the chords

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of passion with a strong and fearless hand. Plenty of defects may be noted—scenes hastily constructed, characters exalted into mere passionate abstractions, motives too sudden, loves and revenges too abundant and intense—but never a want of sincerity, never a borrowed trick, never a gaudy irrelevance, never a superfluous commonplace.

From a *Letter from Robert Browning to T. F. Ke/sall*, 22 May 1868. Printed in *The Browning Box, or the Life and Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes as reflected in letters by his friends and admirers*, Oxford University Press, 1935, pp. 103-5

As I expected, from the moment I began reading the M.S.S. there was nothing for me but to go on and end. I have done so, wishing the matter to read were a year's work rather than a few days': there is not one word I have missed: nor do I find that difficulty in the characters which you speak of. How such a dose of glorious poetry would have affected my brain had I gulped Beddoes for the first time, I hardly know ... On the whole I think you dealt perfectly with Death's Jest Book, in what you with[h]eld: such capital things as Saint Gingo and the Tailor it is a pity to absolutely lose,—but they may be given stripped of the accompanying dialogue. I see what Beddoes wanted to do, and what effect he aimed at in this interfusion of the 'comic stuff' which Milton objects to when blent with 'Tragic sadness & gravity'. The 'stuff' here is immeasurably below the general texture: not that it is other than remarkable,—but what a word would *this* be for the poetry of the piece! Had the comic faculty, and one or two others, been developed in the author equally with the tragic power,—what would have the man been? With the imperfect develop-

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ments I rate some essential to a complete dramatist: such as a[n] insight into and sympathy with characters quite different from his own. I fancy Beddoes, with no more change than is usual with any one man in various circumstances, at once Melfric, Ziba, Wolfram & the rest. He thinks and speaks now as this and now that personage,—in every sense, as he himself likes best,—I never find a new actor speaking his own peculiarities whether Beddoes like them or no. Sibylla, for instance, is thin as her own ghost,—speaking fine things, all the same,—but they stick on her like a fruiterer's contribution of real cherries & strawberries to an invisible wire-tree,—there is no living plant which one can see naturally has produced them,—a hand intervened and gave the skeleton 'non sua poma'. If I dare conjecture about the cause of the defect,—it may have come from Beddoes' predominating desire, in the first stage of his artistry, to deliver himself of what was absorbingly & exclusively interesting to him at the time: had he printed the piece just as it stands, without any delay at all,—he would have at least done justice, in his own mind, to these conceptions of death and life and the intermediate possible state: the exhibition would have been both done and done with: he would have turned his attention to other subjects of thought and feeling, which, whether as congenial to him as the former, were at least new and unexpressed: whereas, he is prevented somehow from venting these, and so goes round and round them, ends in the exclusive occupation of his soul with them,—does not he? What good was got by suppressing the poem, or what harm could have followed the publication even in the worldly way of looking at things? Suppose it had been laughed at, blackguarded in Blackwood, fallen flat from the press? The worse for the world for the quarter of an hour: Beddoes would not have much cared, but probably made a clean breast and begun on something else. It



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is infinitely regrettable. I incline to think that in a future edition I should give the work (as Byron says 'since it can do us good!') in its integrity: the indifferent readers won't care in any case,—the sympathetic will bear all Mandrake & his wife, out of a scientific love of the precise intention of the author. And how curiously different it proves from that which is announced, and probably believed in, by Beddoes in his letter of verse to Procter: he was to despoil Death of his terrors, strip him of his dart, & so on,—make him the 'fool of the feast': he does exactly the reverse, materializes and intensifies the horror, and frightens one to death at dying—just as they do abroad when on every church wall you see a horrible capering Death flourishing his scythe in your face, for 'a fair warning to a careless world', as the old divines have it ...

Now, as to the extracts which might be made why, you might pick out scenes, passages, lyrics, fine as fine can be: the power of the man is immense & irresistible. I don't know, however, that it is advisable to make such a collection,—because you would leave little indeed behind you in the two volumes. If one 'cheated'—put in all the superlative passages of Death's J.B. for instance,—telling the story so as to give the idea that it would be found, --equally with those passages—worked out in the original,—to what a poem would you be sending people!

From *The Academy*, 15 August 1891, p. 129. By Arthur Symons. Reprinted, slightly revised, in *Figures of Several Centuries*, Constable 1916, pp. 123-27

... Beddoes is always large, impressive; the greatness of his aim gives him a certain claim on respectful consideration. That his talent achieved itself, or ever could have achieved itself, he himself would have been

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the last to affirm. But he is a monumental failure, more interesting than many facile triumphs.

The one important work which Beddoes actually completed, *Death's Jest-Book*, is nominally a drama in five acts. All the rest of his work, except a few lyrics and occasional poems, is also nominally dramatic. But there never was anything less dramatic in substance than this mass of admirable poetry in dialogue. Beddoes' genius was essentially lyrical: he had imagination, the gift of style, the mastery of rhythm, a strange choiceness and curiosity of phrase. But of really dramatic power he had nothing. He could neither conceive a coherent plot, nor develop a credible situation. He had no grasp on human nature, he had no conception of what character might be in men and women, he had no faculty of expressing emotion convincingly. Constantly you find the most beautiful poetry where it is absolutely inappropriate, but never do you find one of those brief and memorable phrases—words from the heart—for which one would give much beautiful poetry ...

In scenes which aim at being passionate, one sees the same inability to be natural. What we get is always literature; it is never less than that, nor more than that. It is never frank, uncompromising nature. The fact is, that Beddoes wrote from the head, collectively, and without emotion, or without inspiration, save in literature. All Beddoes' characters speak precisely the same language, express the same desires; all in the same way startle us by their ghostly remoteness from flesh and blood. 'Man is tired of being merely human,' Siegfried says, in *Death's Jest-Book*, and Beddoes may be said to have grown tired of humanity before he ever came to understand it.

Looked at from the normal standpoint, Beddoes' idea of the drama was something wildly amateurish. As a practical playwright he would be beneath con-

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tempt; as a writer of the regulation poetic drama he cannot be considered successful. But what he aimed at was something peculiar to himself—a sort of spectral dramatic fantasia. He would have admitted his obligations to Webster and Tourneur, to all the *macabre* Elizabethan work; he would have admitted that his foundations were based on literature, not on life; but he would have claimed, and claimed justly, that he had produced, out of many strange elements, something which has a place apart in English poetry. *Death's Jest-Book* is perhaps the most morbid poem in our literature. There is not a page without its sad, grotesque, gay or abhorrent imagery of the tomb ... Not Baudelaire was more amorous of corruption; not Poe was more spellbound by the scent of graveyard earth. So Beddoes has written a new Dance of Death, in poetry; has become the chronicler of the praise and ridicule of Death. Tired of being merely human', he has peopled a play with confessed phantoms. It is natural that these eloquent speakers should pass us by with their words, that they should fail to move us by their sorrows or their hates: they are not intended to be human, except, indeed, in the wizard humanity of Death ...

From *The New Quarterly*, Nov. 1907, pp. 65-7. Lytton Strachey, *The Last Elizabethan*. Reprinted in *Books and Characters*, 1922, pp. 244-6

... To the reader, doubtless, his faulty construction is glaring enough; but Beddoes wrote his plays to be acted, as a passage in one of his letters very clearly shows. 'You are, I think,' he writes to Kelsall, 'disinclined to the stage: how I confess that I think this is the highest aim of the dramatist; and should be very desirous to get on it. To look down on it is a piece of

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impertinence, as long as one chooses to write in the form of a play, and is generally the result of one's own inability to produce anything striking and affecting in that way.' And it is precisely upon the stage that such faults of construction as those which disfigure Beddoes' tragedies matter least. An audience, whose attention is held and delighted by a succession of striking incidents clothed in splendid speech, neither cares nor knows whether the effect of the whole, as a whole, is worthy of the separate parts. It would be foolish, in the present melancholy condition of the art of dramatic declamation, to wish for the public performance of *Death's Jest-Book*; but it is impossible not to hope that the time may come when an adequate representation of that strange and great work may be something more than 'a possibility more thin than air'. Then, and then only, shall we be able to take true measure of Beddoes' genius ...

It would be vain to look, among such spectral imaginings ..., for guidance in practical affairs, or for illuminating views on men and things, or for a philosophy, or, in short, for anything which may be called a 'criticism of life'. If a poet must be a critic of life, Beddoes was certainly no poet. He belongs to the class of writers of which, in English literature, Spenser, Keats, and Milton are the dominant figures—the writers who are great merely because of their art. Sir James Stephen was only telling the truth when he remarked that Milton might have put all that he had to say in *Paradise Lost* into a prose pamphlet of two or three pages. But who cares about what Milton had to say? It is his way of saying it that matters; it is his expression. Take away the expression from the *Satires* of Pope, or from *The Excursion*, and, though you will destroy the poems, you will leave behind a great mass of thought. Take away the expression from *Hyperion*, and you will leave nothing at all. To ask which is the

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better of the two styles is like asking whether a peach is better than a rose, because, both being beautiful, you can eat the one and not the other. At any rate, Beddoes is among the roses: it is in his expression that his greatness lies. His verse is an instrument of many modulations, of exquisite delicacy, of strange suggestiveness, of amazing power. Playing on it, he can give utterance to the subtlest visions ...

i

From Edmund Blunden, *Beddoes and his Contemporaries*, *Votive Tablets*, Cobden Sanderson, 1931, pp. 294-6

... Sir Edmund Gosse points out as Beddoes's worst weakness 'his inability to record conversation', and to distinguish his stage figures by the language allotted to them, nor would it be easy to discover in *Death's Jest Book* any weighty exceptions to this just remonstrance. But where is an explanation? Beddoes *could* record conversation—outside *Death's Jest Book*; we turn to his letters and we find one of the most spirited sketches of talk ever made:

'Capital was my first adventure in 1835 at Dover. London Coffee house, old gentleman in coffee room. Waiter, says I, I wish to smoke a cigar, have you a smoking room? W. No occasion, Sir, you can smoke here. 1 (to O.G.) Perhaps it may be disagreeable to you, Sir, in which case——O.G. By no means. I'm myself a smoker (laying aside specs, and looking like Cosmogony Jenkins——) I. 1 have good cigars, will you d.m.t.f. to accept one? O.G. Very kind. /. Come from Calais? O.G. Boulogne. Go to Bristol. /. Anche io sono Bristoliano. O.G. Know King? /. Wife my aunt. O.G. Are YOU? /. Son of well-known physician at Clifton. O.G. Not of D<sup>r</sup> B.? /. Same, unworthily, O.G. That's curious. Your brother married my niece a fort-

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night ago. /. Happy man! Hear of it now for y<sup>e</sup> first time. Tories will never be my heirs. O.G. O! G——! (reassumes specs and exit.) /. I! *exeo.*'

That plainness, and artfulness, and quickness are the antipodes of the lugubrious and long speeches in *Death's Jest Book*—those prodigious passages which recall a description of Coleridge's conversation—'monopollylogues'. Among these the painstaking reader discovers expressions of the Beddoes that might have been. Here are the enchanting songs ... and here too are startling moments such as when the scientist in Beddoes speaks. Isbrand's soliloquy at the beginning of Act V is perhaps the best known and the most reverberant of these ... If we bring together that evolutionary passage at full length, and another theoretical discernment of which the central image is

*that Life's a single pilgrim  
Fighting unarmed amongst a thousand soldiers,—*

an image wonderfully varied and emphasized in the fragment on 'Windless Pestilence'; if with these we take up the paradox elaborated towards the end of *Death's Jest Book*—'But dead and living, which are which?' and such of the occasional pieces as the quatorzain 'To Perfume' and that 'To Tartar, a Terrier Beauty', we speedily compose a shape of poetic originality more enduring and more inspiring even than the beautiful but ever-uncertain songs. Exploring the tragic wardrobe, Beddoes is seldom at ease; talking straight from his studies and his practice, he becomes concise, and prophetic, and complete. What future generations may choose to read in poetry cannot be foreseen; but what this generation would have been reading is Beddoes, had he left one volume of short poems on the realities with which his days were spent...



# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

[First published 1822]





# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

[First published 1822]

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

|                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| THE DUKE                 | MORDRED                     |
| LORD ERNEST              | HUBERT                      |
| HESPERUS, <i>his Son</i> | A HUNTSMAN                  |
| ORLANDO                  | BOY, <i>Page to Orlando</i> |
| CLAUDIO                  | JAILOR                      |

OLIVIA, *Sister to Orlando*

viOLETTA, *her Companion*

LENORA, *Wife of Mordred*

ELORIBEL, *her Daughter*

*Lords, Citizens, Attendants, Guards, &c.*

## ACT I

### SCENE I. *A garden*

HESPERUS *alone*

Now Eve has strewn the sun's wide billowy couch  
With rosercd feathers moulted from her wing,  
Still scanty-sprinkled clouds, like lagging sheep,  
Some golden-fleeced, some streaked with delicate pink,  
Are creeping up the welkin, and behind 5  
The wind, their boisterous shepherd, whistling drives  
them,

From the drear wilderness of night to drink  
Antipodean noon. At such a time,  
While to wild melody fantastic dreams  
Dance their gay morrice in the midmost air, 10  
And sleepers' truant fancies fly to join them;

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act I

While that winged song, the restless nightingale  
Turns her sad heart to music, sweet it is  
Unseen on the moss-cushioned sward to lean,  
And into some coy ear pour out the soul 15  
In sighs and whispers.

*Enter FLORIBEL*

So late, Floribel?

Nay, since I sec that arch smile on thy check  
Rippling so prettily, I will not chide,  
Although the breeze and I have sighed for you  
A dreary while, and the veiled Moon's mild eye 20  
Has long been seeking for her loveliest nymph.  
Come, come, my love, or shall I call you bride?

*Flor.* E'en what you will, so that you hold me dear.

*Hasp.* Well, both my love and bride; see, here's a  
bower

Of Eglantine with honeysuckles woven, 25  
Where not a spark of prying light creeps in,  
So closely do the sweets enfold each other.  
Tis Twilight's home; come in, my gentle love,  
And talk to me. So! I've a rival here;  
What's this that sleeps so sweetly on your neck? 30

*Flor.* Jealous so soon, my Hesperus? Look then,  
It is a bunch of flowers I pulled for you:  
Here's the blue violet, like Pandora's eye,  
When first it darkened with immortal life. 34

*Hesp.* Sweet as thy lips. Fie on those taper fingers,  
Have they been brushing the long grass aside  
To drag the daisy from its hiding-place,  
Where it shuns light, the Danæe of flowers,  
With gold up-hoarded on its virgin lap? 39

*Flor.* And here's a treasure that I found by chance,  
A lily of the valley; low it lay  
Over a mossy mound, withered and weeping  
As on a fairy's grave.

*Hesp.* Of all the posy

Give me the rose, though there's a tale of blood  
Soiling its name. In elfin annals old 45  
'Tis writ, how Zephyr, envious of his love,  
(The love he bore to Summer, who since then  
Has weeping visited the world;) once found  
The baby Perfume cradled in a violet;  
('Twas said the beauteous bantling was the child 50  
Of a gay bee, that in his wantonness  
Toyed with a peabud in a lady's garland;)  
The felon winds, confederate with him,  
Bound the sweet slumberer with golden chains,  
Pulled from the wreathed laburnum, and together 55  
Deep cast him in the bosom of a rose,  
And fed the fettered wretch with dew and air.  
At length his soul, that was a lover's sigh,  
Waned from his body, and the guilty blossom 59  
His heart's blood stained. The twilight-haunting gnat  
His requiem whined, and harebells tolled his knell,  
And still the bee in pied velvet dight  
With melancholy song from flower to flower  
Goes seeking his lost offspring.

*Flor.* Take it then,  
In its green sheath. What guess you, Hesperus, 65  
I dreamed last night? Indeed, it makes me sad,  
And yet I think you love me.

*Hesp.* By the planet  
That sheds it tender blue on lovers' sleeps,  
Thou art my sweetest, nay, mine only thought:  
And when my heart forgets thee, may yon heaven 70  
Forget to guard me.

*Flor.* Aye, I knew thou didst;  
**Yet** surely mine's a sad and lonely fate  
Thus to be wed to secrecy; I doubt,  
E'en while I know my doubts arc causeless torments.  
Yet I conjure thee, if indeed I hold 75  
Some share in thy affections, cast away  
**The** blank and ugly vizard of concealment,

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act I

And, if mine homely breeding do not shame thee,  
Let thy bride share her noble father's blessing.

*Hesp.* In truth I will; nay, prithee let me kiss 80  
That naughty tear away; I will, by heaven;  
For, though austere and old, my sire must gaze  
On thy fair innocence with glad forgiveness.

Look up, my love,  
See how yon orb, dressed out in all her beams, 85  
Puts out the common stars, and sails along  
The stately Queen of heaven; so shall thy beauties,  
But the rich casket of a noble soul,  
Shine on the world and bless it. Tell me now  
This frightful vision.

*Flor.* You will banter me; 90  
But I'm a simple girl, and oftentimes  
In solitude am very, very mournful:  
And now I think how silly 'twas to weep  
At such an harmless thing: well, you shall hear.  
'Twas on a fragrant bank I laid me down, 95  
Laced o'er and o'er with verdant tendrils, full  
Of dark-red strawberries. Anon there came  
On the wind's breast a thousand tiny noises,  
Like flowers' voices, if they could but speak;  
Then slowly did they blend in one sweet strain, 100  
Melodiously divine; and buoyed the soul  
Upon their undulations. Suddenly,  
Methought, a cloud swam swanlike o'er the sky,  
And gently kissed the earth, a fleecy nest,  
With roses, rifled from the cheek of Morn, 105  
Sportively strewn; upon the ethereal couch,  
Her fair limbs blending with the enamoured mist,  
Lovely above the portraiture of words,  
In beauteous languor lay the Queen of Smiles:  
In tangled garlands, like a golden haze, 110  
Or fay-spun threads of light, her locks were floating,  
And in their airy folds slumbered her eyes,  
Dark as the nectar-grape that gems the vines

In the bright orchard of the Hesperides.  
 Within the ivory cradle of her breast 115  
 Gambolled the urchin god, with saucy hand  
 Dimpling her cheeks, or sipping eagerly  
 The rich ambrosia of her melting lips:  
 Beneath them swarmed a bustling mob of Loves,  
 Tending the sparrow stud, or with bees' wings 120  
 Imping their arrows. Here stood one alone  
 Blowing a pyre of blazing lovers' hearts  
 With bellows full of absence-caused sighs:  
 Near him his work-mate mended broken vows 124  
 With dangerous gold, or strung soft rhymes together  
 Upon a lady's tress. Some swelled their cheeks,  
 Like curling rose-leaves, or the red wine's bubbles,  
 In petulant debate, gallantly tilting  
 Astride their darts. And one there was alone,  
 Who with wet downcast eyelids threw aside 130  
 The remnants of a broken heart, and looked  
 Into my face and bid me 'ware of love,  
 Of fickleness, and woe, and mad despair.

*Hesp.* Aye, so he said; and did my own dear girl  
 Deem me a false one for this foolish dream? 135  
 I wish I could be angry; hide, distrustful,  
 Those penitent blushes in my breast, while I  
 Sing you a silly song old nurses use  
 To hush their crying babes with. Tenderly  
 'Twill chide you. 140

*Song*

Poor old pilgrim Misery,  
 Beneath the silent moon he sate,  
 A-listening to the screech owl's cry,  
 And the cold wind's goblin prate;  
 Beside him lay his staff of yew 145  
 With withered willow twined,

**THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY****Act!**

His scant grey hair all wet with dew,  
His cheeks with grief ybrined;  
And his cry it was ever, alack!  
Alack, and woe is me. 150

Anon a wanton imp astray  
His piteous moaning hears,  
And from his bosom steals away  
His rosary of tears:  
With his plunder fled that urchin elf, 155  
And hid it in your eyes,  
Then tell me back the stolen pelf,  
Give up the lawless prize;  
Or your cry shall be ever, alack!  
Alack, and woe is me. 160

*Hesp.* Not yet asleep?

*Flor.* Asleep! No, I could ever,  
Heedless of times and seasons list to thee.  
But now the chilly breeze is sallying out  
Of dismal clouds; and silent midnight walks  
Wrapt in her mourning robe. I fear it's time 165  
To separate.

*Hesp.* So quickly late! oh cruel, spiteful hours,  
Why will ye wing your steeds from happiness,  
And put a leaden drag upon your wheels 169  
When grief hangs round our hearts. Soon will we meet,  
And to part never more.

*Flor.* Oh! that dear never,  
It will pay all. Good night, and think of me.

*Hesp.* Good night, my love; may music-winged sleep  
Bind round thy temples with her poppy wreath;  
Soft slumbers to thee. [Exeunt. 175

SCENE II. *A room in ORLANDO's palace*CLAUDIO *and* ORLANDO *meeting*

*Orl.* Thanks for thy speed, good Claudio; is all done  
As I have ordered?

*Clau.* Could I be unwilling  
In the performance of what you command,  
I'd say with what regret I led Lord Ernest  
Into the prison. My dear lord, 5  
He was your father's friend—

*Orl.* And he is mine.  
You must not think Orlando so forgetful  
As to abuse the reverence of age,  
An age, like his, of piety and virtue;  
'Tis but a fraud of kindness, sportive force. 10

*Clau.* You joy me much, for now I dare to own  
I almost thought it was a cruel deed.

*Orl.* Nay, you shall hear. The sums he owed my  
father,  
Of which his whole estate is scarce a fourth,  
Are never to be claimed, if Hesperus, 15  
His son, be wedded to Olivia. Now  
This Hesperus, you tell me, is a votary,  
A too much favoured votary of my goddess,  
The Dian of our forests, Floribel;  
Therefore I use this show of cruelty, 20  
To scare a rival and to gain a brother.

*Clau.* Now by the patches on the cheek of the moon,  
(Is't not a pretty oath?) a good romance;  
We'll have't in ballad metre, with a burthen  
Of sighs, how one bright glance of a brown damsel, 25  
Lit up the tinder of Orlando's heart  
In a hot blaze.

*Orl.* Enough to kindle up  
An altar in my breast. 'Twas but a moment,  
And yet I would not sell that grain of time  
For thy eternity of heartlessness. 30



*Clau.* Well, well. I can bear nonsense from a lover,  
Oh, I've been mad threescore and eighteen times  
And three quarters, written twenty yards, two nails,  
An inch and a quarter, cloth measure, of sonnets;  
Wasted as much salt water as would pickle 35  
Leviathan, and sighed enough to set up  
Another wind;——

*Orl.* Claudio, I pray thee, leave me,  
I relish not this mockery.

*Clau.* Good sir, attend  
To my experience. You've no stock as yet  
To set up lover: get yourself a pistol 40  
Without a touch-hole, or at least remember,  
If it be whole, to load it with wet powder;  
I've known a popgun well applied, or even  
The flying of a cork give reputation  
To courage and despair. A gross of garters 45  
Warranted rotten will be found convenient.

*Orl.* Now you are troublesome.

*Clau.* One precept more,  
Purge and drink watergruel, lanthorn jaws  
Are interesting; fat men can't write sonnets,  
And indigestion turns true love to bile. 50

*Orl.* 'Tis best to part. If you desire to serve me,  
Persuade the boy to sacrifice his passion;  
I'll lead him to Olivia, they were wont  
In childhood to be playmates, and some love  
May lie beneath the ashes of that friendship, 55  
That needs her breath alone to burst and blaze.

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III. *A prison*

*Enter Guards leading LORD ERNEST in chains*

*L. Em.* I pray you do not pity me. I feel  
A kind of joy to meet Calamity,

My old old friend again. Go tell your lord  
I give him thanks for these his iron bounties.  
How now? I thought you led me to a prison, 5  
A dismal antichamber of the tomb,  
Where creatures dwell, whose ghosts but half inhabit  
Their ruinous flesh houses; here is air  
As fresh as that the bird of morning sings in,  
And shade that scarce is dusk, but just enough 10  
To please the meek and twilight-loving eye  
Of lone Religion. 'Tis an hermitage  
Where I may sit and tell my o'erpassed years,  
And fit myself for dying. My old heart  
Holds not enough of gratitude to pay 15  
This noble kindness, that in guise of cruelty  
Compels me to my good.

*Guard.* I am most glad  
That you endure thus cheerfully, remember  
Your son's one word will give you liberty. 19

*L. Ern.* I know he would not do me so much wrong.  
You think, because I'm white with age, I mourn  
Such hardships. See, my hand's as firm and steady  
As when I broke my first spear in the wars;  
Alas! I am so glad, I cannot smile.

*Guard.* We sorrow thus to leave thee.

*L. Ern.* Sorrow! man, 25  
It is a woman's game. I cannot play it.  
Away; your whining but provokes my spleen.

*(As the guards are retiring he bursts into a  
harsh laugh, when they have left the stage he  
stops short.)*

They're gone and cannot hear me. Now, then, now,  
Eyes weep away my life, heart, if thou hast  
A pulse to strain, break, break, oh break.

*Enter HESPERUS*

My son, 30  
Come here, I'll tell thee all they've done to me,

How they have scoffed and spurned me, thrown me  
here

In wretched loneliness.

*Hesp.* Alas! my father.

*L. Ern.* Oh set me free, I cannot bear this air.

If thou dost recollect those fearful hours, 35

When I kept watch beside my precious boy,

And saw the day but on his pale dear face;

If thou didst think me in my gentlest moods,

Patient and mild, and even somewhat kind;

Oh give me back the pity that I lent, 40

Pretend at least to love and comfort me.

*Hesp.* Speak not so harshly; I'm not rich enough

To pay one quarter of the dues of love,

Yet something I would do. Show me the way,

I will revenge thee well.

*L. Ern.* But whilst thou'rt gone 45

The dread diseases of the place will come

And kill me wretchedly. No, I'll be free.

*Hesp.* Aye, that thou shalt. I'll do; what will I not?

I'll get together all the world's true hearts,

And if they're few, there's spirit in my breast 50

Enough to animate a thousand dead.

*L. Ern.* My son

We need not this; a word of thine will serve.

*Hesp.* Were it my soul's last sigh, I'd give it thee.

*L. Ern.* Marry.

*Hesp.* I—cannot.

*L. Ern.* But thou dost not know

Thy best-loved woos thee. Oft I've stood unseen, 55

In some of those sweet evenings you remember,

Watching your innocent and beauteous play,

(More innocent because you thought it secret,

More beautiful because so innocent;)

Oh! then I knew how blessed a thing I was 60

To have a son so worthy of Olivia.

*Hesp.* Olivia!

*L. Em.* Blush not, though I name your mistress,  
You soon shall wed her.

*Hesp.* I will wed the plague.  
I would not grudge my life, for that's a thing,  
A misery, thou gavest me: but to wed 65  
Olivia; there's damnation in the thought.

*L. Em.* Come, speak to him, my chains, for ye've a  
voice  
To conquer every heart that's not your kin!  
Oh! that ye were my son, for then at least  
He would be with me. How I loved him once! 70  
Aye, when I thought him good; but now—Nay, still  
He must be good, and I, I have been harsh,  
I feel, I have not prized him at his worth:  
And yet I think if Hesperus had erred,  
I could have pardoned him, indeed I could. 75

*Hesp.* We'll live together.

*L. Em.* No, for I shall die;  
But that's no matter.

*Hesp.* Bring the priest, the bride.  
Quick, quick. These fetters have infected him  
With slavery's sickness. Yet there is a secret,  
'Twixt heaven and me, forbids it. Tell me, father; 80  
Were it not best for both to die at once?

*L. Em.* Die! Thou hast spoke a word, that makes my  
heart  
Grow sick and wither; thou hast palsied me  
To death. Live thou to wed some worthier maid;  
Know that thy father chose this sad seclusion; 85  
(Ye rebel lips, why do you call it sad?)  
Should I die soon, think not that sorrow caused it,  
But, if you recollect my name, bestow it  
Upon your best-loved child, and when you give him  
His Grandsire's blessing, add not that he perished 90  
A wretched prisoner.

*Hesp.* Stop, or I am made  
I know not what,—perhaps a villain. Curse me,

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act I

Oh if you love me, curse.

*L. Ern.*

Aye, thou shalt hear

A father's curse; if fate hath put a moment

Of pain into thy life; a sigh, a word, 95

A dream of woe; be it transferred to mine;

And for thy days; oh! never may a thought

Of others' sorrow, even of old Ernest's,

Darken their calm uninterrupted bliss,

And be thy end—oh! any thing but mine. 100

*Hesp.* Guilt, thou art sanctified in such a cause;

Guards; (*they enter*) I am ready. Let me say't so low,

So quickly that it may escape the ear

Of watchful angels; I will do it all.

*L. Ern.* There's nought to do; I've learned to love

this solitude. 105

Farewell, my son. Nay, never heed the fetters;

We can make shift to embrace.

*Hesp.*

Lead him to freedom,

And tell your lord I will not, that's I will.

[*Exeunt LORD ERNEST and guards.*]

Here, fellow; put your hand upon my mouth

Till they are out of hearing. Leave me now. 110

No, stay; come near me, nearer yet. Now fix

The close attention of your eyes on mine.

*Guard.* My lord!

*Hesp.*

See'st thou not death in them?

*Guard.* Forbid it, fate.

*Hesp.*

Away! ill-omened hound,

I'll be a ghost and play about the graves, 115

For ghosts can never wed. [*Exit guard.*]

There, there they go; my hopes, my youthful hopes,

Like ingrate flatterers. What have I to do

With life? Ye sickly stars, that look with pity

On this cursed head, be kind and tell the lightning 120

To scathe me to a cinder; or if that

Be too much blessing for a child of sin,

But strike me mad, I do not ask for more.

**Act II                    THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY**

Come from your icy caves, ye howling winds,  
Clad in your gloomy panoply of clouds,                    125  
And call into your cars, as ye pass o'er  
The distant quarters of this tortured world,  
Every disease of every clime,  
Here shall they banquet on a willing victim;  
Or with one general ague shake the earth,                    130  
The pillars of the sky dissolve and burst,  
And let the ebon-tiled roof of night  
Come tumbling in upon the doomed world:  
Deaf are they still: then death is all a fable,  
A pious lie to make man lick his chains                    135  
And look for freedom's dawning through his grate.  
Why are we tied unto this wheeling globe,  
Still to be racked while traitorous Hope stands by,  
And heals the wounds that they may gape again?  
Aye to this end the earth is made a ball,                    140  
Else crawling to the brink despair would plunge  
Into the infinite eternal air,  
And leave its sorrows and its sins behind.  
Since death will not, come sleep, thou kindred power,  
Lock up my senses with thy leaden key,                    145  
And darken every crevice that admits  
Light, life, and misery if thou canst, for ever.                    *[Exit.*

**ACT II**

*SCENE I. A chamber in ORLANDO'S palace*

*Enter ORLANDO/O his Boy asleep*

*Orl.* Boy! he is asleep;  
Oh innocence, how fairly dost thou head  
This pure first page of man. Peace to thy slumbers,  
Sleep, for thy dreams are 'midst the seraphs' harps,  
Thy thoughts beneath the wings of holiness,                    5  
Thine eyes in Paradise.

## THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act II

The day may come, (if haply gentle death  
 Say not amen to thy short prayer of being,  
 And lap thee in the bosom of the blest;) 10  
 I weep to think on, when the guilty world  
 Shall, like a fiend, be waiting at thy couch,  
 And call thee up on ev'ry dawn of crime.

*Boy. (awaking)* Dear master, didst thou call? I will  
 not be

A second time so slothful.

*Orl.* Sleep, my boy,  
 Thy task is light and joyous, to be good. 15

*Boy.* Oh! if I must be good, then give me money,  
 I pray thee, give me some, and you shall find  
 I'll buy up every tear, and make them scarcer  
 Than diamonds.

*Orl.* Beautiful pity, thou shalt have enough; 20  
 But you must give me your last song.

*Boy.* Nay, sir;  
 You're wont to say my rhymes are fit for girls,  
 And lovesick idiots; I have none you praise  
 Full of the heat of battle and the chase.

*Orl* Sing what you will, I'll like it. 25

### Song

A ho! A ho!  
 Love's horn doth blow,  
 And he will out a-hawking go.  
 His shafts are light as beauty's sighs,  
 And bright as midnight's brightest eyes, 30  
 And round his starry way  
 The swan-winged horses of the skies,  
 With summer's music in their manes,  
 Curve their fair necks to zephyr's reins,  
 And urge their graceful play. 35

A ho! A ho! .  
Love's horn doth blow,  
And he will out a-hawking go.  
The sparrows flutter round his wrist,  
The feathery thieves that Venus kissed 40  
And taught their morning song,  
The linnets seek the airy list,  
And swallows too, small pets of Spring,  
Beat back the gale with swifter wing,  
And dart and wheel along. 45

A ho! A ho!  
Love's horn doth blow,  
And he will out a-hawking go,  
Now woe to every gnat that skips  
To filch the fruit of ladies' lips, 50  
His felon blood is shed;  
And woe to flies, whose airy ships  
On beauty cast their anchoring bite,  
And bandit wasp, that naughty wight,  
Whose sting is slaughter-red. 55

*OH.* Who is thy poet, boy?

*Boy.* I must not tell.

*Or I.* Then I will chide thee for him. Who first drew  
Love as a blindfold imp, an earthen dwarf,  
And armed him with blunt darts? His soul was kin  
To the rough wind that dwells in the icy north, 60  
The dead cold pedant, who thus dared confine  
The universe's soul, for that is Love.  
'Tis he that acts the nightingale, the thrush,  
And all the living musics, he it is  
That gives the lute, the harp and tabor speech, 65  
That flutters on melodious wings and strikes  
The mute and viewless lyres of sunny strings  
Borne by the minstrel gales, mimicking vainly  
The timid voice, that sent him to my breast,



That voice the wind hath treasured and doth use 70  
When he bids roses open and be sweet.

Boy. Now I could guess.

Orl. What, little curious one?

Boy. The riddle of Orlando's feelings. Come,  
You must not frown. I know the lawn, the cot,  
Aye, and the leaf-veiled lattice.

Orl. I shall task 75  
Your busy watchfulness. Bear you this paper,  
I would not trust it to a doubtful hand.

Boy. Unto the wood-nymph? You may think the  
road  
Already footed.

Orl. Go, and prosper then. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *The interior OF MORDRED'S cottage*

LENORA am/FLORIBEL

Flor. My mother, you're too kind, you ought to  
check

These wayward humours. Oh, I know too well  
I'm a poor, foolish, discontented child;  
My heart doth sink when Hesperus is gone,  
And leaves me nought but fears. Forgive me then, 5  
If I have vexed you.

Lett. Dear and gentle soul,  
You ne'er offended me, but when you said  
You had offended. When I look on thee,  
If there's a thought that moistens in my eye,  
Fear that thy husband cannot match such goodness, 10  
Is looking out there.

Flor. Fears of Hesperus!  
That's not my mother's thought, cast it away:  
He is the glass of all good qualities,  
And what's a little virtue in all others  
Looks into him and sees itself a giant; 15

He is a nosegay of the sweets of man,  
A dictionary of superlatives;  
He walks about, a music among discords,  
A star in night, a prayer 'midst madmen's curses;  
And if mankind, as I do think, were made 20  
To bear the fruit of him, and him alone,  
It was a glorious destiny.

*Len.* He is a goodly man, and yet they say  
Strange passions sleep within him. There's Orlando,  
A gentle suitor; Floribel, he loved you, 25  
He had no father, I have often wished  
What it's too late to tell you.

*Flor.* Mother, your Orlando  
Is a good gentleman, I wish him well,  
But to my husband—We'll not talk of him.  
Yet you shall see I can be cool sometimes, 30  
When Hesperus deserves it, as he does  
Even now for his delay.

*Len.* He's here: I'll leave you,  
You shall not quarrel with him for my pleasure [*Exit.*]

*Enter* HESPERUS

*Hesp.* Good morrow, Floribel.

*Flor.* Fair noon to Hesperus; I knew a youth, 35  
In days of yore, would quarrel with the lark,  
If with its joyous matins it foreran  
His early pipe beneath his mistress' window;  
Those days are passed; alas! for gallantry.

*Hesp.* Floribel!

*Flor.* Sir, d'ye know the gentleman? 40  
Give him my benison and bid him sleep  
Another hour, there's one that does not miss him.

*Hesp.* Lady, I came to talk of other things,  
To tell you all my secrets, must I wait  
Until it fits your humour?

*Flor.* As you please: 45  
(The worst of three bad suitors, and his name

Began with an H.)

*Hesp.* Good morrow then, again.

*Flor.*

Heaven help you, sir,

And so adieu.

*Hesp.* Madam, you spoke; you said it, Floribel: 50  
I never thought mine ears a curse before.  
Did I not love thee? Say, have I not been  
The kindest?

*Flor.* Yes, indeed thou *hast* been. Now  
A month is over. What would I not give 54  
For those four sevens of days? But I have lived them,  
And that's a bliss. You speak as if I'd lost  
The little love you gave your poor one then.

*Hesp.* And you as if you cared not for the loss.  
Oh Floribel, you'll make me curse the chance  
That fashioned this sad clay and made it man; 60  
It had been happier as the senseless tree  
That canopies your sleep. But Hesperus,  
He's but the burthen of a scornful song  
Of coquetry; beware, that song may end  
In a death groan. 65

**FLORIBEL** (*sings*)

The knight he left the maid,  
That knight of fickleness,  
Her's was the blame he said,  
And his the deep distress.

If you are weary of poor Floribel, 70  
Pray be not troubled; she can do without thee.  
Oh Hesperus, come hither, I must weep;  
Say you will love me still, and I'll believe it,  
When I forget my folly.

*Hesp.* Dear, I do;  
By the bright fountains of those tears I do. 75

*Flor.* You don't despise me much? May I look up  
And meet no frown?

*Hesp.* Try to look through my breast,  
And see my truth. But, oh! my Floribel,  
Take heed how thou dost look unkindly on me; 79  
For grey-beards have been kneeling, and with prayers  
Trying to pluck thee from my bosom; fairness,  
And innocence and duty league against thee.  
Then do't not, sweet, again; for sometimes strange  
And horrid thoughts bring whispers to my soul;  
They shall not harm thee, girl. I meant indeed, 85  
Hard hearted as I was, to have disclosed  
A tale of terror; but I'll back again:  
Why let the old man die.

*Flor.* Oh no, no, no;  
We will let no one die, but cherish them  
With love like ours, and they will soon be well: 90  
Stay and I'll tell you how to save him.

*Hesp.* Thou!  
Excellent loveliness,  
Thou save him! But I must be gone or else  
Those looks will lure a secret from my breast,  
That threatens both. I'll home and think of some-  
thing. 95  
Meet me to-morrow in the sweet-briar thicket  
When twilight fades to evening. I'm in haste. [*Exit.*

*Flor.* My better thoughts go with thee. It is true  
He hath too much of human passion in him,  
But I will hold him dear, and if again 100  
My wicked senses grow so cruel quick  
As to suspect his kindness, I'll be sure  
My eyes have got false sight, my ears false hearing,  
And my whole mind's become a rebel traitress.

*Enter ORLANDO'S Boy.*

*Boy.* These for fair Floribel; you are the one 105  
I hear my master talk of, surely, lady;  
And yet his words are feeble shadowers  
Of such pure beauty. Please you read his thoughts.

*Flor.* You hold a courtly language for such years,  
But be you ware of compliment akin 110  
To falsehood.

*(reads) From the sad-souled Orlando.*

Fie sir; your gifts are dangerous. Look you here,  
As J disperse the wicked syllables  
Met in this little parliament of words,  
And give them to the light and careless winds, 115  
So do I bid him tear the thoughts of me  
Out of his breast, and hold me as a thing  
Further from him than misery.

*Boy.* It is urgently done; nay, I must say so,  
To hurt the generous blossoms of his love; 120  
I am sorry that a hand so beautiful  
Can be so fell.

*Flor.* Boy, thou dost not know  
The fears that urge me. Had my Hesperus  
Seen these or thee, I know not what of ill  
Must have befallen us.

*Boy.* Lady, you must not weep; 125  
I have a ballad which my master hears  
In his sad moods; it has the art to raise  
A dimple on the cheek of moody care.  
I'll sing it you.

*Flor.* Young one, I almost love thee.

*[Kisses him.]*

*Enter HESPERUS*

*Hesp.* Why Floribel,—Girl! Painted fickleness! 130  
Madam, I'm rude; but Hesperus did not think  
He could intrude on—what was Floribel.

*Flor.* Nor doth he ever.

*Hesp.* If he does not now,  
Be sure he won't again. Oh girl, girl, girl,  
Thou'st killed my heart: I thought thee once, good  
fool, 135  
I will not tell thee what, thou'lt laugh at me.

*Flor.* By heaven!

*Hesp.* Don't name it: do not be forsworn.  
But why should I regard thy words or oaths?

*Flor.* Hesperus, Hesperus!

*Hesp.* Nay, I should be sorry  
To cheat the longing boy; he fills thine arms 140  
Excellent well, believe it. Urchin, seek me  
When that mis-featured butter-print of thine  
Is bearded; I will trim thee with a sword.

*Flor.* Hesperus, thou art mad.

*Hesp.* Better be mad than treacherous. Aye, 'twas  
well 145  
To tear the letters; there might be a husband;  
No, he shall be no more.

*Flor.* But listen to me,  
These lips that thou hast kissed,—

*Hesp.* I, and a thousand,  
Men, boys, and monsters.

*Flor.* And these arms thou callest  
Beloved and fair—

*Hesp.* And fickle and adulterous. 150  
Enough of woman: boy, your paramour  
Is troublesome, sirrah, milk-blooded imp,  
Raise her; she loves your silken limbs; I give you  
All that is mine of her.

*Flor.* Oh! save me, dearest.

*Hesp.* She speaks to you, sir. I beseech you both, 155  
Go on; don't heed me: oh, I joy to see  
Your love-tricks.

*Flor.* By the solemn spousal tie,  
I charge you, hear me.

*Hesp.* Lady, I will tell you,  
Though it is needless, what I meant to say,  
And leave you then for ever. You remember 160  
A loving dupe you entertained some while,  
One Hesperus, you must; oh! that you ever  
Forgot him. Well, I will be brief. He gave you,

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act II

And bid you keep it as you would his love,  
 A little bird, a sweet red-bosomed creature, 165  
 To toy with in his absence: (then he knew not  
 You had another playmate for your chamber.)  
 This bird, it was a creature that I loved,  
 Yet it did not deceive me; I have thought  
 There was a spirit in it—never mind; 170  
 I dreamed I spoke to one, who valued me  
 And my poor feelings. Unto you I gave it,  
 And you have lost it; in my way I passed  
 Its silent wicker house. Now I have spoken,  
 Perhaps was tedious: but I'm still so foolish, 175  
 That I will say, good bye.

*Flor.* Oh, stay, my love.

*Hesp.* He will, the lovely cub.

*Flor.* Thee, thee I mean.

*Hesp.* I am no lover, I. Madam, we're strangers;  
 And yet I knew some while ago a form  
 Like thine, as fair, as delicate. Oh heaven! 180  
 To think of it. But she was innocent,  
 Innocent, innocent.

*Flor.* The angels know  
 I am as spotless.

*Hesp.* Go to them; I'm not one;  
 Perhaps this pap-faced chit may be. Nay, girl,  
 Wet not thy cheeks: I've seen a player weep. 185  
 I will not go, for if I do, the flock  
 Of her warm suitors will be toying here;  
 Yet I'll not stay; for she will melt and pray  
 Till I'm a fool again. Strain not your lungs  
 With laughter when I'm gone. Oh woman, woman.

[Exit. 190

*Flor.* Poor boy, thou hast undone me; lead me in.

[Exeunt.

SCENE III. *An apartment in ORLANDO'S palace*

*Enter HESPERUS*

*Hesp.* Oh thou sad self, thou wretched half of  
Hesperus,  
Thou'rt lost indeed, there's nought of life about thee,  
But the one thought, that thou hast saved a father.  
Now I do think that if I meet a goodness  
In woman's shape, a fair one I'd not ask, 5  
But something that would soothe and comfort me,  
I could almost love her.

*Enter ORLANDO and OLIVIA*

0/7. My brother Hesperus, our poor home is hon-  
oured  
By thy loved father's presence and thine own.  
Here is a living welcome, prithee know her, 10  
Olivia.

*Hesp.* Blessedness you should have said.  
A music waits upon her every step,  
That my heart leaps to.

*Oliv.* Courtly, sir, and kind.

*Hesp.* And fond I would have made it. Oh fair lady,  
A smile of thine will give me health again. 15

0/7. Sister, thou needst no witness to these blushes.  
School her, sir, in the arts of compliment,  
You'll find her an apt learner. *[Exit.*

*Oliv.* Had I a right to pray to you, I would.

*Hesp.* Pray, Lady? Didst thou ever see the goddess  
Step from her dignity of stone, or leave 21  
The hallowed picture in its tinted stole  
And crouch unto her suppliant? Oh no;  
If there is aught so poor a thing as I  
Can please you with, command it and you bless me. 25

*Oliv.* Try, I beseech thee, try not to detest,  
Not utterly to detest a silly girl,  
Whose only merit is that she'd be thine.



# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

## Act II

*Hesp.* Hate thee, thou virtue?

*Oliv.* Well, if it must be,  
Play the deceiver for a little while; 30  
Don't tell me so.

*Hesp.* By Truth's white name I'll tell thee,  
Olivia, there was once an idle thought  
That aped affection in my heart; nay, nay,  
Not in my heart; it was a dream or so;  
A dream within a dream; a pale, dim warmth; 35  
But thou hast dawned like summer on my soul,  
Or like a new existence.

*Oliv.* Twere delightful,  
If credible; but you are all too gallant.

*Hesp.* I knew it must be so: you'll not believe me,  
But doubt and say 'tis sudden. Do not minute 40  
The movements of the soul, for some there are  
Of pinion unimpeded, thrice word-swift,  
Outsoar the sluggish flesh; and these, Olivia,  
Anticipating their death-given powers, can grasp  
A century of feeling and of thought; 45  
Outlive the old world's age, and be at once  
In the present, past, and future; while the body  
Lives half a pulse's stroke. To see and love thee  
Was but one soul's step.

*Oliv.* Then thou canst endure me;  
Thou dost not hate the forward maid? My prayer 50  
Through many a year has been for that one word;  
And I have kept the precious thought of thee,  
Hidden almost from myself. But I'll not speak,  
For I have told too much, too childishly.

*Hesp.* Dear, I could weep, but that my brain is dry,  
To think upon thee. *Me*—'Twere well to court 56  
The yellow pestilence, or woo the lightning  
Unto thy bosom; but to hold me dear—  
It is a crime of hell; forget you thought it.

*Oliv.* 'Tis sweeter than a virtue, I must love thee. 60

*Hesp.* And love me truly?

*Oliv.* Heaven grant me life  
To prove it.

*Hesp.* Then thou shalt be mine own; but not till  
death.

We'll let this life burn out, no matter how;  
Though every sand be moistened with our tears, 65  
And every day be rain-wet in our eyes;  
Though thou shouldst wed some hateful avarice,  
And I grow hoary with a daubed deceit,  
A smiling treachery in woman's form,  
Sad to the soul, heart-cankered and forlorn; 70  
No matter, all no matter.

Though madness rule our thoughts, despair our hearts,  
And misery live with us, and misery talk,  
Our guest all day, our bed-fellow all night;  
No matter, all no matter. 75

For when our souls are born then will we wed;  
Our dust shall mix and grow into one stalk,  
Our breaths shall make one perfume in one bud,  
Our blushes meet each other in a rose,  
Our sweeter voices swell some sky-bird's throat 80  
With the same warbling, dwell in some soft pipe,  
Or bubble up along some sainted spring's  
Musical course, and in the mountain trees  
Slumber our deeper tones, by tempests waked:  
We will be music, spring, and all fair things 85  
The while our spirits make a sweeter union  
Than melody and perfume in the air.  
Wait then, if thou dost love me.

*Oliv.* Be it so;  
You'll let me pray for death, if it will bring  
Such joys as these! Though once I thought to live 90  
An happy bride; but I must learn new feelings.

*Hesp.* New feelings! Aye to watch the lagging clock,  
And bless each moment as it parts from thee,  
To court the blighting grasp of tardy age,  
And search thy forehead for a silver tress 95

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

ActH

As for a most prized jewel.

*Oliv.* I cannot think  
Of that cold bed diseases make for us,  
That earthy sleep; oh! 'tis a dreadful thing.

*Hesp.* The very air,  
I thank it, (the same wild and busy air 100  
That numbers every syllable I speak,  
In the same instant my lips shape its sound  
With the first lisps of him, who died before  
The world began its story;) steals away  
A little from my being, 105  
And at each slightest tremor of a leaf  
My hearse moves one step nearer. Joy, my love,  
We're nearer to our bridal sheets of lead  
Than when your brother left us here just now  
By twenty minutes' talk.

*Oliv.* It is not good 110  
Thus to spurn life, the precious gift of heaven,  
And watch the coming light of dissolution  
With such a desperate hope. Can we not love  
In secret, and be happy in our thoughts,  
Till in devotion's train, th' appointed hour 115  
Lead us with solemnly rejoicing hearts  
Unto our blessed end?

*Hesp.* End! thou sayest.  
And do those cherries ripen for the worms,  
Those blue enchantments beam to light the tomb?  
Was that articulate harmony, (Love uses 120  
Because he seems both Love and Innocence  
When he sings to it,) that summer of sweet breath  
Created but to perish and so make  
The deads' home loveliest?

*Oliv.* But what's to live without my Hesperus? 125  
A life of dying. 'Tis to die each moment  
In every several sense. To look despair,  
Feel, taste, breathe, eat, be conscious of despair.  
No, I'll be nothing rather.

*Hesp.* Nothing but mine!  
 Thou flower of love, I'll wear thee in my bosom; 130  
 With thee the wrath of man will be no wrath,  
 Conscience and agony will smile like pleasure,  
 And sad remembrance lose its gloomy self  
 In rapturous expectation.

*Oliv.* Let me look on thee;  
 Pray pardon me, mine eyes are very fools. 135

*Hesp.* Jewels of pity, azure stars of beauty  
 Which lost affection steers by; could I think  
 To dim your light with sorrow? Pardon me,  
 And I will serve you ever. Sweet, go in;  
 Somewhat I have to think on. *[Exit OLIVIA.*

*Floribel,* 140  
 I would not have thee cross my path to-night;  
 There is an indistinct dread purpose forming,  
 Something, whose depth of wickedness appears  
 Hideous, incalculable, but inevitable;  
 Now it draws nearer, and I do not shudder; 145  
 Avaunt! haunt me no more; I dread it not,  
 But almost—hence! I must not be alone. *[Exit.*

SCENE IV.A *tapestried chamber in the same*

HESPERUS *discovered in a disturbed slumber*

*Hesp. {starting from his couch}* Who speaks? Who  
 whispers there? A light! a light!  
 I'll search the room, something hath called me thrice,  
 With a low muttering voice of toadish hisses,  
 And thrice I slept again. But still it came  
 Nearer and nearer, plucked my mantle from me, 5  
 And made mine heart an ear, in which it poured  
 Its loathed enticing courtship. Ho! a light.

*Enter Attendant with a torch*

Thou drowsy snail, thy footsteps are asleep,

Hold up the torch.

*Attend.* My lord, you are disturbed.  
Have you seen aught?

*Hesp.* I lay upon my bed, 10  
And something in the air, out-jetting night,  
Converting feeling to intenser vision,  
Featured its ghastly self upon my soul  
Deeper than sight.

*Attend.* This is Delusion surely;  
She's busy with men's thoughts at all night hours, 15  
And to the waking subtle apprehension  
The darkling chamber's still and sleepy air  
Hath breath and motion oft.

*Hesp.* Lift up the hangings, mark the doors, the  
corners;  
Seest nothing yet? No face of fiendlike mirth 20  
More frightful than the fixed and doggish grin  
Of a dead madman?

*Attend.* Nought I see, my lord,  
Save the long, varied crowd of warlike shapes  
Set in the stitched picture.

*Hesp.* Heard ye then?  
There was a sound, as though some marble tongue 25  
Moved on its rusty hinge, syllabbling harshly  
The hoarse death-rattle into speech.

*Attend.* The wind is high, and through the silent  
rooms  
Murmurs his burthen, to an heedless car  
Almost articulate.

*Hesp.* Thou sleep'st, fool, 30  
A voice has been at my bedside to-night,  
Its breath is burning on my forehead still,  
Still o'er my brain its accents, wildly sweet,  
Hover and fall. Away and dream again.  
I'll watch myself.

*[He takes the torch and turns to the hangings.]*

*Exit Attendant.*

Aye, these are living colours, 35  
Those cheeks have worn their youth these hundred  
years,  
Those flowers are verdant in their worsted spring  
And blooming still;  
While she, whose needle limned so cunningly,  
Sleeps and dreams not. It is a goodly state, 40  
And there is one I wish had ta'en her bed  
In the stone dormitory.

(Blindfold moth,  
Thou shalt not burn thy life; there, I have saved thee,  
If thou art grateful, mingle with the air  
That feeds the lips of her I thought of once, 45  
Choak her, moth, choak her. I could be content.  
If she were safe in heaven.)

Yon stout dagger  
Is fairly fashioned for a blade of stitches,  
And shines, methinks, most grimly; well, thou art  
An useful tool sometimes, thy tooth works quickly, 50  
And if thou gnawest a secret from the heart,  
Thou tellest it not again: ha! the feigned steel  
Doth blush and steam. There is a snuff of blood.

*[Grasps his dagger convulsively.]*  
Who placed this iron aspic in my hand?  
Speak! who is at my ear?

*[He turns, and addresses his shadow.]*  
I know thee now, 55  
I know the hideous laughter of thy face.  
'Tis Malice' eldest imp, the heir of hell,  
Red-handed Murther. Slow it whispers me,  
Coaxingly with its serpent voice. Well sung,  
Syren of Acheron!

I'll not look on thee; 60  
Why does thy frantic weapon dig the air  
With such most frightful vehemence? Back, back,  
Tell the dark grave I will not give it food.  
Back to thy home of night. What! playest thou still?

Then thus I banish thee. Out, treacherous torch, 65  
Sure thou wert kindled in infernal floods,  
Or thy bright eye would blind at sights like this.

*[Dashes the torch on the ground.]*

Tempt me no more; I tell thee Floribel  
Shall never bleed. I pray thee, guilty word,  
Tempt me no more. *[Wraps himself in his mantle.]*  
I'm deaf, my ears are safe, 70

I do not hear thee woo me to the deed;  
Thou tellest to one without auricular sense  
Olivia's beauties and that bad one's faults.  
Oh! bring me thoughts of pity. Come, come, come,  
Or I am lost.

Bad goblin, must I fly thee? *[Exit.]* 75

SCENE V. *A hall in the same*

LORDERNEST, ORLANDO, CLAUDIO, OLIVIA

*L. Ern.* Saw ye my son?

*Oliv.* Some hours ago we parted,  
And he was strange, though gentle, in his talk.

*Orl.* I passed him in the garden, just at twilight;  
He stood with eyes wide open, but their sense  
Dreamed, in dumb parley with some fancied thing; 5  
For his lips moved, and he did walk and gaze,  
Now frown most mournfully, now smile most madly,  
And weep, and laugh, groan deep and gnash his teeth,  
And now stand still with such a countenance,  
As does the marble sorrow o'er a tomb. 10

At last he tore his feet, as they were roots,  
Up from the earth, and sighed like one o'ercome;  
Then with his fingers thrust upon his eyes,  
And dashed unclosed away, he seemed to snatch  
Some loathly object out of them, and leapt 15  
Into the thicket's gloom.

*L. Ern.* Who saw him since?

*Clau.* In most distempered wildness he hath left  
His chamber now.

*L. Em.*                    Go seek him, every one,  
I do beseech you, 'tis a fearful period  
I know too truly. On his nurse's breast                    20  
Some twenty years ago, he lay and mused  
Upon her singing and bright merry lips;  
A viewless bolt dropped on her, and she died  
Most hideously; close in the infant's face  
Looked all the horrors of her bursting eyes;                    25  
And as the months bring round that black remem-  
brance,  
His brain unsettles, bloody thoughts oppress  
And call him from his bed. Search all the darkness,  
Each one a several way; dear daughter, in.     *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VIA *suicide's grave*

ORLANDO and CLAUDIO

*Clau.* There is a plague in this night's breath,  
Orlando,  
The dews fall black and blistering from yon cloud  
Anchored above us; dost thou mark how all  
The smokes of heaven avoid it and crowd on  
Far from its fatal darkness? Some men say                    5  
That the great king of evil sends his spirits  
In such a winged car, to stir ill minds  
Up to an act of death.

*Orl.*                    We may not think so,  
For there's a fascination in bad deeds  
Oft pondered o'er, that draws us to endure them,                    10  
And then commit. Beware of thine own soul,  
'Tis but one devil ever tempts a man,  
And his name's *Self*. Know'st thou these rankling  
hemlocks?



# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act II

*Clau.* I've seen the ugsome reptiles batten on  
them,

While healthy creatures sicken at the sight. 15

*Orl.* Five months ago they were an human heart  
Beating in Hugo's breast. A parricide  
Here sleeps self-slaughtered. 'Twas a thing of grace,  
In his early infancy; I've known him oft  
Outstep his pathway that he might not crush 20  
The least small reptile. But there is a time  
When goodness sleeps; it came, and vice was grafted  
On his young thoughts, and grew, and flourished there,  
Envenomed passions clustered round that prop;  
A double fruit they bore; a double fruit of death. 25

*Clau.* Enough, Orlando,  
The imps of darkness listen, while we tell  
A dead man's crimes. Even now *I* heard a stir  
As if the buried turned them in their shrouds  
For mere unquiet. Home, it is the time 30  
When the hoarse fowl, the carrier-bird of woe,  
Brings fevers from the moon, and maddening dreams;  
The hour 's unholy, and who hath not sent  
After the parted sun his orisons,  
Falls 'neath the sway of evil. [*Exeunt.* 35

*Enter* HESPERUS

*Hesp.* Hail, shrine of blood, in double shadows  
veiled,  
Where the Tartarian blossoms shed their poison  
And load the air with wicked impulses;  
Hail, leafless shade, hallowed to sacrilege,  
Altar of death! Where is thy deity? 40  
With him I come to covenant, and thou,  
Dark power, that sittest in the chair of night,  
Searching the clouds for tempests with thy brand,  
Proxy of Hades; list and be my witness,  
And bid your phantoms all, (the while I speak 45  
What if they but repeat in sleeping ears,

Will strike the hearer dead, and mad his soul;)   
Spread wide and black and thick their cloudy wings,   
Lest the appalled sky do pale to day.   
Eternal people of the lower world, 50   
Ye citizens of Hades' capitol,   
That by the rivers of remorseful tears   
Sit and despair for ever;   
Ye negro brothers of the deadly winds,   
Ye elder souls of night, ye mighty sins, 55   
Sceptred damnations, how may man invoke   
Your darkling glories? Teach my eager soul   
Fit language for your ears. Ye that have power   
O'er births and swoons and deaths, the soul's attend-   
ants,   
(Wont to convey her from her human home 60   
Beyond existence, to the past or future,   
To lead her through the starry blossomed meads   
Where the young hours of morning by the lark   
With earthly airs are nourished, through the groves   
Of silent gloom, beneath whose breathless shades 65   
The thousand children of Calamity   
Play murderously with men's hearts:) Oh pause,   
Your universal occupations leave,   
Lay down awhile the infant miseries,   
That to the empty and untenanted clay 70   
Ye carry from the country of the unborn;   
And grant the summoned soul one moment more   
To linger on the threshold of its flesh;   
For I would task you.   
Bear this breath of mine,   
This inner Hesperus away, and bring 75   
Another guest to its deserted home;   
The mind of him whose dust is on my feet,   
And let his daring spirit inhabit there   
But for a passing day.   
'Tis here. A wind   
Is rushing through my veins, and I become 80

As a running water.  
 I see a shadowy image of myself,  
 Yet not my perfect self, a brother self,  
 That steps into my bosom. Am I born  
 Newly, or newly dead? I'll think a little. 85  
 Have I e'er lived before, or thought or acted?  
 Why no; it was the morning doze of being,  
 I slept content with dreams; but now I wake  
 And find it noon, a time for stirring deeds.  
 Yes, this is life that trembles in my veins, 90  
 Yes, this is courage warms my heart's full tide:  
 Hesperus is a man, a demon-man,  
 And there's a thing he lives for, shall amaze  
 The emulous bad powers.  
 Lead me on,  
 Mysterious guide, companion wickedness; 95  
 Olivia calls me forward, and to reach her,  
 What if we tread upon a world of hearts?  
 Come, ye ill blasts, ye killing visitants  
 Of sleeping men, wild creatures of the air,  
 We'll walk together; come, ye beauteous snakes, 100  
 Ye lovely fanged monsters of the woods,  
 We'll grovel in the dust and ye shall hiss  
 Your tunes of murder to me. [*An ignis fatuus rises.*  
 L o, she's here  
 To light our sports, the Hebe of the dead,  
 Alecto, 'mid her nest of living hair 105  
 Bearing a star of Tartarus. Lead on. [*Exit.*

## ACT III

SCENE I. *An apartment in ORLANDO'S palace*

HESPERUS seated. Attendants. Enter to them CLAUDIO

*Clau.* The bridegroom's here?

*Attend.*

Yonder he sits, my lord,

And since the morn's first hour, without the motion  
Even of a nerve, as he were growing marble,  
Has sat and watched, the sun blazed in at noon  
With light enough to blind an eagle's ken, 5  
He felt it not, although his eyeballs glared  
Horribly bright: I spoke: he heard me not:  
And when I shook his arm slept on in thought;  
I pray you try him.

*Clau.* Sir, good Hesperus,  
I wait at your desire; we are to end 10  
Our match at tennis. Will you walk with me?

*Attend.* Your voice is weak as silence to his sense.

*Enter* ORLANDO

*Orl.* My brother, you must join us at the banquet;  
We wait your coming long; how's this?

*Attend.* My lord,  
Like trance has held him since the dawn of day, 15  
He has looked down upon yon wood since then,  
Speechless and still.

*Enter* LORD ERNEST

*L.* *Ern.* Now health and good be here,  
For I have missed my son the livelong day.  
Why what an idle loiterer thou art;  
By this your vacant sight must ache with gazing 20  
Upon that view. Arise, I'd have you with me  
To fix upon some posy for the ring  
You wed your love with. Death! Some fearful change  
Is here. Speak; speak and tell me if he lives.

*Attend.* He does, my lord, if breathing is to live, 25  
But in all else is like the confined dead;  
Motion and speech he lacks.

*L.* *Ern.* O heavens, Orlando  
Tell me 'tis false.

*Orl.* I would 'twere in my power,  
But it doth seem too true.

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act HI

*L.*                      *Ern.*                      Ride like the wind,  
Fetch him the aid of medicine. See you not                      30  
Some vision has come to him in the night,  
And stole his eyes and ears and tongue away?

*Enter OLIVIA*

Oh, you are come in time to see him die;  
Look, look, Olivia, look; he knows us not;  
My son, if thou dost hear me, speak one word,                      35  
And I will bless thee.

*Orl.*                                      He is dumb indeed.

*Oliv.* Let me come near him. Dearest Hesperus,  
If thou beholdest these poor unbeauteous cheeks,  
Which first thy flattering kindness taught to blush;  
Or if thou hearest a voice, that's only sweet                      40  
When it says Hesperus; oh gentle love,  
Speak any thing, even that thou hatest Olivia,  
And I will thank thee for 't: or if some horror  
Has frozen up the fountain of thy words,  
Give but a sign.

*Clan.*                      Lady, alas, 'tis vain.                      45

*Oliv. (kneeling)* Nay, he shall speak, or I will never  
move,  
But thus turn earth beseeching his dull hand,  
And let the grass grow over me. I'll hold  
A kind of converse with my raining eyes,  
For if he sees not, nor doth hear, he'll know                      50  
The gentle feel of his Olivia's tears.

*Clau.* Sweet sir, look on her.

*Orl.*                                      Brother.

*Oliv.*                                                                                      Husband.

*L.*                                      *Ern.*                                      *Son.*  
Kind heaven, let him hear, though death should call  
him.                                      *[Pause, a clock strikes.*

*Hesp.* The hour is come.                                      *[Exit.*

SCENE II. *A room in MORDRED'S cottage*FLORIBEL *alone*

*Flor.* And must I wake again? Oh come to me,  
Thou that with dew-cold fingers softly closest  
The wearied eye; thou sweet, thou gentle power,  
Soother of woe, sole friend of the oppressed,  
I long to lay me on thy peaceful breast. 5  
But once I saw thee, beautiful as moonlight,  
Upon a baby's lips, and thou didst kiss them,  
Lingering and oft,  
(As a wild bee doth kiss a rifled flower,  
And clips its waist, and drops a little tear, 10  
Remorsefully enamoured of his prey;)   
Come so to me, sweet death, and I will wreath thee  
An amorous chaplet for thy paly brows;  
And on an odoured bank of wan white buds  
In thy fair arms 15  
I'll lie, and taste thy cool delicious breath,  
And sleep, and sleep, and sleep.

*Enter LENORA*

O here, good mother,  
We'll talk together.

*Len.* What; of Hesperus?  
Methinks he has grown cold.

*Flor.* Oh no; he is  
More full of courtship than he ever was; 20  
Don't think him cold, dear mother, or I may;  
Fm sure he loves me still; I'll go to him,  
Tis nigh the appointed hour.

*Len.* My child, it is a chill and gloomy evening,  
So go not out. Thy Hesperus will come, 25  
And thou wilt live on every word of his  
Till thine eyes sparkle. What means this despondence?

*Flor.* Dear mother, I will strive to be at ease,  
If you desire; but melancholy thoughts

Are poor dissemblers. How I wish we owned      30  
The wealth we've lost.

*Len.*                                      Why girl, I never heard  
One such regret escape your lips before;  
Has not your Hesperus enough?

*Flor.*                                      Too much;  
If he were even poorer than ourselves,  
I'd almost love him better. For, methinks,      35  
It seemed a covetous spirit urged me on,  
Craving to be received his bride. I hope  
He did not think so; if he does, I'll tell him  
I will not share his wealth, but dwell with you.  
Oh that he'd come! How each dull moment drags      40  
Its lazy wing along when he is absent.  
When was he here?

*Len.*                                      Last night.

*Flor.*                                      Last night? Now pr'ythee  
Don't jeer me so, I'm sure, not many days;  
But all is night when he's not here to light me,  
So let it be last night; although that night      45  
Had days for hours, yet in Love's book and mine  
'Tis but an empty cypher, a black round.  
Oh, I've not lived, I've not been Floribel  
Since the last mellow echo of his voice  
Lent the air music; is 't not a sweet voice?      50  
What can you liken to it?

*Len.*                                      Pan's honeycomb  
Of many vocal cells.

*Flor.*                                      How dull you are;  
There's nought beneath the thunder-choir so grand;  
The wood-birds and the waterfalls but mock him.  
He said, dear mother, I should be his countess;      55  
To-day he'd come to fetch me, but with day  
I've laid my expectation in its grave.  
Dost think he will deceive me? Silly girl,  
Querulous ingrate, why do I torment me?  
Sweet mother, comfort.

*Len.* Be you sure he'll come 60  
With his whole princely train of friends and kindred,  
And he will lift thee to his gorgeous car,  
And place thee at his side, a happy wife.

*Flor.* Fie! you cajole me, like a sulky child,  
With gilded cars; but oh! I wish 'twere here. 65  
How gloomily the clouds look, and the wind  
Rattles among the brown leaves dolefully;  
He will be very chill, heap up the fire.  
Hush! hark! What's that?

*Len.* Only your dear father  
Heavily breathing in his sleep; he'll wake 70  
With his sad smile upon his patient face,  
Looking so dear in sickness.

*Flor.* But 'twill cure him,  
When he knows all and sees my bridegroom with me,  
I know it will: and there's the horse's step,  
I'll just run out, it is not cold at all.—

*Len.* Go my love, 75  
But you must come to ask your father's blessing,  
And bring your Hesperus with you.

*Flor.* That I will. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III. A wood

*Enter HUBERT and a Huntsman*

*Hub.* No answer to our shouts but mocking echo?  
Where are our fellow huntsmen? Why they vanished  
Like mist before the sun, and left us here  
Lost in the briary mazes.

*Hunts.* Shame on the rogues  
For this their treatment. But look upwards, Hubert, 5  
See what a mighty storm hangs right above us.

*Hub.* The day is in its shroud while yet an infant,  
And Night with giant strides stalks o'er the world,  
Like a swart Cyclops, on its hideous front



# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

Act III

One round, red, thunderswollen eye ablaze. 10

*Hunts.* Now mercy save the peril-stricken man,  
Who 'mongst his shattered canvas sits aghast  
On the last sinking plank alone, and sees  
The congregated monsters of the deep  
For his dead messmates warring all, save one 15  
That leers upon him with a ravenous gaze  
And whets its iron tusks just at his feet:  
Yet little heeds his wide and tearless eye  
That, or the thunder of the mountain flood  
Which Destiny commissions with his doom; 20  
Where the wild waters rush against the sky,  
Far o'er the desolate plain, his star of hope  
In mockery gleams, while Death is at his side.

*[lightning.*

*Hub.* That flash hath rent the heavens; this way for  
shelter.

*Hunts.* Some steps above there stands a noble oak 25  
That from the sun roofs ever-during night  
With its thickwoven firmament of leaves:  
Thither betake we. *[Exeunt.*

*Enter FLORIBEL*

*Flor.* Hence did I seem to hear a human voice,  
Yet there is nought, save a low moaning sound, 30  
As if the spirits of the earth and air  
Were holding sad and ominous discourse.  
And much I fear me I have lost my path;  
Oh how these brambles tear; here 'twixt the willows;  
Ha! something stirs, my silly prattling nurse 35  
Says that fierce shaggy wolves inhabit here,  
And 'tis in sooth a dread and lonely place;  
There, there again; a rustling in the leaves.

*Enter HESPERUS*

'Tis he at last; why dost thou turn away  
And lock thy bosom from my first embrace? 40

I am so tired and frightened; but thou'rt here;  
I knew thou wouldst be faithful to thy promise,  
And claim me openly. Speak, let me hear thy voice,  
Tell me the joyful news.

*Hesp.* Aye, I am come

In all my solemn pomp, Darkness and Fear, 45  
And the great Tempest in his midnight car,  
The sword of lightning girt across his thigh,  
And the whole daemon brood of night, blind Fog  
And withering Blight, all these are my retainers;  
How: not one smile for all this bravery? 50  
What think you of my minstrels, the hoarse winds,  
Thunder, and tuneful Discord? Hark, they play.  
Well piped, methinks; somewhat too rough, perhaps.

*Flor.* I know you practise on my silliness,  
Else I might well be scared. But leave this mirth, 55  
Or I must weep.

*Hesp.* 'Twill serve to fill the goblets  
For our carousal, but we loiter here,  
The bridesmaids are without; well-picked thou'lt say,  
Wan ghosts of woe-begone, self-slaughtered damsels  
In their best winding sheets; start not, I bid them wipe  
Their gory bosoms; they'll look wondrous comely; 61  
Our link-boy, Will o' the Wisp, is waiting too  
To light us to our grave—bridal I mean.

*Flor.* Ha! how my veins are chilled—why Hesperus!

*Hesp.* What hero of thy dreams art calling, girl? 65  
Look in my face—Is 't mortal? Dost thou think  
The voice that calls thee is not of a mouth  
Long choaked with dust? What though I have assumed  
This garb of flesh and with it the affections,  
The thoughts and weakness of mortality? 70  
'Twas but for thee; and now thou art my bride;  
Lift up thine eyes and smile—the bride of Death.

*Flor.* Hold, hold. My thoughts are 'wildered. Is my  
fancy  
The churlish framer of these fearful words,

Or do I live indeed to such a fate? 75

Oh! no, I recollect; I have not waked  
Since Hesperus left me in the twilight bower.

*Hesp.* Come, we'll to our chamber,  
The cypress shade hangs o'er our stony couch  
A goodly canopy; be mad and merry; 80  
There'll be a jovial feast among the worms. [*aside.*  
Fiends, strew your fiercest fire about my heart  
Or she will melt it.

*Flor.* Oh, that look of fury!  
What's this about my eyes? ah! deadly night,  
No light, no hope, no help.

*Hesp.* What! Darest thou tremble  
Under thy husband's arm, darest think of fear? 86  
Dost dread me, me?

*Flor.* I know not what to dread,  
Nor what to hope; all's horrible and doubtful;  
And coldness creeps—

*Hesp.* She swoons, poor girl, she swoons.  
And, treacherous daemons, ye've allowed a drop 90  
To linger in my eyes. Out, out for ever.  
I'm fierce again. Now shall I slay the victim  
As she lies senseless? ah! she wakes; cheer up,  
'Twas but a jest.

*Flor.* A dread and cruel one;  
But I'll forgive you, if you will be kind; 95  
And yet 'twas frightful.

*Hesp.* Why 'twere most unseemly  
For one marked for the grave to laugh too loud.

*Flor.* Alas! he raves again. Sweetest, what mean you  
By these strange words?

*Hesp.* What mean I? Death and murder,  
Darkness and misery. To thy prayers and shrift; 100  
Earth gives thee back; thy God hath sent me for thee,  
Repent and die.

*Flor.* Oh, if thou wilt it, love,  
If thou but speak it with thy natural voice,

And smile upon me; I'll not think it pain,  
 But cheerfully I'll seek me out a grave, 105  
 And sleep as sweetly as on Hesperus' breast.  
 He will not smile, he will not listen to me.  
 Why dost thou thrust thy fingers in thy bosom?  
 Oh search it, search it; see if there remain  
 One little remnant of thy former love 110  
 To dry my tears with.

*Hesp.* Well, speak on; and then,  
 When thou hast done thy tale, I will but kill thee.  
 Come tell me all my vows, how they are broken,  
 Say that my love was feigned, and black deceit,  
 Pour out thy bitterest, till untamed wrath 115  
 Melt all his chains off with his fiery breath,  
 And rush a-hungering out.

*F/or.* Oh piteous heavens!  
 I see it now, some wild and poisonous creature  
 Hath wounded him and with contagious fang  
 Planted this fury in his veins. He hides 120  
 The mangled fingers, dearest, trust them to me,  
 I'll suck the madness out of every pore,  
 So as I drink it boiling from thy wound  
 Death will be pleasant. Let me have the hand  
 And I will treat it like another heart. 125

*Hesp.* Here 'tis then, [stabs her.  
 Shall I thrust deeper yet?

*F/or.* Quite through my soul,  
 That all my senses, deadened at the blow,  
 May never know the giver. Oh, my love,  
 Some spirit in thy sleep hath stole thy body 130  
 And filled it to the brim with cruelty;  
 Farewell! and may no busy deathful tongue  
 Whisper this horror in thy waking ears,  
 Lest some dread desperate sorrow urge thy soul  
 To deeds of wickedness. Whose kiss is that? 135  
 His lips are ice. Oh my loved Hesperus,  
 Help! [Dies.

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

## Act III

*Hesp.* What a shriek was that; it flew to heaven,  
 And hymning angels took it for their own.  
 Dead art thou, Floribel; fair, painted earth,  
 And no warm breath shall ever more disport 140  
 Between those rubious lips: no, they have quaffed  
 Life to the dregs, and found death at the bottom,  
 The sugar of the draught. All cold and still;  
 Her very tresses stiffen in the air.  
 Look, what a face: had our first mother worn 145  
 But half such beauty, when the serpent came,  
 His heart, all malice, would have turned to love;  
 No hand but this, which I do think was once  
 Cain, the arch-murderer's, could have acted it.  
 And I must hide these sweets, not in my bosom; 150  
 In the foul earth. She shudders at my grasp;  
 Just so she laid her head across my bosom  
 When first—oh villain! which way lies the grave? [*Exit.*]

*Enter HUBERT and a Huntsman*

*Hub.* It is a fearful and tempestuous time,  
 The concave firmament, the angel's bridge 155  
 O'er the world's day and night, is visibly  
 Bowed down and bent beneath its load of thunder,  
 And through the fiery fissures of the clouds  
 Glistens the warfare of armed elements,  
 Bellowing defiance in earth's stunned ear, 160  
 And setting midnight on the throne of day.

*Hunts.* The roar has ceased; the hush of intercalm  
 Numbs with its leaden finger Echo's lips,  
 And angry spirits in mid havoc pause,  
 Premeditating ruin in their silence. 165

*Hub.* Hard by should stand a lone and tattered shed,  
 Where some tired woodsman may by chance be  
 stretched,

Watching his scanty food among the coals;  
 There may we chafe our drenched and chilly limbs.

*Hunts.* The forest has more tenants than I knew, 170

Look underneath this branch; seest thou not yonder,  
Amongst the brushwood and the briary weeds  
A man at work?

*Hub.* My life upon 't some miser,  
Who in the secret hour creeps to his hoard,  
And kneeling at the altar of his love, 175  
Worships that yellow devil, gold.

*Hunts.* Tis buried,  
And now he stamps the sod down, that no light  
May spy his mistress; with what a doleful look  
He marks its grave, and backward walks away,  
As if he left his all of sight behind. 180

*Hub.* Let us steal towards it; I would have a peep  
Upon this hidden jewel. [Exeunt.

*Enter HESPERUS*

*Hesp.* Shall I turn back and try to thrust my soul  
In at her lips, and so re-animate  
The beauteous casket while this body dies? 185  
I cannot—not the universe of breath  
Could give those little lips their life again.  
I've huddled her into the wormy earth,  
And left the guilty dagger at her side.  
Dead Innocence! and must unkindly thistles 190  
And rank thick hemlock force their bristling roots  
Into thy lovely breast? Fool! Is 't not done?  
Why stand I tampering 'midst the listening winds?  
My fears are lying traitors. [Bells at a distance.

Wedding bells,  
Thanks for your merry voices; ye have waked 195  
A sudden hurry round about my heart,  
I'll think it joy. Now for my second bride. [Exit.

SCENE IV. *A saloon in ORLANDO'S palace*

OLIVIA, VIOLETTA, *Nurse, and Attendants*

*Oliv.* You keep me long, am I not yet attired,  
Have ye not tricked me out enough? In faith  
I am so vain to think I need no more.

*Attend.* One moment, madam;  
This little necklace, like the marriage yoke 5  
Pleasantly binding, I must clasp around you.

*Oliv.* A pretty toy, and prettily disposed;  
I have, I know not why, this livelong day  
Wept drops enough to bead a thousand such.  
Where's Violetta? Come, look up, my girl, 10  
Make thine eyes sparkle, mine are very moist.

*Viol.* Shake off this sadness, lady, 'tis not meet  
At such a moment; think upon your bridegroom,  
How his affections seek thee.

*Oliv.* Gentle maid,  
I'll not be sad; yet, little Violet, 15  
How long I've worn thy beauty next my heart,  
Aye, in my very thoughts, where thou hast shed  
Perpetual summer: how long shared thy being:  
Like two leaves of a bud, we've grown together,  
And needs must bleed at parting.

*Viol.* No, not so; 20  
I am thy handmaid still; and when your lord  
Is absent, as he will be, at the tourney,  
The court, or camp, we'll drive the long hours on  
With prattle as of old.

*Oliv.* Thanks, I'll be cheerful;  
But joy 's a plant the showers of many sorrows 25  
Must water, ere it bloom. Good nurse, your pardon,  
You've known me for a froward child before.

*Nurse.* Now, on the scanty remnant of my life,  
Grief's an ill wedding garment; if you'd put  
One of your rosy smiles on, what a grace





As lovely pastoral pictures; all of you  
Shall smile again 'neath Memory's wizard pencil;  
The natural beauties that we've marked together  
Will look you back again; the books we've loved  
Will talk to me of your sweet-worded praises, 65  
The air of our old haunts whisper your voices;  
Trust me, I'll not forget you.

*Attend.* Dearest lady,  
May all the blessings that rain down from heaven  
Upon the marriage-bed, descend on yours;  
May many children, innocent and fair, 70  
With soft embracements throng about your knees,  
Domestic pleasures ever turn your hour-glass,  
And when the long sleep falls upon your eyes,  
Content and holy Peace, the twins of Eden,  
Draw round the curtain 'twixt you and the world, 75  
And watch beside you all the dreary night.

SCENE V. *A room in MORDRED'S cottage*

*Enter* LENORA *supporting* MORDRED

*Mor.* Here let me rest, in my old oaken chair,  
My limbs grow faint, and yet, kind, careful nurse,  
Your smiles have chased away my pains.

*Len.* Dear husband,  
A thousand thanks for those delightful words,  
They bid me hope again and warm my heart. 5

*Mor.* It renovates the spirit thus to look  
With the clear eyes of health and joyousness  
Upon the green creation. But I miss  
A smile of hope, the copy of Lenora's,  
That's wont to light my soul with its rich love;      10  
Where is my peach-cheeked girl, my Floribel?

*Len.* She will be with us soon; before you woke,  
She went to ramble underneath the boughs,  
**And** feed her forest birds; each bower she knows

Of eglantine and hawthorn; now the air 15  
Is calm, she will return.

*Mor.* I hope she may;  
Yet who could injure such a holy thing?  
The frenzied tempest's self, had it a will,  
Would leave her path secure. My dear Lenora  
There is one thing I wish to see accomplished 20  
Before I die.

*Len.* What is it, love? And yet methinks 'twere fit  
For me still to defer its execution,  
And cheat you into living to that end.

*Mor.* Long have I prayed to see her beauty growing " 25  
Under some worthy husband's firm protection.

*Len.* What if she be already wedded?

*Mor.* No,  
That cannot be, she would have told unto me  
The first emotions of her infant love;  
She never had a thought concealed from me, 30  
Even her slightest. 'Tis impossible,  
And yet you look in earnest; speak, and tell me  
You only jest.

*Len.* I speak indeed the truth;  
Perhaps I was imprudent not to tell you,  
But you were very ill, and such the match, 35  
You could not disapprove: Young Hesperus—

*Mor.* Lord Ernest's son!

*Len.* The same.

*Mor.* I'm satisfied,  
My wish is all fulfilled. There's not a man  
Beneath the sun more noble; but his father  
Was wont to be a stern imperious lord, 40  
A scorner of the poor.

*Len.* He did not know it.

*Mor.* He knew it not! That was a sad omission,  
Unworthy of a parent, we might rue it.

*Len.* This night our daughter's bridegroom  
Comes, as his own to claim her, and ere this 45

Doubtless has told the love-tale to his father.

*Mor.* I wish him speedy, he shall find a welcome,  
In the poor man's sole wealth, my hearty love.  
Hark! There's a step.

*Len.* 'Tis Hesperus'; I know it.

*Enter the Huntsman*

*Mor.* Who comes, who is it?

*Len.* One whose visage wears 50  
The darkest sadness; such a man I'd choose  
For the mute herald of disaster.

*Hunts.* Lady,  
Would that my looks could mirror to your soul  
The woe, each syllable of which in speaking 54  
Tears through my heart. Alas! your lovely daughter—

*Len.* What? Speak I pray thee. Has she met with  
aught?

*Mor.* Bid me die, or my fears.

*Enter HUBERT with the body of FLORIBEL*

*Hunts.* Here's all that's left  
Of nature's rarest work: this lifeless all.  
Oh! fall some strange unheard-of punishment  
On Hesperus' head.

*Mor.* Hesperus, Hesperus; oh! 60  
*[Falls back in his chair.]*

*Hub.* Aye, 'twas his hand that wrought its passage  
here,  
And murdered love in its most sacred temple.  
*[LENOR A takes the body into her lap and sits nursing it.]*

*Hunts.* Alas! he heeds not; he is with his daughter.  
Look at this other.

*Hub.* Oh! I cannot bear it;  
Leave her, a mother's agony is holy 65  
As nature's mysteries.

*Hunts.* We'll to the Duke,  
And crush the viper in his nest, before

Report alarm him. Gently, gently tread  
And wake not echo in this home of woe.

*[Exeunt HUBERT and the Huntsman.]*

LENORA *sings in a distracted manner*

Lullaby, lullaby, sweet be thy sleep! 70

Thou babe of my bosom, thou babe of my love;  
Close, close to my heart, dear caresser, you creep,  
And kiss the fond eyelid that watches above.

One touch of those warm lips and then to bed.  
Where is my child? I held her in my arms, 75  
Her heart was beating in my bosom. Ha!  
It is not she that lies upon my breast,  
It is not she that whispers in my ear,  
It is not she that kisses my salt cheek;  
They've stolen her from my couch and left this change-  
ling, 80

Men call Despair—and she it is I suckle.  
I know her by her killing lips of snow,  
Her watery eyeballs and her tear-swoll'n cheeks.  
My Floribel! oh they have ta'en her soul  
To make a second spring of it, to keep 85  
The jarring spheres in melody. Come, husband,  
We'll wander up and down this wintry world,  
And if we see a sadder sight than this,  
Or hear a tale, though false, of half such horror,  
We'll closely hug our bosom-griefs in transport. 90  
Why husband! You're asleep—you're deaf—you're  
dead!

I have not eyes enough to weep for both,  
But I'll go steal the sleeping world's, and beg  
A little dew from every sipping worm  
To wet my cheeks with. *[Exit.]*

## A C T I V

SCENE I. *An apartment in ORLANDO'S palace*HESPERUS *alone*

*Hesp.* How now? This quaint attire of countenance,  
(Well fitted by prim Conscience's old tailor,  
Hypocrisy,) sits rarely, and I'm here,  
The affable, good bridegroom. Wickedness,  
How easy is thy lesson! Now I stand 5  
Up to the throat in blood; from Mercy's records  
For evermore my guilty name is rased.  
But yesterday, oh blessed yesterday,  
I was a man;  
And now-- I start amazed at myself. 10  
This hand, aye this it was I gave to Sin,  
His grasp hath blasted it; 'twas made for kindness,  
For gentle salutation, to deal out  
Merciful alms, confirm the staff of age;  
To reach the crust to want, the balm to sickness, 15  
And balsam wounds, a limb of charity.  
Now the wild adder's sting, the lightning's edge,  
Are blunt and tame and gentle to it. Psha!  
Why then men dread the adder and the flash,  
So shall they cringe to me. A step! In haste 20  
I've washed, and thought me spotless. Yet I fear  
Mine eye is so familiarized with blood,  
It doth pass o'er and disregard the stains:  
That reck's not. Sure I've brushed away those blushes,  
And shaken hesitation from my tongue. 25

*Enter Attendant*

Menial, you're hasty in intruding thus.  
Your errand?

*Attend.* Lady Olivia—

*Hesp.* Give me thine hand. That name  
Makes him my friend who speaks it. Say 't again;

## Scene i

## THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

30

*Attend.*

My lord, your bride—

?

*Attend.*

A wound, my lorè

1 understand not—

*Hesp.*

Fool, I know thou dost no

*Attend.*

I thought not

*Hesp.*

Be it so;

*Attend.*

You might,

*Hesp.* Aye, they are strange indeed; 60  
But mirth, believe me, mirth. Come, tell me now,  
How sits this ring? Death! Are your eyes nailed there?  
Ha! Does the ruby cast a sanguine shade  
Across the veins?

*Attend.* Nought, save the splendid gem,  
Amazed my sight; that's all.

*Hesp.* My friend, 'tis thine, 65  
Too poor a recompense for the good tidings  
Your tongue is laden with; now speak them out.

*Attend.* First let me bless you for your bounty, sir.  
I came to call you to the wedding train,  
Which waits without; such smiles on such rare faces 70  
Mine eyes have never seen: the bride is there,  
None but yourself is wanting to perfect  
This sum of joy.

*Hesp.* Say I'll be there anon;  
And, mark me, on thy life forget each word  
I just have spoken, blot them utterly 75  
Out of thy mind; I can reward a service.  
I like thee well, my trusty, pleasant friend;  
Nay, pr'ythee go, there is no need of thanks.

[Exit Attendant.

I'll give that fellow's blab-tongue to the worms,  
He's heard too much; 'twere well to call him back, 80  
And fasten down his memory with a dagger.  
No, I'll not soil my skin again to-day;  
Down, Murder, down!  
These untamed passions that I keep about me 84  
Will thrive on nought save blood; but they must fast,  
And wear a specious tameness. My Olivia,  
Now my whole soul is thine,—thine and the fiends'.

[Exit

SCENE II. *The interior of the DUKE'S palace*

*Enter the DUKE, HUBERT, and the Huntsman*

*Duke.* Your tale hath stunned me with its dreadful  
import,  
And turned my every faculty to wonder.

*Hub.* You cannot doubt, my liege?

*Duke.* Hubert, I'd give  
The best part of my power for hope to whisper  
A no to my conviction. Devilish villain! 5

*Hub.* Sure all good angels looked another way  
When this foul deed was done.

*Duke.* All ancient cruelties  
Look pale to it and merciful: henceforth  
They that would christen human fiends must write  
Hesperus, 'stead of Cain; and chiding nurses, 10  
To still their peevish babes, shall offer them,  
Not to the wolves, but him, the fiercer beast.

*Hub.* Oh! my good lord, even now my sight is  
dimmed  
With the salt gush that came between my eyes  
And that which seared them: on her turfy couch, 15  
Like one just lulled into a heavy sleep,  
Smiling and calm she lay; the breath  
Had not left fluttering up and down her bosom,  
That all blood-dabbled and besprent with gore  
Still held the guilty steel; the name was on it 20  
Of the cursed owner.

*Duke.* Go, trusty Hubert,  
Speed to Orlando's palace with my guard,  
And drag the murderer here, e'en now I'll judge him;  
Be diligent, put wings upon your feet,  
Some vengeance will fall on us in the night, 25  
If he remain unsentenced. *[Exeunt,*



SCENE III. *A banqueting hall*

LORD ERNEST, ORLANDO, CLAUDIO, OLIVIA,  
VIOLETTA, *Lords, Ladies, and Attendants*

*L. Ern.* Sit here, my daughter; sit and welcome, all;  
You shall not say my Hesperus' nuptial night  
Lacks its due orgies.

*Clau.* Look upon the bride,  
How blushes open their envermeiled leaves  
On her fair features.

*L. Ern.* Sit, I pray you, sirs, 5  
We will have deep and jovial carousal;  
Put on the smiles of joy, and think of nought  
But present pleasure, we've had woes enough;  
Bid 'em be merry, daughter.

*Oliv.* Gentlemen,  
My father wills me give you all a welcome, 10  
And if you love or honour our poor house,  
Be glad with us.

*Clau.* We thank your courtesy, lady, and obey.

*L. Ern.* Where is this dilatory bridegroom still?  
He was not wont to lag; what hast thou done 15  
To banish him, Olivia?

*Oliv.* Good my lord,  
I fear his heart is ill. A veil of gloom  
Darkens his cheeks, an anxious watchfulness  
Plays in his eyes; and when he clasped my hand  
Now in the chapel, though he smiled and whispered 20  
Of bliss and love, an ague thrilled his veins,  
And starting back he groaned.

*L. Ern.* Go, fetch him hither,  
I warrant wine will cure him.

*Attend.* Here he comes.

*Enter HESPERUS*

*Hesp. (aside)* What's all this blaze and riot? Oh, a  
banquet.

They should have got me here the seven sins, 25  
And all the evil things that haunt the world;  
Then what a goodly revel would we hold;  
E'en Death, while hastening to the sick man's pillow,  
Should pause to listen our unhallowed talk,  
And think us all the brood of Pestilence 30  
Met in mysterious council.

*Attend.* Sir, your father  
Has been enquiring for you, and desires  
The comfort of your presence at the table.

*Hesp.* The comfort of my presence! Slave, thou  
mockest me.  
Why dost thou thrust thy taper in my face? 35  
No price is set on't.

*L. Em.* Hither, Hesperus;  
Thou dost not mark this company of kinsmen,  
Met to congratulate you, and partake  
Your gladness.

*Hesp.* Sirs, I thank you heartily.  
(*aside*) A curse upon the gaping saucy rabble; 40  
They must stare too.

*L. Em.* Come, son, and sit beside me;  
They say you're ill, my boy.

*Hesp.* They say the truth.

*L. Em.* What is your ailment?

*Hesp.* Life. But here is one  
Born to smile misery out of the world:  
Look on me, my Olivia.

*Oliv.* Dearest Hesperus 45  
Be calmer, I beseech you; all are here  
My friends and yours.

*Hesp.* No doubt. They drain our goblets.  
A friend! What is 't? A thing shall squeeze your hand,  
Caress with fervent love your 'broidered sleeve,  
And wring his mouth into a leering lie, 50  
While his heart damns thee. One whose love 's as deep  
As your gold coffer. Hast a wife? They come;

Buz, buz, lie, lie, the hungry meat-flies come,  
'Dear lord, sweet lord, our only gentle lord!'  
Aye, thus they sugar o'er the silent dagger, 55  
And love, and love, till they've inhaled thy soul.  
Oh! when I call for friend, bring honest poison.  
Put out the lights, I like the beams o' th' moon;  
And tell those revellers to tope in silence.

*L. Em.* You would not overcast our best-meant  
mirth, 60

Bid us sit palled, like mourners at your bridal,  
And hide in night our kindly countenances?

*Hesp.* Aye, by my grave, I would. There is on earth  
One face alone, one heart, that Hesperus needs;  
'Twere better all the rest were not. Olivia, 65  
I'll tell thee how we'll 'scape these prying eyes;  
We'll build a wall between us and the world,  
And in some summer wilderness of flowers,  
As though but two hearts beat beneath the sun,  
Consume our days of love.

*L. Em.* I pray you, friends, 70  
Excuse the wilful boy, his soul is wholly  
Wrapt up in admiration of his bride:  
We'll have her health; come, fill your goblets round,  
The bride, Olivia.

*Clau.* Happiness befall her,  
May she ne'er feel a woe; we drink to her. [*Music.* 75

*Enter HUBERT*

*Hub.* Hush, hush; ye ill-timed sounds, let darkness  
come,  
And with her funeral trappings hang the walls,  
Of twilight lend a weak and fitful gleam,  
That you may watch each others' watery cheeks.  
Oh! ladies, deck your beauties with salt diamonds, 80  
Wail with the midnight wind, and look as sad  
As if ye heard the thunder-voice of doom.

*L. Em.* What art thou, fearful man?

*Hub.* Woe's harbinger;  
I come to bid you to a funeral;  
Prepare your eyes, for they must see dire vengeance 85  
Fall on the neck of crime.

*Hesp.* Turn out that fellow;  
I know him for a crazy marvel-monger,  
A long-faced gossip, with his batch of wonders:  
And now he'll tell you the most terrible news,  
How many owls and ravens screeched last night, 90  
Or how some ghost has left his marble tomb  
To blab a drunken lie.

*Hub.* I tell a fiend  
His guilt is hid no more. Ho! there, the guard:

*Enter Guards*

That is your prisoner.

*Hesp.* You tread a scorpion:  
The first that stirs brings to my sword his heart; 95  
Ye plunge into your graves. *[The Guards seize him.*  
Ah! Floribel;

Thou draggest my steel away, thou'st frozen me;  
Girl, thou art pale.

*L. Em.* How's this?  
Ruffians, where do you bear my boy? Release him,  
Or I'll—

*Oliv.* Oh! do not anger them. They're meii 100  
Who have sucked pity from their mothers' breasts,  
They will not close their ears to my petition;  
And if they'll loose him, I will pray for them  
While speech is mine.

*L. Ern.* Your swords, my friends, your  
swords.

*Hub.* Stand back, my lords; let the Duke's prisoner  
pass. 105

*L. Em.* The Duke! what Duke dare seize my  
Hesperus?

My noble friends, my—sheath your coward swords,

And put your eyes upon the ground for fear,  
 Your Jove, the Duke he said;—hear ye no thunder?  
 But all the warriors of the universe 110  
 Shall not cow me: I'll free him; villains, back.

*Hub.* Oh! good old man; alas! he is a murderer.

*L. Ern.* A murderer! (*drops his sword.*) This is a  
 baby's arm.

*Oliv.* Save him, oh save him! I am very faint.

[*ORLANDO, VIOLETTA, and Attendants, carry her out.*

*Hesp.* Hence with that voice! So shrieked—I must  
 not think. ,115

*Hub.* Look to Lord Ernest. The Duke sits in council  
 Waiting your presence, lords. On, to the palace.

[*Exeunt* CLAUDIO, HUBERT, HESPERUS,  
*Guards, Lords, and Ladies.*

*Manent* LORD ERNEST and Attendants.

*L. Ern.* Where is he? What! Ye traitors, let him pass,  
 Chained, guarded? By this light—gird on your swords.  
 My hairs are grey, but yet I've blood enough— 120  
 Did they not speak of crime? These limbs aren't mine,  
 But some consumptive girl's.—Aye, it was murder!  
 I'll see the Duke—support me to the palace. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A street before the ducal palace*

*Two Guards attending the body of FLORIBEL.*

*LENO RA hanging over it*

*1st Guard.* 'Tis time to bear the body to the council,  
 The criminal is there already.

*2nd Guard.* Stay;  
 'Twere sacrilege to shake yon mourner off,  
 And she will perish in the wintry night  
 If unattended: yet this poor dumb witness 5  
 Is needful at the trial. While she sleeps  
 With careful hands convey her to the Duke's,  
 And bid the women tend her.



And then—now tell me this and I will bless thee,  
Where thinkest our spirits gp?

*1st Guard.* Madam, I know not;  
Some say they hang like music in the air,  
Some that they sleep in flowers of Paradise,  
Some that they lie ingirt by cloudy curtains; 45  
Or 'mong the stars.

*Len.* Oh! not among the stars,  
For, if she's there, my sight's so dimmed with tears,  
I ne'er shall find her out,  
But wander through the sparkling labyrinth  
Wearied, alone; oh! say not 'mong the stars. 50  
Why do ye move her?

*1st Guard.* We must bear her hence  
Unto the Duke.

*Len.* What! Is it not enough  
That she is dead?

*1st Guard.* No hand shall offer hurt,  
And in short space we'll bring her back again,  
Unto your cottage.

*Len.* Thanks! They shall not harm her; 55  
Soldier, I will repay this kindness nobly;  
Hark you; I'm going far off, to Paradise,  
And if your child, or wife, or brother 's there,  
I'll bring them to you in your dreams some night.  
Farewell; I will go search about for Comfort, 60  
Him, that, enrobed in mouldering cerements, sits  
At the grey tombstone's head beneath the yew;  
Men call him Death, but Comfort is his name. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Two Citizens*

*1st Cit.* Well met sir, come you from the trial?

*2nd Cit.* Aye;  
In wonder that the stones do not come down 65  
To crush that monster of all wickedness,  
The wretched Hesperus; there he stands

Biting his chains and writhing in his rage  
Like a mad tiger.

*1st Cit.* Is he yet condemned?

*2nd Cit.* Death is the sentence.

*1st Cit.* See, the criminal 70  
And his old father; what a sight of pity.

*Enter HESPERUS guarded, ORLANDO, HUBERT, LORD  
ERNEST, and Mob*

*Hesp.* Well, gaping idiots; have ye stared enough;  
Have ye yet satisfied your pious minds  
By thanking your most bounteous stars ye're not  
A prodigy like this? Get home and tell 75  
Your wives, and put me in your tales and ballads;  
Get home and live.

*L. Ern.* Oh hush my son,  
Get some good priest of Charity to draw  
Tears of repentance from your soul, and wake  
The sleeping virtue.

*Hesp.* Who's this greybeard driveller? 80  
Go, find your wits, old fellow, that bald skull  
Is full of leaks; hence! look in last night's bowl;  
Search all your money-bags: don't come abroad  
Again without them; 'tis amiss.

*L. Em.* Oh Heavens!  
Is this the son, o'er whose sleeping smiles 85  
Often I bent, and mingling with my prayers  
Thanksgivings, blessed the loan of so much virtue.

*Hesp.* That's right; weep on, weep on; for thou art he  
Who slew his only child, his first-born child.

*Orl.* Oh look upon his galling agony, 90  
These desperate yearnings of paternal love,  
And try to have an heart.

*Hesp.* You're merry, friend;  
Troth 'tis a goodly jest: what, dost thou think  
These limbs, the strength of nature's armoury,  
That but exist to dare, and dare the things 95



That make the blood of bravery turn pale  
For very terror, such a minion's work,  
The offspring of those dribbling veins? Go to,  
Thou'rt a sad idiot.

*L. Em.* Oh! hear him not, thou ever-present Justice,  
And close thy watchful eyelid, thou that weighest 101  
Th' allotted scale of crime.

*Hesp.* Come hither, age;  
I have a whisper for your secrecy;  
Consider; who am I?

*L. Ern.* Thou wast my son,  
The pulse of my dead heart, light of my eyes, 105  
But now—

*Hesp.* Thy son! I would I'd time to laugh.  
No, no; attend. The night, that gave me being,  
There was unearthly glee upon the winds,  
There were strange gambols played beneath the moon,  
The madman smiled uncouthly in his sleep, 110  
And children shrunk aghast at goblin sights;  
Then came a tap against the rattling casement,  
Not the owl's wing, or struggle of the blast;  
Thy dotardship snored loudly, and meanwhile  
An incubus begot me.

*L. Em.* Lead me home, 115  
My eyes are dim; I cannot see the way:  
I fain would sleep. [*Exit with some of the Citizens.*]

*Hesp.* Go, some one, tell his nurse  
To get him swaddling clothes.

*Or I.* Prodigious wretch!  
Rebel to man and heaven! On thee shall fall  
The cureless torture of the soul, the woe 120  
Hell nurses for the deepest damned.

*Hesp.* 'Tis pity  
So much good cursing should be thrown away;  
Well spit, my reptile! Officers, lead on:  
Shall I, in bondage, stand to glut the sight  
Of these poor marvel-dealing things? Away, 125

I'll shut them out; the red death on you all. *[Going.*

Ah! my good fellow, are you of the train

That wait upon Olivia?

*Attend.* I'm her servant.

*Hesp.* How fares she?

*Attend.* Very ill; she wastes,  
Careless of living.

*Hesp.* Tell her, on my love 130

I charge her live; oh heaven, *she* must not die,

There are enough accusers in the tomb.

Tell her—Shame, shame, they shall not see me weep.

*[Exeunt.*

## A C T V

### SCENE I. *A room in MORDRED'S cottage*

*The dead FLORIBEL laid upon a couch, LENORA  
and Boy*

*Len.* Why dost thou weep, thou little churl?

*Boy.* Alas!

I need not say.

*Len.* Boy, boy; thou'rt wicked; thou wouldst have  
me think

I have no Floribel, but thou shalt see

How I will make her live.

It is the morning, 5

And she has risen to tend her favourite flowers,

And wearied with the toil leans o'er her seat

In silent languor. Now I will steal in

Softly: perchance she sleeps. It's plain she hears not,

Or she would leap all-smiling to my arms; 10

I wish dear Mordred were awake to see

How the sweet girl will start and welcome me

At my first speaking: but I'll wait awhile

And save the pleasure. Ah thou pretty silence,

I know thou'rt thinking what a happy cot                    15  
'Twill be when our loved patient is quite well.  
Yes, you shall take him his first walk; he'll lean  
Upon that arm and you shall show the plants  
New set in the garden, and the grassy path  
Down to the church.

Now I will stand behind her                    20  
So, she must drop her head upon my bosom  
As she looks up. Good-morrow to thee, sweet;  
Now for her gentle cry; she's turning round.  
No-- for she won't seem startled, but pretend  
To have heard my coming. Why art thou so slow?                    25  
Sweet little wag, I know thou'rt not asleep.  
Soft! 'Tis the swiftness of my thought outruns  
Her proper motions. I've this instant spoken,  
The air has scarcely yet ta'en up my words;  
May be she hears not. But I did not speak,                    30  
'Twas only thought, or whispered. Child, good-  
morrow;

Yes, she hears that, but will not stir even yet.  
I'll not be frightened for she surely hears,  
Though if I had not seen her garments move,  
And caught the tiny echo of her breath,                    35  
'Twere dreadful. Speak, I pray thee, Floribel,  
Speak to thy mother; do but whisper 'aye';  
Well, well, I will not press her; I am sure  
She has the welcome news of some good fortune,  
And hoards the telling till her father comes;                    40  
Perhaps she's found the fruit he coveted  
Last night. Ah! she half laughed. I've guessed it then;  
Come tell me, I'll be secret. Nay, if you mock me,  
I must be very angry till you speak.  
Now this is silly; some of those young boys                    45  
Have dressed the cushions with her clothes in sport.  
'Tis very like her. I could make this image  
Act all her greetings; she shall bow her head,  
'Good morrow mother'; and her smiling face

Falls on my neck.—Oh, heaven, 'tis she indeed! 50  
I know it all—don't tell me.

SCENE II. *The interior of a prison*HESPERUS *alone*

*Hesp*, Hark! Time's old iron voice already counts  
The steps unto the after-world, o'er which  
Sleep in her arms hath carried man to-night;  
And all it wakes to business or to joy,  
Save one; and mingled with its solemn tone 5  
I heard the grating gates of hell expand—  
Oh! house of agony,  
I feel thy scorching flames already near.  
Where shall I 'scape? Is there no hiding-place?  
Spirit, that guidest the sun, look round this ball, 10  
And through the windows of deep ocean's vault;  
Is there no nook just big enough for me?  
Or when I'm dead, can I not pass my soul  
For common air, and shroud me in some cloud?  
But then the earth will moulder, clouds evanish; 15  
So Hell, I must unto thee, darksome vale;  
For dared I hope, I could not wish, Elysium,  
There should I meet the frowns of Floribel;  
My father would be there: black gulph of anguish,  
Thou art far better than such paradise. 20  
Why did they teach me there is such a place?  
The pang of misery is there; I know  
There is a land of bliss, and am not in it;  
This, this, outstings your lashes, torturers;  
He has no lack of punishment who feels it. 25

*Enter Jailor*

Oh! speak not for a moment, speak not, sir,  
I know thine errand well; so tell it not.  
But let me shut mine eyes and think a little

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

ActV

That I am what I was. Aye, there he sits,  
My good old sire, with his large eye of love. 30  
How well it smiles upon that lovely maid,  
A beauteous one, indeed; and yet they say  
She died most cruelly. Oh! tell me something,  
Drive out these dreams.

*Jail.* Prisoner, prepare for death. *[Exit.*

*Hesp.* Death! Death! What's death? I cannot think.

*Enter LENORA*

Who art thou? 35

*Len.* Ha! knowest thou not the wretch thou'st made  
Lenora?

Alone I've found thee, villain.

*Hesp.* Not alone;

Oh! not alone: the world hath burst its ribs,  
And let out all the demons in the pit;  
Thick; thick they throng: I cannot breathe for them; 40  
The hounds of Lucifer are feeding on me,  
Yet I endure; Remorse and Conscience too,  
Stirring the dying embers of my heat,  
Which Passion hath burnt out, like midnight gossips  
Sit idly chattering of the injured dread; 45  
But thou'rt the last and worst; I hoped to hide  
Beneath the turf from thee.

*Len.* Thou shalt not leave me; stand and hear my  
curse,

Oh such a curse! I learned it from a voice  
That wandered 'mid the damned: it burns my tongue,  
Listen, wretch, listen; . 51  
Thus, thus I curse thee. . . . No I do revoke it,  
My pardon be upon you for your deeds;  
Though thou didst stab me through my Floribel,  
I think thou once didst love her; didst thou not? 55

*Hesp.* With my whole soul, as now I worship her.

*Len.* Alas! say no, I wish thou'dst break my heart;  
Now, pr'ythee do; I'll bless thee for 't again.

*Hesp.* What! is it stubborn yet? Then thou canst  
teach me  
How to bear misery—but I need it not, 60  
They've dug my grave.

*Len.* But while you still are living,  
What say you to some frolic merriment?  
There are two grassy mounds beside the church,  
My husband and my daughter; let us go  
And sit beside them, and learn silence there; 65  
Even with such guests we'll hold our revelry  
O'er bitter recollections: there's no anguish,  
No fear, no sorrow, no calamity,  
In the deathful catalogue of human pains,  
But we will jest upon 't, and laugh and sing: 70  
Let pitiful wretches whine for consolation,  
Thank heaven we despair.

*Enter Guards*

*Hesp.* See you these men?  
They bid me to a strange solemnity.

*Len.* Must thou be gone?

*Hesp.* I must, alas! for ever.  
Live and be blessed, mother of Floribel.

*[Exit with Guards.]*

*Len.* Farewell; farewell. They drag him to the  
scaffold, 76  
My son, the husband of my Floribel:  
They shall not slaughter him upon the block,  
And to the cursing multitude hold up  
The blackened features which she loved; they shall  
not. *[Exit.]* 80

## ActV

SCENE III. *An apartment in ORLANDO'S palace*

OLIVIA, VIOLETTA, *and Attendants*

*Oliv.* Sing me that strain, my gentle Violet,  
Which erst we used, in sport and mockery  
Of grief, beneath the willow shade at eve  
To chaunt together; 'twill allay my woes.

*Song, by Two Voices*

## First Voice

Who is the baby, that doth lie                    5  
Beneath the silken canopy  
Of thy blue eye?

*Second*

It is young Sorrow laid asleep  
In the crystal deep.

*Both*

Let us sing his lullaby,                    10  
Heigho! a sob and a sigh.

## First Voice

What sound is that, so soft, so clear,  
Harmonious as a bubbled tear  
Bursting, we hear?

*Second*

It is young Sorrow, slumber breaking, 15  
Suddenly awaking.

*Both*

Let us sing his lullaby,  
Heigho! a sob and a sigh.

*Oliv.* 'Tis well: you must not weep; 'twill spoil your voices,  
And I shall need them soon.

*Viol.* For what, Olivia? 20  
You were not wont to prize our simple skill  
Erewhile so highly: what will please you most?  
What lay of chivalry, or rural sport,  
Or shepherd love, shall we prepare you next?

*Oliv.* My dirge: I shall not tax your music else. 25  
It must be: wherefore weep?

*Viol.* I cannot help it,  
When you converse so mournfully of death;  
You must forgive me.

*Oliv.* Death! thou silly girl,  
There's no such thing; 'tis but a goblin word,  
Which bad men conjure from their reeking sins 30  
To haunt their slumbers; 'tis a life indeed.  
These bodies are the vile and drossy seeds,  
Whence, placed again within their kindred earth,  
Springs Immortality, the glorious plant  
Branching above the skies. What is there here 35  
To shrink from? Though your idle legends tell  
How cruelly he treats the prostrate world;  
Yet, unto me this shadowy potentate  
Comes soft and soothing as an infant's sleep,  
And kisses out my being. Violetta, 40  
Dost thou regard my wish, perhaps the last?

*Viol.* Oh! madam, can you doubt it? We have lived  
Together ever since our little feet  
Were guided on the path, and thence have shared  
Habits and thoughts. Have I in all that time, 45  
That long companionship, e'er thwarted thee?  
Why dost thou ask me then? Indeed I know not  
Thy wishes from my own, but to prefer them.  
Then tell me what you will; if its performance  
But occupy the portion of a minute, . 50  
Twill be a happy one, for which I thank you.



*Oliv.* Thine hand upon it, I believe thy promise.  
When I am gone you must not weep for me,  
But bring your books, your paintings, and your  
flowers,

And sit upon my grassy monument 55  
In the dewy twilight, when they say souls come  
Walking the palpable gross world of man,  
And J will waft the sweetest odours o'er you,  
I'll shower down acorn-cups of spicy rain  
Upon your couch and twine the boughs above; 60  
Then, if you sing, I'll take up Echo's part,  
And from a far-off bower give back the ends  
Of some remembered airy melody; '  
Then, if you draw, I'll breathe upon the banks  
And freshen up the flowers, and send the birds 65  
Stammering their madrigals, across your path;  
Then, if you read, I'll tune the rivulets,  
I'll teach the neighbouring shrubs to fan your temples,  
And drive sad thoughts and fevers from your breast;  
But if you sleep, I'll watch your truant sense, 70  
And meet it in the fairy-land of dreams  
With my lap full of blessings; 'twill, methinks,  
Be passing pleasant, so don't weep for me.

*Viol.* I fear, Olivia, I'm a selfish creature,  
These tears drop not for you, but for myself; 75  
'Tis not that death will have you, but that I  
Shall be a lone lost thing without your love.

*Oliv.* My love will spread its wings for ever near you,  
Each gentler, nobler, and diviner thought  
Will be my prompting.

*Viol.* Well, I'll bear it then, 80  
And even persuade myself this intercourse  
Of disembodied minds is no conjecture,  
No fiction of romance. The summer sun  
Will find me on the sod that covers you,  
Among the blossoms; I'll try not to cry; 85  
And when I hear a rustle in the grass,

Or the soft leaves come kissing my bent arm,  
I shall not lay it to the empty air,  
But think I know thy utterance in the noises  
That answer me, and see thy rosy fingers 90  
Dimpling the brooks.

*Oliv.* Thou wilt be cheerful, then?

*Viol.* Yes, with this hope,  
That when, some silent, melancholy night,  
I've sobbed myself to sleep over your picture,  
Or some memorial of your former kindness, 95  
I shall awaken to ethereal music,  
And find myself a spirit with Olivia. [*A bell tolls.*]

*Oliv.* Whose summons loads the gale with mournful  
sound?

*Attend.* Dear lady?

*Oliv.* I ask who's dead or who's to die:  
You need not tell me: I remember now, 100  
It was a thought I wished to keep away.  
My love, my Hesperus, unto me thou wert  
The gentlest and the kindest; sudden madness  
Must have inspired this deed; and why do I,  
Wife of the dying, tarry in the world? 105  
I feel already dissolution's work,  
A languor creeps through all my torpid veins,  
Support me, maidens.

*Viol.* Come unto your couch;  
Sleep will recruit thee.

*Oliv.* Yes; the breathless sleep;  
Come and pray round me, as I fade away, 110  
My life already oozes from my lips,  
And with **that** bell's last sound I shall expire. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *The place of execution*

HESPERUS *guarded*, HUBERT, ORLANDO, *Citizens,&C.*

*Hesp.* Now in the scornful silence of your features  
I see my hated self; my friends, I was  
The pestilence you think of; but to-night  
Angelic ministers have been with me,  
And by the holy communings of conscience 5  
Wrought a most blessed change; my soul has wept  
And lain among the thorns of penitence;  
T ask, (and you will not refuse the boon  
To one who cannot crave again) forgiveness  
For all that in the noontide of my crimes, 10  
Against you, even in thought, I have committed.

*Orl.* And we rejoice to grant it, and if prayers  
In meek sincerity outpoured, avail,  
You have them from our hearts.

*Hesp.* Thy sister's soul spake in those words,  
Orlando, 15  
A wretch's blessing for them. I'm as one  
In some lone watch-tower on the deep, awakened  
From soothing visions of the home he loves;  
Trembling he hears the wrathful billows whoop,  
And feels the little chamber of his life 20  
Torn from its vale of clouds, and, as it falls,  
In his midway to fate, beholds the gleam  
Of blazing ships, some swallowed by the waves,  
Some, pregnant with mock thunder, tossed abroad,  
With mangled carcasses, among the winds; 25  
And the black, sepulchre of ocean, choaked  
With multitudinous dead; then shrinks from pangs,  
Unknown but destined. All I know of death  
Is, that 'twill come. I have seen many die  
Upon the battle field, and watched their lips 30  
At the final breath, pausing in doubt to hear  
If they were gone. I have marked oftentimes  
Their pale eyes fading in the last blue twilight;

But none could speak the burning agony,  
 None told his feelings. I ne'er dreamed I died, 35  
 Else might I guess the torture that attends it.  
 But men unhurt have lost their several senses,  
 Grown deaf, and blind, and dumb without a pang,  
 And surely these are members of the soul,  
 And when they fail, man tastes a partial death: 40  
 Besides our minds share not corporeal sleep,  
 But go among the past and future, or perhaps  
 Inspire another in some waking world,  
 And there's another death.

I will not fear; why do ye linger, guards? 45  
 I've flung my doubts away; my blood grows wild.

*Hub*, The hour appointed is not yet arrived,  
 Some moments we must wait; I pray you, patience.

*Enter LORD ERNEST in the dress of a Peasant, followed  
 by CLAUDIO*

*Clau.* My lord, where dost thou hurry?

*L.* *Ern.* To Despair;  
 Away! I know thee not. Henceforth I'll live 50  
 Those bitter days that Providence decrees me  
 In toil and poverty. Oh son, loved son,  
 I come to give thee my last tear and blessing;  
 Thou wilt not curse the old, sad, wretch again?

*Hesp.* {falling upon the ground and covering himself  
 with the loose earth} Oh trample me to dust.

*L. Ern.* {lying down beside him} My own dear child;  
 Aye, we will lie thus sweetly in the grave, 56  
 (The wind will not awake us, nor the rain,)  
 Thou and thy mother and myself; but I,  
 Alas! I have some tearful years to come  
 Without a son to weep along with me. 60

*Hesp.* Father, dear father!  
 And wilt thou pray for me? Oh, no! thou canst not,  
 Thou must forget or hate me.

*L. Ern.*

Sirs, have pity;

*T.B.*

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 But men unhurt have lost their several senses,  
 Grown deaf, and blind, and dumb without a pang,  
 And surely these are members of the soul,  
 And when they fail, man tastes a partial death: 40  
 Besides our minds share not corporeal sleep,  
 But go among the past and future, or perhaps  
 Inspire another in some waking world,  
 And there's another death.

I will not fear; why do ye linger, guards? 45  
 I've flung my doubts away; my blood grows wild.

*Hub.* The hour appointed is not yet arrived,  
 Some moments we must wait; I pray you, patience.

*Enter LORD ERNEST in the dress of a Peasant, followed  
 by CLAUDIO*

*Clau.* My lord, where dost thou hurry?

*L.* *Ern.* To Despair;  
 Away! I know thee not. Henceforth I'll live 50  
 Those bitter days that Providence decrees me  
 In toil and poverty. Oh son, loved son,  
 I come to give thee my last tear and blessing;  
 Thou wilt not curse the old, sad, wretch again?

*Hesp.* *{falling upon the ground and covering himself  
 with the loose earth}* Oh trample me to dust.

*L. Em.* *{lying down beside him}* My own dear child;  
 Aye, we will lie thus sweetly in the grave, 56  
 (The wind will not awake us, nor the rain,)  
 Thou and thy mother and myself; but I,  
 Alas! I have some tearful years to come  
 Without a son to weep along with me. 60

*Hesp.* Father, dear father!  
 And wilt thou pray for me? Oh, no! thou canst not,  
 Thou must forget or hate me.

*L. Ern.* *Sirs, have pity;*

*T.B.*

# THE BRIDES' TRAGEDY

ActV

Let him not use me thus. Hesperus, Hesperus,  
 Thou'rt going to thy mother; tell her, son, 65  
 My heart will soon be broken; so prepare  
 To have me with you. Bless thee, boy, good night.

•

[Exit.

*Hesp.* My father, heaven will curse thee if I bless;  
 But I shall die the better for this meeting. [Kneeling.  
 Oh, Floribel! fair martyr of my fury, 70  
 Oh, thou blessed saint! look down and see thy ven-  
 geance,  
 And if thy injured nature still can pity,  
 Whisper some comfort to my soul. 'Tis done;  
 I feel an airy kiss upon my cheek;  
 It is her breath; she hears me; she descends; 75  
 Her spirit is around me. Now I'll die.

*Enter* LE NORA

*Len.* Where's Hesperus? Not gone? Speak to me  
 loud,  
 I hear not for the beating of my heart.  
 We're not both dead? Say thou hast 'scaped the heads-  
 man,

Nor felt the severing steel fall through thy neck. 80

*Hesp.* I stay one moment for the signal here,  
 The next I am no more.

*Len.* Then we have conquered.  
 Friend, leave us: I would speak a private word  
 Unto thy prisoner. Look upon these flowers;  
 They grew upon the grave of Floribel, 85  
 And when I pulled them, through their tendrils blew  
 A sweet soft music, like an angel's voice.  
 Ah! there's her eye's dear blue; the blushing down  
 Of her ripe cheek in yonder rose; and there  
 In that pale bud, the blossom of her brow, 90  
 Her pitiful round tear; here are all colours  
 That bloomed the fairest in her heavenly face;  
 Is 't not her breath?

*Hesp.* {smelling them} It falls upon my soul  
Like an unearthly sense.

*Lett.* And so it should,  
For it is 'Death thou'st quaffed: 95  
I steeped the plants in a magician's potion,  
More deadly than the scum of Pluto's pool,  
Or the infernal brewàge that goes round  
From lip to lip at wizards' mysteries;  
One drop of it, poured in a city conduit, 100  
Would ravage wider than a year of plague;  
It brings death swifter than the lightning shaft.

*Hesp.* Tis true: I feel it gnawing at my heart,  
And my veins boil as though with molten lead.  
How shall I thank thee for this last, best gift? 105

*Len.* What is it rushes burning through my mouth?  
Oh! my heart's melted.—Let me sit awhile.

*Hub.* Hear ye the chime? Prisoner we must be gone,  
Already should the sentence be performed.

*Hesp.* On! I am past your power.

(To LENORA) HOW farest thou now? 110

*Len.* Oh! come with me, and view  
These banks of stars, these rainbow-girt pavilions,  
These rivulets of music—hark, hark, hark!  
And here are winged maidens floating round 114  
With smiles and welcomes; this bright beaming seraph  
I should remember; is it not—my daughter? [Dies.

*Hesp.* I see not those; but the whole earth's in  
motion;  
I cannot stem the billows; now they roll:  
And what's this deluge? Ah! Infernal flames! [Falls.

*Hub.* Guards, lift him up. 120

*Hesp.* The bloody hunters and their dogs! Avaunt—  
Tread down these serpents' heads. Come hither,  
Murder;

\* The reader will recollect Massinger's *Duke of Milan*.



Why dost thou growl at me? Ungrateful hound!  
Not know thy master? Tear him off! Help! Mercy!  
Down with your fiery fangs!—I'm not dead yet.

*[Dies.* 125

THE END

POEMS  
CHIEFLY FROM *OUTIDANA*

[Composed 1823-5]



## *The Romance of the Lily*

. . . . .

King Balthasar has a tower of gold,  
And rubies pave his hall; 65  
A magic sun of diamond blazes  
Above his palace wall;  
And beaming spheres play round in mazes,  
With locks of incense o'er them rolled.  
Young Balthasar is the Libyan king, 70  
The lord of wizard sages;  
He hath read the sun, he hath read the moon,  
Heaven's thoughts are on their pages;  
He knows the meaning of night and noon,  
And the spell on morning's wing: 75  
The ocean he hath studied well,  
Its maddest waves he hath subdued  
Beneath an icy yoke,  
And lashed them till they howled, and  
spoke  
The mysteries of the Titan brood, 80  
And all their god forbade them tell.  
He hath beheld the storm,  
When the phantom of its form  
Leans out of heaven to trace,  
Upon the earth and sea, 85  
And air's cerulean face,  
In earthquake, thunder, war, and fire,  
And pestilence, and madness dire,  
That mighty woe, futurity.

.  
From the roof of his tower he talks to Jove, 90  
As the god enthroned sits above;  
Night roosts upon his turret's height,  
And the sun is the clasp of its girdle of light;

## OUTIDANA

And the stars upon his terrace dwell,—  
 But the roots of that tower are fixed in hell. 95  
 Balthasar's soul is a curse and a sin,  
 And nothing is human that dwells within,  
     But a tender, beauteous love,  
         That grows upon his haunted heart,  
 Like a scented bloom on a madhouse wall; 100  
 For amid the wrath and roar of all,  
     It gathers life with blessed art,  
     And calmly blossoms on above.

Bright Sabra, when thy thoughts are seen  
     Moving within those azure eyes, 105  
 Like spirits in a star at e'en;  
     And when that little dimple flies,  
 As air upon a rosy bush,  
 To hide behind thy fluttering blush;  
 When kisses those rich lips uncloze, 110  
 And love's own music from them flows,—  
 A god might love—a demon does.  
     'Tis night upon the sprinkled sky,  
     And on their couch of roses  
         The king and lady lie, 115  
 While the tremulous lid of each discloses  
     A narrow streak of the living eye;  
 As when a beetle, afloat in the sun,  
 On a rocking leaf, has just begun  
     To sever the clasp of his outer wing, 120  
     So lightly, that you scarce can see  
 His little lace pinions' delicate fold,  
 And a line of his body of breathing gold,  
     Girt with many a panting ring,  
 Before it quivers, and shuts again, 125  
 Like a smothered regret in the breast of men,  
     Or a sigh on the lips of chastity.

## OUTIDANA

One bright hand, dawning through **her hair**,  
Bids it be black, itself as fair  
    As the cold moon's palest daughter, 130  
The last dim star with doubtful ray  
Snow-like melting into day,  
    Echoed to the eye on water;  
Round his neck and on his breast  
    The other curls, and bends its bell 135  
    Petalled inward as it fell,  
Like a tented flower at rest.  
    She dreams of him, for rayed joys hover  
    In dimples round her timorous lip,  
    And she turns to clasp her sleeping lover, 140  
Kissing the lid of his tender eye,  
And brushing off the dews that lie  
    Upon its lash's tip;  
And now she stirs no more—  
    But the thoughts of her breast are still, 145  
    As the song of a frozen rill  
Which winter spreads his dark roof o'er  
    In the still and moony hour  
    Of that calm entwining sleep,  
From the utmost tombs of earth, 150  
The vision-land of death and birth,  
    Came a black, malignant power,  
    A spectre of the desert deep:  
And it is Plague, the spotted fiend, the drunkard of the  
    tomb; 154  
Upon her mildewed temples the thunderbolts of doom,  
And blight-buds of hell's red fire, like gory wounds in  
    bloom,  
    Are twisted for a wreath;  
And there's a chalice in her hand, whence bloody  
    flashes gleam,  
While struggling snakes with arrowy tongues twist **o'er**  
    it for a steam,

## OUTIDANA

And its liquor is of Phlegethon, and ^Etna's wrathful  
stream, 160  
And icy dews of death.

Like a rapid dream she came,  
And vanished like the flame  
Of a burning ship at sea,  
But to his shrinking lips she pressed 165  
The cup of boiling misery,  
And he quaffed it in his tortured rest,  
And woke in the pangs of lunacy.  
As a buried soul awaking  
From the cycle of its sleep, 170  
Panic-struck and sad doth lie  
Beneath its mind's dim canopy,  
And marks the stars of memory breaking  
From 'neath oblivion's ebbing deep, 174  
While clouds of doubt bewilder the true sky,—  
So in the hieroglyphic portal  
Of his dreams sate Balthasar,  
Awake amidst his slumbering senses,  
And felt as feels man's ghost immortal,  
Whom the corpse's earthen fences 180  
From his vast existence bar.  
The pestilence was in his breast,  
And boiled and bubbled o'er his brain,  
His thoughtless eyes in their unrest  
Would have burst their circling chain, 185  
Scattering their fiery venom wide,  
But for the soft endearing rain,  
With which the trembler at his side  
Fed those gushing orbs of white, 189  
As evening feeds the waves with looks of quiet light.  
The tear upon his cheek's fierce flush;  
The cool breath on his brow;  
And the healthy presage of a blush,  
Sketched in faint tints behind his skin;

## OUTIDANA

And the hush of settling thoughts within,      195  
    Sabra hath given, and she will need them now.  
For, as the echo of a grove  
Keeps its dim shadow 'neath some song of love,  
    And gives her life away to it in sound,  
Soft spreading her wild harmony,      200  
Like a tress of smoking censery,  
    Or a ring of water round,—  
So all the flowery wealth  
Of her happiness and health  
Untwined from Sabra's strength, and grew      205  
    Into the blasted stem of Balthasar's pale life,  
And his is the beauty and bliss that flew  
On the wings of her love from his sinking wife.  
The fading wanness of despair  
    Was the one colour of her cheek,      210  
And tears upon her bosom fair  
    Wrote the woe she dared not speak;  
But life was in her. Yes: it played  
    In tremulous and fitful grace,  
Like a flame's reflected breath      215  
Shivering in the throes of death  
    Against the monumental face  
Of some sad voiceless marble maid:  
And what is a woman to Baithasar,      219  
    Whom love has weakened, bowed, and broken?  
Upon his forehead's darksome war,  
    His lip's curled meaning, yet unspoken,  
The lowering of his wrinkled brow,  
'Tis graved,—he spurns, he loaths her now.

Along the sea, at night's black noon,      225  
    Alone the king and lady float,  
    With music in a snowy boat,  
That glides in light, an ocean-moon;  
    From billow to billow it dances,  
And the spray around it glances,      230



## OUTIDANA

And the mimic rocks and caves  
 Beneath the mountains of the waves,  
 Reflect a joyous song  
 As the merry bark is borne along;  
 And now it stays its eager sail 235  
 Within a dark sepulchral vale,  
     Amid the living Alps of Ocean,  
 Round which the crags in tumult rise  
 And make a fragment of the skies;  
     Beneath whose precipice's motion 240  
 The folded dragons of the deep  
 Lie with lidless eyes asleep:  
     It pauses; and—Is that a shriek  
     That agonizes the still air,  
     And makes the dead day move and speak 245  
 From beneath its midnight pall, —  
 Or the ruined billow's fall?  
     The boat is soaring lighter there,  
 The voice of woman sounds no more—  
 That night the water-crescent bore 250  
 Dark Balthasar alone unto the living shore.

    Tears, tears for Sabra; who will weep?  
 O blossoms, ye have dew,  
 And grief-dissembling storms might strew  
     Thick-dropping woe upon her sleep. 255  
     False sea, why dost thou look like sorrow,  
     Why is thy cold heart of water?  
 Or rather, why are tears of thee,  
 Compassionless, bad sea?  
     For not a drop does thy stern spirit borrow, 260  
     To mourn o'er beauty's fairest daughter.  
 Heaven, blue heaven, thou art not kind,  
     Or else the sun is not thine eye,  
 For thou should'st be with weeping blind,  
     Not thus forgetful, bright and dry. 265  
 Oh that I were à plume of snow,

# OUTIDANA

To melt away and die  
 In a long chain of bubbling harmony!—  
 My tribute shall be sweet tho' small;  
 A cup of the vale-lily bloom 270  
 Filled with white and liquid woe—  
 Give it to her ocean-pall;  
 With such deluge-seeds I'll sow  
 Her mighty elemental tomb,  
 Until the lamentations grow 275  
 Into a foaming crop of populous overflow.

Hither like a bird of prey,  
 Whom red anticipations feed,  
 Flaming along the fearful day  
 Revenge's thirsty hour doth fly. 280  
 Heaven has said a fearful word;  
 (Which hell's eternal labyrinths heard,  
 And the wave of time  
 Shall answer to the depths sublime,  
 Reflecting it in deed;) 285  
 'Balthasar the king must die.'  
 Must die; for all his power is fled,  
 His spells dissolved, his spirits gone,  
 And magic cannot ease the bed  
 Where lies the necromant alone. 290  
 What thought is gnawing in his heart,  
 What struggles madly in his brain?  
 See, the force, the fiery pain  
 Of silence makes his eyeballs start.  
 O ease thy bosom, dare to tell— 295  
 But grey-haired pity speaks in vain;  
 That bitter shriek, that hopeless yell,  
 Has given the secret safe to hell.  
 Like a ruffled nightingale,  
 Balanced upon dewy wings, 300  
 Through the palace weeps the tale,  
 Leaving tears, where'er she sings;

## OUTIDANA

And, around the icy dead  
     Maids are winding  
 Kingly robes of mocking lead,      305  
     And with leafy garlands binding  
 The unresisting careless head:  
 Gems are flashing, garments wave  
 Round the bridegroom of the grave.  
 Hark! A shout of wild surprise,      310  
     A burst of terrible amaze!  
 The lids are moving up his eyes,  
     They open, kindle, beam, and gaze—  
 Grave, thy bars are broken,  
     Quenched the flames of pain,      315  
 Falsely fate hath spoken,  
     The dead is born again.  
 As when the moon and shadows' strife,  
     On some rebellious night,  
 Looks a pale statue into life,      320  
     And gives his watching form the action of  
         their light,  
 So stilly strode the awakened one,  
 And with the voice of stone,  
     Which troubled caverns screech,  
     Cursing the tempest's maniac might,      325  
     He uttered human speech.  
 \*Tremble, living ones, and hear;  
 By the name of death and fear,  
 By lightning, earthquake, fire and war,  
 And him whose snakes and hounds they are,      330  
 From whose judgment seat I come,  
 Listen, crouch, be dumb.  
 My soul is drowned beneath a flood  
 Of conscience, red with Sabra's blood;  
     And from yon blue infinity,      335  
     Doomed and tortured I am sent  
 To confess the deed and fly;

## OUTIDANA

Wail not for me—yourselves repent:  
Eternity is punishment;  
Listen, crouch, and die.' 340  
With that word his body fell,  
As dust upon the storm,  
Flashlike darkened was his form;  
While through their souls in horror rang  
The dragon shout, the thunderous clang 345  
Of the closing gates of hell.

## *Lines*

Written in a blank leaf of the *Prometheus Unbound*.

WRITE it in gold—a Spirit of the sun,  
An Intellect ablaze with heavenly thoughts,  
A Soul with all the dews of pathos shining,  
Odorous with love, and sweet to silent woe  
With the dark glories of concentrate song,  
Was sphered in mortal earth. Angelic sounds  
Alive with panting thoughts sunned the dim world.  
The bright creations of an human heart  
Wrought magic in the bosoms of mankind.  
A flooding summer burst on Poetry;  
Of which the crowning sun, the night of beauty,  
The dancing showers, the birds whose anthems wild  
Note after note unbind the enchanted leaves  
Of breaking buds, eve, and the flow of dawn,  
Were centred and condensed in his one name  
As in a providence—and that was SHELLEY.

OXFORD, 1822

OUTIDANA

*Sonnet to Zoë King*

LEAF after leaf like a magician's book  
Unfolds the Universe, and needs we now,  
Cousin of mine (while the whole world doth look  
Our shoulders over with its rocky brow),  
In turn our living story must transact  
Upon the surface of its earthen pages;  
Whence the still shade of our most needless act  
Shall paint itself with iron syllables  
In the arched sight of unawakened ages;  
Therefore 'tis ours, and his who with us dwells  
Beneath the roof of the same starry hour,  
Both in his own and in the general mind,  
Which is the world, all truth and good to find,  
And finding practise to his end of power.  
*Feb. 29, 1824*

*Lines*

Written at Geneva; July 16 [1824J

THE hour is starry, and the airs that stray,  
Sad wanderers from their golden home of day,  
On night's black mountain melt and fade away  
In sorrow that is music. Some there be  
Make them blue pillows on Geneva's sea,  
And sleep upon their best-loved planet's shade:  
And every herb is sleeping in the glade;—  
They have drunk sunshine and the linnet's song,  
Till every leaf's soft sleep is dark and strong.  
Or was there ever sound, or can what was  
Now be so dead? Although no flowers or grass  
Grow from the corpse of a deceased sound,  
Somewhat, methinks, should mark the air around  
Its dying place and tomb,

## OUTIDANA

A gentle music, or a pale perfume:  
For hath it not a body and a spirit,  
A noise and meaning? and, when one doth hear it  
Twice born, twice dying, doubly found and lost,  
That second self, that echo, is its ghost.  
But even the dead are all asleep this time,  
And not a grave shakes with the dreams of crime:—  
The earth is full of chambers for the dead,  
And every soul is quiet in his bed;  
Some who have seen their bodies moulder away,  
Antediluvian minds,—most happy they,  
Who have no body but the beauteous air,  
No body but their minds. Some wretches are  
Now lying with the last and only bone  
Of their old selves, and that one worm alone  
That ate their heart: some, buried just, behold  
Their weary flesh, like an used mansion, sold  
Unto a stranger, and see enter it  
The earthquake winds and waters of the pit,  
Or children's spirits in its holes to play.

## *Dirge*

TO-DAY is a thought, a fear is to-morrow,  
And yesterday is our sin and our sorrow;  
And life is a death,  
    Where the body's the tomb,  
And the pale sweet breath  
    Is buried alive in its hideous gloom.  
Then waste no tear,  
For we are the dead; the living are here,  
In the stealing earth, and the heavy bier.  
Death lives but an instant, and is but a sigh,  
And his son is unnamed immortality,

## OUTIDANA

Whose being is thine. Dear ghost, so to die  
Is to live—and life is a worthless lie.  
Then we weep for ourselves, and wish thee good bye.

### *Song of a Maid whose Love is Dead*

MERRY, merry little Stream,  
Tell me, hast thou seen my dear?  
I left him with an azure dream,  
Calmly sleeping on his bier—  
But he has fled!

'I passed him in his churchyard bed—  
A yew is sighing o'er his head,  
And grass-roots mingle with his hair.'

What doth he there?  
O cruel! can he lie alone?  
Or in the arms of one more dear?  
Or hides he in that bower of stone,  
To cause and kiss away my fear?

'He doth not speak, he doth not moan—  
Blind, motionless, he lies alone;  
But, ere the grave snake fleshed his sting,  
This one warm tear he bade me bring  
And lay it at thy feet  
Among the daisies sweet.'

Moonlight whisperer, summer air,  
Songstress of the groves above,  
Tell the maiden rose I wear,  
Whether thou hast seen my love.  
'This night in heaven I saw him lie,  
Discontented with his bliss;  
And on my lips he left this kiss,  
For thee to taste and then to die.'

## OUTIDANA

### *Sonnet*

To Tartar, a Terrier Beauty.

SNOWDROP of dogs, with ear of brownest dye,  
Like the last orphan leaf of naked tree  
Which shudders in bleak autumn; though by thee,  
Of hearing careless and untutored eye,  
Not understood articulate speech of men,  
Nor marked the artificial mind of books,  
—The mortal's voice eternized by the pen,—  
Yet hast thou thought and language all unknown  
To Babel's scholars; oft intensest looks,  
Long scrutiny o'er some dark-veined stone  
Dost thou bestow, learning dead mysteries  
Of the world's birth-day, oft in eager tone  
With quick-tailed fellows handiest prompt replies,  
Solicitudes canine, four-footed amities.

### *Letter to B. W. Procter, Esq.*

From Oxford; May, 1825.

I N every tower that Oxford has is swung,  
Quick, loud, or solemn, the monotonous tongue  
Which speaks Time's language, the universal one  
After the countenance of moon or sun,  
Translating their still motions to the earth. 5  
I cannot read; the reeling belfry's mirth  
Troubles my senses; therefore, Greek, shut up  
Your dazzling pages; covered be the cup  
Which Homer has beneath his mantle old,  
Steamy with boiling life: your petals fold 10  
You fat square blossoms of the yet young tree  
Of Britain-grafted, flourishing Germany:  
Hush! Latin, to your grave: and with the chime  
My pen shall turn the minutes into rhyme



## OUTIDANA

**And** like the dial blacken them. There sits, 15  
 Or stands, or lounges, or perhaps on bits  
 Of this rag's daughter, paper, exorcises  
 With strange black marks and inky wild devices  
 The witch of words, the echo of great verse  
 About the chasms of the universe, 20  
 Ringing and bounding immortality.—  
 Give him thy bosom, dark Melpomene,  
 And let him of thy goblet and thine eye  
 Exhaust the swimming deep insanity.  
 He hath the soul, oh let it then be fed, 25  
 Sea after sea, with that which is not read,  
 Nor wrung by reasoning from a resolute head,  
 But comes like lightning on a hill-top steeple;  
 Heaven's spillings on the lofty laurelled people.  
 Verse to thee, light to thee, wings upraise thee long 30  
 In the unvacillating soar of song,  
 Thou star-seed of a man! But do not dare  
 To tempt thy Apollonian god too far,  
 Clogging and smoking thy young snake, Renown,  
 In the strait stony shadows of the town, 35  
 Lest he grow weak and pine and never be  
 What he was born, twin to Eternity.  
 So come, shake London from thy skirts away:  
 So come, forget not it is England's May.  
 For Oxford, ho! by moonlight or by sun; 40  
 Our horses are not hours but rather run  
 Foot by foot faster than the second-sand,  
 While the old sunteam like a plough doth stand  
 Stuck in thick heaven. Here thou at morn shalt see  
 Spring's dryad-wakening whisper call the tree 45  
 And move it to green answers; and beneath,  
 Each side the river which the fishes breathe,  
 Daisies and grass whose tops were never stirred,  
 Or dews made tremulous, but by foot of bird. 49  
 And you shall mark in spring's heaven-tapestried room  
 Yesterday's knoppe burst by its wild perfume,

## OUTIDANA

Like woman's childhood, to this morning's bloom;  
 And here a primrose pale beneath a tree,  
 And here a cowslip longing for its bee,  
 And violets and lilies every one 55  
 Grazing in the great pasture of the sun  
 Beam after beam, visibly, as the grass  
 Is swallowed by the lazy cows that pass.  
 Come look, come walk,—and there shall suddenly  
 Seize you a rapture and a phantasy, 60  
 High over mountain sweeping, fast and high  
 Through all the intricacies of the sky,  
 As fast and far a ship-wrecked hoard of gold  
 Dives ocean, cutting every billow's fold.  
 These are the honey-minutes of the year 65  
 Which make man god, and make a god—Shakespeare.  
 Come gather them with me. If not, then go,  
 And with thee all the ghosts of Jonson's toe,  
 The fighting Tartars and the Carthaginians:  
 And may your lady-muse's stiff-winged pinions 70  
 Be naked and impossible to fly,  
 Like a fat goose pen-plucked for poetry.  
 A curse upon thy cream to make it sour:  
 A curse upon thy tea-pot every hour;  
 Spirits of ice possess it! and thy tea, 75  
 Changed at its contact, hay and straw leaves be!  
 A cold and nipping ague on thine urn!  
 And an invisible canker eat and burn  
 The mathematic picture near your fire,  
 Of the grave compass-handed quiet sire! 80  
 No more.—Be these the visions of your sorrow  
 When you have read this doggrel through to-morrow,  
 And then refuse to let our Oxford borrow  
 You of the smoky-faced Augustan town,  
 And unpersuaded drop the paper down. 85

## OUTIDANA

### *Pygmalion*

#### The Cyprian Statuary

THERE stood a city along Cyprus' side  
Lavish of palaces, an arched tide  
Of unrolled rocks; and where the deities dwelled  
Their clustered domes pushed up the noon and swelled  
With the emotion of the god within, 5  
As doth earth's hemisphere, when showers begin  
To tickle the still spirit at its core  
Till pastures tremble and the river-shore  
Squeezes out buds at every dewy pore; 9  
And there were pillars, from some mountain's heart,  
Thronging beneath a wide imperial floor  
That bent with riches; and there stood apart  
A palace oft accompanied by trees  
That laid their shadows in the galleries  
Under the coming of the endless light, 15  
Net-like; who trod the marble night or day,  
By moon, or lamp or sunless day-shine white,  
Would brush the shaking ghostly leaves away  
Which might be tendrils or a knot of wine,  
Burst from the depth of a faint window vine, 20  
With a bird pecking it—and round the hall  
And wandering stair-case, within every wall  
Of sea-ward portico, and sleeping chamber,  
Whose patient lamp distilled a day of amber,  
There stood and sate or made rough steeds their  
throne 25  
Immortal generations wrung from stone  
Alike too beautiful for life and death  
And bodies that a soul of mortal breath  
Would be the dross of.

Such a house as this  
Within a garden hard by Salamis, 30  
(Cyprus's city-crown and capital  
Ere Paphos was, and at whose ocean-wall

## OUTIDANA

Beauty and love's paternal waves do beat  
That sprouted Venus:) such a fair retreat  
Lonely Pygmalion self inhabited 35  
Whose fiery chisel with creation fed  
The shipwrecked rocks; who paid the heavens again  
Diamonds for ice; who made gods who make men.  
Lonely Pygmalion: you might see him go  
Along the streets where markets thickest flow 40  
Doubling his gown across his thinking breast  
And the men fall aside; nor only pressed  
Out of his elbows' way but left a place  
A sun-room for him that his mind had space 44  
And none went near; none in his sweep would venture  
For you might feel that he was but the centre  
Of an inspired round, the middle spark  
Of a great moon setting aside the dark  
And cloudy people. As he went along  
The chambered ladies silenced the half-song 50  
And let the wheel unheeded whirl and skim  
To get their eyes blest by the sight of him.  
So locks were swept from every eye that drew  
Sun for the soul through circles violet-blue  
Mild brown or passionate black.

Still, discontent, 55

Over his sensual kind the sculptor went  
Walking his thoughts. Yet Cyprus' girls be fair;  
Daybright and evening-soft the maidens are  
And witching like the midnight and their pleasure  
Silent and deep as midnight's starry treasure. 60  
Lovely and young, Pygmalion yet loved none.  
His soul was bright and lonely as the sun  
Like which he could create—and in its might  
There lived another Spirit wild and bright  
That came and went; and when it came, its light 65  
On these dim earthy things, turn where he will,  
Its light, shape, beauty were reflected still.  
Daytime and dark it came—like a dim mist

## OUTIDANA

Shelling a god it rolled, and ere he wist  
It fell aside, and dawned a shape of grace 70  
And an inspired and melancholy face  
Whose lips were smile-buds dewy—into him  
It rolled like sunlight, till his sight was dim  
And it was in his heart and soul again,  
Not seen but breathed.

There was a grassy plain 75  
A pasture of the deer, Olympus' mountain  
Was the plain's night, the picture of its fountain;  
Unto which unfrequented dell and wood  
Unwittingly his solitary mood  
Oft drew him. In the water lay 80  
A fragment of pale marble, which they say  
Slipped from some fissure in the agued moon  
Which had caught earth-quake and a deadly swoon  
When the sun touched her with his hilly shade.  
Weeds grew upon it and the streamlet made 85  
A wanton music with its ragged side  
And birds had nests there. One still eventide  
When they were perched and sleeping passed this man  
Startling the air with thoughts which over-ran  
The compass of his mind; writing the sand 90  
Idly he paused and laid unwitting hand  
On the cold stone. How smooth the touch! It felt  
Less porous than a lip which kisses melt  
And diamond-hard. That night his workmen wrought  
With iron under it and it was brought, 95  
This dripping quarry while the sky was starry  
Home to the weary yearning statuary.  
He saw no sky that day, no dark that night  
For through the hours his lamp was full of light,  
Shadowing the pavement with his busy right; 100  
Day after day they saw not in the street  
The wondrous artist, some immortal feat  
Absorbed him. And yet often in the noon  
When the town slept beneath the sweltering June

## OUTIDANA

—The rich within; the poor man on the stair— 105  
 He stole unseen into the meadow's air  
 And fed on sight of summer—till the life  
 Was too abundant in him and so rife  
 With light creative he went in alone  
 And poured it warm upon the growing stone. 110  
 The magic chisel thrust and gashed and swept  
 Flying and manifold; no cloud e'er wept  
 So fast, so thick, so light upon the close  
 Of shapeless green it meant to make a rose—  
 And as insensibly out of a stick 115  
 Dead in the winter-time, the dew-drops quick  
 And the thin sun-beams and the airy shower  
 Raise and unwrap a many-leaved flower  
 And then a fruit—So from the barren stock  
 Of the deer-shading formless valley-rock, 120  
 This close stone-bud, he, quiet as the air,  
 Had shaped a lady wonderfully fair.  
 Dear to the eyes—a delicate delight  
 For all her marble symmetry was white  
 As brow and bosom should be; save some azure 125  
 Which waited for a loving lip's erasure  
 Upon her shoulder to be turned to blush.  
 And she was smooth and full, as if one gush  
 Of life had washed her, or as if a sleep  
 Lay on her eyelid easier to sweep 130  
 Than bee from daisy. Who could help a sigh  
 At seeing a beauty stand so life-lessly  
 But that it was too beautiful to die?  
 Dealer of immortality  
 Greater than Jove himself, for only he 135  
 Can such eternize as the grave has ta'en  
 And open heaven by the gate of pain;  
 What art thou now, divine Pygmalion?«  
 Divine! gods counting human. Thou hast done  
 That glory which has undone thee for ever, 140  
 For thou art weak and tearful and dost shiver

## OUTIDANA

Wintrily sad and thy life's healthy river,  
 With which thy body once was overflown,  
 Is dried and sunken to its banks of bone.

He carved it not; nor was the chisel's play 145  
 That dashed the earthen hindrances away  
 Driven and diverted by his muscle's sway;  
 The winged tool as digging out a spell  
 Followed a magnet, wheresoe'er it fell,  
 That sucked and led it right—and for the rest 150  
 The living form with which the stone be blest  
 Was the loved image stepping from his breast.  
 And therefore loves he it and therefore stays  
 About the she-rock's feet, from hour to hour,  
 Anchored to her by his own heart; the power 155  
 Of the isle's Venus therefore doth he pray—  
 'Goddess that made me, save thy son, and save  
 The man that made thee, goddess, from the grave.  
 Thou know'st it not; it is a fearful coop  
 Dark, cold, and horrible—a blinded loop 160  
 In Pluto's madhouse' green and wormy wall.  
 O save me from 't; let me not die, like all,  
 For I am but like one—not yet, not yet,  
 At least not yet—and why? my eyes are wet  
 With the thick dregs of immature despair, 165  
 With bitter blood out of my empty heart,  
 I breathe not aught but my own sighs for air,  
 And my life's strongest is a dying start.  
 No sour grief there is to me unwed,  
 I could not be more lifeless being dead. 170  
 Then let me die—Ha did she pity me?  
 Oh she can never love—did you not see,  
 How still she bears the music of my moan?  
 Her heart? Ah touch it.—Fool. I love the stone.  
 Inspire her, gods—Oft ye have wasted life 175  
 On the deformed, the hideous and the vile:  
 Oh grant it my sweet rock—my only wife.  
 I do not ask it long: a little while—

## OUTIDANA

A year—a day—an hour let it be!  
 For that I'll give you my eternity— 180  
 Or let it be a fiend if ye will send  
 Something yon form to humanize and bend,  
 Within those limbs, and when the new-poured blood  
 Flows in such veins the worst must soon be good.  
 They will not hear.—Thou Jove—or thou, Apollo, 185  
 Aye—thou—thou know'st—Oh listen to my groan.  
 Twas Niobe thou drovest from flesh to stone,  
 Shew this the hole she broke, and let her follow  
 That mother's track of steps and eyelid rain  
 Treading them backwards into life again. 190  
 Life said I? lives she not? is there not gone  
 My life into her which I pasture on,  
 Dead where she is not? Live, thou statue fair,  
 Live, thou dear marble! or I shall go wild.  
 I cover thee my sweet, I leave thee there 195  
 Behind this curtain, my delicious child.  
 That they may secretly begin to give  
 My prayer to thee—when I return, oh live!  
 Oh live—or I live not.'—And so he went,  
 Leaving the statue in its darksome tent. 200

Morn after morn sadder the artist came,  
 His prayer, his disappointment were the same.  
 But when he gazed she was more near to woman;  
 There was a fleshy pink—a dimple wrought 204  
 That trembled—and the cheek was growing human  
 With the flushed distance of a rising thought  
 That still crept nearer. Yet no further sign!  
 And now, Pygmalion, that weak life of thine  
 Shakes like a dew-drop in a broken rose—  
 Or incense parting from the altar glows. 210  
 'Tis the last look and he is mad no more:  
 By rule and figure he could prove at large  
 She never can be born, and from the shore  
 His foot is stretching into Charon's barge.  
 Upon the pavement ghastly is he lying 215



## OUTIDANA

Cold with the last and stoniest embrace,  
Elysium's light illumines all his face,  
His eyes have a wild starry grace  
Of heaven, into whose depth of depths he 's dying  
    A sound, with which the air doth shake                   220  
Extinguishing the window of moonlight.  
A pang of music dropping round delight,  
As if sweet music's honiest heart did break.  
Such a flash and such a sound the world  
Is stung by as if something was unfurled                   225  
That held great bliss within its inmost curled.  
Roof after roof the palace rends asunder,  
And then—a sight of joy and placid wonder!—  
He lies beside a fountain on the knee  
Of the sweet woman-statue, quietly                   230  
Weeping the tears of his felicity.

# DRAMATIC FRAGMENTS

[Composed 1823-5]



*Fragments of*  
THE LAST MAN  
*and other projected plays*<sup>x</sup>

[Composed 1823-5.]

*II Recognition*

SOFT! Stand away! those features—Do not stir!  
Be breathless if thou canst! . . . The trembling ray  
Of some approaching thought, I know not what,  
Gleams on my darkened mind. It will be here  
Directly: now I feel it growing, growing,  
Like a man's shadow, when the sun floats slowly  
Through the white border of a baffled cloud:  
And now the pale conception furls and thickens.  
'Tis settled. Yes—Beroe!—How dare thy cheek  
Be wan and withered as a wrinkling moon  
Upon the tumbled waves? Why earnest thou here?  
I dreamt of thee last night, as thou wert once,  
But I shall never dream of thee again.

*The Last Man*

*III. Doubt*

WHAT'S this? Did you not see a white convulsion  
Run through his cheek and fling his eyelids up?  
There's mischief in the paper.

Mark again

How, with that open palm, he shades his brain  
From its broad, sudden meaning. Once I saw  
One who had dug for treasure in a corner,

<sup>1</sup> The numbers are those of the Oxford edition.

## FRAGMENTS

Where he by torchlight saw a trembling man  
Burying a chest at night. Just so he stood  
With open striving lips and shaking hair;  
Alive but in his eyes, and they were fixed  
On a smeared, earthy, bleeding corpse—his sister.  
There by her murderer crushed into the earth.

### *IV. A Ruffian*

THERE'S a fellow  
With twisting root-like hair up to his eyes,  
And they are streaked with red and starting out  
Under their bristling brows; his crooked tusks  
Part, like a hungry wolf's, his cursing mouth;  
His head is frontless, and a swinish mane  
Grows o'er his shoulders: brown and warty hands,  
Like roots, with pointed nails.—He is the man.

### *VI. A Crocodile*

HARD by the liliated Nile I saw  
A duskish river-dragon stretched along,  
The brown habergeon of his limbs enamelled  
With sanguine almandines and rainy pearl:  
And on his back there lay a young one sleeping,  
No bigger than a mouse; with eyes like beads.  
And a small fragment of its speckled egg  
Remaining on its harmless, pulpy snout;  
A thing to laugh at, as it gaped to catch  
The baulking merry flies. In the iron jaws  
Of the great devil-beast, like a pale soul  
Fluttering in rocky hell, lightsomely flew  
A snowy trochilus, with roseate beak  
Tearing the hairy leeches from his throat.

## FRAGMENTS

### *VIII. Hard Dying*

BY heaven and hell, and all the fools between them,  
I will not die, nor sleep, nor wink my eyes,  
But think myself into a God; old Death  
Shall dream he has slain me, and I'll creep behind him,  
Thrust off the bony tyrant from his throne  
And beat him into dust. Or I will burst  
Damnation's iron egg, my tomb, and come  
Half damned, ere they make lightning of my soul,  
And creep into thy carcase as thou sleepest  
Between two crimson fevers. I'll dethrone  
The empty skeleton, and be thy death,  
A death of grinding madness.—Fear me now:  
I am a devil, not a human soul—

*The Last Man*

### *IX. 'Bona de Mortuis'*

A Y E , the good man, kind father, best of friends—  
These are the words that grow like grass and **nettles**  
**Out** of dead men, and speckled hatreds hide  
Like toads among them.

### *XVII. Hymn*

A N D many voices marshalled in one hymn  
Wound through the night, whose still, translucent  
moments  
Lay on each side their breath; and the hymn passed  
Its long, harmonious populace of words  
Between the silvery silences, as when

## FRAGMENTS

The slaves of Egypt, like a wind between  
The head and trunk of a dismembered king  
On a strewn plank, with blood and footsteps sealed,  
Vallied the unaccustomed sea.

### *XIX. Concealed Joy*

JUST now a beam of joy hung on his eye-lash;  
But as I looked, it sunk into his eye,  
Like a bruised worm writhing its form of rings  
Into a darkening hole.

### *XXII. Life a Glass Window*

LET him lean  
Against his life, that glassy interval  
'Twixt us and nothing; and upon the ground  
Of his own slippery breath, draw hueless dreams,  
And gaze on frost-work hopes. Uncourteous Death  
Knuckles the pane, and——

### *XXVIII. Meditation*

THE bitter past  
And the untasted future I mix up,  
Making the present a dream-figured bowl  
For the black poison, which is caked and moulded  
By the inside of the enchasing thoughts,  
Even as I taste it.

## FRAGMENTS

### *XXIX. Death Sweet*

Is it not sweet to die? for, what is death,  
But sighing that we ne'er may sigh again,  
Getting a length beyond our tedious selves;  
But trampling the last tear from poisonous sorrow,  
Spilling our woes, crushing our frozen hopes,  
And passing like an incense out of man?  
Then, if the body felt, what were its sense,  
Turning to daisies gently in the grave,  
If not the soul's most delicate delight  
When it does filtrate, through the pores of thought,  
In love and the enamelled flowers of song?

### *XXXVII. A Mountain*

ITS impossible ascent was steep,  
As are the million pillars of a shower  
Torn, shivered, and dashed hard against the earth,  
When Day no longer breathes but through the black  
    hours  
The ghost of Chaos haunts the ruined sky.

### *XXXIX. Defiance*

STRIKE, I fear thee not.—  
Why? Art a god; or has the slimy Styx  
Licked thee invulnerable? Does thy soul  
Not wear a fleshy shirt, a cloak of skin,  
Art not sewn up with veins and pegged together  
With bony sticks and hinges? If thou hast a life  
And keep'st it in the cupboard of thy body,  
In the least corner, the minutest pore,



## FRAGMENTS

More secret than the sunshine in a flint,  
I'll drag it out and cast it for a sop  
To the three-gated throat of Pluto's hound.  
So shut your soul's door closer and come on!  
Wert thou like the air, the water or the fire,  
Invulnerable though pierced, I'd quench thee, dam  
thee  
Or breathe thee up.

#### XLIV. Life's Uncertainty

A. T H E king looks well, red in its proper place  
The middle of the cheek, and his eye's round  
Black as a bit of night.

B,                                Yet men die suddenly:  
One sits upon a strong and rocky life,  
Watching a street of many opulent years,  
And Hope 's his mason. Well! to-day do this,  
And so to-morrow; twenty hollow years  
Are stuffed with action:—lo! upon his head  
Drops a pin's point of time; tick! quoth the clock,  
And the grave snaps him.

A.                        Such things may have been;  
The crevice 'twixt two after-dinner minutes,  
The crack between a pair of syllables  
May sometimes be a grave as deep as 'tis  
From noon to midnight in the hoop of time.  
But for this man, his life wears ever steel  
From which disease drops blunted. If indeed  
Death lay in the market-place, or were—but hush!  
See you the tremble of that myrtle bough?  
Doth no one listen?

B. Nothing with a tongue:  
The grass is dumb since Midas, and no Æsop  
Translates the crow or hog. Within the myrtle

## FRAGMENTS

Sits a hen-robin, trembling like a star,  
Over her brittle eggs.

A. Is it no more?

B. Nought: let her hatch.

### XLVII. *Dream of Dying*

SHIVERING in fever, weak, and parched to sand,  
My ears, those entrances of word-dressed thoughts,  
My pictured eyes, and my assuring touch,  
Fell from me, and my body turned me forth  
From its beloved abode: then I was dead;  
And in my grave beside my corpse I sat,  
In vain attempting to return: meantime  
There came the untimely spectres of two babes,  
And played in my abandoned body's ruins;  
They went away; and, one by one, by snakes  
My limbs were swallowed; and, at last, I sat  
With only one, blue-eyed, curled round my ribs,  
Eating the last remainder of my heart,  
And hissing to himself. O sleep, thou fiend!  
Thou blackness of the night! how sad and frightful  
Are these thy dreams!

### L. *Man's Petty Universe contrasted with the True*

SCENE: *the abyss of Space, AMBROSIUS and  
CYNTHIA in the car, returning to the earth*

*Amb.* O what a deep delight it is to cleave,  
Out-darting thought, above all sight and sound,  
And sweep the ceiling of the universe,  
Thus with our locks! How it does mad the heart,

## FRAGMENTS

How dances it along the living veins,  
Like hot and steaming wine! How my eyes ache  
With gazing on his mighty vacancy!  
O Universe of earth and air and ocean,  
Which man calls infinite, where art thou now?  
Sooner a babe should pierce the marble ear  
Of death, and startle his tombed ancestor  
'Mid Hell's thick laughter, shrieks, and flamy noises,  
With cradle-pulings, than the gathered voice  
Of every thunder, ocean, and wild blast.  
Find thee, thou atom, in this wilderness!  
This boundless emptiness, this waveless sea,  
This desert of vacuity, alone  
Is great: and thou, for whom the word was made,  
Art as the wren's small goblet of a home  
Unto the holy vastness of the temple!

*The Last Man*

### *LVII. Diamine's Death-Scene*

*DIANEME and female attendants*

*Dianeme.* Sing on, sing ever, and let sobs arise  
Beneath the current of your harmony,  
Breaking its silvery stillness into gushes  
Of stealing sadness: let tears fall upon it  
And burst with such a sound, as when a lute-string 5  
Torn by the passion of its melody  
Gasps its whole soul of music in one sound,  
And dies beneath the waves of its own voice!  
Be pale thou mooned midnight, and ye stars  
Shed fluttering tremours of inconstant light 10  
Upon the moaning billows; timid leaves  
O'erwhelm yourselves with shadow, and give **out**  
**Your** dewy titterings to the air no more!

## FRAGMENTS

Clouds, clouds, dark, deadly clouds, let not the moon  
Look on his grave! It is too light: the day 15  
Will rise before I die: how old is evening?

*Attend.* The tide of darkness now is at its height.  
Yon lily-woven cradle of the hours  
Hath floated half her shining voyage, nor yet  
Is by the current of the morn opposed. 20

*Dianeme.* The hour is coming: I must give my soul  
To the same moment on whose precious air  
My Casimir soared heavenward, for I know  
There are a million chambers of the dead,  
And every other minute but the same 25  
Would bear me to the one where he is not,  
And that were madness. Bring me yon sick lily,—  
Yon fevered one.

*Attend.* Choose any other, lady,  
For this is broken, odourless, and scorched,  
Where Death has graved his curse.

*Dianeme.* Give it to me; 30  
I'll weep it full. I have a love for flowers:  
Guess you not why? Their roots are in the earth,  
And when the dead awake or talk in sleep,  
These hear their thoughts and write them on their  
leaves

For heaven to look on: and their dews come down 35  
From the deep bosom of the blue, whereon  
The spirits linger, sent by them perchance  
With blessings to their friends. Besides all night  
They are wide-waking, and the ghosts will pause,  
And breathe their thoughts upon them. There, poor  
blossom,

My soul bedews thee, and my breast shall be 41  
Thy death-bed, and our deaths shall intertwine.  
Now, maids, farewell; this is the very echo  
Of his expiring time; one snowy cloud  
Hangs like an avalanche of frozen light 45  
Upon the peak of night's cerulean Alp,

## FRAGMENTS

And yon still pine, a bleak anatomy,  
 Flows like a river on the planet's disk,  
 With its black, wandering arms. Farewell to all:  
 There is my hand to weep on.

Now my soul 50

Develops its great beams, and like a cloud  
 Racked by the mighty winds, at once expands  
 Into a measureless, immortal growth.  
 Cresceted night, and amethystine stars,  
 And day, thou god and glory of the heavens, 55  
 Flow on for ever! Play, ye living spheres,  
 Through the infinity of azure wafted  
 On billowy music! Airs immortal, strew  
 Your tressed beauty on the clouds and seas!  
 And thou the sum of these, nature of all, 60  
 Thou providence pervading the whole space  
 Of measureless creation; thou vast mind,  
 Whose thoughts these pageantries and seasons are,  
 Who claspest all in one imagination,  
 All hail! I too am an eternity; 65  
 I am an universe. My soul is bent  
 Into a girdling circle full of days;  
 And my fears rise through the deep sky of it,  
 Blossoming into palpitating stars; 69  
 And suns are launched, and planets wake within me;  
 The words upon my breath are showery clouds,  
 Sailing along a summer; Casimir  
 Is the clear truth of ocean, to look back  
 The beams of my soft love, the world to turn  
 Within my blue embrace. I am an heaven, 75  
 And he my breezes, rays, and harmony;  
 'Round and around the curvous atmosphere  
 Of my own real existence I revolve,  
 Serene and starry with undying love.  
 I am, I have been, I shall be, O glory! 80  
 An universe, a god, a living Ever. [Dies.

*The Last Man*

*Fragments of*  
LOVE'S ARROW POISONED<sup>1</sup>

[Composed 1823-5]

*X. Erminia Abbandonata*

ERMINIA *and attendant*

*Attend.* Come lift your head from that sad pillow,  
lady.

Let comfort kiss thee dry. Nay, weep no more:  
Oh! sure thy brain has emptied all its tears,  
Thy breast outsighed its passion, leaving room  
For sleep to pour her sweetness into them, 5  
And the cored sleep of sleep, tranquillity,  
That opens but one window of the soul,  
And with her hand on sorrow's face, does keep her  
Dark in her bed and dayless. Quiet now—  
Will you take peace?

*Ermin.* Good-night, you must go in: 10  
The door of life is shut upon me now;  
I'm sepulchred alone. Look in the west;  
Mark you the dusty traveller,  
That stumbles down the clouds?

*Attend.* I see the sun  
Silently dying.

*Ermin.* Weep till your sight is found. 15  
I have been one that thought there was a sun,  
A joyful heat-maker; and like a child  
By a brook's side spooning the sparkles out,  
I caught at his reflection in my soul,  
And found 'twas water painted with a lie, 20

<sup>1</sup> The numbers are those of the Oxford edition.

## FRAGMENTS OF

Cold, bitter water; I have cried it out.  
Sometimes you may see some one through the clouds  
Stepping about the sky,  
He robs some mountain of its child, the day,  
And lays it at the sea's door: but for that 25  
I' the west, 'tis the fat, unwholesome star,  
The bald fool-planet, that has men upon it,  
And they nickname it 'world'.  
And oh! this humpy bastard of the sun,  
It was my slave, my dog, and in my lap 30  
Laid down its shoulder-load of pleasure every night,  
And spun me sunshine to delight my eyes,  
Carried my cities, and did make me summer,  
And flower-limbed spring, and groves with shady  
souls:

But now the whelp rolls up his woody back, 35  
And turns it on me, and so trundles down,  
Leaving this bit of rock for me to live on,  
And his round shadow to be cold in. Go!  
Follow the rabble clinging at his heels,  
Get thee a seat among his rags.—Dost know 40  
That Momus picked a burnt-out comet up  
From Vulcan's floor, and stuck a man upon it;  
Then, having laugh't, he flung the wick away,  
And let the insect feed on planet oil:—  
What was't? Man and his ball.

*Attend.* O dearest lady! 45  
Let not your thoughts find instruments of mirth  
So on the shore where reason has been wrecked,  
And lay them in your brain along with grief;  
For grief and laughter, mingled in the scull,  
Oft boil to madness. Did you hear my words? 50  
*Ermin.* Aye, comfort was among them—that's a  
plaything

For girls, a rattle full of noisy lies  
To fright away black thoughts, and let the sun  
In on the breast. For madness, though I hold it

## LOVE'S ARROW POISONED

Kinder to man's enjoyment than true sense, 55  
 And I would choose it, if they lay before me  
 Even as a grape beside an adder's tongue,  
 To squeeze into my thoughts as in a cup,  
 Hating the forked and the bitter truth—  
 I cannot find it. If my brain were capable 60  
 Of this dear madness, should it not be now  
 All in a bubble with't? What can make mad,  
 If not the abandonment of one, whose love  
 Is more true life than the veins' crimson sap?  
 Leonigiid has cut my heart away, 65  
 And flung it from him: if I could be so,  
 Should I not be tempestuously mad?

*Attend.* Alas! his cruelty looked like a snake  
 Upon Medusa's temple.

*Ermin.* Had I been waked  
 By torchlight in my eyes, and by a voice 70  
 That said 'your babes are burning, stabbed your husband—

Room on your bosom for their murderer's kisses!  
 Why, that to this were tickling to a stab,  
 A pin-wound to an hell-jawed, laughing gash.  
 You saw me spurned by him who was—Oh! was— 75  
 What was he? not a father, son, or husband—  
 Lend me a word.

*Attend.* Indeed your love was much;  
 Your life but an inhabitant of his.

*Ermin.* Loved him! 'tis not enough; the angels  
 might—

*They* might think what I mean, but could not speak it.  
 I dreamt it was the day of judgment once, 81  
 And that my soul, in fear of hidden sins,  
 Went with his stolen body on its shoulders,  
 And stood for him before the judgment-seat—  
 O that I now were damned as I was then! 85  
 But that same body, that same best-loved soul



## FRAGMENTS OF

Cursed, spurned me yesterday. Should I not rave,  
Rave, my girl, rave?

*Attend.* So most women would,  
So all would wonder that another did not.

*Ermin.* Why now, I rave not, laugh not, think not,  
care not; 90

But it is well; so far, I said, 'twas well.  
Next was I not abandoned on the rock,  
That I might starve? and then you know I prayed,  
And when 'twas done, behold! there comes a boat,  
Climbing about the waves; I thought and said, 95  
O bless thee, ocean! hither dost thou come,  
On the same errand as thy birds returning  
Unto their hungry nest; thus has sweet nature  
Sown kindness in thy great, and its small, bosom!  
And as I spoke, the waves came sporting on, 100  
And laid their burthen, like a pillow, here:  
Look! it's my brother dead. Should I not rave,  
Rave, my girl, rave? What comet-dragon is there,  
That makes the air bleed fire with galloping rage,  
But should be dove-like in my simile? 105

*Attend.* Alas! such things,  
Such sudden pluckings by the heart as these,  
People the madhouse, and cram up the grave!

*Ermin.* Therefore I laugh: methinks, when I do tell it,  
That I am supping up a draught of wine. 110  
Would you know why there's death, and tears, and  
blood,

And wrenching hearts out by their shrieking roots,  
Which are more tender than the mailed quick  
Or the wet eyeball? I will tell you this—  
But O! be secret as rocks under sea— 115  
When the world draws the winter o'er his head,  
Capping himself so whitely round his Alp,  
Muffling his feet with ice, and beds him so;  
Then underneath the coverlid and cloak  
He has a poisonous strumpet in his arms, 12Q

## LOVE'S ARROW POISONED

On whom he gets confusion, war, disease,  
 Prodigies, earthquakes, blights: she's in his blood,  
 The hell-wombed witch, hagged and hideous nature!  
 But I'll unwind her.—Nay, I jest, my child:  
 Leave me; seek something—What is it we want? 125  
 O true! 'tis food: take this, and try the huts.

*Attend.* Tis needful truly: I'll procure it quick,  
 And turn the hour back I go upon.

A little then, goodbye. *[Exit.*

*Ermin.* Yes, I do sec  
 The wronger, and will cut her from my heart, 130  
 Pare myself of her utterly. Thou nature,  
 Living or dead, thou influence or thou ruler,  
 I invoke the heaven to hear my charge.  
 Who tied my heart unto Lconigild  
 With gordian love-knots of its thousand strings, 135  
 Then tore them all away to bleed and wither?  
 Was it not nature?  
 Who quickened next that heart a lovely babe,  
 And when its little smile had learnt its mother,  
 When thought was rising in its heavenly eye, 140  
 Bade the grave jump and snap it? The same nature.  
 Here lies a brother in my dead embrace,  
 Loved after, as before, his human life;  
 For in each other's unborn arms we lay,  
 Bedfellows in our mother. Who poisoned him, 145  
 Alone among the horrible sea-waves,  
 And then—O murderess above fratricide,  
 To kill the sister with the brother's corpse!—  
 Sent him a gift to me? Again 'twas nature.  
 I had a husband: nature widowed me; 150  
 A child: she kidnapped it to earth a tree;  
 A brother: him she murdered with her waves;  
 Me she would madden: therefore I defy,  
 Curse, and abandon Nature henceforth ever.  
 And though I cannot creep up to my mother, 155  
 Or flow back to my father's veins again—

## FRAGMENTS OF LOVE'S ARROW POISONED

Resex or uncreate me; thus much can I:  
I will sponge out the sweetness of my heart,  
And suck up horror; Love, woman's thoughts, I'll kill,  
And leave their bodies rotting in my mind, 160  
Hoping their worms will sting; not man outside,  
Yet will I out of hate engender much:  
I'll be the father of a world of ghosts  
And get the grave with carcase. For the rest,  
I will encorpse me in my brother's garments, 165  
Pick me a heart out of a devil's side,  
And so, my own creator, my own child,  
Tread on the womb of nature, unbegotten.  
Now then, ye waves, I step on you again,  
And into my new self, my life outlived: 170  
Come back and kneel, thou world; submit thy side,  
And take me on thy neck again, new-made,  
Fiend-hearted, woman-corpsed, but man-arrayed.

### *XL Humble Beginnings*

W H Y , Rome was naked once, a bastard smudge,  
Tumbled on straw, the den-fellow of whelps,  
Fattened on roots, and, when athirst for milk,  
He crept beneath and drank the swagging udder  
Of Tyber's brave she-wolf; and Heaven's Judea  
Was folded in a pannier.

# TORRISMOND

## *An Unfinished Drama*

[Composed 1824]

**PERSONS                  REPRESENTED**

**GENTS**

**DUKE OF FERRARA**

**TORRISMOND**, *his son*

**THE MARQUIS MALASPINA**

CYRANO, *his son*

AMADEUS, *a boon companion*

|        |   |                            |
|--------|---|----------------------------|
| GARCIA | } | <i>The Duke's Servants</i> |
| GOMEZ  |   |                            |
| ORAN   |   |                            |

|             |   |                  |
|-------------|---|------------------|
| MELCHIOR    | } | <i>Courtiers</i> |
| [GAUDENTIO] |   |                  |

**LADIES**

VERONICA, *Miss Malaspina*

ELVIRA, *a Toad-eater*

ERMINIA, *Oran's Sister*

SCENE: *Ferrara*

ACT I

SCENE I. *A hall in the palace of Ferrara*

*Enter the DUKE, Courtiers, and attendants*

*Duke.* Who has met Torrismond, my son, to-night?

*Garcia.* My lord, he has not crossed me, all the day.

*{To GOMEZ aside}* You need not say we saw him pass  
the terrace,

All red and hot with wine. The duke is angry:  
Mark how he plucks his robe.

*Duke.* Gomez, nor you? 5

*Gomez.* Your Grace in Garcia's answer  
Beheld the face of mine. I have not lent him  
A word to-day.

*Duke.* Nor you? none of you, sirs?—  
No answer! have ye sold yourselves to silence?  
Is there not breath, or tongue, or mouth among you, 10  
Enough to croak a curse?—Nay: there's no wonder.  
Why do I ask? that know you are his curs,  
His echo-birds, the mirrors of his tongue.  
He has locked up this answer in your throats,  
And scratched it on your leaden memories. 15  
What do I ask for? well: go on, go on;  
Be his sop-oracles, and suck yellow truth  
Out of the nipple of his jingling pouch.  
But tell me this, dogs, that do wag your tails  
Round this dwarf Mercury, this gilded Lie-god, 20  
Will you set out and beg with him to-morrow?

*Garcia.* Why, my good lord?

*Duke.* Because, my evil slave,  
Because unless he can these sunbeams coin,  
Or like a bee in metals suck me out  
The golden honey from their marly core, 25  
He's like to board with the cameleon:  
Because I will untie him from my heart  
And drop him to the bottom of the world:  
Because I'll melt his wings—Enough!

*Garcia.* With pardon,  
You are too rough.

*Duke.* Too rough! were I as loud 30  
As shaggy Boreas in his bearish mood,  
Did I roll wheels of thunder o'er your souls,  
And break them into groans,—weep yourselves waves,  
And kneel beneath my storming. Worms ye are,

Born in the fat sides of my pouring wealth: 35  
Lie there and stir not, or I dash you off.

*Garcia.* My lord—

*Duke.* I am no lord, sir, but a father:  
My son has stuck sharp injuries in my heart,  
And flies to hide in your obscurity.  
Cover him not with falsehoods; shield him not; 40  
Or, by my father's ashes,—but no matter.  
You said I was a duke: I will be one,  
Though graves should bark for it. You've heard me  
speak:

Now go not to your beds until my son  
(—It is a word that cases not a meaning—) 45  
Come from his riots: send him then to me:  
And hark! ye fill him not, as ye are wont,  
To the lip's brim with oily subterfuges.  
I sit this evening in the library.

*An Attend.* Lights, lights there for the duke! 50

*Duke.* For the duke's soul I would there were a light!  
Well; on thy flinty resolution strike,  
Benighted man! The sun has laid his hair  
Up in that stone, as I have treasured love  
In a cold heart; but it begins to boil 55  
And if it breaks its casket, will be out.  
Find me a book of fables: he, whose world  
Grows in his thoughts, methinks, alone is happy.  
So now good-night; and do as I have said.

*Garcia.* We shall.—Good dreams, your Grace!

*Duke.* Good acts, you mean. 60  
He who does ill, awake, and turns to night  
For lovely-painted shades,  
Is like a satyr grinning in a brook  
To find Narcissus' round and downy cheek.

[Exit with attendants.

*Gomez.* I never saw my lord so sad and angry: 65  
His blood foamed white with wrath beneath his face,  
Rising and falling like a sea-shore wave.

What boils him thus?

*Garcia.* Perhaps some further outrage  
Reported of his son; for the young lord,  
Whose veins are stretched by passion's hottest wine 70  
Tied to no law except his lawless will,  
Ranges and riots headlong through the world;  
Like a young dragon, on Hesperian berries  
Purplely fed, who dashes through the air,  
Tossing his wings in gambols of desire, 75  
And breaking rain-clouds with his bulging breast.  
Thus has he been from boy to youth and manhood,  
Reproved, then favoured; threatened, next forgiven;  
Renounced, to be embraced: but, till this hour,  
Never has indignation like to this, 80  
With lightning looks, black thoughts and stony words,  
Burst o'er the palace of their love, which stretches  
From heart to heart.

*Gomez.* 1 fear that both will shake;  
And that fair union, built by interchange  
Of leaning kindnesses, in the recoil 85  
May fall between, and leave no bridge for pardon.

*Garcia.* The little that we can, then let us strive  
To hold them in the lock of amity:  
For which our thoughts let us compare within.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. A banqueting hall

CYRANO, AMADEUS, TORRISMOND, and Other  
gents, drinking

*Amad.* Another health! Fill up the goblets, sirrah!  
This wine was pressed from full and rolling grapes  
By the white dance of a Circassian princess,  
Whose breast had never aught but sunlight touched,  
And her own tears: 'tis spicy, cool, and clear 5  
As is a magic fount where rainbows grow

Or nymphs by moonlight bathe their tremulous limbs;  
And works an intellectual alchemy,  
Touching the thoughts to sunshine. Now, to whom—  
To what young saint, between whose breathing paps  
Love's inspiration lies, shall we devote 11  
This last and richest draught: with whose soft name  
Shall we wash bright our hearts? Say, Cyrano.

*Cyran.* Let Torrismond be sponsor for this bowl.  
He sate so still last night, that by plump Cupid, 15  
That merry, cherry-lipped, delicious god  
Whose name is writ on roses, I must think  
He 's paid away his soul in broken sighs,  
Glass oaths, and tears of crocodilish coinage,  
For one quick finger-kiss. Ask him what name, 20  
Made to be written upon hearts and trees  
And grace a sonnet, shall be sugar here,  
Making the juice steam music.

*Torris.* I beseech you,  
Waste not this Araby of words on me:  
I'm dull, but not in love.

*Cyran.* Not ancle-deep? 25  
What means a leaning head, eyelids ajar,  
And lips thick-sown with whispers? Sir, I say,  
Before to-morrow you'll be soused in love  
To the car's tip. In truth, it will be so;  
Sure as an almanac.

*Torris.* \ lay my fate 30  
Upon your mercy: e'en tie love-knots in it,  
If you've nought else to do. Good Cyrano,  
And you, sirs, all pray drink. I fear the fog  
Of my most stupid dulness spreads.

A *mad.* We'll drink  
One cup—one more liquid delight, my friends; 35  
Then for the masquerade at Signor Paulo's.

*Cyran.* Aye; dedicated to the sweet To be,  
The lady Future of our comrade's love.



# TORRISMOND

Act I

*A guest.* What rhymes unborn are shut within that word!

*Amad.* Thus then I soak my heart's dear roots in wine, 40

And the warm drops roll up and down my blood,

Till every tendril of my straying veins

Rings with delight. *[They drink.*

And now, my sons of Bacchus,

To the delirious dance! Nay, Torrismond,

You'll come with us at least.

*Torris.* To-night, I thank you, 45

It is against my will; indeed I cannot;

I'm vilely out of tune, my thoughts are cracked,

And my words dismal. 'Pray you, pardon me:

Some other night we will like Bacchanals

Shiver the air with laughter and rough songs, 50

And be most jovial madmen.

*Amad.* Be it so,

If be it must. We bid you, sir, farewell.

*Torris.* Good night, good lads.

*[Exeunt AM A D E U S and gentlemen.*

Now go, dear Cyrano;

Let me not keep you by my wayward mood.

*Cyran.* If it does not offend you, suffer me— 55

*Torris.* Offend me! No; thou dost not, Cyrano;

I do offend myself. Hadst thou but eyes

To see the spirit toiling in this breast,

How low a wretch should I appear to thee;

How pitifully weak! Now tell me, sir,— 60

I shrink not from the truth, although it stab,

But beg it from your mouth—what think you of me?

*Cyran.* Of you, my lord?

*Torris.* Yes, yes; my words, my manners,

My disposition, will,—how seem they to you? 64

*Cyran.* Sir, my heart speaks of you as one most kind;

Spirited and yet mild: a man more noble

Breathes not his maker's air.

*Torris.* Stay, my good friend;  
I did not ask for flattery.

*Cyran.* Nor I answer it;  
Saying, that here I shake him by the hand  
That has no better in humanity: 70  
A fine, free spirit.

*Torris.* You had better say  
A whirring, singing, empty wine-bubble,  
Like one of these that left us. So I was;  
Vain, futile, frivolous: a boy, a butterfly,—  
In semblance: but inside, by heaven! a depth 75  
Of thoughts most earnest, an unfuelled flame  
Of self-devouring love. *Cyran*, *Cyran*,  
I yearn, and thirst, and ache to be beloved,  
As I could love, through my eternal soul,  
Immutably, immortally, intensely, 80  
Immeasurably. Oh! I am not at home  
In this December world, with men of ice,  
Cold sirs and madams. That I had a heart,  
By whose warm throbs of love to set my soul!  
I tell thee I have not begun to live, 85  
I'm not myself till I've another self  
To lock my dearest and most secret thoughts in;  
Change petty faults and whispering pardons with;  
Sweetly to rule, and Oh! most sweetly serve.

*Cyran.* Have you no father,—nor a friend? Yet I, 90  
I, *Torrismond*, am living, and the duke.

*Torris.* Forgive me, sir, forgive me: I am foolish;  
I've said I know not what, I know not why;  
'Tis nothing,—fancies; I'll to bed;—'tis nothing;  
Worth but a smile, and then to be forgotten. 95  
Good-night: to-morrow I will laugh at this.

*Cyran.* I'll say no more but that I hope you will.

[Exit.

*Torris.* I knew it would be so. He thinks me now  
Weak, unintelligible, fanciful,—  
A boy shut up in dreams, a shadow-catcher: 100

So let him think. My soul is where he sees not,  
 Around, above, below. Yes, yes; the curse  
 Of being for a little world too great,  
 Demanding more than nature has to give,  
 And drinking up for ever and in vain 105  
 The shallow, tasteless, skimmings of their love,  
 Through this unfathomable fever here.—  
 A thought of comfort comes this way; its warmth  
 I feel, although *I* see it not. How's this?  
 There's something I half know; yes, I remember,— 110  
 The feast last night: a dear, ingenuous girl  
 Poured soft, smooth hope upon my dashing passions,  
 Until they tossed their billowy selves to sleep.  
 I'll seek her, try her: in this very garden  
 Often she walks; thither I'll bear my wishes 115  
 And may she prove the echo of their craving! *[Exit.*

SCENE III. *A garden by moonlight*

VERONICA, ELVIRA, *and others*

*Veron.* Come then, a song; a winding, gentle song,  
 To lead me into sleep. Let it be low  
 As zephyr, telling secrets to his rose,  
 For I would hear the murmuring of my mind;  
 And more of voice than of that other music 5  
 That grows around the strings of quivering lutes;  
 But most of thought; for with my mind I listen,  
 And when the leaves of sound are shed upon it,  
 If there's no seed remembrance grows not there.  
 So life, so death; a song, and then a dream! 10  
 Begin before another dewdrop fall  
 From the soft hold of these disturbed flowers,  
 For sleep is filling up my senses fast,  
 And from these words I sink.

*Song*

How many times do I love thee, dear? 15  
Tell me how many thoughts there be  
In the atmosphere  
Of a new-fall'n year,  
Whose white and sable hours appear  
The latest flake of Eternity: 20  
So many times do I love thee, dear.

How many times do I love again?  
Tell me how many beads there are  
In a silver chain  
Of evening rain, 25  
Unravell'd from the tumbling main,  
And threading the eye of a yellow star:  
So many times do I love again.

*Elvira.* She sees no longer: leave her then alone,  
Encompassed by this round and moony night. 30  
A rose-leaf for thy lips, and then good-night:  
So life, so death; a song, and then a dream! [*Exeunt,*

*Enter* TORRISMOND

*Torris.* Herself! her very self, slumbering gently!  
Sure sleep is turned to beauty in this maid,  
And all the rivalry of life and death 35  
Makes love upon her placid face. And here,  
How threads of blue, wound off yon thorny stars  
That grow upon the wall of hollow night,  
Flow o'er each sister-circle of her bosom,  
Knotting themselves into a clue for kisses 40  
Up to her second lip. On that cheek the blush  
That ever dawns dares be no common blush,  
But the faint ghost of some dishevelled rose  
Unfurls its momentary leaves, and bursts

# TORRISMOND

Act I

So quick the haunted fairness knows it not. 45  
 O that this gaze could be eternity!  
 And yet a moment of her love were more.  
 Were there infection in the mind's disease,  
 Inoculation of a thought, even now  
 Should she, from all the windings of her dream, 50  
 Drink my impetuous passion, and become  
 All that I ask. Break from your buds, dear eyes,  
 And draw me into you.

*Veron. (awaking)* Who's there? I dreamt:  
 As I do love that broad, [smooth-edged] star,  
 And her young, vandyked moons that climb the night  
 Round their faint mother, I'd not have had 56  
 Another eye peeping upon that dream,  
 For one of them to wear upon my breast;  
 And I'll not whisper it, for fear these flags  
 Should chance to be the green posterity 60  
 Of that eaves-dropping, woman-witted grass,  
 That robbed the snoring wasps of their least voice,  
 To teach their featheiy gossips of the air  
 What long and furry ears king Midas sprouted;  
 And I'll not think of it, for meditation 65  
 Oft presses from the heart its inmost wish,  
 And thaws its silence into straying words.

*Torris. (aside)* I am no man, if this dream were not  
 spun  
 By the very silkworm, that doth make his shop  
 In Cupid's tender wing-pit, and winds fancies 70  
 In lovers' corner thoughts, when grandam Prudence  
 Has swept the hearth of passion, thrown on cinders,  
 And gone to bed:—and she is not a woman,  
 If this same secret, buried in her breast,  
 Haunt not her tongue,—and hark! here comes its  
 ghost. 75

*Veron.* A fable and a dream! Here, in this garden,  
 It seemed I was a lily:—

*Torris. (aside)* So you are,

But fitter for Arabian paradise,  
 Or those arched gardens where pale-petalled stars,  
 With sunlight honeying their dewy cores, 80  
 Tremble on sinuous, Corinthian necks,—  
 Where Morn her roses feeds, her violets Night.

*Veron.* And to my lily-ship a wooer came,  
 Sailing upon the curvous air of morn,  
 (For 'twas a sunny dream, and a May sky 85  
 The lid of it;) and this imagined suitor,  
 A glass-winged, tortoise-shell, heart-broken bee,  
 Was—he you know of, heart. How did he bend  
 His slender knee, doffing his velvet cap,  
 And swearing, by the taste of Venus' lip, 90  
 If I did not accept his airy love,  
 The truest heart, that ever told the minutes  
 Within an insect's breast, should shed its life  
 Around the hilt of his unsheathed sting.  
 And then this tiny thunderer of flowers, 95  
 Quite, quite subdued, let down a string of tears,  
 (Little they were, but full of beeish truth,)  
 Almost a dewdrop-much, on the fair pages  
 Of transmigrated me; whereon, O Love!  
 Thou tamed'st the straightest prude of Flora's  
 daughters; 100  
 For I did pity Torrismond the bee,  
 And let him, if his life lived in my love,  
 Have that for courtesy.—

*Torris. (coming forward)* O lady! then  
 Will you deny him now? when here he kneels,  
 And vows by heaven, and by the sacred souls 105  
 Of all the dead and living, in your pity  
 His hope is folded, in your soul his love,  
 And in that love his everlasting life.

*Veron.* Out on my tongue, the naughty runaway!  
 What has he heard? Now, if this man should be 110  
 Vain, selfish, light, or hearted with a stone,  
 Or worthless any way, as there are many,

I've given myself, like alms unto an idiot,  
To be for nothing squandered.

*Torris.* Lady, speak!  
And for my truth, O that my mind were open, 115  
My soul expressed and written in a book,  
That thou might'st read and know! Believe, believe  
me!

And fear me not, for, if I speak not truth,  
May I speak never more, but be struck dumb!  
May I be stripped of manhood and made devil, 120  
If I mean not as truly unto thee,  
Though bold it be, as thou unto thyself!  
I will not swear, for thou dost know that easy:  
But put me to the proof, say, 'kill thyself;  
I will outlabour Hercules in will, 125  
And in performance, if that waits on will.  
Shall I fight sword-less with a youthful lion?  
Shall I do aught that I may die in doing?  
Oh! were it possible for such an angel,  
I almost wish thou hadst some impious task, 130  
That I might act it and be damned for thee.  
But, earned for thee, perdition 's not itself,  
Since all that has a taste of thee in it  
Is blest and heavenly.

*Veron.* Stop! You frighten me:  
I dare not doubt you.

*Torris.* Dare not? Can you so? 135

*Veron.* I dare not, for I cannot. I believe you:  
It is my duty.

*Torris.* To the dutiful  
Their duty is their pleasure. Is it not?

*Veron.* 'Twas a rash word; it rather is my fate.

*Torris.* It is my fate to love; thou art my fate, 140  
So be not adverse.

*Veron.* How can I say further?  
I do believe you: less I'll not avow,  
And more I cannot.

*Torris.* Stay, Veronica!  
This very night we both of us may die,  
Or one at least: and it is very likely 145  
We never meet; or, if we meet, not thus,  
But somehow hindered by the time, the place,  
The persons. There are many chances else,  
That, though no bigger than a sunny mote,  
Coming between may our whole future part, 150  
With Milo's force tear our existence up,  
And turn away the branches of each life,  
Even from this hour, on whose star-knotted trunk  
We would engraft our union; it may sever us  
As utterly as if the world should split 155  
Here, as we stand, and all Eternity  
Push through the earthquake's lips, and rise between  
us.

Then let us know each other's constancy:  
Thou in my mind, and I in thine shall be;  
And so disseparable to the edge 160  
Of thinnest lightning.

*Veron.* Stay: be answered thus.  
If thou art Torrismond, the brain of feather;  
If thou art light and empty Torrismond,  
The admiration, oath and bottle-god  
Of beer-brained tipplers, he whose corky heart, 165  
Pierced by a ragged pen of Cupid's wing,  
Spins like a vane upon his mother's temple  
In every silly sigh—let it play on:  
Or pluck it down and stop musk-phials with it.

*Torris.* It is not so; I vow, Veronica. 170

*Veron.* If you unpeopled the Olympian town  
Of all its gods, and shut them in one perjury,  
It would not weigh a flue of melting snow  
In my opinion. Listen thus much more:  
If thou art otherwise than all have held 175  
Except myself; if these, which men do think  
The workings of thy true concentrate self,



Have been indeed but bubbles raised in sport  
 By the internal god, who keeps unseen  
 The fountains of thine undiscovered spirit; 180  
 If underneath this troubled scum of follies,  
 Lies what my hopes have guessed:—why, guess thy  
 wishes

What it may be unto Veronica?

*Torris.* What need of doubts and guesses? make me  
 firm;

With fixed assurance prop my withering hopes, 185  
 Or tear them up at once; give truth for truth.  
 I know it is the custom to dissemble,  
 Because men's hearts are shallow, and their nature  
 So mean, ill-nurtured, selfish, and debased,  
 They needs must paint and swaddle them in lies, 190  
 Before the light could bear to look upon them.  
 But as thou art, thus unalloyed and fresh  
 From thy divine creation, soul and body,  
 Tread artifice to dust, and boldly speak  
 Thine innocent resolve.

*Veron.* Thus then I say: 195  
 As I believe thee steadfast and sincere,  
 (And, if it be not so, God pity me!)  
 I love thee dearly, purely, heartily;  
 So witness heaven, and our own silent spirits!

*Torris.* And by my immortality I swear, 200  
 With the like honesty, the like to thee,  
 Thou picture of the heavens!

*Veron.* Hark! some one comes:  
 Now we must part. Henceforth remember thou,  
 How in this azure secrecy of night,  
 And with what vows, we here have dedicated 205  
 Ourselves, and our eternity of being  
 Unto each other in our Maker's presence.  
 Good-night, then, Torrismond.

*Torris.* And such to thee,

As thou to me hast given, fairest fair!  
Best good! of thy dear kind most ever dear! 210  
[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IV. *The DUKE'S palace*

DUKE, GARCIA, MELCHIOR, GAUDENTIO

*Duke.* Yes, was it not enough, good Garcia:  
Blood spilt in every street by his wild sword;  
The reverend citizens pelted with wrongs,  
Their rights and toil-won honours blown aside,  
Torn off, and trampled 'neath his drunken foot; 5  
The very daughters of the awful church  
Smeared in their whiteness by his rude attempts;  
The law thus made a lie even in my mouth;  
Myself a jest for beer-pot orators;  
My state dishonoured;—was it not enough 10  
To turn a patience made of ten-years' ice,  
Into a thunderbolt?

*Garcia.* It was too much:  
I wonder at your Grace's long endurance.  
Did you ne'er chide him?

*Duke.* No, never in his life;  
He has not that excuse. My eyes and ears 15  
Were frozen-closed. Yet was it not enough  
That his ill deeds outgrew all name and number,  
O'erflowed his years and all men's memories?  
Gaudentio, I was mild; I bore upon me 19  
This world of wrongs, and smiled. But mark you now,  
How he was grateful. Tell them, Melchior.

*Melch.* Linked, as it is surmised, with Lutherans  
And other rebels 'gainst his father's state,  
He has not only for their aid obtained  
From me, the steward of the dukedom, money, 25  
But also robbed, most treacherously robbed,  
By night, and like a thief, the public treasury.

*Gauden.* I'll not believe it; and he is a villain,  
Aye, and the very thief that did the thing,  
Who brings the accusation.

*Duke.* Knave, I think 30  
Thou wert my son's accomplice.

*Melch.* Nay, my lord,  
He says what all would say, and most myself,  
But that these facts—

*Gauden.* What facts? What witnesses?  
Who saw? Who heard? Who knows?

*Duke.* Our trusty steward.

*Gauden.* A Spanish Jew! a godless, heartless exile, 35  
Whose ear 's the echo of the whispering world.  
Why, if *he* only knows, and saw, and heard,  
This Argus-witness with his blood-hound nose  
Who keeps a fairy in his upright ear,  
Is no more than a black, blind, ugly devil, 40  
Nick-named a lie.

*Duke.* Be silent, slave, or dead.  
I do believe him: Garcia, so dost thou?  
Ali honest men, good Melchior, like thyself—  
For that thou art, I think, upon my life—  
Believe thee too.

*Melch.* It is my humble trust: 45  
And in the confidence of honesty  
I pray you pardon this good servant's boldness.  
(*Aside*) God help the miserable velvet fellow!  
It seems he has forgot that little story,  
How he debauched my poor, abandoned sister, 50  
And broke my family into the grave.  
That's odd; for I exceeding well remember it,  
Though then a boy.

*Duke.* Gaudentio, thou dost hear  
Why I forgive thee: but be cautious, sir.

*Gauden.* Cautious, but honest,—cautious of a  
villain. 55

*Duke.* No more! But see where comes the man we talk of.

Leave us together.

[*Exeunt Courtiers.*]

*Enter TORRISMOND*

Torrismond, well met!—

*Torris.* Why then well parted, for I'm going to bed. I'm weary; so, good-night.

*Duke.* Stay; I must speak to you.

*Torris.* To-morrow then, good father, and all day. 60  
But now no more than the old sleepy word,  
And so again, good-night.

*Duke.* Turn, sir, and stay:

I will be brief, as brief as speech can be.—

Seek elsewhere a good night: there is none here.

This is no home for your good nights, bad son, 65

Who hast made evil all my days to come,

Poisoned my age, torn off my beauteous hopes

And fed my grave with them. Oh! thou hast now,

This instant, given my death an hundred sinews,

And drawn him nearer by a thousand hours. 70

But what of that? You'd sow me like a grain,

And from my stalk pick you a ducal crown.

But I will live.

*Torris.* That you may live and prosper

Is every day my prayer, my wish, my comfort.

But what offence has raised these cruel words? 75

*Duke.* That I may live, you plot against my life;

That I may prosper, you have cured my fortunes

Of their encrusted jaundice,—you have robbed me.

So, for your prayers and wishes I do thank you,

But for your deeds I wish and pray Heaven's ven-  
geance. 80

*Torris.* Is this your own invention, or—O nature!

O love of fathers! could a father hear

His offspring thus accused, and yet believe?

Believe! Could he endure, and not strike dead

**TORRISMOND**

**Act I**

The monster of the lie? Sir, here or there, 85  
In you or your informers, there's a villain,  
A fiend of falsehood: so beware injustice!

*Duke.* I never was unjust, but when I pardoned  
Your bloody sins and ravening appetites,—  
For which Heaven pardon me, as I repent it! 90  
But I'll not play at battledore with words.  
Hear me, young man, in whom I did express  
The venom of my nature, thus the son,  
Not of my virtuous will, but foul desires,  
Not of my life, but of a wicked moment, 95  
Not of my soul, but growing from my body,  
Like thorns or poison on a wholesome tree,  
The rank excrescence of my tumid sins,—  
And so I tear thee off: for, Heaven doth know,  
All gentler remedies I have applied; 100  
But to this head thy rankling vice has swelled,  
That if thou dwell est in my bosom longer,  
Thou wilt infect my blood, corrode my heart,  
And blight my being: therefore, off for ever!

*Tonis.* O mother, thou art happy in thy grave! 105  
And there's the hell in which my father lies,  
The serpent that hath swallowed him!

**Enter GAUDENTIO**

*Gauden. (rushing in; to those without)* Away!  
Let me come in! . . . Now, I beseech you, lords,  
Put out this anger; lay a night of sleep  
Upon its head, and let its pulse of fire 110  
Flap to exhaustion. Do not, sir, believe  
This reptile falsehood; think it o'er again  
And try him by yourself: thus questioning,  
Could I, or did I, thus, or such a fault,  
In my beginning days? There stands before you 115  
The youth and golden top of your existence,  
Another life of yours: for, think your morning  
Not lost, but given, passed from your hand to his,

The same except in place. Be then to him.  
 As was the former tenant of your age, 120  
 When you were in the prologue of your time,  
 And he lay hid in you unconsciously  
 Under his life. And thou, my younger master,  
 Remember there 's a kind of god in him,  
 And after heaven the next of thy religion. 125  
 Thy second fears of God, thy first of man,  
 Are his, who was creation's delegate  
 And made this world for thee in making thee.

*Duke.* A frost upon thy words, intended dog!  
 Because thy growth has lost its four-legged way 130  
 And wandered with thee into man's resemblance,  
 Shalt thou assume his rights? Get to your bed,  
 Or I'll decant thy pretext of a soul,  
 And lay thee, worm, where thou shalt multiply.  
 Sir slave, your gibbet's sown.

*Toiris.* Leave him, Gaudentio,  
 My father and your master are not here; 136  
 His good is all gone hence, he 's truly dead;  
 All that belonged to those two heavenly names  
 Arc gone from life with him, and changing cast  
 This slough behind, which all abandoned sins 140  
 Creep into and enliven devilishly.

*Duke.* What! stand I in thy shadow? or has Momus  
 Opened a window 'twixt thy heart and mine?  
 'Tis plated then!

*Torris.* We talk like fighting boys:  
 Out on't! I repent of my mad tongue. 145  
 Come, sir; I cannot love you after this,  
 But we may meet and pass a nodding question—

*Duke.* Never! There lies no grain of sand between  
 My loved and my detested. Wing thee hence,  
 Or thou dost stand to-morrow on a cobweb 150  
 Spun o'er the well of clotted Acheron,  
 Whose hydrophobic entrails stream with fire;  
 And may this intervening earth be snow,

And my step burn like the mid coal of Ætna,  
 Plunging me, through it all, into the core 155  
 Where in their graves the dead are shut like seeds,  
 If I do not—O but he *is* my son!  
 If I do not forgive thee then—but hence!  
 Gaudentio, hence with him, for in my eyes  
 He does look demons.— 160

*Melch.* {to TORRISMOND} Come out with me and  
 leave him:

You will be cool, to-morrow.

*Torris.* That I shall;  
 Cool as an ice-drop in a dead man's eye,  
 For winter is the season of the tomb,  
 And that's my country now.

*Duke.* Away with him! 165  
 I will not hear.—Where did I leave my book?  
 Or was it music?—Take the beggar out.  
 Is there no supper yet?—O my good Melchior!  
 I'm an eternal gap of misery.  
 Let's talk of something else. 170

*Tonis.* O father, father! must I have no father,  
 To think how I shall please, to pray for him,  
 To spread his virtues out before my thought,  
 And set my soul in order after them?  
 To dream, and talk of in my dreaming sleep? 175  
 If I have children, and they question me  
 Of him who was to me as I to them;  
 Who taught me love and sports and childish lore;  
 Placed smiles where tears had been; who bent his talk  
 That it might enter my low apprehension, 180  
 And laughed when words were lost.—O father, father!  
 Must I give up the first word that my tongue,  
 The only one my heart has ever spoken?  
 Then take speech, thought, and knowledge quite away;  
 Tear all my life out of the universe, 185  
 Take off my youth, unwrap me of my years,  
 And hunt me up the dark and broken past

Into my mother's womb: there unbeget me;  
For 'till I'm in thy veins and unbegun,  
Or to the food returned which made the blood 190  
That did make me, no possible lie can ever  
Unroot my feet of thee. Canst thou make nothing?  
Then do it here, for I would rather be  
At home nowhere, than here nowhere at home.'

*Duke.* Why ask'st thou me? Hast thou no deeds to  
undo, 195

No virtues to rebuy, no sins to loose?  
Catch from the wind those sighs that thou hast caused;  
Out of large ocean pick the very tears,  
And set them in their cabinets again.  
Renew thyself, and then will I remember 200  
How thou earnest thus. Thou art all vices now  
Of thine own getting. My son Torrismond  
Did sow himself under a heap of crime,  
And thou art grown from him: die to the root,  
So I may know thee as his grave at least.— 205  
Now, Melchior, we'll away.

*Melch.* Not yet, my lord:

I wait upon this gentleman.

*Duke.* Is 't so?

Why then begone! Good morrow to you, sirs.  
Farewell! and be that word a road to death  
Uncrossed by any other! Not a word! [Exit. 210

*Melch.* Will you not stay?

He's gone: and follow not:  
There's not a speck of flesh upon his heart!  
What shall we do?

' *Torris.* What shall we do?—why, all.  
How many things, sir, do men live to do?  
The mighty labour is to die: we'll do't,— 215  
But we'll drive in a chariot to our graves,  
Wheel'd with big thunder, o'er the heads of men.

[Exeunt.]



# THE SECOND BROTHER

## *A Tragedy*

[Composed 1824-5]

### [PERSONS                  REPRESENTED]

|                                                      |                          |                               |                 |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| MARCELLO                                             | } <i>Brothers of the</i> | VARINI                        | } <i>Nobles</i> |
| ORAZIO                                               |                          | MICHELE                       |                 |
| EZRIL, <i>a Jew</i>                                  |                          | BATTISTA                      |                 |
| MELCHIOR                                             |                          |                               |                 |
| VALERIA, <i>Varini's Daughter</i>                    |                          | ARMIDA                        |                 |
| <i>and Orazio's Wife</i>                             |                          | ROSAURA                       |                 |
| HEBE                                                 |                          | [ <i>A Female Attendant</i> ] |                 |
| [ <i>Gentlemen, Ladies, Guards, and Attendants</i> ] |                          |                               |                 |

SCENE: *Ferrara*

## ACT I

SCENE I. *A street*

MICHELE and BATTISTA *meeting'*, MARCELLO  
*at the side*

*Mich.* Fair shine this evening's stars upon your  
          pleasures,  
*Battista Sorbi!*

*Batt.*                Sir, well met to-night:  
Methinks our path is one.

*Mich.*                                And all Ferrara's.  
There's not a candle lit to-night at home;  
And for the cups,—they'll be less wet with wine        5  
Than is the inmost grain of all this earth  
With the now-falling dew. None sit indoors,  
Except the babe and his forgotten grandsire

And such as, out of life, each side do lie  
Against the shutter of the grave or womb. 10  
The rest that build up the great hill of life,  
From the crutch-riding boy to his sweet mother,  
The deer-eyed girl, and the brown fellow of war  
To the grey head and grandest sire of all  
That's half in heaven,—all these are forth to-night; 15  
And there they throng upon both sides the water,  
Which, guessing at its hidden banks, flows on,  
A water-river 'twixt two tides of flesh—  
And still the streets pour on, each drop a man;  
You'd think the deluge was turned upside down, 20  
And flesh was drowning water.

*Batt.* And where go they?  
To the feast, the wine, the lady-footed dance,—  
Where you, and I, and every citizen  
That has a feathered and a jewelled cap,  
And youthful curls to hang beside it brownly,— 25  
To the Duke's brother, Lord Orazio's palace.

*Marc, (aside)* Orazio! what of him?

*Mich.* Aye, that's a man  
After the heart of Bacchus! By my life,  
There is no mortal stuff that foots the earth  
Able to wear the shape of man, like him, 30  
And fill it with the carriage of a god.  
We're but the tools and scaffolding of men,  
The lines, the sketch, and he the very thing:  
And if we share the name of manhood with him,  
So in the woods the tattered, wool-hung briar, 35  
And the base, bowing poplar, the winds' slave,  
Are trees—and so 's the great and kingly oak,  
Within whose branches like a soul does dwell  
The sun's bold eagle:—as the villain fox,  
The weazel, and the sneaking cur are beasts, 40  
While he, whose wine is in a giant's heart,  
The royal lion, has no bigger name.  
Let men be trees, why then he is the oak;

Let men be beasts, he is their lion-master;  
Let them be stars, and then he is a sun, 45  
A sun whose beams are gold, the night his noon,  
His summer-field a marble hall of banquets,  
With jasper, onyx, amber-leaved cups  
On golden straws for flowers, and, for the dew,  
Wine of the richest grape. So let's not talk 50  
And breathe away the time, whose sands are thawed  
Into such purple tears, but drink it off.

*Batt.* Why, then, away! let's fit our velvet arms,  
And on together.—

*Marc, (advancing)* Nobles of Ferrara,  
My gentle lords, have pity for a man, 55  
Whom fortune and the roundness of the world  
Have, from his feeble footing on its top,  
Flung to deep poverty. When I was born,  
They hid my helplessness in purple wraps,  
And cradled me within a jewelled crown. 60  
But now—O bitter now!—what name of woe,  
Beyond the knowledge of the lips of hell,  
Is fitted to my poor and withering soul,  
And its old, wretched dwelling?

*Batt.* What is this?  
Methinks that a prae-adamite skeleton, 65  
Burst from the grave in a stolen cloak of flesh,  
Ragged and threadbare, from a witch's back,  
Who lived an hundred years, would scarcely seem  
More miserably old.

*Mich.* A wandering beggar,  
Come to Ferrara with the daily lie, 70  
That bears him bread. Come on, and heed him not.  
The stocks, old sir, grow in our streets.

*Enter a gentleman*

How now?

What's your news, sir?

*Gent.* He's coming through this street,

Orazio, wrapt like Bacchus, in the hide  
Of a specked panther, with his dancing nymphs, 75  
And torches bright and many, as his slaves  
Had gathered up the fragments of the sun  
That fell just now. Hark! here his music comes.

*Enter ORAZIO, between HEBE and ROSAURA, attended*

Oraz. Thrice to the moon, and thrice unto the sun,  
And thrice unto the lesser stars of night, 80  
From tower and hill, by trump and cannon's voice,  
Have I proclaimed myself a deity's son:  
Not Alexander's father, Ammon old,  
But ivied Bacchus do I call my sire.  
Hymn it once more. 85

*Song*

Strew not earth with empty stars,  
Strew it not with roses,  
Nor feathers from the crest of Mars,  
Nor summer's idle posies.  
'Tis not the primrose-sandalled moon, 90  
Nor cold and silent morn,  
Nor he that climbs the dusty noon,  
Nor mower war with scythe that drops,  
Stuck with helmed and turbaned tops  
Of enemies new shorn. 95

Ye cups, ye lyres, ye trumpets know,  
Pour your music, let it flow,  
Tis Bacchus' son who walks below.

Oraz. Now break that kiss, and answer me, my  
Hebe;  
Has our great sire a planet in the sky,— 100  
One of these lights?

Hebe. Not yet, I think, my lord.

*Oraz-* My lord? my love! I am the Lord of Love;  
So call me by my dukedom.—He has not?  
We'll make him one, my nymph: when those bright  
eyes

Are closed, and that they shall not be, I swear, 105  
'Till I have loved them many thousand hours,—  
But when they are, their blue enchanted fire  
Cupid shall take upon a torch of heaven,  
And light the woody sides of some dim world,  
Which shall be Bacchus\* godson-star.

*Hebe.* Alas! 110  
Their fire is but unsteady, weak and watery,  
To guess by your love's wavering.

*Oraz-* Wine in a ruby!  
I'll solemnize their beauty in a draught,  
Pressed from the summer of an hundred vines.  
Look on't, my sweet. Rosaura, this same night 115  
I will immortalize those lips of thine,  
That make a kiss so spicy. Touch the cup:  
Ruby to ruby! Slave, let it be thrown  
At midnight from a boat into mid-sea:  
Rosaura's kiss shall rest unravished there, 120  
While sea and land lie in each other's arms  
And curl the world.

*Batt.* Beggar, stand back, I say.

*Marc.* No; I will shadow your adored mortal,  
And shake my rags at him. Dost fear the plague?  
Musk-fingered boy, aside!

*Oraz.* What madman's this? 125

*Rosau.* Keep him away from me!  
His hideous raggedness tears the soft sight  
Where it is pictured.

*Marc.* Your clutch is like the grasping of a wave:  
Off from my shoulder!—Now, my velvet fellow, 130  
Let's measure limbs. Well, is your flesh to mine  
As gold to lead, or but the common plaister  
That wraps up bones? Your skin is not of silk;

Your face not painted with an angel's feather  
With tints from morning's lip, but the daubed clay; 135  
These veiny pipes hold a dog's lap of blood.  
Let us shake hands; I tell thee, brother skeleton,  
We're but a pair of puddings for the dinner  
Of Lady worm; you served in silks and gems,  
I garnished with plain rags. Have I unlocked thee? 140

*Oraz.* Insolent beggar!

*Marc.* Prince! but we must shake hands.  
Look you, the round earth's sleeping like a serpent  
Who drops her dusty tail upon her crown  
Just here. Oh, we are like two mountain peaks,  
Of two close planets, catching in the air: 145  
You, King Olympus, a great pile of summer,  
Wearing a crown of gods; I, the vast top  
Of the ghosts' deadly world, naked and dark,  
With nothing reigning on my desolate head  
But one old spirit of a murdered god, 150  
Palaced within the corpse of Saturn's father.  
Then let's come near and hug. There 's nothing like  
thee

But I thy contrast.—Thou'rt a prince, they say?

*Oraz.* That you shall learn. You knaves that wear  
my livery,  
Will you permit me still to be defiled 155  
By this worm's venom? Tread upon his neck,  
And let's walk over him.

*Marc.* Forbear, my lord!  
I am a king of that most mighty empire,  
That's built o'er all the earth, upon kings' crowns; •  
And poverty 's its name; whose every hut 160  
Stands on a coronet, or star, or mitre,  
The glorious corner-stones.—But you are weary,  
And would be playing with a woman's cheek:  
Give me a purse then, prince.

*Oraz.* No, not a doit:  
The metal, I bestow, shall come in chains. 165

Marc. Well, I can curse. Aye, prince, you have a brother—

Oraz. The Duke!—he'll scourge you.

Marc. Nay, *the second*, sir,  
Who, like an envious river, flows between  
Your footsteps and Ferrara's throne.

Oraz., He's gone:  
Asia, and Africa, the sea he went on, 170  
Have many mouths, and in a dozen years,  
(His absence' time,) no tidings or return,  
Tell me We are but two.

Marc. If he were in Ferrara—

Oraz. Stood he before me there,  
By you, in you, as like as you're unlike, 175  
Straight as you're bowed, young as you are old  
And many years nearer than him to Death  
The falling brilliancy of whose white sword  
Your ancient locks so silverly reflect,  
I would deny, outswear, and overreach, 180  
And pass him with contempt, as I do you.—  
Jove! how we waste the stars: set on, my friends.

Batt. But the old ruffian?

Oraz. Think of him to-morrow.  
See, Venus rises in the softening heaven:  
Let not your eyes abuse her sacred beams, 185  
By looking through their gentleness on ought  
But lips and eyes and blushes of dear love.

### *Song*

Strike, you myrtle-crowned boys,  
'Ivied maidens, strike together:  
Magic lutes, are these, whose noise 190  
Our fingers gather,  
Threaded thrice with golden strings  
From Cupid's bow;

And the sounds of its sweet voice  
Not air, but little busy things 195  
Pinioned with the lightest feather  
Of his wings,  
Rising up at every blow  
Round the chords, like flies from roses  
Zephyr-touched; so these light minions 200  
Hover round, then shut their pinions,  
And drop into the air, that closes  
Where music's sweetest sweet reposes.

*[Exeunt.]*

*Marc.* Then who hath solitude like mine, that is not  
The last survivor of a city's plague, 205  
Eating the mess he cooked for his dead father?  
Who is alone but I? there 's fellowship  
In churchyards and in hell: but I!—no lady's ghost  
Did ever cling with such a grasp of love .  
Unto its soft dear body, as I hung 210  
Rooted upon this brother. I went forth  
Joyfully, as the soul of one who closes  
His pillowed eyes beside an unseen murderer,  
And like its horrible return was mine,  
To find the heart, wherein I breathed and beat, 215  
Cold, gashed, and dead. Let me forget to love,  
And take a heart of venom: let me make  
A staircase of the frightened breasts of men,  
And climb into a lonely happiness!  
And thou, who only art alone as I, 220  
Great solitary god of that one sun, .  
I charge thee by the likeness of our state,  
Undo these human veins that tie me close  
To other men, and let your servant griefs  
Unmilk me of my mother, and pour in 225  
Salt scorn and steaming hate!

*Enter* EZRIL



*Ezr.* How now, my lord?

*Marc.* Much better, my kind Jew. They've weeded out

A troublesome wild plant that grew upon me,  
My heart: I've trampled it to dust, and wept it  
Wetter than Nilus' side. Out of the sun! 230  
And let him bake it to a winged snake.

—Well, you've been shouldered from the palace steps,  
And spurned as I—No matter.

*Ezr.* Nay, my lord!

Come with me: lay aside these squalid wrappings:  
Prepare that honoured head to fit a crown, 235  
For 'twill be empty of your brother soon.

*Marc.* What starry chance has dropped out of the  
skies?

What's this? Oh! now if it should but be so,  
I'll build a bridge to heaven. Tell me, good Jew;  
Excellent Ezrjl, speak.

*Ezr.* At your command 240

I sought the ducal palace, and, when there,  
Found all the wild-eyed servants in the courts  
Running about on some dismaying errand,  
In the wild manner of a market crowd,  
Waked from the sunny dozing at their stalls 245

By one who cries 'the city is on fire';  
Just so they crossed, and turned, and came again.  
I asked of an old man, what this might mean;  
And he, yet grappling with the great disaster  
As if he would have killed it, like a fable, 250  
By unbelief, coldly as if he spoke  
Of something gone a century before,  
Told me, the Duke in hunting had been thrown  
And lay on his last bed.

*Marc.* Ha! well! what next?

You are the cup-bearer of richest joy.— 255  
But it was a report, a lie.—Have done—  
I read it on your lip.

*Ezr.* It was too true.

I went to his bedside, and there made trial  
Of my best skill in physic, with the zeal  
Due to my sovereign.

*Marc.* Impious, meddling fool! 260  
To thrust yourself 'twixt heaven and its victim!

*Ezr.* My lord, I think you would not have said so  
In the sad chamber of the writhing man.  
He lay in a red fever's quenchless flames,  
Burning to dust: despairing of my skill, 265  
I sat myself beside histicart, and spoke  
Of his next brother. When he heard of you,  
He bade be summoned all his counsellors,  
To witness his bequeathing his dominion  
Wholly to you.

*Marc.* Why did you let me wait? 270  
Come, let's be quick: he keeps beneath his pillow  
A kingdom, which they'll steal if we're too late.  
We must o'ertake his death. [Exeunt.

## SCENE II. *Banqueting Hall*

*Enter* ORAZIO, BATTISTA, HEBE, ARMIDA, &C. &C.

### *Music Song*

Will you sleep these dark hours, maiden,  
Beneath the vine that rested  
Its slender boughs, so purple-laden,  
All the day around that elm  
In the mead, nightingale-nested, 5  
Which yon dark hill wears for an helm,  
Pasture-robed and forest-crested?  
There the night of lovely hue  
Peeps the fearful branches through,  
And ends in those two eyes of blue. 10

ORAZIO *and* ARMIDA *come forward*

*Armid.* What! wrap a frown in myrtle, and look sad  
Beneath the shadow of an ivy wreath?  
This should not be, my lord.

*Oraz.* Armid a dear,  
Fm weary of their laughter's empty din.  
Methinks, these fellows with their ready jests 15  
Are like to tedious bells, that ring alike  
Marriage or death. I would we were alone—  
Asleep, Armida.

*Armid.* They will soon be gone:  
One half-hour more—

*Oraz.* No, it could not be so:  
I think and think—Sweet, did you like the feast? 20

*Armid.* Methought, 'twas gay enough.

*Oraz.* Now, I did not.  
'Twas dull: all men spoke slow and emptily.  
Strange things were said by accident. Their tongues  
Uttered wrong words: one fellow drank my death,  
Meaning my health; another called for poison, 25  
Instead of wine; and, as they spoke together,  
Voices were heard, most loud, which no man owned:  
There were more shadows too than there were men;  
And all the air more dark and thick than night  
Was heavy, as 'twere made of something more 30  
Than living breaths.

*Armid.* Nay, you are ill, my lord:  
'Tis merely melancholy.

*Oraz.* There were deep hollows  
And pauses in their talk; and then, again,  
On tale and song and jest and laughter rang,  
Like a fiend's gallop. By my ghost, 'tis strange. 35

*Armid.* Come, my lord, join your guests; they look  
with wonder  
Upon your lonely mood.

*Oraz.* It is the trick  
Of these last livers to unbuild belief:  
They'd rob the world of spirit. Then each look,

Aye, every aspect of the earth and sky, 40  
Man's thought and hope, are lies.—Well; I'll return,  
And look at them again.

MICHELE *advances*

*Mich.* You're tired, my lord.  
Our visit's long: break off, good gentlemen:  
The hour is late.

*Oraz.* Nay, I beseech you, stay:  
My pleasure grows on yours. I'm somewhat dull; 45  
But let me not infect you.

*Enter Attendant*

What with YOU?

*Attend.* A lady, in the garment of a nun,  
Desires to see you.

*Oraz.* Lead her in: all such  
I thank for their fair countenance.

*Enter VALERIA*

Gentle stranger,  
Your will with me?

*Valer.* I am the bearer of another's will: 50  
A woman, whose unhappy fondness yet  
May trouble her lord's memory,—Valeria,—  
Yours for a brief, blessed time, who now dwells  
In her abandoned being patiently,  
But not unsorrowing, sends me.

*Oraz.* My wronged wife! 55  
Too purely good for such a man as I am!  
If she remembers me, then Heaven does too,  
And I am not yet lost. Give me her thoughts,—  
Aye, the same words she put into thine ears,  
Safe and entire, and I will thank thy lips 60  
With my heart's thanks. But tell me how she fares.

*Valer.* Well; though the common eye that has a tear,  
Would drop it for the paleness of her skin

And the wan shivering of her torch of life;  
Though she be faint and weak, yet very well: 65  
For not the tincture or the strength of limb  
Is a true health, but readiness to die.—  
But let her be, or be not.

*Oraz.* Best of ladies!  
And if thy virtues did not glut the mind  
To the extinction of the eye's desire, 70  
Such a delight to see, that one would think  
Our looks were thrown away on meaner things,  
And given to rest on thee!

*Valer.* These words, my lord,  
Are charitable; it is very kind  
To think of her sometimes: for, day and night, 75  
As they flow in and out of one another,  
She sits beside and gazes on their streams,  
So filled with the strong memory of you,  
That all her outward form is penetrated,  
Until the watery portrait is become 80  
Not hers, but yours:—and so she is content  
To wear her time out.

*Oraz.* Softest peace enwrap her!  
Content be still the breathing of her lips!  
Be tranquil ever, thou blest life of her!  
And that last hour, that hangs 'tween heaven and  
earth, 85  
So often travelled by her thoughts and prayers,  
Be soft and yielding 'twixt her spirit's wings!

*Valer.* Think'st thou, Orazio, that she dies but once?  
AH round and through the spaces of creation,  
No hiding-place of the least air, or earth, 90  
Or sea, invisible, untrod, unrained on,  
Contains a thing alone. Not e'en the bird,  
That can go up the labyrinthine winds  
Between its pinions, and pursues the summer,  
Not even the great serpent of the billows, 95  
Who winds him thrice around this planet's waist,

Is by itself, in joy or suffering.

But she whom you have ta'en, and like a leaven  
With your existence kneaded, must be ever  
Another—scarce another—self of thine. 100

*Oraz.* If she has read her heart aloud to you,  
Or you have found it open by some chance,  
Tell me, dear lady, is my name among  
Her paged secrets? does she, can she love me?—  
No, no; that's mad:—does she remember me? 105

*Valer.* She breathes away her weary days and nights  
Among cold, hard-eyed men, and hides behind  
A quiet face of woe: but there are things—  
A song, a face, a picture, or a word— 109  
Which, by some semblance, touch her heart to tears.  
And music, starting up among the strings  
Of a wind-shaken harp, undoes her secrecy,  
Rolls back her life to the first starry hour  
Whose flower-fed air you used, to speak of love;  
And then she longs to throw her bursting breast, 115  
And shut out so/row with Orazio's arms—  
Thus—O my husband!

*Oraz.* Sweetest, sweetest woman!  
Valeria, thou dost squeeze eternity  
Into this drop of joy. O come, come, come!  
Let us not speak; give me my wife again! 120  
O thou fair creature, full of my own soul!  
We'll love, we'll love, like nothing under heaven,  
Like nought but Love, the very truest god.  
Here 's lip-room on thy cheek: there, shut thine eye,  
And let me come, like sleep, and kiss its lid. 125  
Again.—What shall I do? I speak all wrong,  
And lose a soul-full of delicious thought  
By talking—Hush! Let's drink each other up  
By silent eyes. Who lives, but thou and I,  
My heavenly wife?

*Valer.* Dear Orazio! 130

Oraz. I'll watch thee thus, till I can tell a second  
By thy cheek's change. O what a rich delight!  
There's something very gentle in thy cheek,  
That I have never seen in other women:  
And now I know the circle of thine eye, 135  
It is a colour like to nothing else  
But what it means—that's heaven. This little tress,  
Thou'lt give it me to look on and to wear,  
But first I'll kiss its shadow on thy brow.  
That little, fluttering dimple is too late, 140  
If he is for the honey of thy looks:  
As sweet a blush, as ever rose did copy,  
Budded and opened underneath my lips,  
And shed its leaves; and now those fairest cheeks  
Are snowed upon them. Let us whisper, sweet, 145  
And nothing be between our lips and ears  
But our own secret souls. *[A horn without.*

Valer. Heaven of the blest, they're here!

Oraz. Who, what, Valeria?  
Thou'rt pale and tremblest: what is it?

Valer. Alas!  
A bitter kernel to our taste of joy, 150  
Our foolish and forgetful joy. My father!  
Destruction, misery—

*Enter VARINI and attendants*

Varin. Turn out those slaves,—  
Burst the closed doors, and occupy the towers.

Oraz. Varini's self! what can his visit bring?

Valer. Look there; he's walking hither like a man,  
But is indeed a sea of stormy ruin, 156  
Filling and flooding o'er this golden house  
From base to pinnacle, swallowing thy lands,  
Thy gold, thine all. Embrace me into thee,  
Or he'll divide us.

Oraz. Never! calm thyself.— 160  
Now, Count Varini, what's your business here?

If as a guest, though uninvited, welcome!

If not, then say, what else?

*Varin.* A master, spendthrift!

Open those further doors—

*Oraz.* What? in my palace!

*Varin.* Thine! what is thine beneath the night or day?

Not e'en that beggar's carcase, for within that 166

The swinish devils of filthy luxury

Do make their sty. No lands, no farms, no houses—

Thanks to thy debts, no gold. Go out! Thou'rt nothing

Besides a grave and a deep hell.

*Valer.* Orazio, 170

Thou hast Valeria: the world may shake thee off,

But thou wilt drop into this breast, this love,

And it shall hold thee.

*Oraz.* What? lost already!

O that curst steward! I have fallen, Valeria,

Deeper than Lucifer, though ne'er so high, 175

Into a place made underneath all things,

So lost and horrible that hell's its heaven.

*Varin.* Thou shalt not have the idiot, though she be  
The very fool and sickness of my blood.—

Gentlemen, here are warrants for my act: 180

His debts, bonds, forfeitures, taxes and fines,

O'erbalancing the worth of his estates,

Which I have bought: behold them!—For the girl,

Abandoned, after marriage, by the villain,

I am her father: let her be removed; 185

And, if the justice of my rightful cause

Ally you not, at least do not resist me.

*Mich.* What are these writings?

*Batt.* Bills under the Duke's seal,

All true and valid. Poor Orazio! 189

*Oraz.* Why, the rogue pities me! I'm down indeed.

*Valer.* Help me! Oh! some of you have been beloved,  
Some must be married. Will you let me go?



Will you stand frozen there, and see them cut  
Two hearts asunder? Then you will,—you do.  
Are all men like my father? are all fathers 195  
So far away from men? or all their sons  
So heartless?—you are women, as I am;  
Then pity me, as I would pity you,  
And pray for me! Father! ladies! friends!—  
But you are tearless as the desert sands.— 200  
Orazio, love me! or, if thou wilt not,  
Yet I will love thee: that you cannot help.

*Oraz.* My best Valeria! never shalt thou leave me,  
But with my life. O that I could put on  
These feeble arms the proud and tawny strength 205  
Of the lion in my heart!

*Varin.* Out with the girl at once!

*Rosaur.* Forgive them, sir, we all of us beseech.

*Varin.* Lady, among you all she 's but one sire,  
And he says *no*.—Away! 209

*Valer.* Have pity, my sweet father! my good father!  
Have pity, as my gentle mother would,  
Were she alive—thy sainted wife! O pardon,  
If I do wish you had been rent asunder  
Thus dreadfully; for then I had not been;  
Not kissed and wept upon my father's hand, 215  
And he denied me!—you can make me wretched!—  
Be cruel still, but I will never hate you.—  
Orazio, I'll tell thee what it is:  
The world is dry of love; we've drunk it all  
With our two hearts—

*Oraz.* Farewell, Valeria! 220  
Take on thy lost dear hand this truest kiss,  
Which I have brought thee from my deepest soul.  
Farewell, my wife!

*Valer.* They cannot part us long.  
What's life? our love is an eternity:  
O blessed hope! [Exit by force.

*Oraz.* Now then, sir; speak to me: 225

The rest is sport—like rain against a tower  
Unpalsied by the ram. Go on: what's next?

*Varin.* Your palaces are mine, your sheep-specked  
pastures,  
Forest and yellow corn-land, grove and desert,  
Earth, water, wealth: all, that you yesterday 230  
Were mountainously rich and golden with,  
I, like an earthquake, in this minute take.  
Go, go: I will not pick thee to the bones:  
Starve as you will.

*Oraz.* How, sir! am I not wealthy?  
Why, if the sun could melt the brazen man 235  
That strode o'er Corinth, and whose giant form  
Stretched its swart limbs along sea, island, mountain,  
While night appeared its shadow,—*if he could*,—  
Great, burning Phoebus' self—could melt ought of  
him,  
Except the snow-drift on his rugged shoulder, 240  
*Thou* hast destroyed *me*!

*Varin.* Thanks to these banquets of Olympus' top  
From whence you did o'erturn whole Niles of wine,  
And made each day as rainy as that hour  
When Perseus was begot, I have destroyed thee, 245  
Or thou thyself; for, such a luxury  
Would wring the gold out of its rocky shell,  
And leave the world all hollow. So, begone;  
My lord, and beggar!

*Batt.* Noble, old Varini,  
Think, is it fit to crush into the dirt 250  
Even the ruins of nobility?  
Take comfort, sir.

*Oraz.* Who am I now?  
How long is a man dying or being born?  
Is 't possible to be a king and beggar  
In half a breath? or to begin a minute 255  
I' th' west and end it in the furthest east?  
O no! I'll not believe you. When I do,

My heart will crack to powder.—Can you speak?  
Then do: shout something louder than my thoughts,  
For I begin to feel.

*Enter a Messenger*

Mess. News from the court: 260  
The Duke—

Oraz. My brother—speak—  
Was he not ill, and on a perilous bed?  
Speak life and death, thou hast them on thy tongue—  
One's mine, the other his:—a look, a word,  
A motion—life or death?

Mess. The Duke is dead. 265

All. Then we salute in thee another sovereign.

Oraz. Me then, who just was shaken into chaos,  
Thou hast created! I have flown, somehow,  
Upwards a thousand miles: my heart is crowned.  
Your hands, good gentlemen; sweet ladies, yours: 270  
And what new godson of the bony death,  
Of fire, or steel or poison, shall I make  
For old Varini?

Varin. Your allegiance, sirs,  
Wanders: Orazio is a beggar still.

Batt. Is it not true then that the Duke is dead? 275

Oraz\* Not dead? O slave!

Varin. The Duke is dead, my lords;  
And on his death-bed did bestow his crown  
Upon his second brother, Lord Marcello—  
Ours and Ferrafa's Duke.

Oraz. I'll not believe it:  
Marcello is abroad.

Varin. His blest return, 280  
This providential day, has saved our lives  
From thine abhorred sway. Orazio, go:  
And though my clemency is half a crime,  
I spare your person.

Oraz. I'll to the palace.

Act II

THE SECOND BROTHER

When we meet next, be blessed if thou dost kiss 285  
The dust about my ducal chair. *[Exit.*

*Varin.* I shall be there,  
To cry Long live Marcello! in thine ear.—  
Pray pardon me the breaking of this feast,  
Ladies,—and so, good night.

*Rosaur.* Your wish is echoed by our inmost will: 290  
Good night to Count Yarini. *[Exeunt guests.*

*Attend.* My lord -

*Varin.* What are they, sirrah?

*Attend.* The palace-keys.  
There is a banquet in the inner room:  
Shall we remove the plate?

*Varin.* Leave it alone:  
Wine in the cups, the spicy meats uncovered, 295  
And the round lamps each with a star of flame  
Upon their brink; let winds begot on roses,  
And grey with incense, rustle through the silk  
And velvet curtains: then set all the windows,  
The doors and gates, wide open; let the wolves, 300  
Foxes, and owls, and snakes, come in and feast;  
Let the bats nestle in the golden bowls,  
The shaggy brutes stretch on the velvet couches,  
The serpent twine him o'er and o'er the harp's  
Delicate chords:—to Night, and all its devils, 305  
We do abandon this accursed house. *[Exeunt.*

ACT II

SCENE I. *4th apartment in VALERIN's palace*

*Enter VALERIA and attendant*

*Val.* I cannot rest. This wakeful bosom holds  
A gulph of anguish in its little bounds.

*Attend.* Will you not sleep, dear lady? you are weary,  
And yet thus eager, quick, and silently,

Like one who listens for a midnight sign, 5  
You wander up and down from room to room,  
With that wide, sightless eye, searching about  
For what you know not. Will you not to bed?

*Valer.* No, not to-night: my eyes will not be closed,  
My heart will not be darkened. Sleep is a traitor: 10  
He fills the poor, defenceless eyes with blackness,  
That he may let in dreams. I am not well;  
My body and my mind are ill-agreed,  
And comfortlessly strange; faces and forms  
And pictures, friendly to my life-long knowledge, 15  
Look new and unacquainted; every voice  
Is hollow, every word inexplicable,  
And yet they seem to be a guilty riddle;  
And every place, though unknown as a desert,  
Feels like the spot where a forgotten crime 20  
Was done by me in sleep. Night, O be kind!  
I do not come to watch thy secret acts,  
Or thrust myself on Nature's mysteries  
At this forbidden hour: bestow thy dews,  
Thy calm, thy quiet sweetness, sacred mother, 25  
And let me be at ease!

Now, thou kind girl,  
Take thy pale cheeks to rest.

*Attend.* I am not weary:  
Believe me now, I am not.

*Valer.* But, my child,  
Those eyelids, tender as the leaf of spring,  
Those cheeks should lay their roseate delicacy 30  
Under the kiss of night, the feathery sleep;  
For there are some, whose study of the morn  
Is ever thy young countenance and hue.  
Ah maid! you love.

*Attend.* I'll not deny it, madam.  
O that sweet influence of thoughts and looks! 35  
That change of being, which, to one who lives,  
Is nothing less divine than divine life

To the unmade! Love? Do I love? I walk  
Within the brilliance of another's thought,  
As in a glory. I was dark before, 40  
As Venus' chapel in the black of night:  
But there was something holy in the darkness,  
Softer and not so thick as other where;  
And as rich moonlight may be to the blind,  
Unconsciously consoling. Then love came, 45  
Like the out-bursting of a trodden star,  
And what before was hueless and unseen  
Now shows me a divinity like that  
Which, raised to life out of the snowy rock,  
Surpassed mankind's creation, and repaid 50  
Heaven for Pandora.

*Valer.*                      Innocently thought,  
And worthy of thy youth! I should not say  
How thou art like the daisy in Noah's meadow,  
On which the foremost drop of rain fell warm  
And soft at evening: so the little flower 55  
Wrapped up its leaves, and shut the treacherous **water**  
Close to the golden welcome of its breast,  
Delighting in the touch of that which led  
The shower of oceans, in whose billowy drops  
Tritons and lions of the sea were warring, 60  
And sometimes ships on fire sunk in the blood  
Of their own inmates; others were of ice,  
And some had islands rooted in their waves,  
Beasts on their rocks, and forest-powdering winds,  
And showers tumbling on their tumbling self, 65  
And every sea of every ruined star  
Was but a drop in the world-melting flood.

*Attend.* Lady, you utter dreams.

*Valer.*                      Let me talk so:  
I would o'erwhelm myself with any thoughts;  
Aye, hide in madness from the truth. Persuade me 70  
To hope that I am not a wretched woman,  
Who knows she has an husband by his absence,

Who feels she has a father by his hate,  
And wakes and mourns, imprisoned in this house,  
The while she should be sleeping, mad, or dead.— 75  
Thou canst, and pity on thine eyelid hangs,  
Whose dewy silence drops consent—thou wilt!  
I've seen thee smile with calm and gradual sweetness,  
As none, that were not good, could light their cheeks:—  
Thou wilt assist me. Harden not those lips, 80  
Those lovely kissings let them not be stone  
With a denial!

*Attend.* But your father's anger—  
The watchful faith of all the servants—

*Valer.* Fear not:  
Lend me thy help. O come—I see thou wilt.—  
Husband, I'll lay me on thine aching breast 85  
For once and ever.—Haste! for see, the light  
Creates for earth its day once more, and lays \*  
The star of morn's foundation in the east.  
Come—come— *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. *Before the ducal palace*

*Guards driving ORAZIO from the gate*

*Guard.* Back! desperate man: you cannot pass—  
. *Oraz.* By heaven, I must and will:—

*Guard.* By the Duke's order,  
The gates are locked on all to-day.

*Oraz.* By mine,  
By the Duke's brother's order, or his force,  
Open at once yon gates. Slave, by my blood, 5  
But that I think thou know'st me not, I'd make  
That corpse of thine my path. Undo, I say,  
The knitting of this rebel house's arms,  
And let their iron welcome be around me.  
My sword is hungry: do't.

*Guard.* Advance no further: 10

Another step, and all our swords shake hands  
Within your breast.

*Oraz.* Insolent worm of earth,  
To earth and worms for this!

*Guard.* Strike all, strike strong!  
Strike through him right. *[a fight.]*

*Enter EZRIL*

*Ezr.* Peace, on your lives, you traitors!  
What! would you stain the holy throne of justice, 15  
The pure and peaceful temple of the law,  
The sacred dwelling of Ferrara's soul,  
With the foul juices of your drunken veins?  
Put up your impious swords.—What's this? Your  
blood of beer?

*Guard.* Pardon our hasty and forgetful choler: 20  
We but defend our Duke against the outrage  
Of this intemperate brawler.

*Oraz.* Cut him to shreds, and fling him to the dogs.—  
You wait upon the Duke, sir?

*Ezr.* I am one  
Of Lord Marcello's followers.

*Oraz.* Pray you then, 25  
Speak to your Lord Marcello: let him know  
These house-dogs, these his ducal latch-holders  
Dare keep the bolt against his brother's knock.

*Ezr.* Are you then—?

*Oraz.* I am Lord Orazio.  
Be quick!—O nature, what a snail of men! 30  
The morn is frosty, sir: I love not waiting. Let in—

*Ezr.* Now all the mercy of the heavens forbid  
That thou should'st be that rash and wretched neigh-  
bour

Of the Duke's crown, his brother!

*Oraz.* Marcello is my brother; I am his; 35  
If coming of one mother brother us:  
He is the Duke, and I Orazio;



## THE SECOND BROTHER

Act II

He elder, younger I. If Jove and Neptune,  
 And the third Pluto, being Saturn's boys,  
 Lying in Rhea's womb and on her breast, 40  
 Were therefore brethren, so are he and I, —  
 Marcello's mother's son, his grandame's grandson,  
 Marcello's father's babe, his uncle's nephew,  
 His nephew's uncle, brother of his brother,  
 Or what you like,—if this same word of brother 45  
 Sours the sore palate of a royal ear.

*Ezr.* Better thou wert the brother of his foe  
 Than what thou art, a man of the same getting;  
 As out of the same lump of sunny Nile  
 Rises a purple-winged butterfly 50  
 And a cursed serpent crawls.

*Oraz.* Heart-withered, pale-scalped grandfather of  
 lies!  
 Age-hidden monster! Tell me what thou meanest,  
 And then I'll stab thee for thy falsehood.

*Ezr.* Hold him!  
 Your swords between us!—Now, the Duke condemns  
 thee; 55  
 And by his mother's, and his father's grave,  
 And by the dead, that lies within this palace,  
 His brother's sacred corpse, he dreadly swears;  
 And by the heaven those three loved souls  
 Dwell and are blest in, twice he dreadly swears: 60  
 By which dread oath, and hate of all thy crimes,  
 The Duke condemns thee,—mixing in his sentence,  
 Sweet mercy, tearful love, and justice stern,—  
 TO banishment for ever from this hour.

*Oraz.* O reddest hour of wrath and cruelty! 65  
 Banished! Why not to death?

*Ezr.* The pious hope  
 That bitter solitude and suffering thought  
 Will introduce repentance to thy woes,  
 And that conduct thee to religious fear  
 And humbleness: the lark that climbs heaven's stairs

But lives upon the ground:—Go forth, Orazio; 71  
Seek not the house or converse of a citizen,  
But think thyself outside the walls of life:  
If in Ferrara after this decree,  
Your darkest, deepest, and most fearful fear 75  
Falls on thy shoulder, digs beneath thy feet,  
And opens hell for thee. So, pass away!

Oraz. Stay, for an instant; listen to a word:  
O lead me to his throne! Let me but look  
Upon the father in my brother's face! 80  
Let me but speak to him this kindred voice,  
Our boyish thoughts in the familiar words  
Of our one bed-room; let me show to him  
That picture which contains our double childhood,  
Embracing in inexplicable love, 85  
Within each other's, in our mother's arms;  
Thou'lt see rejoicing, O thou good old man,  
The rigour melting through his changed eyes  
Off his heart's roots between whose inmost folds  
Our love is kept.

Ezr. Impossible and vain! 90  
Content thee with thy doom, and look for love  
Over the sea-wide grave. Let us be gone!

*[Exit with guards.]*

Oraz. Let me write to him—send a message to him—  
A word, a touch, a token! old, benevolent man,  
Stay with me then to comfort and advise: 95  
Leave one of these beside me: throw me not  
Alone into despair!—He's gone; they're gone;  
They never will come back; ne'er shall I hear  
The sweet voice of my kinsmen or my friends:  
But here begins the solitude of death. 100  
I was—I am; O what a century  
Of darkness, rocks, and ghostly tempest opens  
Between those thoughts! Within it there are lost  
Dearest Valeria, Marcello whose heart came  
From the same place as mine, and all mankind; 105

Affection, charity, joy: and nothing 's cast  
Upon this barren rock of present time,  
Except Orazio's wreck! here let it lie.

*Enter VARINI and Attendants*

*Varin.* Not in the city? Have you asked the guards  
At bridge and gate,—the palace sentinels? 110

*Attend.* We have—in vain: they have not seen her  
pass.

*Varin.* And did you say Valeria, my Valeria,  
Heaven's love, earth's beauty?

*Oraz- (starting up)* Mine eternally!  
Let heaven unscabbard each star-hilted lightning, 114  
And clench ten thousand hands at once against me,—  
Earth shake all graves to one, and rive itself  
From Libya to the North! in spite of all—  
That threatens, I will stun the adulterous gods—  
She's mine! Valeria's mine! dash me to death,  
From death to the eternal depth of fire, 120  
I laugh and triumph on the neck of fate:  
For still she's mine for ever! give me her,  
Or I will drag thee to a sea-side rock,  
That breaks the bottoms of the thunder-clouds  
And taking thee by this old, wicked hair, 125  
Swing thee into the winds.

• *Varin.* I would, wild man,  
That I could quench thine eyes' mad thirst with her.  
She 's gone, fled, lost. O think not any more,  
Let us forget what else is possible,—  
Yea hope impossibly! the city streets, 130  
The quay, the gardens,—is there yet a place  
Within night's skirt unsearched?

*Oraz.* The wood of wolves:—

*Varin.* Merciful god! that frightful forest grows  
Under that darksome corner of the sky  
Where death's scythe hangs: its murder-shading trees  
Are hairs upon Hell's brow. Away: away! 136

## Scene ii

## THE SECOND BROTHER

And never dare to turn on me again  
 Those eyes, unfilled with—speak to me never,  
 Until you cry—'Behold Valeria!'  
 And drop her on my bosom. 140

Oraz. We'll wind the gordian paths off the trees'  
 roots,

Untie the hilly mazes, and seek her  
 Till we are lost. Help, ho! [Exit with attendants.

Varin. Blessings of mine  
 Feather your speed! and my strong prayers make  
 breaches  
 Through the air before you!

Now I'll close my eyes, 145  
 And, seated on this step, await their coming.  
 Strange and delightful meetings on strange lands  
 Of dead-esteemed friends have happened oft,  
 And such a blessed and benevolent chance  
 Might bring her here unheard; far on the earth 150  
 She goes with her light feet, still as the sparrow  
 Over the air, or through the grass its shade.  
 Behind me would she steal, unknown, until  
 Her lip fell upon mine. It might be so:  
 I'll wait awhile, and hope it. 155

Enter VALERIA

Valer. I know not what it means. None speak to me:  
 The crowded street, and solid flow of men,  
 Dissolves before my shadow and is broken.  
 I pass unnoticed, though they search for me,  
 As I were in the air and indistinct 160"  
 As crystal in a wave. There lies a man—  
 Shall I intreat protection and concealment,  
 And thaw the pity of his wintry head?  
 —No time: they come like arrows after me:  
 I must avoid them. [Exit. 165

Enter EZRIL and servants

*Ezr.* Pursue, o'ertake, stay, seize that hurrying girl:  
Muffle her face and form, and through the bye-ways  
Convey her to the palace. Hasten hounds! [*Exeunt.*]

*Varin.* Thou magical deceiver, precious Fancy!  
Even now, out of this solitude and silence, 170  
Seemed—it was thy creation—music flowing,  
And a conviction of some unseen presence;  
I could have pointed to that empty spot,  
And said, there stands the presence of my daughter!  
The air seemed shaken by that voice of hers— 175  
But 'tis all hushed.

*Enter servants*

How now? speak some of you.

What's here?

*Serv.* A veil and mantle.

*Varin.* Both Valeria's!

Where 's she they should have wrapped?

*Serv.* 'Twas all we found.

*Varin.* Where?

*Serv.* On the grass this purple cloak was dropped,  
Beside the river.

*Varin.* And the veil—which way? 180  
Further on shore, or near those deadly waves?

*Serv.* The veil, my lord—

*Varin.* Tis drenched and dropping wet:  
Would I were drowned beside her! thou wert white;  
And thy limbs' wond'rous victory over snow  
Did make the billows curious of their taste. 185  
They drank thee up, thou sweet one, cruelly!  
Who was in heaven then?

*Enter ORAZIO and servant*

*Oraz.* My love, art dead?  
Wilt thou not ope thy lips, lift up thine eyes?  
It is the air, the sun—

*Serv.* We've found the corpse.

Oraz. Her corpse! O no! she is Valeria still: 190  
She's scarce done living yet: her ghost's the youngest!  
To-morrow she'll be—Oh what *she* will be?  
No she—a corpse, and then—a skeleton!

Varin. Hast looked upon her?

Serv. Death has marred her features—  
So swollen and discoloured their delight, 195  
As if he feared that Life should know her sweet one,  
And take her back again.

Varin. If it be so,  
I'll see her once: that beauty being gone,  
And the familiar tokens altered quite,  
She 's strange—a being made by wicked Death, 200  
And I'll not mourn her. Lead me to the corpse.

*[Exit with attendants.]*

Oraz. Henceforth, thou tender pity of mankind,  
Have nought to do with weeping: let war's eyes  
Sweat with delight; and tears be ta'en from grief,  
And thrown upon the rocky cheek of hate! 205  
For mark! that water, the soft heap of drops,  
Water, that feigns to come from very heaven  
In the round shape of sorrow, that was wont to wash  
Sin from the new-born babe, is hard and bloody;  
A murderer of youth; cold death to those 210  
Whose life approved thy godhead, piteous virtue!

*Enter EZRIL and guards*

Ezr. Here still, unhappy man? then take the doom  
You woo so obstinately. To the dungeon,  
To the deepest chamber of the dayless rock:  
Away and down with him!

Oraz. I care not whither. 215  
Thou canst not drag me deeper, wrap me darker,  
Or torture me as my own thoughts have done.

*[Exeunt,*

## ACT III

SCENE I. *A room in the palace**Enter MARCELLO*

*Marc.* I have them all at last; swan-necked Obedience;  
And Power that strides across the muttering people,  
Like a tall bridge; and War, the spear-maned dragon:  
Such are the potent spirits he commands,  
Who sits within the circle of a crown! 5  
Methought that love began at woman's eye:  
But thou, bright imitation of the sun,  
Kindlest the frosty mould around my heart-roots,  
And breathing through the branches of my veins,  
Makest each azure tendril of them blossom 10  
Deep tingling pleasures, musically hinged,  
Dropping with starry sparks, goldenly honied,  
And smelling sweet with the delights of life.  
At length I am Marcello.

*Enter EZRIL*

*Ezr.* Mighty Duke,  
Ferrara's nobles wait on you, to proffer 15  
The homage of their coronets.

*Marc.* I shall not see them.

*Ezr.* It was the ancient usage of the state  
In every age.—

*Marc.* Henceforth, be it forgotten!  
J, will not let the rabble's daily sight  
Be my look's playmate. Say unto them, Ezril, 20  
Their sovereigns of foretime were utter men,  
False gods, that beat an highway in their thoughts  
Before my car; idols of monarchy,  
Whose forms they might behold. Now I am come,  
Be it enough that they are taught my name, 25  
Permitted to adore it, swear and pray

In it and to it: for the rest I wrap  
 The pillared caverns of my palace round me,  
 Like to a cloud, and rule invisibly  
 On the god-shouldering summit of mankind. 30  
 Dismiss them so. •

*Ezr.* 'Tis dangerous,—

*Marc.* Begone!

Each minute of man's safety he does walk  
 A bridge no thicker than his frozen breath  
 O'er a precipitous and craggy danger  
 Yawning to death! *[Exit EZRIL.*

A perilous sea it is, 35  
 'Twixt this and Jove's throne, whose tumultuous  
 waves

Are heaped contending ghosts! There is no passing,  
 But by those slippery, distant stepping-stones,  
 Which frozen Odin trod, and Mahomet,  
 With victories harnessed to his crescent sledge, 40  
 And building waves of blood upon the shallows,  
 O'erpassed triumphant: first a pile of thrones  
 And broken nations, then the knees of men,  
 From whence, to catch the lowest root of heaven,  
 We must embrace the winged waist of fame, 45  
 Or nest within opinion's palmy top  
 'Till it has mixed its leaves with Atlas' hair,  
 Quicker to grow than were the men of Cadmus—

*Re-enter EZRIL*

*Ezr.* They are departing with the unequal pace  
 Of discontent and wonder.

*Marc.* Send them home 50  
 To talk it with their wives: sow them with books  
 Of midnight marvels, witcheries, and visions:  
 Let the unshaven Nazarite of stars  
 Unbind his wondrous locks, and grandame's earth-  
 quake  
 Drop its wide jaw; and let the churchyard's sleep 55



## THE SECOND BROTHER

## Act III

Whisper our goblins. When the fools are ripe  
 And gaping to the kernel, thou shalt steal  
 And lay the egg of my divinity  
 In their fermenting sides.—Where is my brother?  
 The first I'll aim at. 60

*Ezr.* 'Mid the poisonous dregs of this deep building,  
 Two days and their two nights have had his breath  
 All of one colour to his darkened eyes.  
 No voice has fed his cars, and little food  
 His speech-robbed lips.

*Marc.* 'Tis well. This is a man 65  
 Whose state has sunk i' th' middle of his thoughts:  
 And in their hilly shade, as in a vale,  
 I'll build my church, making his heart the quarry.  
 Take him his meal, and place a guard around  
 The wood below: the rest of my instructions, 70  
 For we must juggle boldly, shall be whispered  
 Secretly in my closet.

*Ezr.* Will you not  
 First cast this ragged and unseemly garb  
 And hang your sides with purple?

*Marc.* No: these rags 75  
 Give my delight a sting. I'll sit in them;  
 And when I've stretched my dukedom through men's  
 souls,

Fix on its shore my chair, and from it bid  
 Their doubts lie down. Wilt help me?

*Ezr.* Duke, thou art  
 A fathomless and undiscovered man,  
 Thinking above the eagle's highest wings, 80  
 And underneath the world. Go on: command:  
 And I am thine to do. *[Exeunt,*

SCENE II. *A dungeon of Cyclopean architecture*ORAZIO *solus**Orazio.* I'll speak again:

This rocky wall's great silence frightens me,  
Like a dead giant's.

Methought I heard a sound; but all is still. %

This empty silence is so deadly low, 5

The very stir and winging of my thoughts

Make audible my being; every sense

Aches from its depth with hunger.

The pulse of time is stopped, and night's blind sun

Sheds its black light, the ashes of noon's beams, 10

On this forgotten tower, whose ugly round,

Amid the fluency of brilliant morn,

Hoops in a blot of parenthetic night,

Like ink upon the crystal page of day,

Crossing its joy! But now some lamp awakes, 15

And with the venom of a basilisk's wink

Burns the dark winds. Who comes?

*Enter EZRIL*

*Ezril.* There's food for thee.  
Eat heartily; be mirthful with your cup;  
Though coarse and scanty.

*Orazio.* I'll not taste of it.  
To the dust, to the air with the cursed liquids 20  
And poison-kneaded bread.

*Ezril* Why dost thou this?

*Orazio.* I know thee and thy master: honey-lipped,  
Viper-tongued villain, that dost bait intents,  
As crook'd and murderous as the scorpion's sting,  
With mercy's sugared milk, and poisonest 25  
The sweetest teat of matron charity!

*Enter MARCELLO*

*Marc.* Thou hast her then, in secret and secure?

### Act III

*Marc.* Excellent Ezril!

*Ezr.* The husband: where his sorrow, strong in error,  
as spurned him down.

[Exit EZRIL. 35

Ho! sleep'st thou here?

Oraz. Didst thou say, Rise? I stand. Where am I  
now,

*Marc.* Alive, and in Ferrara.

*Marc.* What ails thee thus?

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*Oraz.* Am I so like to marble in my form,  
So wicked at the heart? No; thou art bad:  
A charitable man would never ask. 60  
And if thou e'er hadst loved, or been once human,  
Loved, grieved, or hoped, thou'dst feel what I have  
lost.

My wife is dead! thou know'st not what I mean,  
And therefore art accurst. Now let me weep.

*Marc.* Thou dost me wrong. Lament! Fd have thee  
do't: 65

The heaviest raining is the briefest shower.  
Death is the one condition of our life:  
To murmur were unjust; our buried sires  
Yielded their seats to us, and we shall give  
Our elbow-room of sunshine to our sons. 70  
From first to last the traffic must go on;  
Still birth for death. Shall we remonstrate then?  
Millions have died that we might breathe this day:  
The first of all might murmur, but not we.  
Grief is unmanly too.

*Oraz,* Because 'tis godlike. 75  
I never felt my nature so divine,  
As at this saddest hour. Thou'dst have me busy  
In all the common usage of this world:  
To buy and sell, laugh, jest, and feast, and sleep,  
And wake and hunger that I might repeat 'em; 80  
Perchance to love, to woo, to wed again.

*Marc.* The wonted wheel.

*Oraz,* O how I hate thee for 't!  
I've passed through life's best feelings—they are her's;  
Humanity's behind me. Ne'er I'll turn,  
But consecrated to this holy grief, 85  
Live in her memory: heaven has no more.

*Marc.* Yes, *she* is there. Let not thy woes be impious,  
Lest ye should never meet; but anchor thee  
On the remembrance that thou there wilt meet  
Her deepest self, her spirit. 90

*Oraz.* Thou talk'st to me of spirits and of souls—  
What are they? what know I or you of them?  
I love no ghost: I loved the fairest woman,  
With too much warmth and beauty in her cheek  
And gracious limbs, to hold together long. 95  
To-day she 's cold and breathless, and to-morrow  
They'll lay her in the earth; then she will crumble:  
Another year no place in all the world,  
But this poor heart, will know of her existence.  
Can she come back, O can she ever be 100  
The same she was last night in my embrace?  
No comfort else, no life!

*Marc.* She can.

*Oraz.* What didst thou speak?  
Blaspheme not nature: wake not hope to stab it:  
O take not comfort's sacred name in vain I  
Wilt say it now again?

*Marc.* There is a way, 105  
Which, if thy heart's religion could permit—

*Oraz.* What's that but she? Do it, what'er it is;  
I take the sin to me. Come, what will come—  
And what but pain can come?—for that will be  
All paradise concentrate in a minute, 110  
When she—but she is dead; I saw her corpse;  
Upon my soul! thou liest unfathomably:  
No god could do it.

*Marc.* I have earned the taunt.  
Seven heavens do fold the secret from thine eye:  
Be happily incredulous. Perchance 115  
It were a cursed and unhallowed rite:  
Let's think it all a fiction. So farewell!

*Oraz.* Thou dost not go; thou shalt not leave me  
thus:  
No; by the power thou speakest of, I do swear  
It shall be tried: if unsuccessful, then 120  
We shall be what we are.

*Marc.* Not its success

Act IV

THE SECOND BROTHER

I doubt, but its impiety. O be quick  
To fear perdition!

*Oraz.* Can I fear aught further  
Than what I feel?

*Marc.* The sting of grief speaks here,  
And not the tongue of thought. A month, a year 125  
Pass in reflection: after such a time,  
If thou demand'st the same, I'll then assist thee.

*Oraz.* What? dost thou think I'll live another month  
Without her? No. I did not seek this knowledge:  
Thou hast created hope, unbidden, in me; 130  
Therefore, I charge thee, let it not be killed!  
I pray not, I beseech thee not, again;  
But I command thee, by my right to bliss,  
Which I have lost in trusting thee, to do it,  
Without an instant's loss.

*Marc.* Must it be so? 135  
To-morrow night in the Cathedral vault  
Valeria will be buried: meet me there.

*Oraz.* Thou wilt not fail?

*Marc.* I will not, on my life.

*Oraz.* Then she is mine again,  
All and for ever.

*Marc.* (*aside*) As thou shalt be mine. 140

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I. *The Campo Santo*

*Enter* MARCELLO, EZRIL, MELCHIOR, VALERIA

*Valer.* Whither, and by what law of man or nature,  
Do ye thus lead me? Awe of sacred justice,  
Dread of the clenched punishment that follows  
The tremulous shoulder of pale, muffled guilt,—

Do they not gaze from every silent bed 5  
In this sad place?

*Melch.* Sheathe that nurse's tongue.  
There's wooing 'twixt the moon and Death to-night:  
This is his cabinet.

*Marc.* 'Beseech you, lady.  
Break not this still submission and so force us 9  
To stir our power from 'ts feigned, complacent sleep.

*Valer.* Force! dost thou know me, that thou threat-  
en'st force?

*Melch.* Why, thou'rt some wealthy sinner, very like,  
Whose gloves are worn with lips of richest princes:—  
It recks not here. The unfashionable worm,  
Respectless of the crown-illumined brow, 15  
The cheek's bewitchment, or the sceptred clench,  
With no more eyes than Love, creeps courtier-like,  
On his thin belly, to his food—no matter  
How [clad or] nicknamed it might strut above,  
What age or sex,—it is his dinner-time. 20  
—Now with what name, what coronal's shade, wilt  
scare

Our rigour to the wing?

*Valer.* I have a plea,  
As dewy-piteous as the gentle ghost's  
That sits alone upon a forest-grave,  
Thinking of no revenge: I have a mandate, 25  
As magical and potent as e'er ran  
Silently through a battle's myriad veins,  
Undid their fingers from the hanging steel,  
And drew them up in prayer: I AM A WOMAN.  
O motherly remembered be the name, 30  
And with the thought of loves and sisters, sweet  
And comforting! therefore be piteous to me.  
O let my hand touch yours! I could do more  
By its sad tremors than my tongue.

*Melch.* Away!  
We own a mood of marble. There 's no earth 35

In any crevice of my well-built spirit,  
Whence woman's rain could wake the weedy leaves  
Of the eye-poison, pity.

*Marc.* If I were  
Another man than this, Nature's cast child,  
Renounced by Life and Death of common men, 40  
And placed by wrongs upon an island-peak,  
Methinks I could relent.

*Melch.* Draw up thyself.  
This bearskin, charity, is a great-coat  
For ragged, shivering sin: thine Indian hate,  
That shivers like the serpent's noontide tongue 45  
With poisonous, candid heat, must trample on it.

*Valer.* O icy hearts! but no; soft ice doth melt,  
And warms contritely;—I renounce the words,  
And roll away the tender side of Heaven  
To bare its lightnings. I am innocent,— 50  
As white as any angel's lily wing;  
And if you wrong me, mark! I will not weep,  
Nor pray against your souls, nor curse your lives,  
Nor let my madness wake all things that are  
To roll destruction on you,—but be silent, 55  
Secret as happiness to man and God,  
And let the judgment ripen silently,  
Under your feet and o'er you—mighty, quiet,  
Deadly and tedious, as a silent hell.  
Now, what ye dare, begin!

*Marc.* Our purpose glides, 60  
Calm and remorseless as this human orb,  
Whose moon, thou see'st, bestows an equal beam  
Upon the odorous gardens we passed by,  
And the gaunt lips of this new-opened grave.  
Canst thou reproach our want of charity, 65  
Beholding this and all the thoughts it lends?

*Melch.* 'Tis a fit oracle for such an hour,  
And has the caverns of its inspirations,  
**More true** than Delphian, underneath our being.



Let's speak to it.

*Ezr.* What would'st thou?

*Melch.* It may teach 70

This tremulous lady resignation, sir.

Ho, there! thou maker of this earthen bed;

Thou porter of the gates,

God-father of the dead, art thou below?

Whose grave is this thou digg'st? 75

. . . . .

### *Fragments of "The Second Brother" <sup>1</sup>*

#### I

W H O are you?—

What I cannot express with human language,  
Nor thou with thought accept. What do you see?—  
A wild old creature.—

An old man? Know then,

Across the flaming orifice of hell  
Passes, as through a magic lamp its glass,  
A frozen ocean, in whose midst is graven  
The wrizled grey resemblance of a man  
Who lived his centuries before the clouds  
Had stolen the first drop of the broad flood,  
And the reflection of that antique form,  
Ruddy and firm when Hell cheers up and blazes,  
Pale when it falls, or darkened by the passing  
Of fiends between it and the limning fire,  
Now at this midnight moment dyes the sight  
Of some distrusting youth, and with a voice  
Strayed from a sleeper's tongue, seems likest me;  
Speaks just as I do—

<sup>1</sup> The numbers are those of the Oxford edition.

What do you mean?—

That I am Adam-gotten,  
A soul and skeleton in a flesh doublet:  
What else? Dost think that I could be this shade?

*///. A Lofty Mind*

His thoughts are so much higher than his state,  
That, like a mountain hanging o'er a hut,  
They chill and darken it.



POEMS

*Composed 1826-9*



## *Letter to B. W. Procter*

From Göttingen; March, 1826.

TO-DAY a truant from the odd old bones  
And winds of flesh, which, as tamed rocks and stones  
Piled cavernously make his body's dwelling,  
Have housed man's soul: there, where time's billows  
    swelling  
Make a deep ghostly and invisible sea 5  
Of melted worlds antediluvially  
Upon the sand of ever-crumbling hours,  
God-founded, stands the castle, all its towers  
With veiny tendrils ivied: this bright day  
I leave its chambers and with oars away 10  
Seek some enchanted island where to play.  
And what do you, that in the enchantment dwell  
And should be raving ever, a wild swell  
Of passionate life rolling about the world,  
Now sun-sucked to the clouds, dashed on the curled 15  
Leaf-hidden daisies; an incarnate storm  
Letting the sun through on the meadows yellow;  
Or anything except that earthy fellow  
That wise dog's brother, man? O shame to tell!  
Make tea in Circe's cup, boil the cool well, 20  
The well Pierian, which no bird dare sip  
But nightingales. There let kettles dip  
Who write their simpering sonnets to its song,  
And walk on Sundays in Parnassus' park:  
Take thy example from the sunny lark, 25  
Throw off the mantle which conceals the soul,  
The many-citied world, and seek thy goal  
Straight as a starbeam falls. Creep not nor climb  
As they who place their topmost of sublime  
On some peak of this planet pitifully; 30  
Dart eaglewise with open wings and fly,

## POEMS 1826-9

Until you meet the gods. Thus counsel I  
 The men who can, but tremble to be great;  
 Cursed be the fool who taught to hesitate  
 And to regret: time lost most bitterly. 35  
 And thus I write and I dare write to thee,  
 Fearing that still, as you were wont to do,  
 You feed and fear some asinine Review.  
 Let Jaggernaut roll on, and we, whose sires  
 Blooded his wheels and prayed around his fires, 40  
 Laugh at the leaden ass in the god's skin.  
 Example follows precept: I have been  
 Giving some negro minutes of the night  
 Freed from the slavery of my ruling spright  
 Anatomy the grim, to a new story 45  
 In whose satiric pathos we will glory.  
 In it Despair has married wildest Mirth  
 And to their wedding-banquet all the earth  
 Is bade to bring its enmities and loves  
 Triumphs and horrors: you shall see the doves 50  
 Billing with quiet joy and all the while  
 Their nest's the scull of some old king of Nile:  
 But he who fills the cups and makes the jest  
 Pipes to the dancers, is the fool o' the feast.  
 Who 's he? I've dug him up and decked him trim 55  
 And made a mock, a fool, a slave of him  
 Who was the planet's tyrant: dotard Death:  
 Man's hate and dread: not with a stoical breath  
 To meet him like Augustus standing up,  
 Nor with grave saws to season the cold cup 60  
 Like the philosopher, nor yet to hail  
 His coming with a verse or jesting tale  
 As Adrian did and More: but of his night,  
 His moony ghostliness and silent might  
 To rob him, to uncypress him i' the light 65  
 To unmask all his secrets; make him play  
 Momus o'er wine by torchlight is the way  
 To conquer him and kill; and from the day

## POEMS 1826-9

Spurned, hissed and hooted send him back again  
 An unmask'd braggart to his bankrupt den. 70  
 For death is more 'a jest' than Life, you see  
 Contempt grows quick from familiarity.  
 I owe this wisdom to Anatomy.—  
 Your Muse is younger in her soul than mine:  
 O feed her still on woman's smiles and wine 75  
 And give the world a tender song once more,  
 For all the good can love and can adore  
 What's human, fair and gentle. Few, I know,  
 Can bear to sit at my board when I show  
 The wretchedness and folly of man's all 80  
 And laugh myself right heartily. Your call  
 Is higher and more human: I will do  
 Unsociably my part and still be true  
 To my own soul; but e'er admire you  
 And own that you have nature's kindest trust 85  
 Her weak and dear to nourish, that I must.  
 Then fare, as you deserve it, well, and live  
 In the calm feelings you to others give.

### *The Ghosts' Moonshine*

|

IT is midnight, my wedded;  
 Let us lie under  
 The tempest bright, my dreaded,  
 In the warm thunder:  
 Tremble and weep not! What can you fear?  
 My heart's best wish is thine,—  
 That thou wert white, and bedded  
 On the softest bier,



## POEMS 1826-9

In the ghosts' moonshine.  
Is that the wind? No, no;  
Only two devils, that blow  
Through the murderer's ribs to and fro,  
In the ghosts' moonshine.

### II

Who is there, she said afraid, yet  
Stirring and awaking  
The poor old dead? His spade, it  
Is only making—  
(Tremble and weep not! What do you crave?)  
Where yonder grasses twine,  
A pleasant bed, my maid, that  
Children call a grave,  
In the cold moonshine.  
Is that the wind? No, no;  
Only two devils, that blow  
Through the murderer's ribs to and fro,  
In the ghosts' moonshine.

### III

What dost thou strain above her  
Lovely throat's whiteness?  
A silken chain, to cover  
Her bosom's brightness?  
Tremble and weep not: what dost thou fear?  
—My blood is spilt like wine,  
Thou hast strangled and slain me, lover,  
Thou hast stabbed me, dear,  
In the ghosts' moonshine.  
Is that the wind? No, no;  
Only her goblin doth blow  
Through the murderer's ribs to and fro,  
In its own moonshine.

*Lines*

Written in the album of one who had watched the progress of the  
American and French revolutions

As an almighty night doth pass away  
From an old ruinous city in a desert,  
And all its cloudy wrecks sink into day:  
While every monstrous shape and ghostly wizard  
That dwelled within the cavernous old place,  
Grows pale and shrinks and dies in its dismay:  
And then the light comes in, and flowery grace  
Covers the sand, and man doth come again  
And live rejoicing in the new-born plain:  
So you have seen great gloomy centuries,  
(The shadow of Rome's Death) in which did dwell  
The men of Europe, shudder and arise:  
So you have seen break up that smoke of Hell,  
Like a great superstitious snake, uncurled  
From the pale temples of the awakening world.

*Written in an Album at Clifton*

March, 1828

LONG have I racked my brain for rhymes to please,  
But vainly, for the time doth frown upon me,  
And throw the lights and shadows of reality  
Thro' my mind's caverns, melting in its glare  
The fairy-like inhabitants of twilight 5  
Which I essayed to summon. Even so  
It came to pass as I have heard it told,  
That once a lady's grace and gentleness  
That shed soft beauty over every one  
Standing around her, like to spirits summoned 10  
That must so wait and gaze, but dared not step  
Within the circled halo of the charmer,  
Lent to an almost unknown traveller

# POEMS 1826-9

A book whose leaves were heavy with the music  
 Of poetry such as she loved to read, 15  
 For poetry was her life's element  
 Which she shook from her, lightly breaking up  
 The current of men's thoughts, wherein this world  
 Was pictured drearily, into fair dimples,  
 As doth a curled swan silently roving 20  
 Thro' the reflection of a haunted palace  
 Upon a musically enchanted stream.  
 And on those pages where her eye would dwell  
 She had permitted the world-wandering stranger  
 To leave a token of his poor existence: 25  
 And now enclosed in his quiet chamber,  
 Holding the magic volume which contained  
 The charms to raise the memory of the gone  
 Out of the night that had closed over them,  
 The Traveller, grateful for so sweet a task, 30  
 Fain would have spellbound fiction's fairest shapes  
 And sent them captive to pay homage there.  
 But all in vain: the truth was restless in him,  
 And shook his visionary fabrics down,  
 As one who had been buried long ago 35  
 And now was called up by a necromancer  
 To answer dreadful questions; so compelled,  
 He left the way of fiction and wrote thus:  
 'Woe unto him whose fate hath thwarted him,  
 Whose life has been 'mongst such as were not born 40  
 To cherish in his bosom reverence,  
 And the calm awe that comforteth the heart  
 And lulls the yearnings of hope unfulfilled:  
 Such have I been. And woe again to him  
 Who in too late an hour presumptuously 45  
 O'erhears a wish confessing to his soul,  
 And must dismiss it to his discontent  
 With scorn and laughter. Woe again to me!  
 For now I hear even such an anxious voice  
 Crying in my soul's solitude and bewailing 50

# POEMS 1826-9

That I had never in my childhood known  
 The bud of this manifold beauteousness,  
 And seen each leaf turn on its tender hinge  
 Until the last few parted scarce and held  
 Deep in their midst a heaven-reflecting gem; 55  
 For then I might—oh vain and flattering wish! —  
 I might have stood, tho' last, among the friends  
 Where I am now the last among the strangers,  
 And not have passed away as now I must  
 Into forgetfulness, into the cold 60  
 Of the open homeless world without a hope,  
 Unless it be of pardon for these words:  
 For what is 't to the moon that every drop  
 Of flower-held rain reflects and gazes on her!  
 Her destiny is in the starry heavens, 65  
 Theirs here upon the ground, and she doth set,  
 Leaving her shadow no more to delight them,  
 And cometh ne'er again till they are fled.  
 So is 't with me. Yet to have seen, tho' seldom.  
 And to have fed me on that beauty's light, 70  
 And to have been allowed to trace these thoughts,  
 Are undeserved favours from my fortune.'——

Such was the import of his lines which many  
 Would have rejected with a scornful smile,  
 But if she smiled, smiled pity; she was gentle, 75  
 Read and forgave and never thought again  
 On the presumptuous stranger and his lines.  
 Away! I should have told a better tale.  
 Forgive, and shut these pages up for ever.

*Dedicatory Stanzas*

W H O findeth comfort in the stars and flowers  
 Apparelling the earth and evening sky,  
 That moralize throughout their silent hours,  
 And woo us heaven-wards till we wish to die;  
 Oft hath he singled from the soothing quire,  
 For its calm influence, one of softest charm  
 To still his bosom's pangs, when they desire  
 A solace for the world's remorseless harm.  
 Yet they, since to be beautiful and bless  
 Is but their way of life, will still remain  
 Cupbearers to the bee in humbleness,  
 Or look untouched down through the moony rain,  
 Living and being worlds in bright content,  
 Ignorant, not in scorn, of his affection's bent.

So thou, whom I have gazed on, seldom seen,  
 Perchance forgotten to the very name,  
 Hast in my thoughts the living glory been,  
 In beauty various, but in grace the same.  
 At eventide, if planets were above,  
 Crowning anew the sea of day bereft,  
 Swayed by the dewy heaviness of love,  
 My heart felt pleasure in the track thou'dst left:  
 And so all sights, all musings, pure and fair,  
 Touching me, raised thy memory to sight,  
 As the sea-suns awakes the sun in air,—  
 If they were not reflections, thou the light.  
 Therefore bend hitherwards, and let thy mildness  
 Be glassed in fragments through this storm and wild-  
 ness.

And pardon, if the sick light of despair  
 Usurp thy semblance oft, with tearful gleam  
 Displaying haunted shades of tangled care  
 In my sad scenes: soon shall a pearly beam,

POEMS 1826-9

Shed from the forehead of my heaven's queen,—  
That front thy hand is pressed on,—bring delight.  
Nor frown, nor blame me, if, such charms between,  
Spring mockery, or thoughts of dreadest night.  
Death's darts are sometimes Love's. So Nature tells,  
When laughing waters close o'er drowning men;  
When in flowers' honied corners poison dwells;  
When Beauty dies; and the unwearied ken,  
Of those who seek a cure for long despair,  
Will learn. Death hath his dimples everywhere;  
Love only on the cheek, which is to me most fair.



# DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

[Composed 1825-8; revised 1829-49]





# DEATH'S JEST BOOK

## or *The Fool's Tragedy*

### IN FIVE ACTS

[EARLY VERSION]

—— δημαγωγεῖ  
 ἐν τοῖς ἄνω νεκροῖσι, 420  
 καὶ σὺν τὰ πρῶτα τῆς ἐκεῖ μοχθηρίας.

\* \* \*

Χωρῶμεν ἐς πολυρρόδους  
 λειμῶνας ἀνθεμῶδεις, 450  
 τὸν ἡμέτερον τρόπον,  
 τὸν καλλιχορῶτατον,  
 παίζοντες, ὃν ὀλβιαί  
 Μοῖραι ξυνάγουσιν.

ΜΟΝΟΙΣ ΓΑΡ ἙΜΙΝ ἙΛΙΟΣ  
 ΚΑΙ ΦΕΓΓΟΣ ἸΑΛΑΡΟΝ ἔστιν  
 ὅσοι μεμυήμεθ'.

Χορος Μυστῶν.

*Aristoph. Ranae. Ed. Dindorf Lips. 1824—8.*

PERSONS

REPRESENTED

MELVERIC, *Duke of Münsterberg*

ADALMAR, } *his Sons*

ATHULF

WOLFRAM, *a Knight* } *Brothers*

ISBRAND, *the Court-fool*

TORWALD, *Governor in the Duke's absence*

MARIO

SIEGFRIED

ZIBA

HOMUNCULUS MANDRAKE, *Zany to a Mountebank*

[BOY]

SIBYLLA

AMALA, *Torwald's Daughter*

KATE

*Knights, Arabs, Attendants, Musicians, Priests, Sailors, Conspirators, Gravediggers, Pall-bearers, Guards, Messengers, Ladies, attending on Sibylla and on Amala*

*The Dance of Death*

SCENE: *in the first act at Ancona, and afterwards in Egypt; in the latter acts at the town of Grüssau, residence of the Duke of Münsterberg, in Silesia.*

TIME: *the end of the thirteenth century*

## ACT I

### SCENE I. *The Seashore. Ancona*

*Enter* MANDRAKE *and* KATE

*Mandr.* Am I a man of gingerbread that you should mould me to your liking, or hath my will a man's nose to follow? To have my way, in spite of your tongue and reason's teeth, tastes better than Hungary wine; and my heart beats in a honey-pot 5 now I reject you and all sober sense: so, I prithee, go back to my master, the Doctor, and tell him he may seek another zany for his booth, a new wise merry Andrew. My jests are cracked, my coxcomb fallen, my bauble confiscated, my cap mediatized. Toll the 10 bell; for Jack Pudding is no more!

*Kate.* Wilt thou away from *me* then, sweet Mandrake? Wilt thou not marry me?

*Mandr.* Child, my studies must first be ended. Thou knowest I hunger after wisdom, as the red sea 15 after ghosts; therefore will I travel awhile.

*Kate.* Whither then, dear Mandrake?

*Mandr.* Whither should a student in the black arts, an adept, a Rosicrucian? Where is our native land? You heard the herald this morning thrice in- 20 vite all christian folk to follow the brave knight, Sir Wolfram, to the shores of Egypt, and there help to free from bondage his noble fellow in arms, Duke Melveric, whom, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, wild pagans captured. There, Kate, in that 25 Sphynx land they made the roads with the philosopher's stone. There be wise crocodiles whose daughters are more cunning than the witches of Lapland, and fairer than the Lotus of the Nile. There can one chat with mummies in a pyramid, 30 and breakfast on basilisk's eggs. Thither then, Homunculus Mandrake, son of the great Para-

celsus; languish no more in the ignorance of these  
climes, but aboard with alembic and crucible, and  
weigh anchor for Egypt. 35

*Enter* ISBRAND

*Isbr.* Good morrow, brother Vanity! How? soul  
of a pickle-herring, body of a spagirical toss-pot,  
doublet of motley, and mantle of pilgrim, how art  
thou transmuted! Wilt thou desert our brother-  
hood, fool sublimate? Shall the motley chapter no 40  
longer boast thee? Wilt thou forswear the order of  
the bell, and break thy vows to Momus? Have  
mercy on Wisdom and relent.

*Mandr.* Have reverence, I pray thee. To-morrow  
I know thee not. In truth, I mark our noble faculty 45  
is in decay. The world will see its ears in a glass no  
longer; so we are laid aside and shall soon be for-  
gotten; for why should the feast of asses come but  
once a year, when all the days are foaled of one  
mother? O world, world! The gods and fairies left 50  
thee, for thou wert too wise; and now, thou Socra-  
tic star, thy demon, the great Pan, Folly, is parting  
from thee. The oracles still talked in their sleep,  
shall our grandchildren say, till Master Merriman's  
kingdom was broken up: now is every man his own 55  
fool, and the world 's cheerless.

*Isbr.* Farewell, thou great-eared mind: I mark, by  
thy talk, that thou commencest philosopher, and  
then thou art only a fellow-servant out of livery.  
But lo! here come the uninitiated—now avaunt, 60  
wise spirit, thou hast no portion in me.

*Enter* TORWALD, AMALA, WOLFRAM, *Knights  
and Ladies*

*Torw.* The turning tide; the sea's wide leafless  
wind,  
Wherein no birds inhabit and few traffic,

Making his cave within your sunny sails;  
The eager waves, whose golden, silent kisses 65  
Seal an alliance with your bubbling oars;  
And our still-working wishes, that impress  
Their meaning on the conscience of the world,  
And prompt the unready Future,—a<sup>1</sup>l invite you  
Unto your voyage. And prosperous be the issue, 70  
As is the promise, and the purpose good!  
Are all the rest aboard?

*Wolfr.* All. 'Tis a train  
Of knights whose bosoms pant with one desire,  
Bold hearts and ardent all; their high resolve  
So rocky and embattled in the flood 75  
Of their desire: a flaming ghost-walked sea:  
That Fate's decrees against us, shod in iron  
With sails of dragon's wings, and manned with  
devils,

Would scarce escape a wreck. All hearts are ready.

*Mandr.* All, sir Knight; but the pigs are just go- 80  
ing aboard, and poor dear great Mandrake must  
be shipped too.

*Wolfr.* Who is this fellow that interrupts?

*Isbr.* One of the many you have made. Yester-  
day he was a fellow of my kindred and served a 85  
quacksalver, but now he lusts after the mummy  
land whither you are bound. 'Tis a servant of the  
rosy cross, a correspondent with the stars; the  
dead are his friends, and the secrets of the moon  
his knowledge. He will brew you a gallon of gold 90  
out of a shilling. But had I been cook to a chame-  
leon, I could not sweeten the air to his praise  
enough. Suffice it, of his wisdom Solomon knew  
less than a bee of petrified flowers, or your butcher  
of the Mammoth. We fools send him as ambas- 95  
sador to Africa; take him with you, or be yourself  
our representative.

*Wolfr.* Speedily aboard then; and sink us not with thy understanding.

*Mandr.* I thank thee, Knight. Twice shalt thou live for this if I bottle eternity. *[Exit with KATE.*

*Torw.* These letters, then, are the last trust I give you:

Of his two sons, whose love and dread ambition,  
Crossing like murderous swords, teach us affright;  
And of the uncertain people who incline 105  
Daily more to the present influence,  
Forgetting all that their sense apprehends not;  
I have at large discoursed unto the Duke:  
And may you find his spirit strong to bear  
The roughness of such tidings. 110

*Isbr. (aside)* May they flatten him till he have no more brain than a pancake.

*Amala.* And forget not  
Our duke, with gentle greetings, to remind  
Of those who have no sword to draw for him, 115  
But whose unarmed love is not less true,  
Than theirs who seek him helmed. And so farewell,  
They say you serve a lady in those lands,  
So we dare offer you no token, knight,  
Beside good wishes.

*Wolfr.* Thanks, and farewell to both; 120  
And so I take my leave

*[Exeunt AMALA, TORWALD and Attendants.*

*Isbr.* Stay: you have not my blessing yet. With what jest shall I curse you in earnest? Know you this garb, and him who wears it, and wherefore it is worn? A father slain and plundered; our fraternal bond against the assassin shall so end that thou savest him whom we should help to damn? O do it, and I shall learn to laugh the dead out of their coffins!

*Wolfr.* Hence with your idle taunts. I must  
away. 130

The wind so fair, the sun so bright, the waves  
Caress invitingly into their bosom  
My fleet ship's keel, that at her anchor bounds  
As doth the greyhound from his leader's hand,  
Following his eye beams after the light roe. 135

*Isbr.* Away then, away! Thus be our fair purpose shipwrecked. Unfurl your sails and let all the honest finny folk of ocean, and those fair witty fishes, the mermaid spinsters, follow your luckless boats with mockery: there 's not a blubber but 140 shall wish he had a voice to yell parricide in your sails, not a sea-dog but shall howl and hunt you down after his salt-water fashion when he knows your errand. What, O! what spirit of our ancestral enemies would dare to whisper this tale through 145 our father's bones? Thou wilt save him from the Saracens' chains, who robbed our sire's grey hairs of a crown, and trod him down a beggar to the sceptred corpses of our progenitors? Save *him*, who slew our hopes; bless him who cozened us of 150 our part of this sepulchral planet? Revenge, Revenge! lend me your torch, that I may by its bloody light spell the lines of this man's face, and note how pitiful an ass the philtres of charity and friendship have made of my poor brother. 155

*Wolfr.* Should we repent this change? I know  
not why.—

We came disguised into the court, stiff limbed  
With desperate intent, and doubly souled  
With murder's devil and our own still ghosts.  
But must I not relent, finding the heart, 160  
For which my dagger hungered, so inclined  
In brotherly affection unto me?  
O bless the womanish weakness of my soul,  
Which came to slay, and leads me now to save!



*Isbr.* Hate! Hate! Revenge and blood! These are 165  
the only words of any language I will teach my  
boys. What accursed poison has that Duke, that  
snake, with his tongue, his sting, dropped into  
thine ear? Thou art no brother of mine more: he  
was a fellow whose soul was of that tune which 170  
shall awake the dead; aye if you had played it on a  
sow-geldef's horn: for thine! if I should make a  
trumpet of the devil's antlers, and blow thee  
through it, my lady's poodle would be scarce  
moved to a hornpipe. O fie on 't! Say when hast 175  
thou undergone transfusion, and whose hostile  
blood now turns thy life's wheels? Who has poured  
Lethe into thy veins to wash thy father out of heart  
and brains? Ha! be pale, and smile, and be pro-  
digal of thy body's motions, for thou hast no soul 180  
more. *That* thy sire placed in thee; and, with the  
determination to avenge, thou hast turned it out of  
doors. But 'tis well: why lament? Now I have all  
the hatred and revenge of the world to myself to  
hate and murder him with. 185

*Wolfr.* Thou speak'st unjustly, what thou rashly  
think'st;

But time must soften and convince: now leave me,  
If thou hast nothing but reproach for pastime.

*Isbr.* Be angry then, and we will curse each  
other. But if thou goest now to save this man, 190  
come not again for fear of me and the paternal  
ghost: for when he comes to me in the night, and  
cries revenge! my heart forgets that my head hath  
a fool's cap on it, and dreams of daggers: come not  
again then! 195

*Wolfr.* Out of my path! In this despised garb  
Alone, durst thou have tempted thus my anger,  
Dishonour'd brother! While I am away,  
Meditate o'er thy servile state, thou groom,  
Crown'd and anointed priest of mockery: 200

And mend thee if thou canst.—I am for Egypt [Exit.

Isbr. Contempt then be thy shadow in the day  
And point at thee and call thee parricide!  
But I will turn my bosom now to thee,  
Brutus, thou saint of the avenger's order; 205  
Refresh me with thy spirit, or pour in  
Thy whole great ghost. Isbrand, thou tragic fool,  
Cheer up! Art thou alone? Why, so should be  
Creators and destroyers. I'll go brood  
And strain my burning and distracted soul 210  
Against the naked spirit of the world,  
Till some portent's begotten. [Exit.

SCENE I L *The African Coast: a woody solitude near the sea. In the back ground ruins overshadowed by the characteristic vegetation of the oriental regions*

*The DUKE and SIBYLLA; the latter sleeping in a tent*

Duke. Soft sleep enwrap thee: with his balm bedew  
Thy young fair limbs, Sibylla: thou didst need  
The downy folding of his arms about thee.  
And wake not yet, for still the starless night  
Of our misfortune holds its hopeless noon. 5  
No serpent shall creep o'er the sand to sting thee,  
No blossom-trampling lion, no sea-creature,  
(For such are now the partners of thy chamber,)  
Disturb thy rest: only the birds shall dare  
To shake the dewy blossoms that hang o'er thee, 10  
And fan thee with their wings. As I watch for thee,  
So may the power, that has so far preserved us,  
Now in the uttermost, now that I feel  
The cold drops on my forehead, and scarce know  
Whether Fear shed them there, or the near breath 15  
Of our pursuing foes has settled on it,  
Stretch its shield o'er us.

*Enter ZIBA*

What bring'st, Ziba? Hope?  
Else be as dumb as that thou bring'st, Despair.

*Ziba.* Fruits: as I sat among the boughs and robbed  
The sparrows and their brothers of their bread, 20  
A horde of armed Saracens rode by,  
Each swearing that thy sword should rest ere night  
Within his sheath, his weapon in thy breast.

*Duke.* Speak lower, Ziba, lest the lady wake.  
Perhaps she sleeps not, but with half-shut eyes 25  
Will hear her fate. The slaves shall need to wash  
My sword of Moslem blood before they sheath it.  
Which path took they?

*Ziba.* Sleeping, or feigning sleep,  
She doth well: 'tis trying on a garb  
Which she must wear, sooner or later, long: 30  
Tis but a warmer lighter death. The ruffians,  
Of whom I spoke, turned towards the cedar forest,  
And, as they went in, there rushed forth a lion  
And tore their captain down. Long live the lion!  
We'll drink his tawny health: he gave us wine. 35  
For, while the Moors in their black fear were flying,  
I crept up to the fallen wretch, and borrowed  
His flask of rubious liquor. May the prophet  
Forgive him, as I do, for carrying it!  
This for to-day: to-morrow hath gods too, 40  
Who'll ripen us fresh berries, and uncage  
Another lion on another foe.

*Duke.* Brave Arab, thanks. But saw'st thou from the  
heights  
No christian galley steering for this coast?

*Ziba.* I looked abroad upon the wide old world, 45  
And in the sky and sea, through the same clouds,  
The same stars saw I glistening, and nought else.  
And as my soul sighed unto the world's soul,  
Far in the north a wind blackened the waters,

And after that creating breath was still, 50  
A dark speck sat on the sky's edge: as watching  
Upon the heaven-girt border of my mind  
The first faint thought of a great deed arise,  
With force and fascination I drew on  
The wished sight, and my hope seemed to stamp 55  
Its shape upon it. Not yet is it clear  
What, or from whom, the vessel.

*Duke.*

Who so e'er

The ocean wanderers, Heaven give them welcome:  
There 's nothing we can fear. Who dare refuse us  
Protection from the savage Moslem's rage? 60  
But see, the lady stirs. Once more look out,  
And thy next news be safety. [Exit ZIBA.

Hast thou gathered

Rest and refreshment from thy desert couch,  
My fair Sibylla?

*Sibyl.*

Deeply have I slept.

As one who doth go down unto the springs 65  
Of his existence and there bathed, I come  
Regenerate up into the world again.  
Kindest protector, 'tis to thee I owe  
This boon, a greater than my parents gave.  
Me, who had never seen this earth, this heaven, 70  
The sun, the stars, the flowers, but shut from nature  
Within my dungeon birthplace lived in darkness,  
Me hast thou freed from the oppressor's power,  
And godlike given me this heaven, this earth,  
The flowers, the stars, the sun. Methinks it were 75  
Ingratitude to thank thee for a gift  
So measurelessly great.

*Duke.*

As yet, sweet lady,

I have deserved but little thanks of thine.  
We've not yet broken prison. This wall of waves  
Still lies between us and the world of men; 80  
That too I hope to climb. Our true Egyptian  
Hath brought me news of an approaching ship.

When that hath borne thee to our German shore,  
And thou amongst the living tastest life,  
And gallants shall have shed around thy beauties 85  
A glory of the starry looks of love,  
For thee to move in, thank me then.

*Sibyl.* I wish not  
To leave this shady quiet way of life.  
Why should we seek cruel mankind again?  
Nature is kinder far: and every thing 90  
That lives around us, with its pious silence,  
Gives me delight: the insects, and the birds  
That come unto our table, seeking food,  
The flowers, upon whose petals Night tells down 94  
Her tremulous dews, these are my dearest playmates.  
O let us never leave them.

*Duke.* That would be  
To rob thy fate of thee. In other countries  
Another godliker mankind doth dwell,  
Whose works each day adorn and deify  
The world their fathers left them. Thither shalt thou,  
For among them must be the one thou'rt born for. 101  
Durst thou be such a traitress to thy beauty  
As to live here unloving and unloved?

*Sibyl.* Love I not thee? O, if I feel beside thee  
Delight and an unruffled calm, in which 105  
My soul doth gather round thee, to reflect  
Thy heavenly goodness: if in thy society  
I am so full of comfort, that no room  
For any other wish, no doubt, remains;  
Love I not thee?

*Duke.* Dear maiden, thou art young. 110  
Thou must see many, and compare their merits  
Ere thou canst choose. Esteem and quiet friendship  
Oft bear Love's semblance for awhile.

*Sibyl.* I know it;  
Thou shalt hear how. A year and more is past  
Since a brave Saxon knight did share my prison; 115

A noble generous man, in whose discourse  
I found much pleasure: yet, when he was near me,  
There ever was a pain which I perceived  
Even in the very sweetness of my comfort:  
My heart was never still: and many times, 120  
When he had fetched me flowers, I trembled so  
That oft they fell as I was taking them  
Out of his hand. When I would speak to him  
I heard not, and I knew not what I said.  
Yet this I thought was Love. O self deceived! 125  
For now I can speak all I think to thee  
With confidence and ease. What else can that be  
Except true love?

*Duke.* The like I bear to thee,  
O more than all that thou hast promised me:  
For if another being stepped between us, 130  
And were he my best friend, I must forget  
All vows, and cut his heart away from mine.

*Sibyl.* Think not on that: it is impossible.

*Enter ZIBA*

*Ziba.* O my dear lord, we're saved!

*Duke.* How? Speak!  
Though every word hath now no meaning more, 135  
Since thou hast said 'she 's saved'.

*Ziba.* The ship is in the bay, an armed knight  
Steps from his boat upon the shore.

*Duke.* Blest hour!  
And yet how palely, with what faded lips  
Do we salute this unhop'd change of fortune! 140  
Thou art so silent, lady; and I utter  
Shadows of words, like to an ancient ghost,  
Arisen out of hoary centuries  
Where none can speak his language. I had thought  
That I should laugh, and shout, and leap on high: 145  
But see! this breath of joy hath damped my soul,  
Melted the icy mail, with which despair

Had propped my heart, unsealed the springs of weakness:

And O! how weary, sad and faint I go  
To welcome what I prayed for. Thou art quiet; 150  
How art thou then, my love?

*Sibyl.* Now Hope and Fear  
Stand by me, masked in one another's shapes;  
I know not which is which, and, if I did,  
I doubt which I should choose.

*Enter WOLFRAM and Knights*

*Wolfr.* Are these thy comrades?  
Then, Arab, thy life's work and mine is done. 155  
My duke, my fellow knight!

*Duke.* O friend! So call me!  
Wolfram, thou comest to us like a god,  
Giving life where thou touchest with thy hand.

*Wolfr.* Were it mine own, I'd break it here in twain,  
And give you each a half.

*Duke.* I will not thank thee, 160  
I will not welcome thee, embrace and bless thee;  
Nor will I weep in silence. Gratitude,  
Friendship, and Joy are beggar'd, and turned forth  
Out of my heart for silly hypocrites:  
They understand me not; and my soul, dazzled, 165  
Stares on the unknown feelings that now crowd it,  
Knows none of them, remembers none, counts none,  
More than a new-born child in its first hour.  
One word, and then we'll speak of this no more:  
At parting each of us did tear a leaf 170  
Out of a magic roll, and, robbing life  
Of the red juice with which she feeds our limbs,  
We wrote a mutual bond. Thou dost remember?

*Wolfr.* And if a promise binds beyond the grave  
My ghost shall not forget it. There I swore 175  
That, if I died before thee, I would come

With the first weed that shoots out of my grave,  
And bring thee tidings of our other home.

*Duke.* That bond hast thou now fulfilled thus; or  
rather

Unto me lying in my sepulchre 180

Comest thou, and say'st, 'Arise and live again'.

*Wolfr.* And with thee dost thou bring some angel  
back.

Look on me, lady.

*Sibyl*, (aside) Pray heaven, she be not

The angel of the death of one of you,

To make the grave and the flowers' roots amends.—

Now turn I to thee, knight. O dared I hope, 186

Thou hast forgotten me!

*Wolfr.* Then were I dead,

And stripped of the human spirit's inheritance,

The immortality, of which thy love

Gave me the first sure proof. Forgotten thee! 190

Aye; if thou be not she, with whom I shared

Few months ago that dungeon, which thy presence

Lit with delight unknown to liberty;

If thou be not Sibylla, she whose semblance

Here keepeth watch upon my heart. Behold it: 195

Morning and night my eyes do feed upon it.

Thou gavest it me one day, when I admired,

And coveted above all stars a dewdrop,

That in the joyous dimple of a flower

Imaged thee tremulously. Since that time 200

Many a secret tear hath done the same,

Which I have shed over this pictured beauty.—

Speak to me then: or art thou, as this toy,

Only the likeness of the maid I loved?

But there 's no seeming such a one. O come! 205

This talking is a pitiful invention:

We'll leave it to the wretched. All my science,

My memory, I'd give for thy sole love,

And keep that ever secret.



*Sibyl.* Thou dost move me. 209  
With ghost-compelling words thou draw'st me to thee:  
O! at thy call I must surrender me,  
My lord, my love, my life.

*Duke, {aside}* O souls that dwell  
In these three bosoms, keep your footings fast,  
For there's a blasting thought stirring among you.  
They love each other. Silence! Let them love; 215  
And let him be her love. She is a flower,  
Growing upon a grave.—Now, gentle lady,  
Retire, beseech you, to the tent and rest.  
My friend and I have need to use those words  
Which are bequeathed unto the miserable. 220  
Come hither; you have made me free of them:  
Who dare be wretched in the world beside me?  
Think now what you have done; and tremble at it.  
But I forgive thee, love. Go in and rest thee.

*Sibyl* And he?

*Duke.* Is he not mine?

*Wolfr.* Go in, sweet, fearlessly. 225  
I come to thee, before thou 'st time to feel  
That I am absent.

[*Exeunt SIBYLLA, ZIBA, and the Knights.*]

*Duke.* Wolfram, we have been friends.

*Wolfr.* And will be ever.  
I know no other way to live.

*Duke.* 'Tis pity.  
I would you had been one day more at sea.

*Wolfr.* Why so? 230

*Duke.* You're troublesome to-day. Have you not  
marked it?

*Wolfr.* Alas! that you should say so.

*Duke.* That's all needless.  
Those times are past, forgotten. Hear me, knight:  
That lady's love is mine. Now you know that,  
Do what you dare.

*Wolfr.* The lady! my Sibylla! 235

Oh that I did not love thee for those words,  
That I might answer well.

*Duke.* Unless thou yield'st her,—  
For thou hast even subdued her to thy arms,  
Against her will and reason, wickedly  
Torturing her soul with spells and adjurations,— 240  
Unless thou giv'st her the free will again  
To take her gentle course of being on,  
Which flowed towards me with steady love:—O Wol-  
fram,

Thou know'st not how she fed my soul so doing,  
Even as the streams an ocean:—Give her me, 245  
And we are friends again. But I forget:  
Thou lovest her too; a stern, resolved rival;  
And passionate, I know. Nay then, speak out:  
'Twere better if we argued warmly here,  
Till the blood has its way.

*Wolfr.* Unworthy friend! 250

*Duke.* Forget that I am so, and many things  
Which we've been to each other, and speak out.  
F would we had much wine; 'twould bring us sooner  
To the right point.

*Wolfr.* Can it be so? O Melveric!  
I thought thou wert the very one of all 255  
Who shouldst have heard my secret with delight.  
I thought thou wert my friend.

*Duke.* All things like these,  
Friendship, esteem, sympathy, hope, faith,  
We need no more: away with them for ever!  
Wilt follow them out of the world? Thou see'st 260  
All human things die and decay around us.  
'Tis the last day for us; and we stand naked  
To let our cause be tried. See'st thou not why?  
We love one creature: which of us shall tear her  
Out of his soul? I have in all the world 265  
Little to comfort me, few that do name me  
With titles of affection, and but one

Who came into my soul at its night-time,  
 As it hung glistening with starry thoughts  
 Alone over its still eternity, 270  
 And gave it godhead. Thou art younger far,  
 More fit to be beloved; when thou appearest  
 All hearts incline to thee, all prouder spirits  
 Are troubled unto tears and yearn to love thee.  
 O, if thou knew'st thy heart-compelling power, 275  
 Thou wouldst not envy me the only creature  
 Who holds me dear. If I were such as thou,  
 I would not be forgetful of our friendship,  
 But yield to the abandoned his one joy.

*Wolfr.* Thou prob'st me to the quick.

O, would to heaven, 280  
 That I had found thee somewhere in a battle,  
 Alone against the swords of twenty foes!  
 Then I had rescued thee, and died content,  
 Ignorant of the treasure I had saved thee.  
 But now my fate hath made a wisher of me: 285  
 Oh shame that it is so; and better were it  
 If she had never been, who is the cause!

*Duke.* He is the cause! Oh fall the curse on him,  
 And may he be no more, who dares the gods  
 With such a wish! Speak thou no more of love, 290  
 No more of friendship here: the world is open:  
 I wish you life and merriment enough  
 From wealth and wine, and all the dingy glory  
 Fame doth reward those with, whose love-spurned  
 hearts

Hunger for goblin immortality. 295  
 Live long, grow old, and honour crown thy hairs,  
 When they are pale and frosty as thy heart.  
 Away. I have no better blessing for thee.  
 Wilt thou not leave me?

*Wolfr.* Should I leave thee thus?

*Duke.* Why not? Or, 'cause I hate thee perfectly, 300  
 Must I then tell thee so? Away I pray thee.

. Have I not cut all ties betwixt us off?  
Why, wert thou my own soul, I'd drive thee from me.  
Go, put to sea again.

*Wolfr.* Farewell, then, Duke.  
Methinks thy better self indeed hath left thee, 305  
And so I follow. *[Exit.*

*Duke.* Thither? Thither? Traitor  
To every virtue. Then Amen is said  
Unto thy time of being in this world:  
Thou shalt die. Ha! the very word doth double  
My strength of life: the resolution leaps 310  
Into my heart divinely, as doth Mars  
Upon the trembling footboard of his car;  
Hurrying into battle wild and panting,  
Even as my death-dispensing thought does now.  
Ho! Ziba!

*Enter ZIBA*

Hush! How still, how full how lightly 315  
I move about the place since this resolve,  
Like to a murder-charged thunder cloud  
Stepping about the starry streets of night,  
Breathless and masked,  
O'er a still city sleeping by the sea. 320  
Ziba, come hither; thou'rt the night I'll hang  
My muffled wrath in. Come, I'll give thee business  
Shall make thy life still darker, for one light on 't  
Must be put out. O let me joy no more,  
Till Fate hath kissed my wooing soul's desire 325  
Off her death-honied lips, and so set seal  
To my decree, in which he 's sepulchred.  
Come, Ziba, thou must be my counsellor. *[Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Interior of a tent*

## SIBYLLA, WOLFRAM

*Wolfr.* This is the oft-wished hour, when we together  
May walk upon the sea-shore: let us seek  
Some greensward overshadowed by the rocks.  
Wilt thou come forth? Even now the sun is setting  
In the triumphant splendour of the waves. 5  
Hear you not how they leap?

*Sibyl.* Nay; we will watch  
The sun go down upon a better day:  
Look not on him this evening.

*Wolfr.* Then let's wander  
Under the mountain's shade in the deep valley,  
And mock the woody echoes with our songs. 10

*Sibyl.* That wood is dark, and all the mountain caves  
Dreadful and black, and full of howling winds:  
Thither we will not wander.

*Wolfr.* Shall we seek  
The green and golden meadows, and there pluck 14  
Flowers for thy couch, and shake the dew out of them?

*Sibyl.* The snake that loves the twilight is come out,  
Beautiful, still, and deadly; and the blossoms  
Have shed their fairest petals in the storm  
Last night; the meadow's full of fear and danger.

*Wolfr.* Ah! you will to the rocky fount, and there 20  
We'll see the fireflies dancing in the breeze,  
And the stars trembling in the trembling water,  
And listen to the daring nightingale  
Defying the old night with harmony.

*Sibyl.* Nor that: but we will rather here remain, 25  
And earnestly converse. What said the Duke?  
Surely no good.

*Wolfr.* A few unmeaning words,  
I have almost forgotten.

*Sibyl.* Tell me truly,  
Else I may fear much worse.

*Wolfr.* Well: it may be  
That he was somewhat angry. 'Tis no matter;                   30  
He must soon cool and be content.

*Enter ZIBA*

*Ziba.* Hail, knight!  
I bring to thee the draught of welcome. Taste it.  
The Grecian sun ripened it in the grape,  
Which Grecian maidens plucked, and pressed; then  
    came  
The desert Arab to the palace gate,                                 35  
And took it for his tribute. It is charmed;  
And they who drink of such have magic dreams.

*Wolfr.* Thanks for thy care. Til taste it presently:  
Right honey for such bees as I.

*Enter a Knight*

*Knight.* Up, brave knight!  
Arouse thee, and come forth to help and save.                   40

*Wolfr.* Here is my sword. Who needs it?

*Sibyl.* Is 't the Duke?  
O my dark Fear!

*Knight.* 'Tis he. In the wood hunting,  
A band of robbers rushed on us.

*Wolfr.* How many?

*Knight.* Some twelve to five of us; and in the fight  
Which now is at the hottest, my sword failed me.             45  
Up then in speed, good Knight: I'll lead the way.

*Wolfr.* Sibylla, what deserves he at our hands?

*Sibyl.* Assist him; he preserved me.

*Wolfr.* For what end?

*Sibyl.* Death's sickle points thy questions. Hesitate  
    not,  
But hence.

*Enter a second Knight*

*Wolfr.* Behold another from the field—                   50

Now thy news?

*2nd Knight.* My fellow soldiers  
Bleed and grow faint: fresh robbers pour upon us,  
And the Duke stands at bay unhelmed against them.

*Wolfr.* Brave comrade, keep the rogues before thee,  
dancing

At thy sword's point, but a few moments longer; 55  
Then I am with thee. Farewell thou, Sibylla;  
He shall not perish thus. Rise up, my men,  
To horse with sword and spear, and follow me.  
Where is the cup? One draught and then away:  
I pledge thee, lady. [*Takes the goblet.*]

*Ziba.* (*dashes it to the ground*) Out, thou villainous  
liquor! 60

Ha! it rings well and lies not. 'Tis right metal  
For funeral bells.

*Wolfr.* Rogue, what dost thou?

*Ziba.* Pour thou unto the subterraneous gods  
Libations of thy blood: I have shed wine,  
Now, will ye not away?

*Wolfr.* Come hither, slave: 65  
Say, on your life, why did you spill that wine?

*Ziba.* A superstitious fancy: but now hence.  
'Twas costly liquor too.

*Wolfr.* Then finish it.  
'Twas well that fortune did reserve for you  
These last and thickest drops here at the bottom. 70

*Ziba.* Drink them? forbid the prophet!

*Wolfr.* Slave, thou diest else.

*Ziba.* Give me the beaker then.—O God, I dare not.  
Death is too bitter so: alas! 'tis poisoned.

*Sibyl.* Pernicious caitiff!

*Wolfr.* Patience, my Sibylla!  
I knew it by thy lying eye. Thou'rt pardoned. 75  
But for thy lord, the Saracen deal with him  
As he thinks fit. Wolfram can help no murderer.

*Sibyl.* Mercy! O let me not cry out in vain:  
Forgive him yet.

*Wolfr.* The crime I have forgiven:  
And Heaven, if he 's forgiven there, can save him! 80  
O monster! in the moment when my heart  
Turned back to him with the old love again,  
Then was I marked for slaughter by his hand.  
I can forgive him; but no more:—lie still  
Thou sworded hand, and thou be steely, heart. 85

*Enter a third Knight wounded*

*3rd Knight.* Woe! woe! Duke Melferic is the Arabs'  
captive.

*Sibyl.* Then Heaven have mercy on him!

*Wolfr.* So 'tis best:  
He was his passion's prisoner already.

*3rd Knight.* They bind him to a column in the desert,  
And aim their poisoned arrows at his heart. 90

*Wolfr.* O Melferic, why didst thou so to me?  
*Sibylla,* I despise this savage Duke,  
But thus he shall not die. No man in bonds  
Can be my enemy. He once was noble:  
Up once again, my men, and follow me. 95  
I bring him to thee, love, or ne'er return.

*Sibyl.* A thousand tearful thanks for this. Farewell.  
*[Exeunt severally.]*

#### SCENE IV. A Wood

MANDRAKE and his boy

*Mandrake.* The roots, the toadstools. That 's  
right, and the herbs. Now, where be the bones and  
the minerals?

*Boy.* In the other basket. Art thou in good faith,  
a witch? 5

*Mandr.* A poor amateur. 'Tis my hobby. A



philtre, a nativity, the raising up of a paltry devil or so. I do no more. Mere retail conjuring.

*Boy.* But what dish will thy black art stew of these simples? 10

*Mandr.* With a pound of crocodile's fat we will concoct a salve, an ointment. Thou hast heard of being invisible.

*Boy.* Aye, and now shall I see it? O lend me thy spectacles. 15

*Mandr.* This is the secret: it shall be had in bottles and to prevent imposition all sealed with the ring of Gyges.

*Boy.* How shall I believe such things?

*Mandr.* Doubt at thy peril, boy. This, I tell thee, 20 will make the true ointment. 'Tis no great rarity. Look for a true friend, a wit who ne'er borrowed money or stole verses, a woman without envy; there are legions of such, but they have anointed their virtues with this pomatum till they disappeared. 25

*Boy.* Then will I rub my warts with it. But whence have you the receipt?

*Mandr.* Out of an ancient island where invisible honest men trade with invisible money. 'Tis made according to the law of contraries, but serves best 30 against foibles at Court, and there be horned beasts which use it with great comfort.

*Boy.* And wilt thou make thyself invisible?

*Mandr.* Out, out! Who would ever lose sight of himself? 'Tis scarce possible nowadays. Alas! 'tis a 35 dangerous and wicked butter, and hath so worked upon priests' humanity, great men's wisdom, and poet's immortality, that when death hath anointed us with it, Posterity shall hold all these things for fables. But away, our business is secret. Hear you 40 no noise? Here come disturbers. [Exeunt.

*Enter Arabs with the DUKE*

1st Arab. Against this column: there's an ancient  
beast  
Here in the neighbourhood, which to-night will  
thank us  
For the ready meal.

*[They bind the DUKE against a column.]*

2nd Arab. Christian, in thy heaven  
Boast that we took thy blood in recompense 45  
Of our best comrades.

1st Arab. Hast a saint or mistress?  
Call on them, for next minute comes the arrow.

Duke. O Wolfram! now methinks thou lift'st the  
cup.  
Strike quickly, Arab.

1st Arab. Brothers, aim at him.

*Enter WOLFRAM and knights*

Wolfr. Down, murderers, down.

2nd Arab. Fly! there are hundreds on us. 50  
Wolfr. Die, ye slaves!

*[Fight—the Arabs are part slain, part beaten  
off by the knights, who pursue the flying.]*

Wolfr. *{unbinding the DUKE}* Thank heaven, not too  
late! Now you are free.  
There is your life again.

Duke. Hast thou drunk wine?  
Answer me, knight, hast thou drunk wine this even-  
ing? 54

Wolfr. Nor wine, nor poison. The slave told me all.  
O Melveric, if I deserve it of thee,  
Now canst thou mix another draught. But all  
Be now forgotten and unknown to Heaven.

Duke. And wilt thou not now kill me?

Wolfr. Let us strive  
Henceforward with good deeds against each other, 60  
We once were friends and may be so again;  
No one shall whisper of that deadly thought.

Now we will leave this coast.

*Duke.* Aye, we will step  
 Into a boat and steer away: but whither?  
 Think'st thou I'll live in the dread consciousness 65  
 That I have dealt so wickedly and basely,  
 And been of thee so like a god forgiven?  
 No: 'tis impossible... By your leave, friend—

*[Takes a sword from a fallen Arab.*

O what a coward villain must I be  
 So to exist.

*Wolfr.* Be patient but awhile. 70  
 And all these thoughts will soften.

*Duke.* The grave be patient,  
 That's yawning in the wood for one of us.  
 I want no comfort. I am comfortable,  
 For one of us must perish in this instant.  
 Fool, would thy virtue shame and crush me down; 75  
 And make a grateful blushing bond-slave of me?  
 O no! I dare be wicked still: and murderer  
 My thought has christened me, such I must remain.  
 O curse thy meek, forgiving, childish heart,  
 Which doth insult me with its cowardly virtue; 80  
 Twice-sentenced, die! *[Strikes at WOLFRAM.*

*Wolfr.* Madman, keep off.

*Duke.* I pay my thanks in steel.

*[Fight: WOLFRAM /a/Ay.*

*Wolfr.* Murderer! Mayst thou never more repent—

*Duke.* So then we both are blasted: but thou diest,  
 Who durst forgive my treachery. Now proclaim me. 85  
 Thy worldly work is done. I give thee leave.

*The Knights re-enter with SIBYLLA and ZIBA*

*Knight.* O luckless victory! our leader wounded!

*Sibylla.* Bleeding to death! and he, whom he so  
 saved,

Armed and unhurt. O Wolfram, speak to me.

Let me not think thou'rt dying.

*Wolfr.* But I am: 90  
Slain villainously. Sibylla, had [ stayed—  
But thou and life are lost; so I'll be silent.

*Sibylla.* O Melveric why kneelst thou not beside him  
And weepst with me? He saved thee.

*Duke.* And I've thanked him.  
He'll not deny it.

*Sibylla.* O that I could avenge thee! 95  
Who did this, Wolfram?

*Wolfr.* Thou knowest, Melveric;  
At the last day reply thou to that question,  
When such an Angel puts it: I'll not answer  
Or then, or now. [Dies.

*Duke.* Then the tale is out.  
He 's dead. Oh heaven, what a word for me! 100

*Knight.* Accursed be he that did it.

*Duke* He is cursed,  
And from this moment shut up in a hell  
Far from all earthly things.

*Sibylla.* He is dead then;  
Then all is dead. Speak to me never more  
A word of love, pleasure or happiness. 105  
My world lies with him.

*Knight.* All that liveth here,  
Kneel down beside the body of this knight,  
And swear revenge against his murderer.

*Duke.* With all my heart. Methinks I'm of the dead,  
And yet 'tis right so. Pray all in silence. 110

(*They kneel. The curtain falls*)

## ACT II

SCENE I. *A room in a tavern in Ancona*

ISBRAND *and other Guests drinking, KATE waiting on them*

*Isbr.* Another flask, Kate. Thou knowest how fishy I am in my liquid delights. Dryness is akin to barrenness, and of barrenness comes nakedness and bareness, and these are melancholy, being the parables of human extremity, and of the uttermost 5 of death and a pig's tail: therefore, good Kate, 'tis the duty of a wise man to thirst and the part of a good woman to wet his lips.

*Kate.* Master Isbrand, the wine is sweet, but a sweet seducer. You have had three flasks, and 10 there is morality in all trades.

*Isbr.* You say true—I had forgot. There have you the morality. (*Gives her money*) Will you have history for it? Then think of that great King in Lydia, Croesus, whom they would have set on fire, 15 but the lucky dog had seen the sun through the bottom of too many glasses, so he was too wet and went out. Will you have divinity for it? There 's Bacchus, in his time a clever travelling God and an arch-Tosspot. Wilt have law? Behold my 20 Cudgel. Poetry? Then bring the fourth bottle.

*Kate.* 'Tis true you are not what you might be, but withal, a wellspoken customer, and the action of your right hand is too irresistible for us poor weak ones, so there's your new flask. 25

*Isbr.* Gramercy, Hostess. This is the mystery of humanity, drank I not wine I were a tailor to-morrow; next day a dog, and in a week I should have less life than a witch's broomstick. Drinking hath been my education and my path of life. Small 30 beer was my toothless infancy, the days of my

childhood I passed in stout, porter comforted my years of Love, but my beard growing I took to sack, and now I quench the aspiration of my soul in these good wines of Hungary. And for these my 35 merits, I hold my place at Court.—Now your health, mistress, and your lover's, my late colleague. Where is he now?

*Kate.* The silly fellow! He would go to sea with Sir Wolfram, and of that ship we have heard 40 nothing as yet.

*A Guest.* A sail has been seen this morning, and he who keeps the tower said that it was the Knight's vessel.

*Isbr.* How? Then she must be in port ere this: 45 first down with the wine, then down to the water.

*Enter Sailors and* HOMUNCULUS

MANDRAKE'S *Boy*

*1st Sailor.* Now we're in Christendom, my lads, we'll get drunk once more. A curse on their watery superstition! those Turkish dogs do but lap the Nile. Now who would drink water that's 50 made only to be sailed on?

*2nd Sailor.* Therefore wine, hostess, ale and brandy. My legs hate walking on this stupid dead earth. I'm born to roll through life, and if the world won't under me tumble and toss, why, I 55 must e'en suck up a sort of marine motion out of the can.

*Isbr.* Good morrow, lusty comrades. Are you just come in?

*1st Sailor.* Aye, at last the winds have brought 60 our good ship, the Baris,\* ashore.

*Isbr.* The Baris that sailed in the Spring for Ægypt? What do you bring with you?

\* The name of Charon's boat according to Orpheus, Diod. Sic. l. 96.

*1st Sailor.* A rare cargo. We have on board one whose body is invisible, another whose soul is in 65 heaven's keeping, and a third, poor lady, whose life and love are shipwrecked.

*Fsbr.* Now first, your dead. They are my best acquaintance and my dearest gossips: your departed, who is he? 70

*Boy.* O mistress, let me speak, else the invisible man will be here before you know that you are not able to see him.

*Kate.* O 'tis my Mandrake's boy. Now say who has the world lost sight of and where is thy master? 75

*Boy.* It is even he I would tell of: in Ægypt we plundered ichneumons of their marrow, and knocked the yolks out of crocodile's eggs, with which, and all manner of mummy, he made a liniment of invisibility, and with it he swore he 80 could anoint then out of sight.

*Isbr.* Praised be the secrets of alchemy that can thus embody that subtlety which shall subdue the flesh and all its wickedness in an ounce of hog's lard. But is not this ointment called the fat of the 85 land, with which those who are smeared do hide the hideousness of their souls so often? But go on, boy, I am but a commentator on this world: to the text again.

*Boy.* Now Mandrake had churned his bewitch- 90 ing butter, potted it, and all was well: but last night in the storm, the waves rolled, and the ship rolled in them, and in the middle of dreams, fell the pot of balsam on the maVs scull who made it, broke it to pieces, and bathed him from head to 95 foot, and so ran he about dripping with the oil of invisibility and tears for his lost body—but here he comes: see him not.

*Kate.* Now will we teach thee to leave a poor

woman who loves thee to temptation and the earn-100  
ing of her bread, thou rosicrucian fellow!

*Enter MANDRAKE*

*Isbr.* Agreed! A game at blind man's buff.  
Therefore, friends, weep no more for he is gone.

*Mandrake.* I daresay that's my funeral sermon;  
—does he praise me poor dear man?—and there 's 105  
Kate, she weeps buckets I warrant ye.

*Isbr.* But weep not so, sweet Kate; 'tis true you  
have lost a peerless simpleton: such flawless folly  
is a rich jewel in the ring of wedlock: but add no  
vain tears to the waves which roll over him. 110

*Mandrake.* Sweetheart Kate, and friends all: I  
am not dead nor gone, where are your eyes? I am  
here.

*Kate.* O mercy! there is haunting here; did you  
not hear his voice? 115

*Boy.* Aye, so spake Master, but he is departed,  
and here is no one.

*Mandrake.* Good folks don't pretend any more  
that you don't see me. O Lord, I am half fright-  
ened already into the belief that I am vanished. 120  
Reasonable folks! I stand here in the corner, by  
the rack of plates.

*Kate.* There again! This is impudent haunting in  
the daytime in a reputable house. Run and fetch  
Holy Water. Alas! that my poor husband's ghost 125  
should not know that he is dead! but he was ever  
absent.

*Isbr.* Nay, don't be frightened, hostess: 'tis a jest  
of mine; I have ventriloquized a little and mocked  
your dear fellow's voice. Now mark you I do it 130  
again and abuse you as if I were a ghost against my  
will.

*Mandrake.* But Isbrand, and gentle people, can't  
you see me really, not a twinkling of me? Nor my



face in the pewter plates? Ah, then I must be lost. 135  
But I will be seen soon and heard and felt, rogues  
and hypocrites, and you shall weep for it—or I am  
not Mandrake.

*Isbr.* Is it not natural, comrades?

*Kate.* Very good, but leave it, I pray you, or I 140  
shall think I hear him, which is impossible, and  
fall a-crying which were a waste of tears here  
where there are so few to see me, and no white  
kerchief to hold my tears.

*Isbr.* Then I will please thee, and be no more a 145  
skeleton's prompter; but good mimic as I am you  
shall hear a better some night, if you live after the  
fashion of this world; he is called conscience and  
doth prattle with the voices of the dead through  
the speaking trumpet of the winds. Beware of him. 150

*Mandrake.* Well, let me be viewless then, I am  
still palpable, so let me cut arguments from the  
ash-tree, and convince the incredulous by the ach-  
ing of their shoulders that they are short-sighted.

*[Strikes among the others.]*

*Sailor.* Help! help! the house is falling in. 155

*Kate.* Does it hail? or can you ventriloquize a  
cudgelling, acquaintance?

*Boy.* Murder, murder! here is the ghost of a  
game at single-stick, methinks I begin to see.

*Isbr.* Be patient: 'tis only electricity.—Knock 160  
again.

*[They fall on MANDRAKE]*

Confess, thou invisible one, is it possible for  
Christian eye to see thee?

*Kate, (striking him)* Art thou material, villain-  
spectre? Wilt thou not let us mourn for my poor 165  
bridegroom, undisturbed?

*Boy.* If thou wilt have a voice, take this o' thy  
chaps.

*Mandrake.* O gentle people! I confess. I will be invisible if you will leave off seeing where to put 170 your blows in;—immaterial to keep my bones whole, and inaudible if you will hear my petition. I am no Mandrake, I am nothing.

*Isbr.* Nay, then thou hast gotten no blows, and that were pity: see, I strike no longer thee—I strike 175 nothing.

*Mandrake.* Enough! I am a poor invisible man, and will leave off haunting—But tremble, if I ever come to sight again.

*[Runs out, the rest after him.]*

SCENE II. *The interior of a church at Ancona.*

*The DUKE, in the garb of a pilgrim, SIBYLLA and Knights, assembled round the corpse of Wolfram which is lying on a bier.*

*Dirge*

If thou wilt ease thine heart  
Of love and all its smart,  
Then sleep, dear, sleep;  
And not a sorrow  
Hang any tear on your eyelashes; 5  
Lie still and deep,  
Sad soul, until the sea-wave washes  
The rim o' th' sun to-morrow,  
In eastern sky.

But wilt thou cure thy heart 10  
Of love and all its smart,  
Then die, dear, die;  
'Tis deeper, sweeter,  
Than on a rose bank to lie dreaming  
With folded eye; 15

And then alone, amid the beaming  
Of love's stars, thou'lt meet her  
In eastern sky.

*Knight.* These rites completed, say your further  
pleasure.

*Duke.* To horse and homewards in all haste: my  
business 20

Urges each hour. This body bury here,  
With all due honours. I myself will build  
A monument, whereon, in after times,  
Those of his blood shall read his valiant deeds,  
And see the image of the bodily nature 25  
He was a man in. Scarcely dare I, lady,  
Mock you with any word of consolation:  
But soothing care, and silence o'er that sorrow,  
Which thine own tears alone dare tell to thee  
Or offer comfort for; and in all matters 30  
What thy will best desires, I promise thee.  
Wilt thou hence with us?

*Sibyl.* Whither you will lead me.  
My will lies there, my hope, and all my life  
Which was in this world. Bring me to a nunnery:  
There shall I soonest learn the way to heaven. 35  
Farewell, my love,—I will not say to thee  
Pale corpse,—we do not part for many days.  
A little sleep, a little waking more,  
And then we are together out of life.

*Duke.* Cover the coffin up. This cold, calm stare 40  
Upon familiar features is most dreadful:  
Methinks too the expression of the face  
Is changed, since all was settled gently there,  
And threatens now. But I have sworn to speak  
And think of that no more, which has been done.—45  
Now then into the bustle of the world  
We'll rub our cares smooth there.

*Knight.* This gate, my lord;  
There stand the horses.

*Duke.* Then we're mounted straight.  
But, pri'thee, friend, forget not that the Duke 49  
Is still in prison: I am a poor pilgrim. [Exeunt.]

**Enter MANDRAKE**

*Mandr.* Refuge at last: Here then I am at home:  
I could weep, or rather I could think that I wept,  
for it appears to be but too true that I have given  
up the body. Well, what is, is, and what is not, is  
not; and I am not what I was - -for I am what I was 55  
not; I am no more I, for I am no more: I am no  
matter, being out of all trouble, and nobody at all,  
but poor Mandrake's pure essence. And how came  
I to this pass? Marry, I must either have been very  
sound asleep when I died, or else I died by mistake 60  
for I am sure I never intended it: or else this being  
dead is a quite insignificant habit when one 's used  
to it: 'tis much easier than being alive, now I think  
on it: only think of the trouble one has to keep up  
life. One must breathe, and pass round the blood 65  
and digest and let hair, and nails, and bone and  
flesh grow.—Who comes? I dare for the sake of  
my skin haunt no longer. [Exit.]

*Enter ISBRAND and SIEGFRIED attended*

*Isbr.* Dead and gone! a scurvy burthen to this  
ballad of life. There lies he, Siegfried; my brother, 70  
and I am not moved; dead, and I weep not. And  
why not, Siegfried?

*Siegfr.* 'Tis well that you are reconciled to his  
lot and your own.

*Isbr.* Reconciled! A word out of a love tale, 75  
that's not in my language. No, no. I am patient  
and still and laborious, a good contented man;  
peaceable as an ass chewing a thistle; and my

thistle is revenge. I do but whisper it now: but hereafter I will thunder the word, and I shall shoot 80 up gigantic out of this pismire shape, and hurl the bolt of that revenge.

*Siegfr.* To the purpose: the priests return to complete the burial.

*Isbr.* Right: we are men of business here. Away 85 with the body, gently and silently; it must be buried in my duke's chapel in Silesia: why, hereafter. (*The body is borne out by attendants.*) That way, fellows: the hearse stands at the corner of the square: but reverently, 'tis my brother you carry. 90

*Siegfr.* But the priests will discover the robbery.

*Re-enter MANDRAKE*

*Mandr.* Welcome, fellows: tell me if ye hear, whether ye be living, or young goblins. For there is many a fellow with broad shoulders and a goodly paunch who looks and behaves as if he 95 were alive, although in soul and spirit he be three times more dead than salt fish in Lent. I, for my part, am a sort of amateur goblin.

*Isbr.* The very fellow for us.—What, darest thou haunt again? Down, Sir, on your bier, and be 100 buried as it beseems thee.

*Mandr.* Shall I submit to be a body again? No, I am above being buried. I am but a young angel, as yet unfledged, but bye and bye I shall try a flight.

*Isbr.* Lie down, lie down, vampire! or you die. 105

*Mandr.* Superfluous fellow, will ye be guilty of tautology, and kill a dead man?

*Isbr.* Down then, on the bier, and be still.

[*They throw MANDRAKE down on the bier and cover him with the pall.*]

*Isbr.* Cover thy face up if thou wilt have a good bust; and when thou comest to the churchyard, 110 thou mayst run if thou must needs give death the

slip: but dead thou art, and to be buried is thy vocation. So submit.

*Enter the Priests and bearers*

*Siegfr.* A substitute in time.

*Isbr.* Here come the priests: now, move not, 115  
fellow, belie not thy destiny.—But one more farewell, Fathers; he was my brother. (*Goes to the bier, and whispers to MANDRAKE.*) Lie quiet, and be buried, thou ape of the dead! If thou art deceased, it is thy duty; if thou art not, speak and I 120  
will despatch thee: I hold a dagger to thy heart till thou art in the grave. Art dead?

*Mandr.* 1 am, I am; I have been so all my life: bury me in peace.

*[He is borne out, the Priests following.]*

*Isbr.* Away, we must be doing in Miinsterberg: 125  
the Governor is there, and those two Duke's sons who shall perish for his sake. I bury my brother there: he is an earthquake-seed, and will whisper revenge to earth, and I to heaven; and though we whisper now, thunder shall speak the word here-130  
after: and it shall be the thunder of the wheels of a war-chariot in which I shall triumph like Jupiter in my fool's cap, to fetch the Duke and his sons to Hell, and then my bells will ring merrily, and I shall jest more merrily than now: for I shall be 135  
Death the Court-fool.—Come, Siegfried.

*[Exeunt.]*

*MANDRAKE runs across the stage, crying*

*Mandr.* Who'll run a race with a ghost? Now, Musicians, strike up Death's Hornpipe, for I dance alone through the world like a Jack o' Lanthorn.

*[Exit.]* 140

SCENE III. *A hall in the ducal castle of  
Munsterberg in the town of Grussau in Silesia*

TORWALD, ADALMAR, ATHULF, ISBRAND, SIEG-  
FRIED; *the DUKE, disguised as a pilgrim;*  
AM A L A ; *and other ladies and knights; conversing  
in various groups*

*Athulf.* A fair and bright assembly: never strode  
Old arched Grüssau over such a tide  
Of helmed chivalry, as when to-day  
Our tourney guests swept, leaping billow-like,  
Its palace-banked streets. Knights shut in steel, 5  
Whose shields, like water, glassed the soul-eyed  
    maidens,  
That softly did attend their armed tread,  
Flower-cinctured on the temples, whence gushed  
    down  
A full libation of star-numbered tresses,  
Hallowing the neck unto love's silent kiss, 10  
Veiling its innocent white: and then came squires,  
And those who bore war's silken tapestries,  
And chequered heralds: 'twas a human river,  
Brimful and beating as if the great god,  
Who lay beneath it, would arise. So swings 15  
Time's sea, which Age snows into and encreases,  
When from the rocky side of the dim future,  
Leaps into it a mighty destiny,  
Whose being to endow great souls have been  
Centuries hoarded, and the world meanwhile 20  
Sate like a beggar upon Heaven's threshold,  
Muttering its wrongs.

*Siegfr.* My sprightly *Athulf*,  
Is it possible that you can waste the day,  
Which throws these pillared shades among such  
    beauties,  
In lonely thought?

*Athulf,* Why I have left my cup, 25

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

This music, which they tickle from the strings,  
Is excellent for drowning ears that gape,  
When one has need of whispers.

Would have it so: his morning nap being o'er,  
He'd no more need of music, but is moving  
Straight to the lists.

*Adalm.* (to ISBRAND) Be sure 'tis heavy.  
 ne lance of mine a wolf shut his jaws on  
 ut cracked it not, you'll see his bite upon it: 40  
 lies among the hunting weapons.

*Adalm.* The same; it poises well,  
and falls right heavy: find it. *[Exit ISBRAND.]*

You know the man is sore upon a couch  
But upright, on his bloody-hoofed steed  
Gallop'ing o'er the ruins of his foes,  
Whose earthquake he hath been, there will he shout,  
Laugh, run his tongue along his trembling lip,      50  
And swear his heart tastes honey.

*Siegfr.* Nay, thou'rt harsh;  
He was the axe of Mars; but, Troy being felled,  
Peace trims her bower with him.



*Athulf.* Aye, in her hand  
He 's iron still.

*Adalm.* I care not, brother Athulf,  
Whether you're right or wrong: 'tis very certain, 55  
Thank God for it, I am not Peace's lap-dog,  
But Battle's shaggy whelp. Perhaps, even soon,  
Good friend of Bacchus and the rose, you'll feel  
Your budding wall of dalliance shake behind you,  
And need my spear to prop it.

*Athulf.* Come the time! 60  
You'll see that in our veins runs brotherhood.

*A Lady.* Is Siegfried Here? At last! I've sought for  
you  
By every harp and every lady's shoulder,  
Not ever thinking you could breathe the air  
That ducal cub of Miinsterberg makes frightful 65  
With his loud talk.

*Siegfr.* Happy in my error,  
If thus to be corrected.

*Re-enter ISBRAND*

*Isbr.* The lance, my lord:  
A delicate tool to breathe a heathen's vein with.

*The Lady.* What, Isbrand, thou a soldier? Fie  
upon thee!  
Is this a weapon for a fool? 70

*Isbr.* Madam, I pray thee pardon us. The fair  
have wrested the tongue from us, and we must give  
our speeches a sting of some metal—steel or gold.  
And I beseech thee, lady, call me fool no longer:  
I grow old, and in old age you know what men 75  
become. We are at court, and there it were sin to  
call a thing by its right name: therefore call me a  
fool no longer, for my wisdom is on the wane, and  
I am almost as sententious as the governor.

*The Lady.* Excellent: wilt thou become court- 80  
confessor?

*Isbr.* Aye, if thou wilt begin with thy secrets, lady. But my fair mistress, and you, noble brethren, I pray you gather around me. I will now speak a word in earnest, and hereafter jest 85 with you no more: for I lay down my profession of folly. Why should I wear bells to ring the changes of your follies on? Doth the besonneted moon wear bells, she that is the parasite and zany of the stars, and your queen, ye apes of madness? 90 As I live I grow ashamed of the duality of my legs, for they and the apparel, forked or furbelowed, upon them constitute humanity; the brain no longer; and I wish I were an honest fellow of four shins when I look into the note-book of your 95 absurdities. I will abdicate.

*The Lady.* Brave! but how dispose of your dominions, most magnanimous zany?

*Isbr.* My heirs at law are manifold. Yonder minister shall have my jacket; he needs many col- 100 ours for his deeds. You shall inherit my mantle; for your sins, (be it whispered,) chatter with the teeth for cold; and charity, which should be their greatcoat, you have not in the heart.

*The Lady.* Gramercy: but may I not beg your 105 coxcomb for a friend?

*Isbr.* The brothers have an equal claim to that crest: they may tilt for it. But now for my crown. O cap and bells, ye eternal emblems, hieroglyphics of man's supreme right in nature; O ye, 110 that only fall on the deserving, while oak, palm, laurel, and bay rankle on *their* foreheads, whose deserts are oft more payable at the other extremity: who shall be honoured with you? Come candidates, the cap and bells are empty. 115

*The Lady.* Those you should send to England, for the bad poets and the critics who praise them.

*Isbr.* Albeit worthy, those merry men cannot

this once obtain the prize. I will yield Death the crown of folly. He hath no hair, and in this 120 weather might catch cold and die: besides he has killed the best knight I knew, Sir Wolfram, and so is doubly deserving. Let him wear the cap, let him toll the bells; he shall be our new court-fool: and, when the world is old and dead, the thin wit 125 shall find the angel's record of man's works and deeds, and write with a lipless grin on the innocent first page for a title, 'Here begins Death's Jest-book'.—There, you have my testament: henceforth speak solemnly to me, and you shall have a 130 measured answer from me, who have relapsed into courtly wisdom.

*The Lady.* Come, Siegfried, let us leave this wild odd jester.

Some of us in a corner wait your music,  
Your news, and stories. My lord Adalmar, 135  
You must be very weary all this time,  
The rest are so delighted. Come along, [*To SIEGFRIED.*  
Or else his answer stuns me.

*Adalm.* Joyous creature!  
Whose life's first leaf is hardly yet uncurled.

*Athulf.* Use your trade's language; were I journey-  
man 140  
To Mars, the glorious butcher, I would say  
She 's sleek, and sacrificial flowers would look well  
On her white front.

*Adalm.* Now, brother, can you think,  
Stern as I am above, that in my depth  
There is no cleft wherein such thoughts are hived 145  
As from dear looks and words come back to me,  
Storing that honey, love. O! love I do,  
Through every atom of my being.

*Athulf.* Aye,  
So do we young ones all. In winter time  
This god of butterflies, this Cupid sleeps, 150

As they do in their cases; but May comes;  
With it the bee and he: each spring of mine  
He sends me a new arrow, thank the boy.  
A week ago he shot me for this year;  
The shaft is in my stomach, and so large                 155  
I scarce have room for dinner.

*Adalm.*                                          Shall I believe thee,  
Or judge mortality by this stout sample  
I screw my mail o'er? Well, it may be so;  
You are an adept in these chamber passions,  
And have a heart that's Cupid's arrow cushion      160  
Worn out with use. I never knew before  
The meaning of this love. But one has taught me,  
It is a heaven wandering among men,  
The spirit of gone Eden haunting earth.                                          164  
Life's joys, death's pangs are viewless from its bosom,  
Which they who keep are gods; there 's no paradise,  
There is no heaven, no angels, no blessed spirits  
No souls, or they have no eternity,  
If this be not a part of them.

*Athulf.* This in a Court!  
Such sort of love might Hercules have felt 170  
Warm from the Hydra fight, when he had fattened  
On a fresh-slain Bucentaur, roasted whole,  
The heart of his pot-belly, till it ticked  
Like a cathedral clock. But in good faith  
Is this the very truth? Then I have found 175  
My fellow fool. For I am wounded too  
E'en to the quick and inmost, Adalmar.  
So fair a creature! of such sweets compact  
As nature stints elsewhere; which you may find  
Under the tender eyelid of a serpent, 180  
Or in the gurge of a kiss-coloured rose,  
By drops and sparks: but when she moves, you see,  
Like water from a crystal overfilled,  
Fresh beauty tremble out of her and lave  
Her fair sides to the ground. Of other women, 185

(And we have beauteous in this court of ours,)  
 I can remember whether nature touched  
 Their eye with brown or azure, where a vein  
 Runs o'er a sleeping eyelid, like some streak  
 In a young blossom; every grace count up, 190  
 Here the round turn and crevice of the arm,  
 There the tress-bunches, or the slender hand  
 Seen between harpstrings gathering music from them:  
 But when she leaves me I know nothing more,  
 (Like one from whose awakening temples rolls 195  
 The cloudy vision of a god away)  
 Than that she was divine.

*Adalm.* Fie sir, these are the spiced sighs of a heart,  
 That bubbles under wine; utter rhyme-gilding,  
 Beneath man's sober use. What do you speak of? 200

*Athulf.* A woman most divine, and that I love  
 As you dare never.

*Adalm.* Boy, a truce with talk.  
 Such words are sacred, placed within man's reach  
 To be used seldom, solemnly, when speaking  
 Of what both God and man might overhear 205  
 You unabashed.

*Athulf.* Of what? What is more worthy  
 Than the delight of youth, being so rare,  
 Precious, short-lived, and irrecoverable?

*Adalm.* When you do mention that adored land,  
 Which gives you life, pride, and security, 210  
 And holy rights of freedom; or in the praise  
 Of those great virtues and heroic men,  
 That glorify the earth and give it beams,  
*Then* to be lifted by the like devotion  
 Would not disgrace God's angels.

*Athulf.* Well, sir, laud, 215  
 Worship, and swear by them, your native country  
 And virtues past; a phantom and a corpse:  
 Such airy stuff may please you. My desires  
 Are hot and hungry; they will have their fill

Of living dalliance, gazes, and lip-touches, 220  
Or swallow up their lord. No more rebuking:  
Peace be between us. For why are we brothers,  
Being the creatures of two different gods,  
But that we may not be each other's murderers?

*Adalm.* So be it then! But mark me, 225  
I spoke not from a cold unnatural spirit,  
Barren of tenderness. I feel and know  
Of woman's dignity: how it doth merit  
Our total being, has all mine this moment:  
But they should share with us our level lives: 230  
Moments there are, and one is now at hand,  
Too high for them. When all the world is stirred  
By some preluding whisper of that trumpet,  
Which shall awake the dead, to do great things,  
Then the sublimity of my affection, 235  
The very height of my beloved, shows me  
How far above her 's glory. When you've earned  
This knowledge, tell me: f will say, you love  
As a man should. [*He retires.*]

*Athulf* But this is somewhat true.  
I almost think that I could feel the same 240  
For her. For *her*? By heavens, 'tis Amala,  
Amala only, that he so can love.  
There? by her side? in conference! at smiles!  
Then I am born to be a fratricide.  
I feel as I were killing him. Tush, tush; 245  
A phantom of my passion! But, if true—  
What? What, my heart? A strangely-quiet thought,  
That will not be pronounced, doth answer me.

*TORwALD comes forward, attended by the company*

*Torw.* Break up! The day 's of age. Knights to the  
lists,  
And ladies to look on. We'll break some lances 250  
Before 'tis evening. To your sports, I pray;  
I follow quickly. [*He is left alone with the DUKE.*]

Pilgrim, now your news:

Whence come you?

*Duke.* Straightway from the holy land  
Whose sanctity such floods of human blood,  
Unnatural rain for it, will soon wash out. 255

*Torw.* You saw our Duke?

*Duke.* I did: but Melveric  
Is strangely altered. When we saw him leap,  
Shut up in iron, on his burning steed  
From Griissau's threshold, he had fifty years 259  
Upon his head, and bore them straight and upright,  
Through dance, and feast, and knightly tournament.

*Torw.* How is he not the same? Tis but three years  
And a fourth's quarter past. What is the change?  
A silvering of the hair? a deeper wrinkle  
On cheek and forehead?

*Duke.* I do not think you'd know him,  
Stood he where I do. No. I saw him lying 266  
Beside a fountain on a battle-evening:  
The sun was setting over the heaped plain;  
And to my musing fancy his front's furrows,  
With light between them, seemed the grated shadows  
Thrown by the ribs of that field's giant, Death; 271  
'Twixt which the finger of the hour did write  
This is the grave's'.

*Torw.* How? Looked he sorrowful?  
Knows he the dukedom's state?

*Duke, (giving letters to TORWALD)* Ask these. He 's  
heard  
The tidings that afflict the souls of fathers; 275  
How these two sons of his unfilially  
Have vaulted to the saddle of the people,  
And charge against him. How he gained the news,  
You must know best: what countermines he digs,  
Those letters tell your eyes. He bade me say, 280  
His dukedom is his body, and, he forth,  
That may be sleeping, but the touch of wrong,

The murderer's barefoot tread will bring him back  
Out of his Eastern visions, ere this earth  
Has swung the city's length.

*Torw.* I read as much: 285  
He bids me not to move; no eye to open,  
But to sit still and doze, and warm my feet  
At their eruption. This security  
Is most unlike him. I remember oft,  
When the thin harvests shed their withered grain, 290  
And empty poverty yelped sour-mouthed at him,  
How he would cloud his majesty of form  
With priestly hangings, or the tattered garb  
Of the step-seated beggar, and go round  
To catch the tavern talk and the street ballad, 295  
Until he knew the very nick of time,  
When his heart's arrow would be on the string;  
And, seizing Treason by the arm, would pour  
Death back upon him.

*Duke.* He is wary still,  
And has a snake's eye under every leaf. 300  
Your business is obedience unto him,  
Who is your natal star; and mine to worm,  
Leaf after leaf, into the secret volume  
Of their designs. Already has our slave,  
The grape juice, left the side-door of the youngest 305  
Open to me. You think him innocent.  
Fire flashes from him; whether it be such  
As treason would consult by, or the coals  
Love boils his veins on, shall through this small crevice,  
In which the vine has thrust his cunning tendril, 310  
Be looked and listened for.

*Torw.* Can I believe it?  
Did not I know him and his spirit's course,  
Well as the shape and colour of the sun,  
And when it sets and rises? Is this he?  
No: 'tis the shadow of this pilgrim false, 315  
Who stands up in his height of villainy,



Shadowy as a hill, and throws his hues  
 Of contradiction to the heavenly light,  
 The stronger as it shines upon him most. 319  
 Ho! pilgrim, I have weighed and found thee villain.  
 Are thy knees used to kneeling? It may chance  
 That thou must change the altar for the block:  
 Prove thou'rt his messenger,

*Duke.* Pause! I am stuffed  
 With an o'erwhelming spirit: press not thou,  
 Or I shall burst asunder, and let through 325  
 The deluging presence of thy duke. Prepare:  
 He 's near at hand.

*Torw.* Forbid it, Providence!  
 He steps on a plot's spring, whose teeth encircle  
 The throne and city.

*Duke, (disrobing)* Fear not. On he comes,  
 Still as a star robed in eclipse, until 330  
 The earthy shadow slips away. Who rises?  
 I'm changing: now who am I?

*Torw.* Melveric!  
 Miinsterberg, as I live and love thee!

*Duke.* Hush!  
 Is there not danger?

*Torw.* Aye: we walk on ice  
 Over the mouth of Hell: an inch beneath us, 335  
 Dragon Rebellion lies ready to wake.  
 Ha! there behold him.

*Enter ADALMAR*

*Adalm.* Lord Governor, our games are waiting for  
 you.  
 Will you come with me? Base and muffled stranger,  
 What dost thou here? Away.

*Duke.* Prince Adalmar, 340  
 Where shall you see me? I will come again,  
**This** or the next **world**. **Thou, who** earnest  
**The** seeds of a new world, may'st understand me.

## Scene iii

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Look for me ever. There 's no crack without me  
In earth and all around it. Governor, 345  
Let all things happen, as they will. Farewell:  
Tremble for no one.

*Adalm.* Hence! the begging monk  
Prates emptily.

*Duke.* Believe him.

*Torw.* Well, lead on;  
Wert thou a king, I'd not obey thee more.

[Exit With ADALMAR.]

*Duke.* Rebellion, treason, parricidal daggers! 350  
This is the bark of the court dogs, that come  
Welcoming home their master. My sons too,  
Even my sons! O not sons, but contracts,  
Between my lust and a destroying fiend,  
Written in my dearest blood, whose date run out, 355  
They are become death warrants, Parricide,  
And murder of the heart that loved and nourished.  
Be merry, ye rich fiends! Piety 's dead,  
And left the world a legacy to you.  
Under the green-sod are your coffins packed, 360  
So thick they break each other. The day 's come  
When scarce a lover, for his maiden's hair,  
Can pluck a stalk whose rose draws not its hue  
Out of a hate-killed heart. Nature 's polluted,  
There 's man in every secret corner of her, 365  
Doing damned wicked deeds. Thou art old, world,  
A hoary atheistic murderous star:  
I wish that thou would'st die, or could'st be slain,  
Hell-hearted bastard of the sun.  
O that the twenty coming years were over! 370  
Then should I be at rest, where ruined arches  
Shut out the troublesome unghostly day;  
And idlers might be sitting on my tomb,  
Telling how I did die. How shall I die?  
Fighting my sons for power; or of dotage, 375  
Sleeping in purple pressed from filial veins;

And let my epitaph be, 'Here lies he,  
Who murdered his two children?' Hence cursed  
thought!

I will enquire the purpose of their plot:

There may be good in it, and, if there be,

I'll be a traitor too.

380

[Exit.

SCENE IV. *A retired gallery in the ducal castle*

*Enter ISBRAND and SIEGFRIED*

*Isbr.* Now see you how this dragon-egg of ours  
Swells with its ripening plot? Methinks I hear  
Snaky rebellion turning restless in it,  
And with its horny jaws scraping away  
The shell that hides it. All is ready now: 5  
I hold the latch-string of a new world's wicket;  
One pull—and it rolls in. Bid all our friends  
Meet in that ruinous churchyard once again,  
By moonrise; until then I'll hide myself;  
For these sweet thoughts rise dimpling to my lips, 10  
And break the dark stagnation of my features,  
Like sugar melting in a glass of poison.  
To-morrow, Siegfried, shalt thou see me sitting  
One of the drivers of this racing earth  
With Grussau's reins between my fingers. Ha! 15  
Never since Hell laughed at the church, blood-drunken  
From rack and wheel, has there been joy so mad  
As that which stings my marrow now.

*Siegfr.* Good cause,  
The sun-glance of a coming crown to heat you,  
And give your thoughts gay colours in the steam 20  
Of a fermenting brain.

*Isbr.* Not that alone.  
A sceptre is smooth handling, it is true,  
And one grows fat and jolly in a chair  
That has a kingdom crouching under it,

With one's name on its collar, like a dog 25  
To fetch and carry. But the heart I have  
Is a strange little snake. He drinks not wine  
When he'd be drunk, but poison: he doth fatten  
On bitter hate, not love. And oh, that duke!  
My life is hate of him; and when I tread 30  
His neck into the grave, I shall, methinks,  
Fall into ashes with the mighty joy,  
Or be transformed into a winged star:  
That will be all eternal heaven distilled  
Down to one thick rich minute. This sounds madly, 35  
But I am mad when I remember him:  
Siegfried, you know not why.

*Siegfr.*

I never knew

That you had quarrelled.

*Isbr.*

True: but did you not see

My brother's corpse? There was a wound on 't Siegfried;

He died not gently, nor in a ripe age; 40

And I'll be sworn it was the duke that did it,

Else he had not remained in that far land,

And sent his knights to us again.

*Siegfr.*

I thought

He was the duke's close friend.

*Isbr.*

Close as his blood:

A double-bodied soul they did appear, 45

Rather than fellow hearts.

*Siegfr.*

I've heard it told

That they did swear and write in their best blood,

And her's they loved the most, that who died first

Should, on death's holidays, revisit him

Who still dwelt in the flesh.

*Isbr.*

O that such bond

50

Would move the jailor of the grave to open

Life's gate again unto my buried brother

But half an hour! Were I buried, like him,

There in the very garrets of the grave,

But six feet under earth (that's the grave's sky), 55  
I'd jump up into life. But he 's a quiet ghost;  
He walks not in the churchyard after dew,  
But gets to his grave betimes, burning no glow-worms,  
Sees that his bones are right, and stints his worms  
Most miserly. If you were murdered, Siegfried, 60  
As he was by this duke, should it be so?

*Siegfr.* Here speaks again your passion: what know  
wc

Of Death's commandments to his subject-spirits,  
Who are as yet the body's citizens?  
What seas unnavigable, what wild forests, 65  
What castles, and what ramparts there may hedge  
His icy frontier?

*Isbr.* Tower and roll what may,  
There have been goblins bold who have stolen pass-  
ports,  
Or sailed the sea, or leaped the wall, or flung  
The drawbridge down, and travelled back again. 70  
So would my soul have done. But let it be.  
At doomsday's dawning shall the ducal cut-throat  
Wake by a tomb-fellow he little dreamt of.  
Methinks, I see them rising with mixed bones,  
A pair of patchwork angels.

*Siegfr.* What does this mean? 75

*Isbr.* A pretty piece of kidnapping, that's all.  
When Melveric's heart's heart, his new-wed wife,  
Upon the bed whereon she bore these sons,  
Died, as a blossom does whose inmost fruit  
Tears it in twain, and in its stead remains 80  
A bitter poison-berry: when she died,  
What her soul left was by her husband laid  
In the marriage grave, whereto he doth consign  
Himself being dead.

*Siegfr.* Like a true loving mate.  
Is not her tomb 'mid the cathedral ruins, 85  
Where we to-night assemble?

*Isbr.*

Say not her's:

A changeling lies there. By black night came I,  
And, while a man might change two goblets' liquors,  
I laid the lips of their two graves together,  
And poured my brother into hers; while she, 90  
Being the lightest, floated and ran over.  
Now lies the murdered where the loved should be;  
And Melferic the dead shall dream of heaven,  
Embracing his damnation. There 's revenge. 94  
But hush! here comes one of my dogs, the princes;—  
To work with you. [Exit SIEGFRIED.

Now for another shape;

For Isbrand is the handle of the chisels  
Which Fate, the turner of men's lives, doth use  
Upon the wheeling world.

*Enter* ATHULF

There is a passion

Lighting his cheek, as red as brother's hate: 100  
If it be so, these pillars shall go down,  
Shivering each other, and their ruins be  
My step into a pryncedom. Doth he speak?

*Athulf.* Then all the minutes of my life to come  
Are sands of a great desart, into which 105  
I'm banished broken-hearted. Amala,  
I must think thee a lovely-faced murderess,  
With eyes as dark and poisonous as nightshade;  
Yet no, not so; if thou hadst murdered me,  
It had been charitable. Thou hast slain 110  
The love of thee, that lived in my soul's palace  
And made it holy: now 'tis desolate,  
And devils of abandonment will haunt it,  
And call in Sins to come, and drink with them  
Out of my heart. But now farewell, my love; 115  
For thy rare sake I would have been a man  
One story under God. Gone, gone art thou.  
Great and voluptuous Sin now seize upon me,

Thou paramour of Hell's fire-crowned king,  
That showedst the tremulous fairness of thy bosom  
In heaven, and so didst ravish the best angels. 121  
Come, pour thy spirit all about my soul,  
And let a glory of thy bright desires  
Play round about my temples. So may I  
Be thy knight and Hell's saint for evermore. 125  
Kiss me with fire: I'm thine.

*Isbr.* Doth it run so?  
A bold beginning we must keep him up to 't.

*Athulf.* Isbrand!

*Isbr.* My prince.

*Athulf.* Come to me. Thou'rt a man  
I must know more of. There is something in thee,  
The deeper one doth venture in thy being, 130  
That drags us on and down. What dost thou lead to?  
Art thou a current to some unknown sea  
Islanded richly, full of syren songs  
And unknown bliss? Art thou the snaky opening  
Of a dark cavern, where one may converse 135  
With night's dear spirits? If thou'rt one of these,  
Let me descend thee.

*Isbr.* You put questions to me  
In an Egyptian or old magic tongue,  
Which I can ill interpret.

*Athulf.* Passion's hieroglyphics;  
Painted upon the minutes by mad thoughts, 140  
Dungeoned in misery. Isbrand, answer me;  
Art honest, or a man of many deeds  
And many faces to them? Thou'rt a plotter,  
A politician. Say, if there should come  
A fellow, with his being just abandoned 145  
By old desires and hopes, who would do much—  
And who doth much upon this grave-paved star,  
In doing, must sin much—would quick and straight,

Sword-straight and poison-quick, have done with  
doing;

Would you befriend him?

*Isbr.* I can lend an arm 150

To good bold purpose. But you know me not,  
And I will not be known before my hour.

Why come you here wishing to raise the devil,  
And ask me how? Where are your sacrifices?

Eye-water is not his libation, prayers 155

Reach him not through earth's chinks. Bold deeds and  
thoughts,

What men call crimes, are his loved litany;  
And from all such good angels keep us! Now sir,  
What makes you fretful?

*Athulf.* I have lost that hope,  
For which alone I lived. Henceforth my days 160

Are purposeless; there is no reason further

Why I should be, or should let others be;

No motive more for virtue, for forbearance,

Or anything that's good. The hourly need,

And the base bodily cravings, must be now 165

The aim of this deserted human engine.

Good may be in this world, but not for me;

Gentle and noble hearts, but not for me;

And happiness, and heroism, and glory,

And love, but none for me. Let me then wander 170

Amid their banquets, funerals, and weddings,

Like one whose living spirit is Death's Angel.

*Isbr.* What? You have lost your love and so turned  
sour?

And who has ta'en your chair in Amala's heaven?

*Athulf.* My brother, my Cain; Adalmar.

*Isbr.* I'll help thee, prince: 175

When will they marry?

*Athulf.* I could not wish him in my rage to die

Sooner: one night I'd give him to dream hells.

To-morrow, Isbrand.



*Isbr.* Sudden, by my life.  
But, out of the black interval, we'll cast 180  
Something upon the moment of their joy,  
Which, should it fail to blot, shall so deform it,  
That they must write it further down in time.

*Athulf.* Let it be crossed with red.

*Isbr.* Trust but to me:  
I'll get you bliss. But I am of a sort 185  
Not given to affections. Sire and mother  
And sister I had never, and so feel not  
Why sin 'gainst them should count so doubly wicked,  
This side o' th' sun. If you would wound your foe,  
Get swords that pierce the mind: a bodily slice 190  
Is cured by surgeon's butter: let true hate  
Leap the flesh wall, or fling his fiery deeds  
Into the soul. So he can marry, Athulf,  
And then—

*Athulf.* Peace, wicked-hearted slave!  
Darest thou tempt me? I called on thee for service, 195  
But thou wouldst set me at a hellish work,  
To cut my own damnation out of Lust:  
Thou'ldst sell me to the fiend. Thou and thy master,  
That sooty beast the devil, shall be my dogs,  
My curs to kick and beat when I would have you. 200  
I will not bow, nor follow at his bidding,  
For his hell-throne. No: I will have a god  
To serve my purpose; Hatred be his name;  
But 'tis a god, divine in wickedness,  
Whom I will worship. [Exit. 205

*Isbr.* Then go where Pride and Madness carry thee:  
And let that feasted fatness pine and shrink,  
Till thy ghost's pinched in the tight love-lean body.  
I see his life, as in a map of rivers,  
Through shallows, over rocks, breaking its way, 210  
Until it meet his brother's, and with that  
Wrestle and tumble o'er a perilous rock,  
Bare as Death's shoulder: one of them is lost,

And a dark haunted flood creeps deadly on  
Into the wailing Styx. Poor Amala! 215  
A thorny rose thy life is, plucked in the dew,  
And pitilessly woven with these snakes  
Into a garland for the King of the grave. [Exit.

## ACT III

SCENE I. *An apartment in the ducal castle*

*The DUKE and TORWALD*

*Duke.* Let them be married: give to Adalmar  
The sweet society of woman's soul,  
As we impregnate damask swords with odour  
Pressed from young flowers' bosoms, so to sweeten  
And purify war's lightning. For the other, 5  
Who catches love by eyes, the court has stars,  
That will take up in his tempestuous bosom  
The shining place she leaves.

*Torw.* It shall be done:  
The bell, that will ring merrily for their bridal,  
Has but few hours to score first.

*Duke.* Good. I have seen too 10  
Our ripe rebellion's ringleaders. They meet  
By moonrise; with them I: to-night will be  
Fiends' jubilee, with heaven's spy among them.  
What else was 't that you asked?

*Torw.* The melancholy lady you brought with you?

*Duke.* Torwald, I fear her's is a broken heart. 16  
When first I met her in the Egyptian prison,  
She was the rosy morning of a woman;  
Beauty was rising, but the starry grace  
Of a calm childhood might be seen in her. 20  
But since the death of Wolfram, who fell there,  
Heaven and one single soul only know how,  
I have not dared to look upon her sorrow.

*Torw.* Methinks she 's too unearthly beautiful.  
Old as I am, I cannot look at her, 25  
And hear her voice, that touches the heart's core,  
Without a dread that she will fade each instant.  
There 's too much heaven in her: oft it rises,  
And, pouring out about the lovely earth,  
Almost dissolves it. She is tender too; 30  
And melancholy is the sweet pale smile,  
With which she gently doth reproach her fortune.

*Duke.* What ladies tend her?

*Torw.* My Amala; she will not often see  
One of the others.

*Duke.* Too much solitude  
Maintains her in this grief. I will look to 't 35  
Hereafter; for the present I've enough.  
We must not meet again before to-morrow.

*Torw.* I may have something to report...

*Duke.* Ho! Ziba.

*Enter ZIBA*

*Ziba.* Lord of my life!

*Duke.* I bought this man of Afric from an Arab, 40  
Under the shadow of a pyramid,  
For many jewels. He hath skill in language;  
And knowledge is in him root, flower, and fruit,  
A palm with winged imagination in it,  
Whose roots stretch even underneath the grave, 45  
And on them hangs a lamp of magic science  
In his soul's deepest mine, where folded thoughts  
Lie sleeping on the tombs of magi dead:  
So said his master when he parted with him.  
I know him skilful, faithful; take him with you; 50  
He 's fit for many services.

*Torw.* I'll try him:  
Wilt thou be faithful, Moor?

*Ziba,* As soul to body.

*Torw.* Then follow me. Farewell, my noble pilgrim.  
[Exit.]

*Duke.* It was a fascination, near to madness,  
Which held me subjugated to that maiden. 55  
Why do I now so coldly speak of her,  
When there is nought between us? O! there is,  
A deed as black as the old towers of Hell.  
But hence! thou torturing weakness of remorse;  
'Tis time when I am dead to think on that: 60  
Yet my sun shines; so courage, heart, cheer up:  
Who should be merrier than a secret villain? [Exit.]

SCENE II. *Another room in the same*

SIBYLLA and AMALA

*Sibyl.* I would I were a fairy, Amala,  
Or knew some of those winged wizard women,  
Then I could bring you a more precious gift.  
'Tis a wild graceful flower, whose name I know not;  
Call it Sibylla's love, while it doth live; 5  
And let it die that you may contradict it,  
And say my love doth not, so bears no fruit.  
Take it. I wish that happiness may ever  
Flow through your days as sweetly and as still,  
As did the beauty and the life to this 10  
Out of its roots.

*Amala.* Thanks, my kind Sibylla:  
To-morrow I will wear it at my wedding,  
Since that must be.

*Sibyl.* Art thou then discontented?  
I thought the choice was thine, and Adalmar  
A noble warrior worthy of his fortune. 15

*Amala.* O yes: brave, honourable is my bridegroom,  
But somewhat cold perhaps. If his wild brother  
Had but more constancy and less insolence  
In love, he were a man much to my heart.

But, as it is, I must, I will be happy; 20

And Adalmar deserves that I should love him.

But see how night o'ertakes us. Good rest, dear:

We will no more profane sleep's stillest hour.

Sibyl. Good night, then. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *The ruins of a spacious Gothic Cathedral and churchyard. On the cloister wall the Dance of Death is painted. The sepulchre of the Dukes with massy carved folding doors, &c, by moonlight.*

Enter MANDRAKE

Mandr. After all being dead 's not so uncomfortable when one 's got into the knack of it. There's nothing to do, no taxes to pay, nor any quarrelling about the score for ale. And yet I begin shrewdly to suspect that death 's all a take-in: as soon as 5 gentlemen have gained some 70 years of experience they begin to be weary of the common drudgery of the world, lay themselves down, hold their breath, close their eyes and are announced as having entered into the fictitious condition by means of 10 epitaphs and effigies. But, good living people, don't you be deceived any more: It is only a cunning invention to avoid paying poor's rates and the reviewers. They live all jollily underground and sneak about a little in the night air to hear the news and 15 laugh at their poor innocent great-grandchildren, who take them for goblins, and tremble for fear of death, which is at best only a ridiculous game at hide-and-seek. That is my conviction, and I am quite impartial being in the secret, but I will only 20 keep away from the living till I have met with a few of these gentle would-be dead, who are shy enough, and am become initiated into their secrets, and then I will write to the newspapers, turn King's evidence

and discover the whole import and secret, become 25  
more renowned than Columbus, though sure to be  
opposed by the doctors and undertakers whose in-  
vention the whole most extravagant idea seems to  
be. Ah! some living folks.—Well, I must keep up  
the joke a little longer, and keep away from them: 30  
here are good quarters for the like of me, there I'll  
sleep to-night. *[Goes into the sepulchre.*

*Enter* ISBRAND and SIEGFRIED

*Isbr.* Not here? That wolf-howled, witch-prayed,  
owl-sung fool,  
Fat mother moon hath brought the cats their light  
A whole thief's hour, and yet they are not met. 35  
I thought the bread and milky thick-spread lies,  
With which I plied them, would have drawn to head  
The state's bad humours quickly.

*Siegfr.* They delay  
Until the twilight strollers are gone home.

*Isbr.* That may be. This is a sweet place methinks: 40  
These arches and their caves, now double-nighted  
With heaven's and that creeping darkness, ivy,  
Delight me strangely. Ruined churches oft.  
As this, are crime's chief haunt, as ruined angels  
Straight become fiends. This tomb too tickleth me 45  
With its wild-rose branches. Dost remember, Siegfried,  
About the buried Duchess? In this cradle  
I changed the new dead: here the murdered lies.

*Siegfr.* Are we so near? A frightful theft!

*Isbr.* Fright! idiot!—  
Peace; there 's a footstep on the pavement.

*Enter the* DUKE

Welcome! 50

I thank you, wanderer, for coming first,  
They of the town lag still.

*Duke.* The enterprise,  
And you its head, much please me.

*Isbr.* You are courteous.

*Duke.* Better: I'm honest. But your ways and words  
Are so familiar to my memory, 55  
That I could almost think we had been friends  
Since our now riper and declining lives  
Undid their outer leaves.

*Isbr.* I can remember  
No earlier meeting. What need of it? Methinks  
We agree well enough: especially 60  
And you have brought bad tidings of the Duke.

*Duke.* If I had time,  
And less disturbed thoughts, I'd search my memory  
For what thou'rt like. Now we have other matters  
To talk about.

*Isbr.* And, thank the stingy star-shine,  
I see the shades of others of our council. 65

*Enter ADALMAR and other civil and military  
conspirators*

Though late met, well met, friends. Where stay the  
rest?

For we're still few here.

*Adalm.* They are contented  
With all the steps proposed, and keep their chambers  
Aloof from the suspecting crowd of eyes,  
Which day doth feed with sights for nightly gossip, 70  
Until your hour strikes.

*Isbr.* That's well to keep at home,  
And hide, as doth Heaven's wrath, till the last minute.  
Little 's to say. We fall as gently on them,  
As the first drops of Noah's world-washing shower  
Upon the birds' wings and the leaves. Give each 75  
A copy of this paper: it contains  
A quick receipt to make a new creation  
In our old dukedom. Here stands he who framed it.

*Adalm.* The unknown pilgrim! **You** have warrant,  
Isbrand, 79  
For trusting him?

*Isbr.* I have.

*Adalm.* Enough. How are the citizens?  
You feasted them these three days.

*Isbr.* And have them by the heart for 't.  
'Neath Griissau's tiles sleep none, whose deepest  
bosom

My fathom hath not measured; none, whose thoughts  
I have not made a map of. In the depth  
And labyrinthine home of the still soul, 85  
Where the seen thing is imaged, and the whisper  
Joints the expecting spirit, my spies, which are  
Suspicion's creeping words, have stolen in,  
And, with their eyed feelers, touched and sounded  
The little hiding holes of cunning thought, 90  
And each dark crack in which a reptile purpose  
Hangs in its chrysalis unripe for birth.  
All of each heart I know.

*Duke.* O perilous boast!  
Fathom the wavy caverns of all stars,  
Know every side of every sand in earth, 95  
And hold in little all the lore of man,  
As a dew's drop doth miniature the sun:  
But never hope to learn the alphabet,  
In which the hieroglyphic human soul  
More changeably is painted than the rainbow 100  
Upon the cloudy pages of a shower,  
Whose thunderous hinges a wild wind doth turn.  
Know all of each! when each doth shift his thought  
More often in a minute, than the air  
Dust on a summer path.

*Isbr.* Liquors can lay them: 105  
Grape-juice or vein-juice.

*Duke.* Yet there may be one,  
Whose misty mind's perspective still lies hid.



*Jsbr.* Ha! stranger, where?

*Duke.* A quiet, listening, flesh-concealed soul.

*Jsbr.* Are the ghosts eavesdropping? None, that do  
live, 110

Listen besides ourselves.

*A struggle behind: SIEGFRIED brings MARIO forward*

Who 's there?

*Siegfr.* A fellow,  
Who crouched behind the bush, dipping his ears  
Into the stream of your discourse.

*Jsbr.* Come forward.

*Mario.* Then lead me. Were it noon, I could not find  
him

Whose voice commands me: in these callous hands 115  
There is as much perception for the light,  
As in the depth of my poor dayless eyes.

*Jsbr.* Thy hand then.

*Mario.* Art thou leader here?

*Jsbr.* Perchance.

*Mario.* Then listen, as I listened unto you,  
And let my life and story end together, 120  
If it seem good to you. A Roman am I;  
A Roman in unroman times: I've slept  
At midnight in our Capitolian ruins,  
And breathed the ghost of our great ancient world,  
Which there doth walk: and among glorious visions,  
That the unquiet tombs sent forth to me, 126  
Learned I the love of Freedom. Scipio saw I  
Washing the stains of Carthage from his sword,  
And his freed poet, playing on his lyre  
A melody men's souls replied unto: 130  
Oak-bound and laurelled heads, each man a country;  
And in the midst, like a sun o'er the sea  
(Each helm in the crowd gilt by a ray from him),  
Bald Julius sitting lonely in his car,  
Within the circle of whose laurel wreath 135

All spirits of the earth and sea were spell-bound.  
 Down with him to the grave! Down with the god!  
 Stab, Cassius; Brutus, through him; through him, all!  
 Dead.—As he fell there was a tearing sigh:  
 Earth stood on him; her roots were in his heart;     140  
 They fell together. Caesar and his world  
 Lie in the Capitol; and Jove lies there,  
 With all the gods of Rome and of Olympus;  
 Corpses: and does the eagle batten on them?  
 No; she is flown: the owl sits in her nest;     145  
 The toge is cut for cowls; and falsehood dozes  
 In the chair of freedom, triple-crowned beast,  
 King Cerberus. Thence I have come in time  
 To see one grave for foul oppression dug,  
 Though I may share it.

*Isbr.*                                Nay: thou'rt a bold heart. 150  
 Welcome among us.

*Mario.*                                I was guided hither  
 By one in white, garlanded like a bride,  
 Divinely beautiful, leading me softly;  
 And she doth place my hand in thine, once more  
 Bidding me guard her honour amongst men;     155  
 And so I will, with death to him that soils it:  
 For she is Liberty.

*Adalm.*                                In her name we take thee;  
 And for her sake welcome thee brotherly.  
 At the right time thou comest to us, dark man,  
 Like an eventful unexpected night,     160  
 Which finishes a row of plotting days,  
 Fulfilling their designs.

*Isbr.*                                Now, then, my fellows,  
 No more; but to our unsuspected homes.  
 Good night to all who rest; hope to the watchful. 164  
 Stranger, with me. (*To MARIO*) [*Exeunt: manet DUKE.*]

*Duke.* I'm old and desolate. O were I dead  
 With thee, my wife! **Oft** have I lain by **night**  
**Upon** thy grave, and **burned with the mad wish**

To raise thee up to life. Thank God, whom then  
I might have thought not pitiful, for lending 170  
No ear to such a prayer. Far better were I  
Thy grave-fellow, than thou alive with me,  
Amid the fears and perils of the time.

*Enter ZIBA*

Who 's in the dark there?

*Ziba.* One of the dark's colour:

*Ziba,* thy slave.

*Duke.* Come at a wish, my Arab. 175

Is Torwald's house asleep yet?

*Ziba.* No: his lights still burn.

*Duke.* Go; fetch a lantern and some working  
fellows

With spade and pickaxe. Let not Torwald come.

In good speed do it. *[Exit ZIBA.*

That alone is left me:

I will abandon this ungrateful country, 180

And leave my dukedom's earth behind me; all,

Save the small urn that holds my dead beloved:

That relic will I save from my wrecked principedom;

Beside it live and die.

*Enter TORWALD, ZIBA, and gravediggers*

Torwald with them!

Old friend, I hoped you were in pleasant sleep: 185

Tis a late walking hour.

*Torw.* I came to learn

Whether the slave spoke true. This haunted hour,

What would you with the earth? Dig you for treasure?

*Duke.* Aye, I do dig for treasure. To the vault:

Lift up the kneeling marble woman there, 190

And delve down to the coffin. Aye, for treasure:

The very dross of such a soul and body

Shall stay no longer in this land of hate.

I'll covetously rake the ashes up

Of this my love-consumed incense star, 195  
And in a golden urn, over whose sides  
An unborn life of sculpture shall be poured,  
They shall stand ever on my chamber altar.  
I am not Heaven's rebel; think 't not of me;  
Nor that I'd trouble her sepulchral sleep 200  
For a light end. Religiously I come  
To change the bed of my beloved lady,  
That what remains below of us may join,  
Like its immortal.

*Torw.* There is no ill here: 204  
And yet this breaking through the walls, that sever  
The quick and cold, led never yet to good.

*Ziba.* Our work is done: betwixt the charmed moon-  
shine  
And the coffin lies nought but a nettle's shade,  
That shakes its head at the deed.

*Duke.* Let the men go. [*Exeunt grave'diggers.*]  
Now Death, thou shadowy miser,  
I am thy robber; be not merciful, 211  
But take me in requital. There she is then;  
I cannot hold my tears, thinking how altered.  
O thoughts, ye fleeting, unsubstantial things,  
Thou formless, viewless, and unsettled memory! 215  
How dare ye yet survive that gracious image,  
Sculptured about the essence whence ye rose?  
That words of hers should ever dwell in me,  
Who is as if she never had been born 219  
To all earth's millions, save this one! Nay, prithee,  
Let no one comfort me. I'll mourn awhile  
Over her memory.

*Torw.* Let the past be past,  
And Lethe freeze unwept on over it.  
What is, be patient with; and, with what shall be,  
Silence the body-bursting spirit's yearnings. 225  
Thou say'st that, when she died, that day was spilt  
All beauty flesh could hold; that day went down

An oversouled creation. The time comes  
When thou shalt find again thy blessed love,  
Pure from all earth, and with the usury 230  
Of her heaven-hoarded charms.

*Duke.* Is this the silence  
That I commanded? Fool, thou say'st a lesson  
Out of some philosophic pedant's book.  
I loved no desolate soul: she was a woman,  
Whose spirit I knew only through those limbs, 235  
Those tender members thou dost dare despise;  
By whose exhaustless beauty, infinite love,  
Trackless expression only, I did learn  
That there was aught yet viewless and eternal; 239  
Since they could come from such alone. Where is she?  
Where shall I ever see her as she was?  
With the sweet smile, she smiled only on me;  
With those eyes full of thoughts, none else could see?  
Where shall I meet that brow and lip with mine?  
Hence with thy shadows! But her warm fair body, 245  
Where 's that? There, mouldered to the dust. Old man  
If thou dost dare to mock my ears again  
With thy ridiculous, ghostly consolation,  
I'll send thee to the blessings thou dost speak of.

*Torw.* For Heaven's and her sake restrain this  
passion. 250

*Duke.* She died. But Death is old and half worn out:  
Are there no chinks in 't? Could she not come to me?  
Ghosts have been seen, but never in a dream,  
After she'd sighed her last, was she the blessing  
Of these desiring eyes. All, save my soul, 255  
And that but for her sake, were his who knew  
The spell of Endor, and could raise her up.

*Torw.* Another time that thought were impious.  
Unreasonable longings, such as these,  
Fit not your age and reason. In sorrow's rage 260  
Thou dost demand and bargain for a dream,  
Which children smile at in their tales.

*Ziba.* Smile ignorance!  
But, sure as men have died, strong necromancy  
Hath set the clock of time and nature back; 264  
And made Earth's rooty, ruinous, grave-piled caverns  
Throb with the pangs of birth. Aye, were I ever  
Where the accused innocent did pray  
The dead, whose murder he was falsely charged with,  
To rise and speak him free, I would essay  
My sires' sepulchral magic.

*Duke.* Slave, thou tempt'st me  
To lay my sword's point to thy throat, and say 271  
' Do it or die thyself.

*Torw.* Prithee, come in.  
To cherish hopes like these is either madness,  
Or a sure cause of it. Come in and sleep:  
To-morrow we'll talk further.

*Duke.* Go in thou. 275  
Sleep blinds no eyes of mine, till I have proved  
This skive's temptation.

*Torw.* Then I leave you to him.  
Good night again. [Exit TORWALD.

*Duke.* Good night, and quiet slumbers.  
Now then, thou juggling African, thou shadow,  
Think'st thou I will not murder thee this night, 280  
If thou again dare tantalize my soul  
With thy accursed hints, thy lying boasts?  
Say, shall I stab thee?

*Ziba.* Then thou murder'st truth.  
I spoke of what I'd do.

*Duke.* You told ghost-lies,  
And thought I was a fool because I wept. 285  
Now, once more, silence: or to-night I shed  
Drops royaller and redder than those tears.

*Enter ISBRAND followed by SIEGFRIED with  
wine, &c.*

*Isbr.* Pilgrim, not yet abed? Why, ere you've time

To lay your cloak down, heaven will strip off night,  
And show her daily bosom.

*Duke.* Sir, my eyes 290

Never did feel less appetite for sleep:  
I and my slave intend to watch till morrow.

*Isbr.* Excellent. You're a fellow of my humour  
I never sleep o' nights; the black sky likes me,  
And the soul's solitude, while half mankind 295  
Lies quiet in earth's shade rehearsing death.

Come, let's be merry, I have sent for wine.  
And here it comes. These mossy stones about us  
Will serve for stools, although they have been turrets  
Which scarce aught touched but sunlight, or the claw  
Of the strong-winged eagles, who lived here 301  
And fed on battle-bones. Come sit, sir stranger;  
Sit too, my devil-coloured one; here 's room  
Upon my rock. Fill, Siegfried.

*Siegfr.* Yellow wine,  
And rich be sure. How like you it? 305

*Duke.* Better ne'er wetted lip.

*Isbr.* Then fill again. Come, hast no song to-night,  
Siegfried? Nor you, my midnight of a man?  
I'm weary of dumb toping.

*Siegfr.* Sing, yourself, Sir.  
My songs are staler than the cuckoo's tune: 311  
And you, companions?

*Duke.* We are quite unused.

*Isbr.* Then you shall have a ballad of my making.

*Siegfr.* How? do you rhyme too?

*Isbr.* Sometimes, in leisure moments  
And a romantic humour; this I made 315  
One night a-strewing poison for the rats  
In the kitchen corner.

*Duke.* And what's your tune?

*Isbr.* What is the night-bird's tune, wherewith she  
startles  
The bee out of his dream and the true lover,

And both in the still moonshine turn and kiss      320  
 The flowery bosoms where they rest, and murmuring  
 Sleep smiling and more happily again?  
 What is the lobster's tune when he is boiled?  
 I hate your ballads that are made to come  
 Round like a squirrel's cage, and round again.      325  
 We nightingales sing boldly from our hearts:  
 So listen to us.

*Song by ISBRAND*

Squats on a toad-stool under a tree  
 A bodiless childfull of life in the gloom,  
 Crying with frog voice, 'What shall I be?      330  
 Poor unborn ghost, for my mother killed me  
 Scarcely alive in her wicked womb.  
 What shall I be? shall I creep to the egg  
 That's cracking asunder yonder by Nile,  
 And with eighteen toes,      335  
 And a snuff-taking nose,  
 Make an Egyptian crocodile?  
 Sing, "Catch a mummy by the leg  
 And crunch him with an upper jaw,  
 Wagging tail and clenching claw;      340  
 Take a bill-full from my crow,  
 Neighbour raven, caw, O caw,  
 Grunt, my crocky, pretty maw!"  
 'Swine, shall I be one? 'Tis a dear dog;  
 But for a smile, and kiss, and pout,      345  
 I much prefer *your* black-lipped snout,  
 Little, gruntless, fairy hog,  
 Godson of the hawthorn hedge.  
 For, when Ringwood snuffs me out,  
 And 'gins my tender paunch to grapple,      350  
 Sing, " 'Twixt your ancles visage wedge,  
 And roll up like an apple."



'Serpent Lucifer, how do you do?  
Of your worms and your snakes I'd be one or two  
For in this dear planet of wool and of leather 355  
Tis pleasant to need no shirt, breeches or shoe,  
And have arm, leg, and belly together.  
Then aches your head, or are you lazy?  
Sing, "Round your neck your belly wrap,  
Tail-a-top, and make your cap 360  
Any bee and daisy."

'I'll not be a fool, like the nightingale  
Who sits up all midnight without any ale,  
Making a noise with his nose;  
Nor a camel, although 'tis a beautiful back; 365  
Nor a duck, notwithstanding the music of quack  
And the webby, mud-patting toes.  
I'll be a new bird with the head of an ass,  
Two pigs' feet, two men's feet, and two of a hen;  
Devil-winged; dragon-bellied; grave-jawed, because  
grass 370  
Is a beard that's soon shaved, and grows seldom  
again  
Before it is summer; so cow all the rest;  
The new Dodo is finished. O! come to my nest.'

*Siegfr.* A noble hymn to the belly gods indeed:  
Would that Pythagoras heard thee, boy! 375  
*Isbr.* I fear you flatter: 'tis perhaps a little  
Too sweet and tender, but that is the fashion;  
Besides my failing is too much sentiment.  
Fill the cups up, and pass them round again;  
I'm not my nightly self yet. There 's creation 380  
In these thick yellow drops. By my faith, Siegfried,  
A man of meat and water 's a thin beast,  
But he who sails upon such waves as these  
Begins to be a fellow. The old gods  
Were only men and wine.

*Siegfr* Here's to their memory. 385  
They're dead, poor sinners, all of them but Death,  
Who has laughed down Jove's broad, ambrosian brow,  
Furrowed with earthquake frowns: and not a ghost  
Haunts the gods' town upon Olympus' peak.

*Isbr.* Methinks that earth and heaven are grown bad  
neighbours, 390  
And have blocked up the common door between them.  
Five hundred years ago had we sat here  
So late and lonely, many a jolly ghost  
Would have joined company.

*Siegfr.* To trust in story,  
In the old times Death was a feverish sleep, 395  
In which men walked. The other world was cold  
And thinly-peopled, so life's emigrants  
Came back to mingle with the crowds of earth:  
But now great cities are transplanted thither,  
Memphis, and Babylon, and either Thebes, 400  
And Priam's towery town with its one beech.  
The dead are most and merriest: so be sure  
There will be no more haunting, till their towns  
Are full to the garret; then they'll shut their gates,  
To keep the living out, and perhaps leave 405  
A dead or two between both kingdoms.

*Duke.* Ziba;  
Hearst thou, phantaslic mountebank, what's said?

*Ziba.* Nay: as I live and shall be one myself,  
I can command them hither.

*Isbr.* Whom?

*Ziba.* Departed spirits.

*Duka.* He who dares think that words of human  
speech, 410  
A chalky ring with monstrous figures in it,  
Or smoky flames can draw the distant souls  
Of those, whose bones and monuments are dust,  
Must shudder at the restless, broken death,  
Which he himself in age shall fall into. 415

*Isbr.* Suppose we four had lived in Cyrus' time,  
And had our graves under Egyptian grass,  
D'you think, at whistling of a necromant,  
I'd leave my wine or subterranean love  
To know his bidding? Mummies cannot pull 420  
The breathing to them, when they'd learn the news.

*Ziba.* Perhaps they do, in sleep, in swoons, in fevers:  
But your belief's not needed.

(*To the DUKE*) YOU remember  
The damsel dark at Mecca, whom we saw  
Weeping the death of a pale summer flower, 425  
Which her spear-slain beloved had tossed to her  
Galloping into battle?

*Duke.* Happy one!  
Whose eyes could yield a tear to soothe her sorrows.  
But what's that to the point?

*Ziba.* As those tears fell,  
A magic scholar passed; and, their cause known, 430  
Bade her no longer mourn: he called a bird,  
And bid it with its bill select a grain  
Out of the gloomy deathbed of the blossom.  
The feathery bee obeyed; and scraped aside  
The sand, and dropped the seed into its grave: 435  
And there the old plant lay, still and forgotten,  
By its just budding grandsons; but not long:  
For soon the floral necromant brought forth  
A wheel of amber, (such may Clotho use  
When she spins lives,) and as he turned and sung, 440  
The mould was cracked and shouldered up: there came  
A curved stalk, and then two leaves unfurled,  
And slow and straight between them there arose,  
Ghostlily still, again the crowned flower.  
Is it not easier to raise a man, 445  
Whose soul strives upward ever, than a plant,  
Whose very life stands halfway on death's road,  
Asleep and buried half?

*Duke.* This was a cheat:  
The herb was born anew out of a seed,  
Not raised out of a bony skeleton. 450  
What tree is man the seed of?

*Ziba.* Of a ghost;  
Of his night-coming, tempest-waved phantom:  
And even as there is a round dry grain  
In a plant's skeleton, which being buried  
Can raise the herb's green body up again; 455  
So is there such in man, a seed-shaped bone,  
Aldabaron, called by the Hebrews Luz,  
Which, being laid into the ground, will bear  
After three thousand years the grass of flesh,  
The bloody, soul-possessed weed called man. 460

*Isbr.* Let's have a trick then in all haste, I prithee.  
The world's man-crammed; we want no more of them:  
But show me, if you will some four-legged ghost;  
Rome's mother, the she-wolf; or the fat goat  
From whose dugs Jove sucked godhead; any thing;  
Pig, bullock, goose; for they have goblins too, 466  
Else ours would have no dinner.

*Ziba.* Were you worthy,  
I'd raise a spirit whom your conscience knows;  
And he would drag thee down into that world,  
Whither thou didst send him.

*Isbr.* Thanks for the offer.  
Our wine 's out, and these clouds, whose blackest  
                    wombs 471  
Seem swelling with a second centaur-birth,  
Threaten plain water. So good night.

[Exit With SIEGFRIED.]

*Duke.* Obstinate slave! Now that we are alone,  
Durst thou again say life and soul has lifted 475  
The dead man from the grave, and sent him walking  
Over the earth?

*Ziba.* I say it, and will add  
Deed to my word, not oath. Within what tomb

Dwells he, whom you would call?

*Duke.*

There. But stand off!

If you do juggle with her holy bones, 480  
By God I'll murder thee. I don't believe you,  
For here next to my heart I wear a bond,  
Written in the blood of one who was my friend,  
In which he swears that, dying first, he would  
Borrow some night his body from the ground, 485  
To visit me once more. One day we quarrelled,  
Swords hung beside us and we drew: he fell  
Yet never has his bond or his revenge  
Raised him to my bed-side, haunting his murderer  
Or keeping blood-sealed promise to his friend. 490  
Does not this prove you lie?

*Ziba.*

Tis not my spell:

Shall I try that with him?

*Duke.*

Never on him.

The heavy world press on him, where he lies,  
With all her towers and mountains!

*Ziba.*

Listen, lord.

Time was when Death was young and pitiful, 495  
Though callous now by use; and then there dwelt,  
In the thin world above, a beauteous Arab,  
Unmated yet and boyish. To his couch  
At night, which shone so starry through the boughs,  
A pale flower-breathed nymph with dewy hair 500  
Would often come, but all her love was silent;  
And ne'er by daylight could he gaze upon her,  
For ray by ray, as morning came, she paled,  
And like a snow of air dissolved i' th' light,  
Leaving behind a stalk with lilies hung, 505  
Round which her womanish graces had assembled.  
So did the early love-time of his youth  
Pass with delight: but when, compelled at length,  
He left the wilds and woods for riotous camps  
And cities full of men, he saw no more, 510  
Tho' prayed and wept for, his old bed-time vision,

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

515

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Are written words, which read, even in a whisper,  
Would in the air create another star; 545  
And, more than thunder-tongued storms in the sky.  
Make the old world to quake and sweat with fear;  
And, as the chilly damps of her death-swoon  
Fall and condense, they to the moon reflect  
The forms and colours of the pale old dead; 550  
Laid there among the bones, and left to burn  
With sacred spices, its keen vaporous power  
Would draw to life the earliest dead of all,  
Swift as the sun doth ravish a dew-drop  
Out of a flower. But sec, the torch goes out: 555  
How shall I light it?

*Duke.* Here 's my useless blood-bond;  
These words, that should have waked illumination  
Within a corpse's eyes, will make a tinder,  
Whose sparks might be of life instead of fire.  
Burn it.

*Ziba.* An incense for thy senses, god of those, 560  
To whom life is as death to us; who were,  
Ere our grey ancestors wrote history;  
When these our ruined towers were in the rock;  
And our great forests, which do feed the sea  
With storm-souled fleets, lay in an acorn's cup: 565  
When all was seed that now is dust; our minute  
Invisibly far future. Send thy spirit  
From plant of the air, and from the air and earth,  
And from earth's worms, and roots, again to gather  
The dispersed being, 'mid whose bones I place 570  
The words which, spoken, shall destroy death's king-  
dom,  
And which no voice, but thunder, can pronounce.  
Marrow fill bone, and vine-like veins run round them,  
And flesh, thou grass, mown wert thou long ago—  
Now comes the brown dry after-crop. Ho! ghost! 575  
There 's thy old heart a-beating, and thy life  
Burning on the old hearth. Come home again!

Duke. Hush! Do you hear a noise?

Ziba. It is the sound  
Of the ghost's foot on Jacob's ladder-rungs. 579

Duke. More like the tread upon damp stony steps  
Out of a dungeon. Dost thou hear a door  
Drop its great bolt and grate upon its hinges?

Ziba. *{aside}* Serpentine Hell! That is thy staircase  
echo,

And thy jaws' groaning. What betides it?

Duke. Thou human murder-time of night, 585  
What hast thou done?

Ziba. My task: give me death if the air has not  
What was the earth's but now. Ho there! i' th' vault.

A Voice. Who breaks my death?

Ziba. Draw on thy body, take up thy old limbs, 590  
And then come forth tomb-born.

Mandr. *(within)* I have drawn on my stockings,  
and taken up my old jerkin: but before I go out,  
can't you give me some water to shave with? I have  
a beard of a week's growth with which I decline 595  
appearing before the ladies; and on an occasion  
of being raised one would willingly be a little  
spruce, master Sorcerer.

Duke. One moment's peace and silence!  
Let me remember what a grace she had, 600  
Even in her dying hour: her soul set not,  
But at its noon Death like a cloud came o'er it,  
And now hath passed away. O come to me  
Thou dear departed spirit of my wife;  
And, surely as I clasp thee once again, 605  
Thou shalt not die without me.

Ziba. Ho! there, Grave,  
Is life within thee?

A voice *from within*. Melferic, prepare.

Mandr. *from within*. Coming, coming!  
This cursed boot!

Duke. Did'st hear that answer? Open, and let in 610



The blessing to my eyes, whose subtle breath  
Doth penetrate my heart's quick; let me hear  
That dearest name out of those dearest lips.  
Who 's there? Who comes?

*Ziba.* Momus of Hell, what's this?

*Enter MANDRAKE from the Sepulchre*

*Mandr.* A poor ghost of one Homunculus Man- 615  
drake, Apothecary, often called by the boys in the  
street, Monkey Drake, at your service. Excuse my  
disorder. And, conjurer, I'll give you a little bit of  
advice: the next time don't bait your ghost-trap  
with bombast and doggrell, but good beef: we live 620  
poorly in the dead line: and so I'll promise you,  
you may catch as many ghosts, if they are of one  
mind with my stomach, in a night in this church-  
yard, as rats in a granary. But your commands,  
gentlemen. 625

*Duke.* Is this thy wretched jest, thou villainous  
fool?

But I will punish thee, by heaven, and thou too  
Shalt soon be what thou shouldst have better  
acted.

*Mandr.* Excuse me. As you have thought proper  
to call me to the living, I shall take the liberty of 630  
remaining alive. I am more used to it; and living  
was ever my hobby. If you want to speak to  
another ghost of longer standing, look into the  
old lumber room of a vault again. Some one seems  
to be putting himself together there: or advertise 635  
for a ghost; for my part, I was always dead against  
my will, and shall write an Essay on it to be  
dedicated to my black friend here: good night,  
gentlemen. I must vanish, for I must go to Egypt  
once more to make the salve again: and this time 640  
I shall pot it in tin. Old Sir, you must not take it

ill, if I offend you: we dead are odd fish. Good  
night, all. [Exit.

*Duke.* Thou disappointed cheat! Was this a  
fellow,

Whom thou hadst hired to act a ghostly part? 645  
Thou see'st how well he does it. But away!  
Or I will teach thee better to rehearse it.

*Ziba.* Death is a hypocrite, a white dissembler,  
Like all that doth seem good! I am put to shame.  
[Exit.

*Duke.* Deceived and confounded vain desires! 650  
Why laugh I not, and ridicule myself?  
Come, I will leave this chilly silent place,  
For nothing's to be gained by waiting in it.  
'Tis still, and cold, and nothing in the air  
But an old grey twilight, or of eve or morn 655  
I know not which, dim as futurity,  
And sad and hoary as the ghostly past,  
Fills up the space. Hush! not a wind is there,  
Not a cloud sails over the battlements,  
Not a bell tolls the hour. Is there an hour? 660  
Or is not all gone by, which here did hive,  
Of men and their life's ways? If I could but hear  
The ticking of a clock, or some one breathing,  
Or e'en a cricket's chirping, or the grating  
Of the old gates amidst the marble tombs, 665  
I should be sure that this was still the world.  
Hark! Hark! Doth nothing stir?  
No light, and still no light, besides this ghost  
That mocks the dawn, unaltered? Still no sound?  
No voice of man? No cry of beast? No rustle 670  
Of any moving creature? And sure I feel  
That I remain the same: no more round blood-drops  
Roll joyously along my pulseless veins:  
The air I seem to breathe is still the same:  
And the great dreadful thought, that now comes o'er  
me, 675

Must remain ever as it is, unchanged.—  
This moment doth endure for evermore;  
Eternity hath overshadowed time;  
And I alone am left of all that lived,  
Pent in this narrow, horrible conviction. 680  
Ha! the dead soon will wake! My Agnes, rise;  
Rise up, my wife! One look, ere Wolfram comes;  
Quick, or it is too late: the murdered hasten:  
My best-beloved, come once to my heart...  
But ah! who art thou?

*The gates of the sepulchre fly open and discover*  
WOLFRAM

Wolfr.                      Wolfram, murderer,                      685  
To whose heart thou didst come with horrid purpose.

Duke. Lie of my eyes, begone! Are thou not dead?  
Are not the worms, that ate thy marrow, dead?  
What dost thou here, thou wretched goblin fool?  
Think'st thou, I fear thee? Thou man-mocking air,  
Thou art not truer than a mirror's image,                      691  
Nor half so lasting. Back again to coffin,  
Thou baffled idiot spectre, or haunt cradles:  
Or stay, and I'll laugh at thee. Guard thyself,  
If thou pretendest life.                      695

Wolfr. Is this thin air, that thrusts thy sword away?  
Flesh, bones, and soul, and blood that thou stoPst  
from me,  
Upon thy summons, bound by bloody signs,  
Here Wolfram stands: what wouldst thou?

Duke.                      What paper else,  
But that cursed compact, could have made full Hell  
Boil over, and spill thee, thou topmost damned? 701  
But down again! I'll see no more of thee.  
Hound, to thy kennel! to your coffin, bones!  
Ghost, to thy torture!

Wolfr.                      Thou returnest with me;  
So make no hurry. I will stay awhile                      705

Act IV

DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

To see how the world goes, feast and be merry,  
And then to work again.

*Duke.* Darest thou stand there,  
Thou shameless spirit, and assert thyself,  
While I defy, and question, and deride thee?  
The stars, I see them dying: clearly all 710  
The passage of this night remembrance gives me,  
, And I think coolly: but my brain is mad,  
Else why behold I that? Is't possible  
Thou'rt true, and worms have vomited thee up  
Upon this rind of earth? No; thou shalt vanish. 715  
Was it for this I hated thee and killed thee?  
I'll have thee dead again, and hounds and eagles  
Shall be thy graves, since this old, earthy one  
Hath spat thee out for poison.

*Wolfr.* Thou, old man,  
Art helpless against me. I shall not harm thee; 720  
So lead me home. I am not used to sunlight,  
And morn's a-breaking.

*Duke.* Then there is rebellion  
Against all kings, even Death. Murder's worn out  
And full of holes; I'll never make't the prison,  
Of what I hate, again. Come with me, spectre; 725  
If thou wilt live against the body's laws,  
Thou murderer of Nature, it shall be  
A question, which haunts which, while thou dost last.  
So come with me. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *An apartment in the Governor's palace*

*The DUKE and an attendant*

*Duke.* Your lord sleeps yet?

*Attend.* An hour ago he rose;

About this time he 's busy with his falcons,  
And then he takes his meal.

*Duke.* I'll wait for him. [*Exit Attendant.*]  
How strange it is that I can live to-day;  
Nay look like other men, who have been sleeping 5  
On quiet pillows and not dreamt! Methinks  
The look of the world 's a lie, a face made up  
O'er graves and fiery depths; and nothing 's true  
But what is horrible. If man could see  
The perils and diseases that he elbows, 10  
Each day he walks a mile; which catch at him,  
Which fall behind and graze him as he passes;  
Then would he know that Life 's a single pilgrim,  
Fighting unarmed amongst a thousand soldiers.  
It is this infinite invisible 15  
Which we must learn to know, and yet to scorn,  
And, from the scorn of that, regard the world  
As from the edge of a far star. Now then  
I feel me in the thickest of the battle;  
The arrow-shower pours down, swords hew, mines  
open 20  
Their ravenous mouths about me; it rains death  
But cheerly I defy the braggart storm,  
And set my back against a rock, to fight  
Till I am bloodily won.

**Enter TORWALD**

*Torw.* How? here already?  
I'm glad on't, and to see you look so clear 25  
After that idle talk. How did it end?

*Duke.* Scarcely as I expected.

*Torw.* Dared he conjure?  
But surely you have seen no ghost last night:  
You seem to have supped well and slept.

*Duke* We'd wine,  
And some wild singing. Of the necromancy 30  
We'll speak no more. Ha! Do you see a shadow?

*Torw.* Aye: and the man who casts it.

*Duke.* 'Tis true; my eyes are dim and dull with  
watching.

This castle that fell down, and was rebuilt  
With the same stones, is the same castle still; 35  
And so with him.

*Enter WOLFRAM*

*Torw.* What mean you?

*Duke.* Impudent goblin!  
Darest thou the daylight? Dar'st be seen of more  
Than me, the guilty? Vanish! Though thou'rt there,  
I'll not believe I see thee.

*Torw.* Who 's the stranger?  
You speak as one familiar.

*Duke.* Is aught here 40  
Besides ourselves? I think not.

*Torw.* Yet you gaze  
Straight on the man.

*Duke.* A villainous friend of mine;  
Of whom I must speak well, and still permit him  
To follow me.—So thou'rt yet visible,  
Thou grave-breaker! If thou wilt haunt me thus, 45  
I'll make thee my fool, ghost, my jest and zany.—  
'Tis his officious gratitude that pains me:  
The carcase owes to me its ruinous life,  
(Between whose broken walls and cloven sides  
You see the other world's grey spectral light;) 50  
Therefore he clings to me so ivily.—  
Now, goblin, lie about it.—Tis in truth  
A faithful slave.

*Wolfr.* If I had come unsummoned,  
If I had burst into your sunny world,  
And stolen visibility and birth 55  
Against thy prayers, thus shouldst thou speak to me:  
But thou hast forced me up, remember that.  
I am no fiend, no foe; then let me hear

These stern and tyrannous rebukes no more.  
Wilt thou be with the born, that have not died? 60  
I vanish: now a short farewell. I fade;  
The air doth melt me, and, my form being gone,  
I'm all thou see'st not. [Exit.

*Duke.* Dissolved like snow in water! Be my cloud,  
My breath, and fellow soul, I can bear all, 65  
As long as thou art viewless to these others.—  
Now there are two of us. How stands the bridal?

*Torw.* This evening 'twill be held.

*Duke.* Good; and our plot  
Leaps on your pleasure's lap; here comes my gang;  
Away with you. [Exit TORWALD.

I do begin to feel 70  
As if I were a ghost among the men.  
As all I loved are; for their affections  
Hang on things new, young, and unknown to me:  
And that I am is but the obstinate will  
Of this my hostile body. 75

*Enter* ISBRAND, ADALMAR, and SIEGFRIED

*Isbr.* Come, let's be doing: we have talked whole  
nights  
Of what an instant, with one flash of action,  
Should have performed: you wise and speaking people  
Need some one, with a hatchet-stroke, to free  
The Pallas of your Jove-like headaches.

*Duke.* Patience: 80  
Fledging comes after hatching. One day more:  
This evening is the wedding of the prince,  
And with it feasts and maskings. In mid bowls  
And giddy dances let us fall upon them. 84

*Siegfr.* Well thought: our enemies will be assembled.

*Isbr.* I like to see Ruin at dinner time,  
Firing his cannons with the coals they lit  
To boil the flesh-pots on. But what say you  
To what concerns you most? [To ADALMAR,

*Adalm.* That I am ready  
To hang my hopeful crown of happiness 90  
Upon the temple of the public good.

*Isbr.* Of that no need. Your wedding shall be  
finished;  
Or left, like a full goblet yet untasted,  
To be drunk up with greater thirst from toil.  
I'll wed too when I've time. My honest pilgrim, 95  
The melancholy lady, you brought with you,  
Looks on me with an eye of much content:  
I have sent some rhymed love-letters unto her,  
In my best style. D' you think we're well matched? 99

*Adalm.* How? The lion to thirst after the bee's dew?

*Isbr.* True: I am rough, a surly bellowing storm;  
But fallen, never tear did hang more tender  
Upon the eyelash of a love-lorn girl,  
Or any Frenchman's long, frost-bitten nose,  
Than in the rosecup of that lady's life 105  
I shall lie trembling. Pilgrim, plead for me  
With a tongue love-oiled.

*Duke.* Win her, sir, and wear her.  
But you and she are scarcely for one world.

*Isbr.* Enough; I'll wed her. Siegfried, come with me;  
We'll talk about it in the rainy weather. 110  
Pilgrim, anon I find you in the ruins,  
Where we had wine last night. [Exit with SIEGFRIED.

*Adalm.* Would that it all were over, and well over!  
Suspensions flash upon me here and there:  
But we're in the mid ocean without compass, 115  
Winds wild, and billows rolling us away:  
Onwards with hope!

*Duke.* Of what? Youth, is it possible  
That thou art toiling here for liberty,  
And others' welfare, and such virtuous shadows  
As philosophic fools and beggars raise 120  
Out of the world that's gone? Thou'lt sell thy birth-  
right



For incense praise, less tickling to the sense  
Than Esau's pottage steam?

*Adalm.* No, not for these,  
Fame's breath and praise, its shadow. 'Tis my manner  
To do what's right and good.

*Duke.* Thou'rt a strange prince.  
Why all the world, except some fifty lean ones, 126  
Would, in your place and at your ardent years,  
Seek the delight that lies in woman's limbs  
And mountain-covering grapes. What's to be royal,  
Unless you pick those girls, whose cheeks you fancy,  
As one would cowslips? And see hills and valleys 131  
Mantled in autumn with the snaky plant,  
Whose juice is the right madness, the best heaven?  
Have men, and beasts, and woods with flowers and  
fruit

From all the earth, one's slaves; bid the worm eat 135  
Your next year's purple from the mulberry leaf,  
The tiger shed his skin to line your robes,  
And men die, thousands in a day, for glory?  
Such things should kings bid from their solitude  
Upon the top of Man. Justice and Good, 140  
All penniless, base, earthy kind of fellows,  
So low, one wonders they were not born dogs,  
Can do as well, alas!

*Adalm.* There 's cunning in thee.  
A year ago this doctrine might have pleased me:  
But since, I have remembered in my childhood 145  
My teachers told me that I was immortal,  
And had within me something like a god;  
Now, by believing firmly in that promise,  
I do enjoy a part of its fulfilment,  
And, antedating my eternity, 150  
Act as I were immortal.

*Duke.* Think of *now*.  
This Hope and Memory are wild horses, tearing  
The precious *now* to pieces. Grasp and use

The breath within you; for you know not, whether  
That wind about the trees brings you one more. 155  
Thus far yourself. But tell me, hath no other  
A right, which you would injure? Is this sceptre,  
Which you would stamp to dust and let each varlet  
Pick out his grain of power; this great spirit,  
This store of mighty men's concentrate souls, 160  
Which kept your fathers in gods' breath, and you  
Would waste in the wide, smoky, pestilent air  
For every dog to snuff in; is this royalty  
Your own? O! when you were a boy, young prince,  
I would have laid my heart upon your spirit: 165  
Now both are broken.

*Adalm.*

Father?

*Duke.*

Yes, my son:

We'll live to be most proud of those two names.

Go on thy way: I follow and o'erlook.

This pilgrim's shape will hang about and guard thee,  
Being but the shadow of my sunniness, 170  
Looking in patience through a cloudy time. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A garden*

SIBYLLA and ATHULF

*Athulf.* From me no comfort. O you specious  
creatures,

So poisonous to the eye! Go! you sow madness:  
And one of you, although I cannot curse her,  
Will make my grave a murderer's. Til do nought;  
But rather drink and revel at your bridal. 5

And why not Isbrand? Many such a serpent  
Doth lick heaven's dew out of as sweet a flower.  
Wed, wed! I'll not prevent it.

*Sibyl.*

I beseech thee,

If there be any tie of love between thee  
And she whp is thy brother's.

*Athulf.* Curse the word! 10  
 And trebly curse the deed that made us brothers!  
 O that I had been born the man I hate!  
 Any, at least, but one. Then—sleep my soul;  
 And walk not in thy sleep to do the act,  
 Which thou must ever dream of. My fair lady, 15  
 I would not be the reason of one tear  
 Upon thy bosom, if the times were other;  
 If women were not women. When the world  
 Goes round the other way and doing Cain-like  
 Passes as merrily as doing Eve-like, 20  
 Then I'll be pitiful. Let go my hand;  
 It is a mischievous limb, and may run wild,  
 Doing the thing its master would not.  
 Lo! Here comes some holy father to console you.

*[Exit.*

*Sibyl.* Then no one hears me. O! the world 's too  
 loud, 25  
 With trade and battle, for my feeble cry  
 To rouse the living. The invisible  
 Hears best what is unspoken; and my thoughts  
 Have long been calling comfort from the grave.

*Enter WOLFRAM*

*Wolfr.* Lady, you called me.  
*Sibyl.* I?  
*Wolfr.* The word was *Comfort'*.  
 A name by which the master, whose I am, 31  
 Is named by many wise and many wretched.  
 Will ye with me to the place where sighs are not;  
 A shore of blessing, which disease doth beat  
 Sea-like, and dashes those whom he would wreck 35  
 Into the arms of Peace? But ah! what say I?  
 You're young and must be merry in the world;  
 Have friends to envy, lovers to betray you;  
 And feed young children with the blood of your heart,  
 Till they have sucked up strength enough to break it,

Poor woman! Art thou nothing but the straw 41  
 Bearing a heavy poison, and, that shed,  
 Cut down to be stamped on? But thou'rt i' th' blade,  
 The green and milky sun-deceived grass:  
 So stand till the scythe comes, take shine and shower,  
 And the wind fell you gently.

*Sibyl.* Do not go. 46  
 Speak as at first you did; there was in the words  
 A mystery and music, which did thaw  
 The hard old rocky world into a flood,  
 Whereon a swan-drawn boat seemed at my feet 50  
 Rocking on its blue billows; and I heard  
 Harmonies, and breathed odours from an isle,  
 Whose flowers cast tremulous shadows in the day  
 Of an immortal sun, and crowd the banks  
 Whereon immortal human kind doth couch. 55  
 This I have dreamt before: your speech recalled it.  
 So speak to soothe me once again.

*Wolfr. {aside}* Snake Death,  
 Sweet as the cowslip's honey is thy whisper:  
 O let this dove escape thee! I'll not plead,  
 I will not be thy suitor to this innocent: 60  
 Open thy craggy jaws; speak, coffin-tongued,  
 Persuasions through the dancing of the yew-bough  
 And the crow's nest upon it. *{Aloud}* Lady fair,  
 Listen not to me, look not on me more.  
 I have a fascination in my words, 65  
 A magnet in my look, which drags you downwards,  
 From hope and life. You set your eyes upon me,  
 And think I stand upon this earth beside you:  
 Alas! I am upon a jutting stone,  
 Which crumbles down the steeps of an abyss; 70  
 And you, above me far, grow wild and giddy:  
 Leave me, or you must fall into the deep.

*Sibyl.* I leave thee never, nor thou me. O no!  
You know not what a heart you spurn away;  
How good it might be, if love cherished it; 75

And how deserted 'tis; ah, so deserted,  
That I have often wished a ghost would come,  
Whose love might haunt it. Turn not thou, the last.  
Thou see'st I'm young: how happy might I be!  
And yet I only wish these tears I shed 80  
Were raining on my grave. If thou'lt not love me,  
Then do me the next office; show me only  
The shortest path to solitary death.

*Wolfr.* You're moved to wiidness, maiden. Beg not  
of me.

I can grant nothing good: quiet thyself, 85  
And seek heaven's help. Farewell.

*Sibyl.* Wilt thou leave me?  
Unpitying, aye unmoved in cheek and heart,  
Stern, selfish mortal? Hast thou heard my prayer;  
Hast seen me weep; hast seen my limbs to quiver,  
Like a storm-shaken tree over its roots? 90  
Art thou alive, and canst thou sec this wretch,  
Without a care?

*Wolfr.* Thou sce'st I am unmoved:  
Infer the truth.

*Sibyl.* Thy soul indeed is dead.

*Wolfr.* My soul, my soul! O that it wore not now  
The semblance of a garb it hath cast off; 95  
O that it was disrobed of these mock limbs,  
Shed by a rocky birth unnaturally,  
Long after their decease and burial!  
O woe that I must speak! for she, who hears,  
Is marked for no more breathing. There are histories  
Of women, nature's bounties, who disdained 101  
The mortal love of the embodied man,  
And sought the solitude which spirits cast  
Around their darksome presence. These have loved,  
Wooped, wedded, and brought home their moonstruck  
brides 105

Unto the world-sanded eternity.  
Hast faith in such reports?

*Sibyl.* So lonely am I,  
That I dare wish to prove them true.

*Wolfr.* Dar'st die?  
A grave-deep question. Answer it religiously.

*Sibyl.* With him I loved, I dared.

*Wolfr.* With me and for me. 110  
I am a ghost. Tremble not; fear not me.

The dead are ever good and innocent,  
And love the living. They are cheerful creatures,  
And quiet as the sunbeams, and most like,  
In grace and patient love and spotless beauty, 115  
The new-born of mankind. 'Tis better too  
To die, as thou art, young, in the first grace  
And full of beauty, and so be remembered  
As one chosen from the earth to be an angel;  
Not left to droop and wither, and be borne 120  
Down by the breath of time. Come then, Sibylla,  
For I am Wolfram!

*Sibyl.* Thou art come to fetch me!  
It is indeed a proof of boundless love,  
That thou hadst need of me even in thy bliss.  
I go with thee. O Death! I am thy friend, 125  
I struggle not with thee, I love thy state:  
Thou canst be sweet and gentle, be so now;  
And let me pass praying away into thee.  
As twilight still does into starry night. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *A garden, under the windows of AMALA's  
apartment* ATHULF

*Athulf.* Once more I'll see thee, love, speak to thee,  
hear thee;  
And then my soul shall cut itself a door  
Out of this planet. I've been wild and heartless,  
Laughed at the feasts where Love had never place,  
And pledged my light faith to a hundred women, 5

Forgotten all next day. A worthless life,  
 A life ridiculous! Day after day,  
 Folly on folly! But I'll not repent.  
 Remorse and weeping shall not be my virtues:  
 Let fools do both, and, having had their evil, 10  
 And tickled their young hearts with the sweet sins  
 That feather Cupid's shafts, turn timid, weep,  
 Be penitent. Now the wild banquet's o'er,  
 Wine spilt, lights out, I cannot brook the world,  
 It is so silent. And that poisonous reptile, 15  
 My past self, is a villain I'll not pardon.  
 I hate and will have vengeance on my soul:  
 Satirical Murder, help me... Ha! I am  
 Devil-inspired: out with you, ye fool's thoughts!  
 You're young, strong, healthy yet; years may you live:  
 Why yield to an ill-humoured moment? No! 21  
 I'll cut his throat across, make her my wife;  
 Huzza! for a mad life! and be a Duke!  
 I was born for sin and love it.

O thou villain,
 Die, die! Have patience with me, heavenly Mercy! 25  
 Let me but once more look upon that blessing,  
 Then can I calmly offer up to thee  
 This crime-haired head.

*Enter AMALA as bride, with a bridesmaid*

O beauty, beauty!
 Thou shed'st a moony night of quiet through me.  
 Thanks! now I am resolved.

Bridesm.                      Amala, good night: 30
 Thou'rt happy. In these high delightful times,  
 It does the human heart much good to think  
 On deepest woe, which may be waiting for us,  
 Masked even in a marriage-hour.

Amala.                      Thou'rttimid: 35
 'Tis well to trust in a good genius.

Are not our hearts, in these great pleasures godded,  
Let out awhile to their eternity  
And made prophetic? The past is pale to me;  
But I do see my future plain of life,  
Full of rejoicings and of harvest-dances, 40  
Clearly, it is so sunny. A year hence  
I'll laugh at you for this, until you weep.  
Good night, sweet fear.

*Bridesm.* Take this flower from me,  
(A white rose, fitting for a wedding-gift,)  
And lay it on your pillow. Pray to live 45  
So fair and innocently; pray to die,  
Leaf after leaf, so softly. [Exit.

*Amala.*—Now to my chamber; yet an hour or two,  
In which years must be sown.

*Athulf.* Stay, Amala;  
An old acquaintance brings a greeting to you, 50  
Upon your wedding night.

*Amala.* His brother Athulf! What can he do here?  
I fear the man.

*Athulf.* Dost love him?

*Amala.* That were cause  
Indeed to fear him. Leave me, leave me, sir;  
It is too late. We cannot be together 55  
For any good.

*Athulf.* This once we can. O Amala,  
Had I been in my young days taught the truth,  
And brought up with the kindness and affection  
Of a good man! I was not myself evil,  
But out of youth and ignorance did much wrong. 60  
Had I received lessons in thought and nature,  
We might have been together, but not thus.  
How then? Did you not love me long ago?  
More, O much more than him? Yes, Amala,  
You would have been mine now. A life with thee, 65  
Heavenly delight and virtue ever with us!



I've lost it, trod on it, and spurned it. Woe!  
O bitter woe is me!

*Amala.* Athulf, why make me  
Rue the inevitable? Prithee leave me.

*Athulf.* Thee bye and bye: and all that is not thee. 70  
Thee, my all, that I've forfeited I'll leave,  
And the world's all, my nothing.

*Amala.* Nay; despond not.  
Thou'lt be a merry, happy man some day,  
And list to this as to a tale of some one  
You had forgotten.

*Athulf.* Now no need of comfort: 75  
I'm somehow glad that it did thus fall out.  
Then had I lived too softly; in these woes  
I can stand up, and show myself a man.  
I do not think that I shall live an hour.  
Wilt pardon me for that my earlier deeds 80  
Have caused to thee of sorrow? *Amala,*  
Pity me, pardon me, bless me in this hour;  
In this my death, in this your bridal, hour.  
Pity me, sweet.

*Amala.* Both thee and me: no more!

*Athulf.* Forgive!

*Amala.* With all my soul. God bless thee, my dear

*Athulf.* 85

*Athulf.* Kiss I thy hand? O much more fervently  
Now, in my grief, than heretofore in love.  
Farewell, go; look not back again upon me.  
In silence go. *[Exit AMALA.]*

She having left my eyes,  
There 's nothing in the world, to look on which 90  
I'd live a moment longer. Therefore come,  
Thou sacrament of death: Eternity,  
I pledge thee thus. *[He drinks from a vial.]*

How cold and sweet! It seems  
As if the earth already began shaking,

To sink beneath me. O ye dead, come near; 95  
 Why see I you not yet? Come, crowd about me;  
 Under the arch of this triumphal hour,  
 Welcome me; I am one of you, and one  
 That, out of love for you, have forced the doors  
 Of the stale world. 100

*Enter ADALMAR*

*Adalm.* I'm weaned to the core: where 's Amala?  
 Ha! Near her chambers! Who?

*Athulf.* Ask that to-morrow  
 Of the marble, Adalmar. Come hither to me.

We must be friends: I'm dying.

*Adalm.* How?

*Athulf.* The cup,  
 I've drank myself immortal.

*Adalm.* You are poisoned? 105

*Athulf.* I am blessed, Adalmar. I've done 't myself.  
 'Tis nearly passed, for I begin to hear  
 Strange but sweet sounds, and the loud rocky dashing  
 Of waves, where time into Eternity  
 Falls over ruined worlds. The wind is fair, 110  
 The boat is in the bay,  
 And the fair mermaid pilot calls away.

*Adalm.* Self poisoned?

*Athulf.* Aye: a philosophic deed.  
 Go and be happy.

*Adalm.* God! What hast thou done?

*Athulf.* Justice upon myself.

*Adalm.* No. Thou hast stolen  
 The right of the deserving good old man 116  
 To rest, his cheerful labour being done.  
 Thou hast been wicked; caused much misery;  
 Dishonoured maidens; broken fathers' hearts;  
 Maddened some; made others wicked as thyself; 120  
 And darest thou die, leaving a world behind thee

That groans of thee to heaven?

*Athulf.* If I thought so -  
Terrible would it be: then I've both killed  
And damned myself. There 's justice!

*Adalm.* Thou should'st have lived;  
Devoting every minute to the work 125  
Of useful, penitent amendment: then,  
After long years, you might have knelt to Fate,  
And ta'en her blow not fearing. Wretch, thou diest not  
But goest living into hell.

*Athulf.* It is too true;  
I am deserted by those turbulent joys. 130  
The fiend hath made me death-drunk. Here Til lie,  
And die most wretchedly, accursed, unpitied  
Of all, most hated by myself. O God,  
If thou could'st but repeal this fatal hour,  
And let me live, how day and night I'd toil 135  
For all things to atone! Must I wish vainly?  
My brother, is there any way to live?

*Adalm.* For thee, alas! in this world there is none.  
Think not upon 't.

*Athulf.* Thou liest: there must be:  
Thou know'st it, and dost keep it secret from me, 140  
Letting me die for hate and jealousy.  
O that I had not been so pious a fool,  
But killed thee, 'stead of me, and had thy wife!  
I should be at the banquet, drinking to her,  
Kissing her lip, in her eye smiling...

Peace! 145  
Thou see'st I'm growing mad: now leave me here,  
Accursed as I am, alone to die.  
O birth, O breath, O life!

*Adalm.* Wretched, yet not despised, farewell my  
brother.

*Athulf.* O Arab, Arab! Thou dost sell true drugs.  
Brother, my soul is very weary now: 151  
Speak comfortably to me.

*Adalm.* From the Arab,  
From Ziba, had'st the poison?

*Athulf.* Aye. 'Twas good:  
An honest villain is he.

*Adalm.* Hold, sweet brother,  
A little longer hold in hope on life; 155  
But a few minutes more. I seek the sorcerer,  
And he shall cure thee with some wondrous drug.  
He can, and shall perform it: rest thee quiet:  
Hope or revenge I'll bring thee. *[Exit.*

*Athulf.* Dare I hope? 160  
O no: methinks it is not so unlovely,  
This calm unconscious state, this breathless peace,  
Which all, but troublesome and riotous man,  
Assume without resistance. Here I'll lay me,  
And let life fall from off me tranquilly.

*Enter singers and musicians led by SIEGFRIED; they  
sing under AMALA'S windows*

*Song*

*By female voices*

We have bathed, where none have seen us,  
In the lake and in the fountain, 166  
Underneath the charmed statue  
Of the timid, bending Venus,  
When the water-nymphs were counting  
In the waves the stars of night, 170  
And those maidens started at you,  
Your limbs shone through so soft and bright.  
But no secrets dare we tell,  
For thy slaves unlace thee,  
And he, who shall embrace thee, 175  
Waits to try thy beauty's spell.

*By male voices*

We have crowned thee queen of women,  
Since love's love, the rose, hath kept her  
Court within thy lips and blushes,  
And thine eye, in beauty swimming, 180  
Kissing, we rendered up the sceptre,  
At whose touch the startled soul  
Like an ocean bounds and gushes,  
And spirits bend at thy controul.  
But no secrets dare we tell, 185  
For thy slaves unlace thee,  
And he, who shall embrace thee,  
Is at hand, and so farewell.

*Athulf.* Shame on you! Do you sing their bridal song  
Ere I have closed mine eyes? Who 's there among you  
That dare to be enamoured of a maid 191  
So far above you, ye poor rhyming knaves?  
Ha! there begins another.

*Song by SIEGFRIED*

Maiden, thou sittest alone above,  
Crowned with flowers and like a sprite 195  
Starrily clothed in a garment white:  
Thou art the only maiden I love,  
And a soul of fondness to thee I bring,  
Thy glorious beauty homaging,—  
But ah! thou wearest a golden ring. 200

Maiden, thou'st broken no vow to me  
But undone me alone with gentleness,  
Wasting upon me glances that bless:  
And knew'st that I never was born for thee.  
No hope, no joy, yet never more 205  
My heart shall murmur; now 'tis o'er,  
I'll bless thee, dying at thy door.



Death and Hymen both are here;  
So up with scythe and torch,  
And to the old church porch, 240  
While all the bells ring clear:  
And rosy, rosy the bed shall bloom,  
And earthy, earthy heap up the tomb.

Now tremble dimples on your cheek,  
Sweet be your lips to taste and speak, 245  
For he who kisses is near:  
For her the bridegroom fair,  
In youthful power and force;  
For him the grizard bare,  
Pale knight on a pale horse, 250  
To woo him to a corpse.

Death and Hymen both are here;  
So up with scythe and torch,  
And to the old church porch,  
While all the bells ring clear: 255  
And rosy, rosy the bed shall bloom,  
And earthy, earthy heap up the tomb.

*Athulf.* Now we'll lie down and wait for our two  
summoners;  
Each patiently at least.

*Enter AMALA*

O thou kind girl,  
Art thou again there? Come and lay thine hand 260  
In mine; and speak again thy soft way to me.

*Amala.* Thy voice is fainter, *Athulf*: why sang'st  
thou?

*Athulf.* It was my farewell: now I'll sing no more;  
Nor speak a great deal after this. 'Tis well  
You weep not. If you had esteemed me much, 265  
It were a horrible mistake of mine.  
Wilt close my eyes when I am dead, sweet maid?

*Amala.* O Athulf, thou might'st still have lived.

*Athulf.* What boots it,  
And thou not mine, not even loving me?  
But that makes dying very sad to me. 270  
Yet even thy pity is worth much.

*Amala.* O no;  
I pity not alone, but I am wretched—  
Love thee and ever did most fervently,  
Still hoping thou would'st turn and merit it.  
But now—O God! if life were possible to thee, 275  
I'd be thy friend for ever.

*Athulf.* O thou art full of blessings!  
Thou lovest me, *Amala*: one kiss, but one;  
It is not much to grant a dying man.

*Amala.* I am thy brother's bride, forget not that; 280  
And never but to this, thy dying ear,  
Had I confessed so much in such an hour.  
But this be too forgiven. Now farewell.  
'Twere not amiss if I should die to-night:  
*Athulf*, my love, my only love, farewell. 285

*Athulf.* Yet one more minute. If we meet hereafter,  
Wilt thou be mine? I have the right to thee;  
And, if thou promise, I will let him live  
This life, unenvied, with thee.

*Amala.* *Athulf*, I will:  
Our bliss there will be greater for the sorrow 290  
We now in parting feel.

*Athulf* F go, to wait thee. [*Exit AMALA.*]  
Farewell, my bliss! She loves me with her soul,  
And I might have enjoyed her, were he fallen.  
Ha! ha! and I am dying like a rat,  
And he shall drink his wine, twenty years hence, 295  
Beside his cherished wife, and speak of me  
With a compassionate smile! Come, Madness, come,  
For death is loitering still.

*Enter ADALMAR and ZIBA*



*Adalm.*

An antidote!

Restore him whom thy poisons have laid low,  
If thou wilt not sup with thy fellow fiends 300  
In hell to-night.

*Ziba,* I pray thee strike me not.

It was his choice; and why should he be breathing  
Against his will?

*Athulf* Ziba, I need not perish.

Now my intents are changed: so, if thou canst,  
Dispense me life again.

*Adalm.* Listen to him, 305

And once be a preserver.

*Ziba.* Let him rise.

Why, think you that I'd deal a benefit,  
So precious to the noble as is death,  
To such a pampered darling of delight  
As he that shivers there? O, not for him, 310  
Blooms my dark Nightshade, nor doth Hemlock brew  
Murder for cups within her cavernous root.  
Not for him is the metal blessed to kill,  
Nor lets the poppy her leaves fall for him.  
To heroes such are sacred. He may live, 315  
As long as 'tis the Gout and Dropy's pleasure.  
He wished to play at suicide, and swallowed  
A draught, that may depress and shake his powers  
Until he sleeps awhile; then all is o'er.  
And so good night, my princes. [Exit,

*Adalm.* Dost thou hear? 320

*Athulf.* Victory! victory! I *do* hear; and Fate hears,  
And plays with Life for one of our two souls,  
With dice made of death's bones. But shall I do't?  
O Heaven! it is a fearful thing to be so saved!

*Adalm.* Now, brother, thou'lt be happy.*Athulf.* With thy wife! 325

I tell thee, hapless brother, on my soul,  
Now that I live, I *will* live; I alone;  
And Amala alone shall be my love.

There's no more room for you, since you have chosen  
The woman and the power which I covet. 330

Out of thy bridal bed, out of thy throne!

Away to Abel's grave. [Stabs ADALMAR.

*Adalm.* Thou murderous traitor!

I was thy brother. [Dies.

*Athulf.* (After a pause) How long a time it is since I  
was here!

And yet I know not whether I have slept, 335

Or wandered through a dreary cavernous forest,

Struggling with monsters. 'Tis a quiet place,

And one inviting strangely to deep rest.

I have forgotten something; my whole life

Seems to have vanished from me to this hour. 340

There was a foe whom I should guard against;

Who is he?

*Amala.* (from her window) Adalmar!

*Athulf* (in a low voice) Hush! hush! I come to thee.

Let me but see if he be dead: speak gently,

His jealous ghost still hears.

*Amala.* So, it is over

With that poor troubled heart! O then to-night 345

Leave me alone to weep.

*Athulf* As thou wilt, lady.

I'm stunned with what has happened. He is dead.

*Amala.* O night of sorrow! Bear him from the  
threshold.

None of my servants must know where and why

He sought his grave. Remove him. O poor Athulf, 350

Why did'st thou it? I'll to my bed and mourn. [Retires.

*Athulf* Hear'st thou, corpse, how I play thy part?

Thus had he

Pitied me in fraternal charity,

And I lain there so helpless. But what's this,

That chills my blood and darkens so my eyes? 355

What's going on in my heart and in my brain,

My bones, my life, all over me, all through me?

It cannot last. No longer shall I be  
 What I am now. Oh! I am changing, changing,  
 Dreadfully changing! Even here and now 360  
 A transformation will o'ertake and seize me.  
 It is God's sentence whispered over me.  
 I am unsouled, dishumanized, uncreated;  
 My passions swell and grow like brutes conceived;  
 My feet are fixing roots, and every limb 365  
 Is billowy and gigantic, till I seem  
 A wild old wicked mountain in the sea:  
 And the abhorred conscience of this murder,  
 Shall be created and become a Lion  
 All alone in the darkness of my spirit, 370  
 And lair him in my caves,  
 And when I lie tremendous in the billows,  
 Murderers, and men half ghosts, stricken with mad-  
 ness,  
 Will come to live upon my rugged sides,  
 Die, and be buried in it. Now it comes; 375  
 I break, and magnify, and lose my form.  
 And yet I shall be taken for a man,  
 And never be discovered till I die.  
 Terrible, terrible: damned before my time,  
 In secret! Tis a dread, o'erpowering phantom. 380  
*[He lies down by the body, and sleeps: the scene closes.]*

SCENE IV. *A large hall in the ducal castle. Through the windows in the background appears the illuminated city*

*Enter ISBRAND and SIEGFRIED*

*Isbr.* By my grave, Siegfried, 'tis a wedding-night.  
 The wish, that I have courted from my boyhood,  
 Comes blooming, crowned, to my embrace. Methinks,  
 The spirit of the city is right lovely;  
 And she will leave her rocky body sleeping 5

To-night, to be my queenly paramour.  
Has it gone twelve?

*Siegfr.* This half hour. Here I've set  
A little clock, that you may mark the time.

*Isbr.* Its hand divides the hour. Are our guards here,  
About the castle?

*Siegfr.* You've a thousand swordsmen, 10  
Strong and true soldiers, at the stroke of one.

*Isbr.* One 's a good hour; a ghostly hour. To-night  
The ghost of a dead planet shall walk through,  
And shake the pillars of this dukedom down.  
The princes both are occupied and lodged 15  
Far from us: that is well; they will hear little.  
Go once more round, to the towers and battlements:  
The hour, that strikes, says to our hearts 'Be one';  
And, with one motion of a hundred arms,  
Be the beacons fired, the alarums rung, 20  
And tyrants slain! Be busy.

*Siegfr.* I am with them. [Exit.

*Isbr.* Mine is the hour it strikes; my first of life.  
To morrow, with what pity and contempt,  
Shall I look back new-born upon myself!

*Enter a servant*

What now?

*Servant.* The banquet's ready.

*Isbr.* Let it wait awhile: 25  
The wedding is not ended. That shall be  
No common banquet: none sit there, but souls  
That have outlived a lower state of being.  
Summon the guests. [Exit servant.

Some shall have bitter cups,  
The honest shall be banished from the board 30  
And the knaves duped by a luxurious bait.

*Enter the DUKE, TORWALD, and other guests  
and conspirators*

Friends, welcome hither in the prince's name,  
Who has appointed me his deputy  
To-night. Why this is right: while men are here,  
They should keep close and warm and thick together,  
Many abreast. Our middle life is broad; 36  
But birth and death, the turnstiles that admit us  
On earth and off it, send us, one by one,  
A solitary walk. Lord governor,  
Will you not sit?

*Torw.* You are a thrifty liver, 40  
Keeping the measure of your time beside you.

*Isbr.* Sir, I'm a melancholy, lonely man,  
A kind of hermit: and to meditate  
Is all my being. One has said, that time  
Is a great river running to eternity. 45  
Methinks 'tis all one water, and the fragments,  
That crumble off our ever-dwindling life,  
Dropping into 't, first make the twelve-houred circle,  
And that spreads outwards to the great round Ever.

*Torw.* You're fanciful.

*Isbr.* A very ballad-maker. 50  
We quiet men must think and dream at least.  
Who likes a rhyme among us? My lord governor,  
'Tis tedious waiting until supper time:  
Shall I read some of my new poetry?  
One piece at least?

*Torw.* Well; without further preface, 55  
If it be brief.

*Isbr.* A fragment, quite unfinished,  
Of a new ballad called The Median Supper'.  
It is about Astyages; and I  
Differ in somewhat from Herodotus.  
But altering the facts of history, 60  
When they are troublesome, good governors  
Will hardly visit rigorously. Attention!

'Harpagus, hast thou salt enough,  
Hast thou broth enough to thy kid?  
And hath the cook put right good stuff      65  
Under the pasty lid?'

'I've salt enough, Astyages,  
And broth enough in sooth;  
And the cook hath mixed the meat and grease  
Most tickling to my tooth.'      70

So spake no wild Red Indian swine,  
Eating a forest rattle-snake:  
But Harpagus, that Mede of mine,  
And King Astyages so spake.

'Wilt have some fruit? Wilt have some wine? 75  
Here 's what is soft to chew;  
I plucked it from a tree divine,  
More precious never grew.'

Harpagus took the basket up,  
Harpagus brushed the leaves away;      80  
But first he filled a brimming cup,  
For his heart was light and gay.

And then he looked, and saw a face,  
Chopped from the shoulders of some one;  
And who alone could smile in grace      85  
So sweet? Why, Harpagus, thy son.

'Alas!' quoth the king, 'I've no fork,  
Alas! I've no spoon of relief,  
Alas! I've no neck of a stork  
To push down this throttling grief.      90

We've played at kid for child, lost both;  
I'd give you the limbs if I could;  
Some lie in your platter of broth:  
Good night, and digestion be good.'

Now Harpagus said not a word, 95  
Did no eye-water spill:  
His heart replied, for that had heard;  
And hearts' replies are still.

How do you like it?

*Duke.* Poetry, they say,  
Should be the poet's soul; and here, methinks, 100  
In every word speaks yours.

*Isbr.* Good. Don't be glad too soon.  
Do ye think I've done? Three minutes' patience more.

A cannibal of his own boy,  
He is a cannibal uncommon;  
And Harpagus, he is my joy, 105  
Because he wept not like a woman.

From the old supper-giver's poll  
He tore the many-kingdomed mitre;  
To him, who cost him his son's soul,  
He gave it; to the Persian fighter: 110  
And quoth,  
'Old art thou, but a fool in blood:  
If thou hast made me eat my son,  
Cyrus hath ta'en his grandsire's food;  
There's kid for child, and who has won? 115

All kingdomless is thy old head,  
In which began the tyrannous fun;  
Thou'rt slave to him, who should be dead:  
There's kid for child, and who has won?'

Now let the clock strike, let the clock strike now, 120  
And world be altered!

*[The clock strikes one, and the hour is repeated  
from the steeples of the city.]*

Trusty timepiece,  
Thou hast struck a mighty hour, and thy work 's done;  
For never shalt thou count a meaner one.

*[He dashes it on the ground.]*

Thus let us break our old life of dull hours,  
And hence begin a being, counted not 125  
By minutes, but by glories and delights.

*[Steps to a window and throws it open.]*

Thou steepled city, that dost lie below,  
Time doth demand whether thou wilt be free.  
Now give thine answer.

*[A trumpet is heard, followed by a peal of  
cannon. Beacons are seen. The stage is lined  
with soldiery.]*

Torw. Traitor, desperate traitor!  
Yet betrayed traitor! Make a path for me, 130  
Or, by the majesty that thou offendest,  
Thou shalt be struck with lightning in thy triumph.

*Isbr. All kingdomless is the old mule,  
In which began the tyrannous fun;  
Thou'rt slave to him, who was thy fool; 135  
There's Duke for Brother; who has won?*

Take the old man away.

Torw. I go; but my revenge  
Hangs, in its unseen might, godlike around you.

*[Exit guarded.]*

*Isbr. To work, my friends, to work! Each man his  
way.*

These present instants, cling to them: hold fast; 140  
**And spring from this one to the next, still upwards.**



They're rungs to Jacob's ladder to scale heaven with:  
Haste, or 'tis drawn away. *[Exeunt ceteri.]*

O stingy nature,  
To make me but one man! Had I but body  
For every several measure of thought and will, 145  
This night should see me world-crowned.

*Enter a messenger*

What news bring'st thou?  
Messr. Friends of the governor hold the strongest  
tower,  
And shoot with death's own arrows.  
*Isbr.* Get thee back,  
And never let me hear thy voice again,  
Unless to say, "'Tis taken'. Hark ye, sirrah; 150  
Wood in its walls, lead on its roof, the tower  
Cries, 'Burn me!' Go and cut away the drawbridge,  
And leave the quiet fire to himself:  
He knows his business. *[Exit messenger.]*

*Enter ZIBA armed*

What with you?  
*Ziba.* I'll answer,  
When one of us is undermost.  
*Isbr.* Ha! Midnight, 155  
Can a slave fight? *[They fight: ZIBA is disarmed.]*  
Now darest thou cry for mercy?  
*Ziba.* Never. Eternity! Come give me that,  
And I will thank thee.  
*Isbr.* Something like a man,  
And something like a fool. Thou'rt such a reptile,  
That I do like thee: pick up thy black life: 160  
I would not make my brother King and Fool,  
Friend Death, so poor a present. Hence! *[Exit ZIBA]*  
They're busy.

Tis a hot hour, which Murder steals from Love,  
To create ghosts in.

*Enter SIEGFRIED*

Now?

*Siegfr.* Triumph! They cannot stand another half  
hour. 165

The loyal had all supped and gone to bed:  
When our alarums thundered, they could only  
Gaze from their frightened windows: and some few  
We had in towers and churches to besiege.  
But, when one hornet's nest was burnt, the rest 170  
Cried quarter, and went home to end their naps.

*Isbr.* 'Twas good. I knew it was well planned. Return,  
And finish all. I'll follow thee, and see  
How Mars looks in his night-cap. [*Exit SIEGFRIED.*  
O! it is nothing now to be a man. 175

Adam, thy soul was happy that it wore  
The first, new, mortal members. To have felt  
The joy of the first year, when the one spirit  
Kept house-warming within its fresh-built clay,  
I'd be content to be as old a ghost. 180

Thine was the hour to live in. Now we're common,  
And man is tired of being no more than human;  
And I'll be something better:—not by tearing  
This chrysalis of psyche ere its hour,  
Will I break through Elysium. There are sometimes,  
Even here, the means of being more than men: 186  
And I by wine, and women, and the sceptre,  
Will be, my own way, heavenly in my clay.

O you small star-mob, had I been one of you,  
I would have seized the sky some moonless night, 190  
And made myself the sun; whose morrow rising  
Shall see me new-created by myself.

Come, come; to rest, my soul. I must sleep off  
This old plebeian creature that I am. [*Exit.*

## ACT V

SCENE I. *An apartment in the ducal castle*ISBRAND *and* SIEGFRIED

*Siegfr.* They wait still for you in their council  
chamber,

And clamorously demand the keys of the treasure,  
The stores of arms, lists of the troops you've hired,  
Reports of your past acts, and your intentions  
Towards the new republic.

*Isbr.* They demand! 5

A phrase politer would have pleased me more.  
The puppets, whose heart-strings I hold and play  
Between my thumb and fingers, this way, that way;  
Through whose masks, wrinkled o'er by age and  
passion,

My voice and spirit hath spoken continually; 10

Dare now to ape free will? Well done, Prometheus!

Thou'st pitied Punch and given him a soul,

And all his wooden peers. The tools I've used

To chisel an old heap of stony laws,

The abandoned sepulchre of a dead dukedom, 15

Into the form my spirit loved and longed for;

Now that I've perfected her beauteous shape,

And animated it with half my ghost;

Now that I lead her to our bridal bed,

Dare the mean instruments to lay their plea, 20

Or their demand forsooth, between us? Go;

And tell the fools, (you'll find them pale, and dropping  
Cold tears of fear out of their trembling cheek-pores;)

Tell them, for comfort, that I only laughed;

And bid them all to sup with me to-night, 25

When we will call the cup to counsel.

*Siegfr.* Mean you

Openly to assume a kingly power,

Nor rather inch yourself into the throne?

Perhaps—but as you will.

*Isbr.*

Siegfried, I'm one

That what I will must do, and what I do 30

Do in the nick of time without delay.

To-morrow is the greatest fool I know,

Excepting those that put their trust in him.

In one word hear, what soon they all shall hear:

A king 's a man, and I will be no man 35

Unless I am a king. Why, where 's the difference?

Throne steps divide us: they're soon climbed perhaps:

I have a .bit of FIAT in my soul,

And can myself create my little world.

Had I been born a four-legged child, methinks 40

I might have found the steps from dog to man,

And crept into humanity. There be

Those that fall down out of their stage of manhood

Into the story where the four-legged dwell.

But to the conclave with my message quickly: 45

I've yet a deal to do. *[Exit SIEGFRIED.]*

How I despise

All you mere men of muscle! It was ever

My study to find out a way to godhead,

And on reflection soon I found that first

I was but half created; that a power 50

Was wanting in my soul to be its soul,

And this was mine to make. Therefore I fashioned

A will above my will, that plays upon it,

As the first soul doth use in men and cattle.

There 's lifeless matter; add the power of shaping, 55

And you've the crystal: add again the organs,

Wherewith to subdue sustenance to the form

And manner of one's self, and you've the plant:

Add power of motion, senses, and so forth,

And you've all kind of beasts; suppose a pig: 60

To pig add foresight, reason, and such stuff,

Then you have man. What shall we add to man,

To bring him higher? I begin to think  
That's a discovery I soon shall make.  
Thus I, owing nought to books, but being read      65  
In the odd nature of much fish and fowl,  
And cabbages and beasts, have I raised myself,  
By this comparative philosophy,  
Above your shoulders, my sage gentlemen.  
Have patience but a little, and keep still,      70  
I'll find means, bye and bye, of flying higher. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *Another apartment*

*The* DUKE, MARIO, ZIBA, and *Conspirators.*

## SIEGFRIED

*A Conspirator, (to SIEGFRIED)* Said he nought else?

*Siegfr.*      What else he said was worse.

He is no more Isbrand of yesterday;  
But looks and talks as one, who in the night  
Hath made a bloody compact with some fiend.  
His being is grown greater than it was,      5  
And must make room, by cutting off men's lives,  
For its shadowy increase.

*Conspir.*      O friends, what have we done?  
Sold, for a promise, still security,  
The mild familiar laws our fathers left;  
Uprooted our firm country.

*Ziba.*      And now sit,      10  
Weeping like babes, among its ruins. Up!  
You have been cheated; now turn round upon him.  
In this his triumph pull away his throne,  
And let him into hell.

*Another Conspir.*      But that I heard it  
From you, his inmost counsel and next heart,      15  
I'd not believe it. Why, the man was open;  
We looked on him, and saw your looks reflected;  
Your hopes and wishes found an echo in him;

He pleased us all, I think. Let's doubt the worst,  
Until we see.

*Duke.*                   Until you feel and perish.                   20  
You looked on him, and saw your looks reflected,  
Because his soul was in a dark deep well,  
And must draw down all others to encrease it:  
Your hopes and wishes found an echo in him,  
As out of a sepulchral cave, prepared                   25  
For you and them to sleep in. To be brief,  
He is the foe of all; let all be his,  
And he must be o'erwhelmed.

*Siegfr.*                                   I throw him off,  
Although I feared to say so in his presence,  
And think you all will fear. O that we had                   30  
Our good old noble Duke, to help us here!

*Duke.* Of him I have intelligence. The governor,  
Whose guards are bribed and awed by these good  
tidings,  
Waits us within. There we will speak at large:  
And O! may justice, for this once, descend                   35  
Like lightning-footed vengeance.

*Mario.*                                   It will come;  
But when, I know not. Liberty, whose shade  
Attends, smiles still in patience, and that smile  
Melts tyrants down in time: and, till she bids,  
To strike were unavailing.

*[Exeunt, ZIBA and SIEGFRIED remain.]*

*Ziba.*                                   Let them talk:                   40  
I mean to do; and will let no one's thoughts,  
Or reasonable cooling counsels, mix  
In my resolve to weaken it, as little  
As shall a drop of rain or pity-water  
Adulterate this thick blood-curdling liquor.                   45  
Siegfried, I'll free you from this thankless master.

*Siegfr.* I understand. To-night? Why that is best.  
In plottings there is still some creak unstopped,  
Some heart unsteered, some fellow who doth talk

In sleep or in his cups, or tells his talc, 50  
 Love-drunk, unto his secret-selling mistress.  
 How shall't be done though?

*Ziba.* I'm his cup-bearer;  
 An office that he gave me in derision  
 And I will execute so cunningly  
 That he shall have no lips to laugh with, long; 55  
 Nor spare and spurn me, as he did last night.  
 Let him beware, who shows a dogged slave  
 Pity or mercy! For the drug, 'tis good:  
 There is a little, hairy, green-eyed snake,  
 Of voice like to the woody nightingale, 60  
 And ever singing pitifully sweet,  
 That nestles in the barry bones of death,  
 And is his dearest pet and playfellow.  
 The honied froth about that serpent's tongue  
 Deserves not so his habitation's name, 65  
 As doth this liquor. That's the liquor for him.

*[Exeunt.]*

### SCENE III. A meadow

*SIBYLLA and ladies, gathering flowers*

*Sibyl.* Enough; the dew falls, and the glow-worm 's  
 shining:

Now let us search our baskets for the fairest  
 Among our flowery booty, and then sort them.

*Lady.* The snowdrops are all gone; but here are  
 cowslips,  
 And primroses, upon whose petals maidens, 5  
 Who love to find a moral in all things,  
 May read a lesson of pale bashfulness;  
 And violets, that have taught their young buds white-  
 ness,

That blue-eyed ladies' lovers might not tear them  
 For the old comparison; daisies without number, 10

And buttercups and lilies of the vale.

*Sibyl.* Sit then; and we will bind some up with  
rushes,

And wind us garlands. Thus it is with man;  
He looks on nature as his supplement,  
And still will find out likenesses and tokens 15  
Of consanguinity, in the world's graces,  
To his own being. So he loves the rose,  
For the cheek's sake, whose touch is the most grateful  
At night-fall to his lip; and, as the stars rise,  
Welcomes the memories of delighting glances, 20  
Which go up as an answer o'er his soul.

*Lady.* And therefore earth and all its ornaments,  
Which are the symbols of humanity  
In forms refined, and efforts uncompleted,  
All innocent and graceful, temper the heart, 25  
Of him who muses and compares them skilfully,  
To glad belief and tearful gratitude.  
This is the sacred source of poesy.

*Sibyl.* While we are young and free from care, we  
think so.

But, when old age or sorrow brings us nearer 30  
To spirits and their interests, we see  
Few features of mankind in outward nature;  
But rather signs inviting us to heaven.  
I love flowers too; not for a young girl's reason,  
But because these brief visitors to us 35  
Rise yearly from the neighbourhood of the dead,  
To show us how far fairer and more lovely  
Their world is; and return thither again,  
Like parting friends that beckon us to follow, 40  
And lead the way silent and smilingly.  
Fair is the season when they come to us,  
Unfolding the delights of that existence  
Which is below us: 'tis the time of spirits,  
Who with the flowers, and like them, leave their  
graves:



But when the earth is sealed, and none dare come 45  
 Upwards to cheer us, and man 's left alone,  
 We have cold, cutting winter. For no bridal,  
 Excepting with the grave, are flowers fit emblems.

*Lady.* And why then do we pluck and wreathe them  
 now?

*Sibyl.* Because a bridal with the grave is near. 50  
 You will have need of them to strew a corpse.  
 Aye, maidens, I am dying; but lament not:  
 It is to me a wished for change of being.  
 Yonder behold the evening star arising,  
 Appearing bright over the mountain-tops; 55  
 He has just died out of another region,  
 Perhaps a cloudy one; and so die I;  
 And the high heaven, serene and light with joy,  
 Which I pass into, will be my love's soul,  
 That will encompass me; and I shall tremble, 60  
 A brilliant star of never-dying delight,  
 'Mid the ethereal depth of his eternity.  
 Now lead me homewards: and I'll lay me down,  
 To sleep not, but to rest: then strew me o'er  
 With these flowers fresh out of the ghosts' abodes, 65  
 And they will lead me softly down to them. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *The ruined Cathedral, in which a large covered table with empty chairs is set; the sepulchre, and the cloisters painted with the DANCE OF DEATH as in Act III, Scene 3. Moonlight. The clock strikes twelve; on which is heard*

*A Song in the air*

The moon doth mock and make me crazy,  
 And midnight tolls her horrid claim  
 On ghostly homage. Fie, for shame!  
 Deaths, to stand painted there so lazy.

There 's nothing but the stars about us, 5  
And they're no tell-tales, but shine quiet:  
Come out, and hold a midnight riot,  
Where no mortal fool dare flout us:  
And, as we rattle in the moonlight pale;  
Wanderers shall think 'tis the nightingale. 10

*[The Deaths, and the figures paired with them,  
come out of the walls, and dance fantasti-  
cally to a rattling music, singing; some  
seat themselves at the table and drink and  
with mocking gestures, mask the feast,  
&c.]*

*Song*

Mummies and skeletons, out of your stones;  
Every age, every fashion, and figure of Death:  
The death of the giant with petrified bones;  
The death of the infant who never drew breath.  
Little and gristly, or bony and big, 15  
White and clattering, grassy and yellow;  
The partners are waiting, so strike up a jig,  
Dance and be merry, for Death 's a droll fellow.  
The emperor and empress, the king and the queen,  
The knight and the abbot, friar fat, friar thin, 20  
The gipsy and beggar, are met on the green;  
Where 's Death and his sweetheart? We want to  
begin.  
In circles, and mazes, and many a figure,  
Through clouds, over chimneys and cornfields  
yellow,  
We'll dance and laugh at the red-nosed gravedigger, 25  
Who dreams not that Death is so merry a fellow.  
*One with a scythe, who has stood sentinel, now sings:*

Although my old ear  
 Hath neither hammer nor drum,  
 Methinks I can hear  
 Living skeletons come. 30

The cloister re-echoes the call,  
 And it frightens the lizard,  
 And, like an old hen, the wall  
 Cries 'cluck! cluck! back to my gizzard;  
 'Tis warm, though it's stony, 35  
 'My chickens so bony.'

So come let us hide, each with his bride,  
 For the wicked are coming who have not yet died.  
*[The Deaths return to their places in the wall.]*

*Enter ISBRAND, the DUKE, SIEGFRIED, MARIO, WOLF-  
 RAM as fool, and Conspirators, followed by ZIBA and  
 other Attendants*

*Isbr.* You wonder at my banqueting-house perhaps:  
 But 'tis my fashion, when the sky is clear, 40  
 To drink my wine out in the open air:  
 And this our sometime meeting-place is shadowy,  
 And the wind howleth through the ruins bravely.  
 Now sit, my gentle guests: and you, dark man,

*[To WOLFRAM.]*  
 Make us as merry as you can, and proudly 45  
 Bear the new office, which your friend, the pilgrim,  
 Has begged for you: 'twas my profession once;  
 Do justice to that cap.

*Duke.* Now, having washed our hearts of love and  
 sorrow,  
 And pledged the rosiness of many a cheek, 50  
 And, with the name of many a lustrous maiden,  
 Ennobled enough cups; feed, once again,  
 Our hearing with another merry song.

*Isbr.* 'Tis pity that the music of this dukedom,  
 Under the former government, went wrong, 55  
**Like** all the rest: my ministers shall look to't.

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

*Siegfr.* What shall it be,  
And of what turn? Shall battle's drum be heard?  
The chase's trumpet? Shall the noise of Bacchus  
Swell in our cheeks, or lazy, sorrowing love 60  
Burthen with sighs our ballad?

*Isbr.* Try the piece,  
You sang me yesternight to sleep with best.  
It is for such most profitable ends  
We crowned folks encourage all the arts.

*Song*

My goblet's golden lips are dry,                   65  
And, as the rose doth pine  
For dew, so doth for wine

My goblet's cup;  
Rain, O! rain, or it will die;  
Rain, fill it up! 70

Arise, and get thee wings to-night,  
 Ætna! and let run o'er  
 Thy wines, a hill no more,  
 But darkly frown  
 A cloud, where eagles dare not soar,      75  
 Dropping rain down.

*Isbr.* A very good and thirsty melody:  
What say you to it, my court poet?

*Wolfr.* Good melody! If this be a good melody,  
 I have at home, fattening in my sty, 80  
 A sow that grunts above the nightingale.  
 Why this will serve for those, who feed their veins  
 With crust, and cheese of dandelion's milk,  
 And the pure Rhine. When I am sick o' mornings,  
 With a horn-spoon tinkling my porridge-pot, 85  
 'Tis a brave ballad: but in Bacchanal night,

O'er wine, red, black, or purple-bubbling wine,  
That takes a man by the brain and whirls him round,  
By Bacchus' lip! I like a full-voiced fellow,  
A craggy-throated, fat-cheeked trumpeter, 90  
A barker, a moon-howler, who could sing  
Thus, as I heard the snaky mermaids sing  
In Phlegethon, that hydrophobic river,  
One May-morning in Hell.

*Song*

Old Adam, the carrion crow, 95  
The old crow of Cairo;  
He sat in the shower, and let it flow  
Under his tail and over his crest;  
And through every feather  
Leaked the wet weather; 100  
And the bough swung under his nest;  
For his beak it was heavy with marrow.  
Is that the wind dying? O no;  
It's only two devils, that blow  
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,  
In the ghosts' moonshine. 106

Ho! Eve, my grey carrion wife,  
When we have supped on kings' marrow,  
Where shall we drink and make merry our life?  
Our nest it is queen Cleopatra's scull, 110  
'Tis cloven and cracked,  
And battered and hacked,  
But with tears of blue eyes it is full:  
Let us drink then, my raven of Cairo.  
Is that the wind dying? O no; 115  
It's only two devils, that blow  
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,  
In the ghosts' moonshine.

*Isbr.* Pilgrim, it is with pleasure I acknowledge,  
In this your friend, a man of genuine taste: 120  
He imitates my style in prose and verse:  
And be assured that this deserving man  
Shall soon be knighted, when I have invented  
The name of my new order; and perhaps  
I'll make him minister. I pledge you, Fool: 125  
Black! something exquisite.

*Ziba.* Here 's wine of Egypt,  
Found in a Memphian cellar, and perchance  
Pressed from its fruit to wash Sesostri's throat,  
Or sweeten the hot palate of Cambyses.  
See how it pours, thick, clear, and odorous. 130

*Isbr.* 'Tis full, without a bubble on the top:  
Pour him the like. Now give a toast.

*Wolfr.* Excuse me:  
I might offend perhaps, being blunt, a stranger,  
And rustically speaking rustic thoughts.

*Isbr.* That shall not be: give us what toast you will,  
We'll empty all our goblets at the word, 136  
Without demur.

*Siegfr.* Well, since the stranger 's silent.  
I'll give a toast, which, I can warrant you,  
Was yet ne'er drunk. There is a bony man,  
Through whom the sun shines, when the sun is out:  
Or the rain drops, when any clouds are weeping; 141  
Or the wind blows, if Æolus will; his name,  
And let us drink to his success and sanity;—  
But will you truly?

*Isbr.* Truly, as I said.

*Siegfr.* Then round with the health of Death, round  
with the health 145  
Of Death the bony, Death the great; round, round.  
Empty yourselves, all cups, unto the health  
Of great King Death!

*Wolfr.* Set down the cup, Isbrand, set the cup down.  
Drink not, I say.

*Siegfr.* And what's the matter now? 150

*Isbr.* What do you mean, by bidding me not drink?  
Answer, I'm thirsty.

*Wolfr.* Push aside the boughs:  
Let's see the night, and let the night see us.

*Isbr.* Will the fool read us astronomic lectures?

*Wolfr.* Above stars; stars below; round the moon  
stars. 155

*Isbrand,* don't sip the grape-juice.

*Isbr.* Must I drink,  
Or not, according to a horoscope?

Says Jupiter, no? Then he 's a hypocrite.

*Wolfr.* Look upwards, how 'tis thick and full, how  
sprinkled,

This heaven, with the planets. Now, consider; 160

Which will you have? The sun 's already taken,

But you may find an oar in the half moon,

Or drive the comet's dragons; or, if you'd be

Rather a little snug and quiet god,

A one-horse star is standing ready for you. 165

Choose, and then drink.

*Isbr.* If you are sane or sober,  
What do you mean?

*Wolfr.* It is a riddle, sir,  
*Siegfried,* your friend, can solve.

*Siegfr.* Some sorry jest.

*Wolfr.* You'll laugh but palely at its sting, I think.

Hold the dog down; disarm him; grasp his right. 170

My lord, this worthy courtier loved your virtues

To such excess of piety, that he wished

To send you by a bye-path into heaven.

Drink, and you're straight a god—or something else.

*A Conspirator.* O murderous villain! Kill him where  
he sits. 175

*Isbr.* Be quiet, and secure him. *Siegfried,* *Siegfried;*  
Why hast thou no more genius in thy villany?

Wilt thou catch kings in cobwebs? Lead him hence:

Chain him to-night in prison, and to-morrow  
Put a cord round his neck and hang him up, 180  
In the society of the old dog  
Who killed my neighbour's sheep.

*Siegfr.* I do thank thee.

In faith, I hoped to have seen grass grow o'er you,  
And should have much rejoiced. But, as it is,  
I'll willingly die upright in the sun: 185  
And I can better spare my life than you.  
Good night then, Fool and Duke: you have my curse;  
And Hell will have you some day down for hers:  
So let us part like friends. My lords, good sleep  
This night, the next I hope you'll be as well 190  
As I shall. Should there be a lack of rope,  
I recommend my bowstring as a strong one.  
Once more, farewell: I wish you all, believe me,  
Happily old, mad, sick, and dead, and cursed.

*[Exit guarded.]*

*Isbr.* That gentleman should have applied his talent  
To writing new-year's wishes. Another cup! 196

*Wolfr.* He has made us dull: so I'll begin a story.  
As I was newly dead, and sat beside  
My corpse, looking on it, as one who muses  
Gazing upon a house he was burnt out of, 200  
There came some merry children's ghosts to play  
At hide-and-seek in my old body's corners:—

*Isbr.* But how came you to die and yet be here?

*Wolfr.* Did I say so? Excuse me. I am absent,  
And forget always that I'm just now living. 205  
But dead and living, which are which? A question  
Not easy to be solved. Are you alone,  
Men, as you're called, monopolists of life?  
Or is all being, living? and *what is*,  
With less of toil and trouble, more alive, 210  
Than they, who cannot, half a day, exist  
Without repairing their flesh mechanism?  
Or do you owe your life, not to this body,



But to the sparks of spirit that fly off,  
 Each instant disengaged and hurrying 215  
 From little particles of flesh that die?  
 If so, perhaps you are the dead yourselves:  
 And these ridiculous figures on the wall  
 Laugh, in their safe existence, at the prejudice,  
 That you are anything like living beings. 220  
 But hark! The bell tolls, and a funeral comes.  
*[Enter a funeral; ladies bearing a pall.]*

*Dirge*

We do lie beneath the grass  
 In the moonlight, in the shade  
 Of the yew-tree. They that pass  
 Hear us not. We are afraid 225  
 They would envy our delight,  
 In our graves by glow-worm night.  
 Come follow us, and smile as we;  
 We sail to the rock in the ancient waves,  
 Where the snow falls by thousands into the sea, 230  
 And the drowned and the shipwrecked have  
 happy graves. *[Exeunt.]*

*Duke.* What's this that comes and goes, so shadow-like?

*Attendant.* They bear the fair Sybylla to her grave.

*Duke.* She dead!

Darest thou do this, thou grave-begotten man,  
 Thou son of Death? *(To WOLFRAM)*

*Wolfr.* Sibylla dead already? 235  
 I wondered how so fair a thing could live:  
 And, now she is no more, it seems to me  
 She was too beautiful ever to die!

*Isbr.* She, who was to have been my wife? Here,  
 fellow;  
 Take thou this flower to strew upon her grave, 240

A lily of the valley; it bears bells,  
 For even the plants, it seems, must have their fool,  
 So universal is the spirit of folly;  
 And whisper, to the nettles of her grave,  
 \*King Death hath asses' ears'. 245

*Mario. (Stabbing ISBRAND)* At length thou art con-  
 demned to punishment.

Down thou usurper, to the earth and grovel!  
 The pale form, that has led me up to thee,  
 Bids me deal this; and, now my task is o'er,  
 Beckons me hence. [Exit.

*Isbr.* Villain, thou dig'st deep: 250  
 But think you I will die? No: should I groan,  
 And close my eyes, be fearful of me still.  
 Tis a good jest: I but pretend to die,  
 That you may speak about me bold and loudly;  
 Then I come back and punish: or I go 255  
 To dethrone Pluto. It is wine I spilt,  
 Not blood, that trickles down.

*Enter TORWALD with soldiers*

*Torw.* Long live duke Melveric!

*All.* Long live duke Melveric!

*Isbr.* Duke Isbrand, long live he!  
 Duke Melveric is deposed.

*Torw.* Receive the homage 260  
 Of your revolted city.

*Duke.* Torwald, thanks.  
 The usurper has his death-wound.

*Torw.* Then cry, Victory!  
 And long life to duke Melveric! once more.

*Isbr.* I will live longer: when he 's dead and buried,  
 A hundred years hence, or, it may be, more, 265  
 I shall return and take my dukedom back.  
 Imagine not I 'm weak enough to die.

*Wolfr.* Meantime Death sends you back this cap of  
 office.

At his court you're elected to the post:  
Go, and enjoy it.

*[Sets the fool's cap on ISBRAND'S head.]*

Isbr.                      Bye and bye. But let not                      270

Duke Melveric think that I part unrevenged:  
For I hear in the clouds about me voices,  
Singing

*All kingdomless is thy old head,  
In which began the tyrannous fun; 275  
He fetches thee, who should be dead;  
There 's Duke for Brother! Who has won?*

Now Death doth make indeed a fool of me.                      *[Dies.]*

Duke. Where are my sons? I have not seen them  
lately.

Go to the bridegroom's lodgings, and to Athulf's, 280  
And summon both.                      *[Exit attendant.]*

Wolfr.                      They will be here; and sooner  
Than you would wish. Meanwhile, my noble Duke,  
Some friends of mine behind us seem to stir.  
They wish, in honour of your restoration,  
In memory also of your glorious deeds,                      285  
To present masque and dance to you. Is't granted?

Duke. Surely; and they are welcome, for we need  
Some merriment amid these sad events.

Wolfr. You in the wall there then, my thin light  
archers,  
Come forth and dance a little: 'tis the season                      290  
When you may celebrate Death's Harvest-Home.

*[A dance of Deaths. In the middle of it enter  
AMALA, followed by a bier, on which the  
corpse of Adalmar is borne. The dance  
goes out.]*

Duke. What's this? Another mummery?

Wolfr.                      The antimasque,  
I think they call it: 'tis satirical.

*Amala.* My lord, you see the bridal bed that waits me.

Your son, my bridegroom, both no more, lies here,  
Cold, pale, abandoned in his youthful blood: 296  
And I his bride have now no duty further,  
But to kneel down, wretched, beside his corpse,  
Crying for justice on his murderers.

*Duke.* Could my son die, and I not know it sooner?  
Why, he is cold and stiff. O! now my crown 301  
Is sunk down to the dust, my life is desolate.  
Who did this deed?

*Enter* ATHULF

*Wolfr.* Athulf, answer the call.

*Amala,* O no! Suspect not him. He was last night  
Gentle, and full of love, to both of us, 305  
And could imagine ne'er so foul a deed.  
Suspect not him; for so thou mak'st me feel  
How terrible it is that he is dead,  
Since his next friend 's accused of such a murder:  
And torture not his ghost, which must be here, 310  
Striving in vain to utter one soul-sound,  
To speak the guiltless free. Tempt not cruelly  
The helplessness of him who is no more,  
Nor make him discontented with the state,  
Which lets him not assert his brother's innocence. 315

*Duke, (to ATHULF)* Answer! Thou look'st like one,  
unto whose soul

A secret voice, all day and night, doth whisper,  
'Thou art a murderer'. Is it so? Then rather  
Speak not. Thou wear'st a dagger at thy side;  
Avenge the murdered man, thou art his brother; 320  
And never let me hear from mortal lips  
That my son was so guilty.

*Athulf.* Amala,  
Still loves me; weep some gentle drops for me;  
And, when we meet again, fulfil thy promise.

Father, look here! *[Stabs himself to death.*

*Amala.* O Athulf! live one moment to deny it; 326

I ask that, and that only. Lo! old man,

He hath in indignation done the deed.

Since thou could'st think him for an instant guilty,

He held the life, which such a base suspicion 330

Had touched, and the old father who could speak it,

Unworthy of him more: and he did well.

I bade thee give me vengeance for my bridegroom,

And thou hast slain the only one who loved me.

Suspect and kill me too: but there 's no need; 335

For such a one, as I, God never let

Live more than a few hours.

*[She falls into the arms of her ladies.*

*Duke.* Torwald, the crown is yours; I reign no more.

But when, thou spectre, is thy vengeance o'er!

*Wolfr.* Melveric, all is finished, which to witness

The spirit of retribution called me hither. 341

Thy sons have perished for like cause, as that

For which thou did'st assassinate thy friend.

Sibylla is before us gone to rest.

Blessing and Peace to all who are departed! 345

But thee, who daredst to call up into life,

And the unholy world's forbidden sunlight,

Out of his grave him who reposed softly,

One of the ghosts doth summon, in like manner,

Thee, still alive, into the world o' th' dead. 350

*[Exit with the DUKE into the sepulchre.*

*The curtain falls*

*Songs and Fragments*  
*from the*  
REVISIONS OF *DEATH'S JEST-BOOK*

[Composed 1829-49]

FROM ACT I, SCENE I  
*/ . The Spirit of Folly*

*Mandr*\_\_\_\_O world, world, the gods and fairies left you, for thou wert too grave, and now, Socratic star, thy Demon, thy great Pan, Folly, is waning from thy side. The oracles still talked in their sleep, shall our grand-children say, till Master Merry man's Kingdom was broken up; now is every man his own Fool, and Fate for us all. So much for my dying speech and confession as the last Fool, or indeed, the last Man, for he who hath no leaven of the original father Donkey in any corner of him, may be an angel, black, white or piebald: he has lost his title to humanity. And now a ballad to the speech, a rhyme to the reason:

Folly hath now turned out of door  
Mankind and Fate, who were before  
Jove's Harlequin and Clown.  
The world 's no stage, no tavern more,  
Its sign, the Fool's ta'en down.  
With poppy rain and cypress dew  
Weep all, for all, who laughed for you:  
For goose-grass is no medicine more,  
But the owl's brown eye 's the sky's new blue.  
Heigho! Foolscape!

*hbr.* Well said and truly. 'Twas no idle joke of Heaven's that Tarquin's fool and Manlius' geese saved Earth's only Rome, and in her freedom, civilized

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

manners, art and science, for all future times, but a hint and token which man has overlooked. Why not an owl or a philosopher? If the good lord of the creation, being a beggar in foolery, will in spite of Destiny ride a cock-horse on Wisdom, why! he must needs gallop to Bedlam. I wash my hands of him. Well, now the Fates are no more humorous, they have been converted by the Knowledge Society tracts, and to make something useful of their cotton, do now with the threads of noble men's destinies knit matrimonial night-caps for old Goody Nature and Gaffer Mankind to play Punch and Judy in. But I grow delirious, and utter grave Truths.

### //. *Mandrake's Embarkation*

ARE all the rest aboard?...

*Mandr.* All, Sir Knight: the very pigs and capons chuck and grunt their magnanimous resolution to yield up their four-footed and biped ghosts without a squeak against Cook Destiny. To be a sausage in such a cause is superhuman: a flitch, or still more roasted whole, is so enviable that were I not Mandrake I could wish myself a cow or a calf; and that, if possible monstrous: with eight legs and double-headed, to be eaten two-fold on so patriotic an expedition. For my good will's sake now, hold me for a calf, though unworthy, and take me with you.

*Wolfr.* Who is this saucy fellow that prates between?

*Isbr.* A living somebody or nobody, a false coin of flesh that may pass at Court as a tolerable counterfeit of humanity, so indeed that all who see but skin-deep might take it for a scurvy human creature. Believe it not. Some one of those malicious Gods who envy Prometheus his puppet show have taught all con-

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

founded sorts of malcontent beasts, saucy birds and ambitious shell-fish, and hopping creatures of land and water, the knack of looking human to the life. How? is the mystery of the cookery-book. Briskets of veal, liver and lights, tripe and capon, have been so cunningly smuggled into the featherless two-legged ones that the real history of the World is Æsop's fable-book in masquerade. A whole people is stout and surly, being mostly certain steaks and Barons of beef gone human: another, after centuries of amphibious diet, owes to the frog's legs in its wooden shoes the agility with which it jumps over gentle King Log, and devotes itself patriotically to the appetite of Emperor Stork, his follower: aye, it would even blow itself up to be bull itself. Even you, Sir Knight, are still tolerably like unto a man, but Sirloin labours hard to shoulder away thy fine old heart, and a whole herd of sheep bleats in that merciful resolve of thine to pardon thy foe; but more of that anon.

### *///. The Home is One*

*Torw.* What say the Princes?

*Jsbr. (Aside)* They remain, good youths;

They trust in Providence and in their birthright,

And let what lion will, sup on their father.

That is the course of nature.

*Sibald.* Bid him but send us loving thoughts each day;

We will reply: and in this interchange

He must be gainer, for he can love us

Not more than doubly with the selfsame love,

But we two him, each with a separate heart,

Twice for his once.

*Wolfr.*

For kind farewells



## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

This one short word the time allows,  
With which we take our leave.

*Erminia.* We to our homes,  
You to the homeless waves; unequal parting.

*Wolfr.* The earth may open, and the sea o'erwhelm;  
Many the ways, the little home is one;  
Thither the courser leads, thither the helm,  
And at the gate we meet when all is done.

### IV. *Blindness of Hatred*

*Wolfr.* Hence with your dark demands: let's shape  
our lives  
After the merciful lesson of the sun,  
That gilds our purpose....

*Isbr*\_\_\_\_Revenge, Revenge lend me your torch, that  
I may by its bloody fire see the furrows of this man's  
countenance, which once were iron, like the bars of  
Hell gate, and devilish thoughts peeped through them;  
but now is as a cage of very pitiful apes.

*Wolfr.* Thou knowest not Melveric, for thou lov'st  
him not.

### V. *Good for Evil*

*Wolfr.* Now rather let me think, like thou, my body  
perished:  
I will revenge me if I die for him;  
And let me be the one, if any must:  
He shall know who I was, and who my father.  
Like to the moon rebuking a blasphemer,  
Such vengeance shall shine out and light his deeds.  
I can no other execute, and when  
I lose this awe and piety towards nature

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

And human kind,—O God, if such a curse  
Awaits me in the winter of my years,—  
Rather diseased poverty or madness,  
Which I could bear, I hope, with self-content:  
If I should cease to be my mother's child,  
Let the sea overwhelm, the lightning strike me down,  
Or give me any grave that earth can spare.

## VI. Love and Hatred

*Wolfr.* O think not, brother, that our father's spirit  
Breathes earthly passion more: he is with me  
And guides me to the danger of his foe,  
Bringing from heaven, his home, pity and pardon.  
But should his blood need bloody expiation,  
Then let *me* perish. Blind these eyes, my sire,  
Palsy my vigorous arm, snow age upon me,  
Strike me with lightning down into the deep,  
Open me any grave that earth can spare,  
Leave me the truth of love, and death is lovely. *[Exit.]*

*Isbr.* O lion-heartedness right asinine!  
Such lily-livered meek humanity  
Saves not thy duke, good brother; it but shines  
Sickly upon his doom, as moonbeams breaking  
Upon a murderer's grave-digging spade.  
Or fate 's a fool, or I will be his fate.-  
What ho! Sir Knight! One word—Now for a face  
As innocent and lamblike as the wool  
That brings a plague.

*Re-enter* WOLFRAM

*Wolfr.* What will you more with me?

*Isbr.* Go, if you must and will; but take with you  
At least this letter of the governor's,

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Which, in your haste, you dropped. I must be honest,  
For so my hate was ever. Go.

*Wolfr.* And prosper! *[Exit.*

*Isbr.* Now then he plunges right into the waters,  
Like a possessed pig of Gallilee.  
O Lie, O Lie, O lovely lady Lie,  
They told me that thou art the devil's daughter.  
Then thou art greater than thy father, Lie;  
For while he mopes in Hell, thou queen'st it bravely,  
Ruling the earth under the name of Truth,  
While she is at the bottom of the well,  
Where Joseph left her.

### *VII. Song from the Ship*

To sea, to sea! the calm is o'er;  
The wanton water leaps in sport,  
And rattles down the pebbly shore;  
The dolphin wheels, the sea-cows snort.  
And unseen Mermaids' pearly song  
Comes bubbling up, the weeds among.  
Fling broad the sail, dip deep the oar:  
To sea, to sea! the calm is o'er.

To sea, to sea! our wide-winged bark  
Shall billowy cleave its sunny way,  
And with its shadow, fleet and dark,  
Break the caved Tritons' azure ray,  
Like mighty eagle soaring light  
O'er antelopes on Alpine height.  
The anchor heaves, the ship swings free,  
The sails swell full. To sea, to sea!

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

*Isbr.* The idiot merriment of thoughtless men!  
How the fish laugh at them, that swim and toy  
About the ruined ship, wrecked deep below,  
Whose pilot's skeleton, all full of sea weeds,  
Leans on his anchor, grinning like their Hope.

### FROM ACT I, SCENE II

#### *VIII. Sleeper's Countenance Contemplated*

'Tis but a warmer lighter death, this shadow of our  
life,  
The marble sleep, which seldom lifts not up the eyelid  
Till the last trumpet: thus so cloud-like light  
To kiss the day's life off from our hushed lips;  
And, see, even thus we smile.

*Duke.* There smiles methinks  
A cherished dream, that lies upon her lips  
As the word love written upon a rose,  
With which the story of our youth begins.  
Could'st thou but see whose image so delights her!

*Ziha.* Her thoughts are far from us in early childhood:

For 'tis our wont to dream of distant friends  
And half-forgotten times.

*Duke.* Enough! Is this a time  
For talk of air like this? Save up your love tales  
And dream-book wisdom for a younger hearer  
Upon an idler day.

#### *IX. A Day of Surpassing Beauty*

THE earth is bright, her forests all are golden;  
A cloud of flowers breathes blushing over her,

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

And, whispering from bud to blossom, opens  
The half awoken memory of the song  
She heard in childhood from the mystic sun:  
A thought that seeks impatiently its word.  
There is some secret stirring in the world,  
A crown, or cross, for one is born to-day.

### *X. A Night-Scene*

THE lake, like her, heaves gently  
Its breast of waves under a heaven of sleep,  
And pictures in its soothed transparent being  
The depth of worlds o'erhanging: o'er the pillow,  
Washed by the overflowing flowery locks,  
A silver promise of the moon is breathed:  
And the light veil of hieroglyphic clouds  
The curious wind rends ever and anon,  
Revealing the deep dream of Alpine heights,  
Which fill the distance of its wondering spirit,  
And on its hectic cheeks the prophecies  
Doth fearfully reflect, which flicker up  
Out of the sun's grave underneath the world.

### *XL A Beautiful Night*

How lovely is the heaven of this night,  
How deadly still its earth. The forest brute  
Has crept into his cave, and laid himself  
Where sleep has made him harmless like the lamb;  
The horrid snake, his venom now forgot,  
Is still and innocent as the honied flower  
Under his head:—and man, in whom are met  
Leopard and snake,—and all the gentleness

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

And beauty of the young lamb and the bud,  
Has let his ghost out, put his thoughts aside  
And lent his senses unto death himself;  
Whereby the King and beggar all lie down  
On straw or purple-tissue, are but bones  
And air, and blood, equal to one another  
And to the unborn and buried: so we go  
Placing ourselves among the unconceived  
And the old ghosts, wantonly, smilingly,  
For sleep is fair and warm—

### *XII. Liberty*

*Duke.*

Liberty!

Thou breakest through our dungeon's wall of waves,  
As morning bursts the towery spell of night.  
Horse of the desert, thou, coy arrowy creature,  
Startest like sunrise up, and from thy mane  
Shaking abroad the dews of slumber, boundest  
With sparkling hoof along the scattered sands,  
The livelong day in liberty and light.

### *XIII*

[*Duke.*] Away, away, thou soarest, happy bird,  
With pealing song and hearty clap of wings,  
Cheerily rowing through the sea of air  
Thy little boat of life high overhead,  
Startling the gaze of lofty capricorns  
On mountain pinnacle; now glidest thou  
Softly to settle on a flowering spray  
Gay as May morning, love-thought on the eyelid  
Of simple maiden; thence to dart ere long

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Full of heedless song and caring nought  
For the tear shed at parting: When thy day,  
Spent so in sunshine, darkens, thou art welcomed  
In the warm bosom of thy feathery home  
By patient mate; and I must hear thee toying  
Until the very thought of liberty  
Is in my dreams, a bird whose nest is built—

### *XIV. First Love Unrecognized*

Sibyl\_\_\_ Strange dread of meeting, greater dread of  
parting:  
Impatient hoping for another word,  
Yet sorrow for it, ere it was quite spoken,  
Because 'farewell was nearer. . . .  
I saw his image clearer in his absence  
Than near him, for my eyes were strangely troubled;  
And never had I dared to talk thus to him.

. . . . .  
Duke. Yet, my Sibylla, oft first love must perish;  
Like the poor snow-drop, boyish love of Spring,  
Born pale to die, and strew the path of triumph  
Before the imperial glowing of the rose,  
Whose passion conquers all.

### *XV. Anticipation of Wolfram's Coming*

*Enter a knight*

*Knight.* Hither, Sir Knight—

*Duke.* What knight?

*Knight.* What knight, but Wolfram?

*Duke.* Wolfram, my knight!

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

*Sibyl.* My day, my Wolfram!  
*Duke.* Know'st him?  
*Sibyl.* His foot is on my heart; he comes, he comes.

### *XVI. Duke's Decision*

*Duke....* Ha! What's this thought,  
Shapeless and shadowy, that keeps wheeling round,  
Like a dumb creature that sees coming danger,  
And breaks its heart trying in vain to speak?  
I know the moment: 'tis a dreadful one,  
Which in the life of every one comes once;  
When for the frightened hesitating soul  
High heaven and luring sin with promises  
Bid and contend: oft the faltering spirit,  
O'ercome by the fair fascinating fiend,  
Gives her eternal heritage of life  
For one caress, for one triumphant crime.—  
I will possess thee, maiden. Doubt and care  
Be trampled in the dust with the worm conscience!  
Farewell then, Wolfram.—

### *XVII*

[*Duke.*] Pitiful villain! that dost long to sin  
And dar'st not. Shall I dream my soul is bathing  
In his reviving blood, yet lose my right,  
My only health, my sole delight on earth,  
For fear of shadows on a chapel wall  
In some pale painted Hell? By thy beauty,  
I will possess thee, maiden.



DEATH'S JEST-BOOK  
FROM ACT I, SCENE III  
XVIII

SIBYLLA, WOLFRAM, *Knights*

*Song*

I

IN lover's ear a wild voice cried:  
'Sleeper, awake and rise!'  
A pale form stood by his bed-side,  
"With heavy tears in her sad eyes.  
'A beckoning hand, a moaning sound,  
A new-dug grave in weedy ground  
For her who sleeps in dreams of thee.  
Awake! Let not the murder be!'  
Unheard the faithful dream did pray,  
And sadly sighed itself away.  
'Sleep on,' sung Sleep, 'to-morrow  
'Tis time to know thy sorrow.'  
'Sleep on,' sung Death, 'to-morrow  
From me thy sleep thou'lt borrow.\*  
Sleep on, lover, sleep on,  
The tedious dream is gone;  
The bell tolls one.

II

Another hour, another dream:  
'Awake! awake!' it wailed,  
'Arise, ere with the moon's last beam  
Her rosy life hath paled.  
A hidden light, a muffled tread,  
A daggered hand beside the bed  
Of her who sleeps and dreams of thee.  
Thou wak'st not: let the murder be.\*

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

In vain the faithful dream did pray,  
And sadly sighed itself away.  
    'Sleep on,' sung Sleep, 'to-morrow  
    'Tis time to know thy sorrow.'  
    'Sleep on,' sung Death, 'to-morrow  
    From me thy sleep thou'lt borrow.'  
Sleep on, lover, sleep on,  
The tedious dream is gone;  
    Soon comes the sun.

### III

Another hour, another dream:  
    A red wound on a snowy breast,  
A rude hand stifling the last scream,  
    On rosy lips a death-kiss pressed.  
Blood on the sheets, blood on the floor,  
The murderer stealing through the door.  
'Now,' said the voice, with comfort deep,  
'She sleeps indeed, and thou may'st sleep.'  
The scornful dream then turned away  
To the first, weeping cloud of day.  
    'Sleep on,' sung Sleep, 'to-morrow  
    'Tis time to know thy sorrow.'  
    'Sleep on,' sung Death, 'to-morrow  
    From me thy sleep thou'lt borrow.'  
Sleep on, lover, sleep on,  
The tedious dream is gone;  
    The murder's done.

*Wolfr.* Sing me no more such ditties: they are well  
For the last gossips, when the snowy wind  
Howls in the chimney till the very taper  
Trembles with its blue flame, and the bolted gates  
Rattle before old winter's palsied hand.  
If you will sing, let it be cheerily  
Of dallying love. There's many a one among you

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Hath sung, beneath our oak trees to his maiden,  
Light bird-like mockeries, fit for love in springtime.  
Sing such a one.

### *Song*

I

I love thee and I love thee not,  
I love thee, and I'd rather not,  
All of thee, and I know not what.  
    A flowery eye as tender,  
    A swan-like neck as slender,  
    And on it a brown little spot  
        For tears to fall afraid on  
        And kisses to be paid on,  
    Have other maidens too.  
    Then why love I, love, none but you?  
If I could find the reason why,  
Methinks my love would quickly die.

II

Aye, knew I how to hate thee, maid,  
I'd hate thee for I knew not what,  
Excepting that I'd rather not  
    Be thy friend or foeman;  
    For thou'rt the only woman,  
    On whom to think my heart's afraid;  
        For if I would abhor thee,  
        The more must I long for thee.  
    What others force me to,  
    I turn me from; why not from you?  
If I could find the reason why,  
My disenchanted love would die.

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

### III

But should'st thou cease my heart to move  
To longings, that I'd rather not,  
And tried I hate, I know not what  
My heart would do for mourning;  
Love I,—it bursts, love scorning.  
O loveliest hate, most hateful love,  
This combat and endeavour  
Is what enslaves me ever.  
Til neither of the two,  
Or hate or love the love of you.  
And now I've found the reason why,  
I know my love can never die.

### *XIX. The Duke Overpowered by Enemies*

A N D now like to an ancient vine-bound tower,  
Which Heaven looks through, beside a countless sea,  
Drunken with storm he totters.

### *XX. Mercy*

*Wolfr.* Sibylla, what deserves he at our hands?  
*Sibyl.* Who, were desert the test, were not deserted  
By heavenly judges all, save only Mercy?

### *XXI. Human Life: Its Value*

THINK what I plead for: for a life! the gift  
Of God alone, whom he who saves't is likest.  
How glorious to live; even in one thought  
The wisdom of past times,

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

And from the luminous minds of many men,  
Catch a reflected truth; as in one eye  
Light from unnumbered worlds and furthest planets  
Of the star-crowned universe is gathered  
Into one ray.

### *XXII. Its Danger*

A Y , rosy life, smile in thy summer triumph,  
The morning shine upon thy pearly crown.  
The flattering wind kisses thine opening eyelids  
And rocks thee on his bosom, silly babe:  
Thou heedst not how the traitor mocks the tear  
On the dead leaf he careless puffs away.

## FROM ACT I, SCENE IV

### *XXIII. The New Cecilia*

*Titmouse.* How shall I believe such things?

*Mandr.* How you can: but believe, or thou shalt be  
made an example of like St. Ginguolph's relict. List to  
her legend and tremble, youth, for 'tis exceeding true,  
and by St. Cecilia, most musically melancholy.

Whoever has heard of St. Gingo  
Must know that the gipsy  
He married was tipsy  
Every day of her life with old Stingo.

And after the death of St. Gingo  
The wonders he did do  
Th' incredulous widow  
Denied with unladylike lingo.

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

'For St. Gingo a fig's and a feather-end!  
He no more can work wonder  
Than a clyster-pipe thunder  
Or I sing a psalm with my nether-end.'

As she said it, her breakfast beginning on  
A tankard of home-brewed inviting ale,  
Lo! the part she was sitting and sinning on  
Struck the old hundredth up like a nightingale.

Loud as psophia in an American forest, or  
The mystic Memnonian marble in  
A desert at daybreak, that chorister  
Breathed forth his *Æolmn* warbling.

That creature seraphic and spherical,  
Her firmament, kept up its clerical  
Thanksgivings, until she did aged die,  
Cooing and praising and chirping alert in  
Her petticoats, swung like a curtain  
Let down o'er the tail of a Tragedy.

Therefore, ladies, repent and be sedulous  
In praising your lords, lest, ah! well a day!  
Such judgement befall the incredulous  
And your latter ends melt into melody.

### *XXIV. The Oviparous Tailor and Anxious Fishermen*

*Mandr....* Hear you no noise? Here come disturbers.  
*Titmouse.* 'Tis only a hen-ostrich laying eggs like a  
tailor.

*Mandr.* A tailor! Ignorance, that craft is viviparous.  
*Titmouse.* Are they though? What is goose? And

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

why sit they crosslegged but to hatch. Why, it is written in a Bridgewater Treatise that the genus Tailor,—as man and woman's tailor or man-milliner, tailor military or civil, readymoney tailor, and even he that botcheth in a stall—at a certain age become oviparous, and lay eggs like a cod-fish, which are good poached, and brought to table with spinache, also, in egg-flip.

Wee, wee tailor,  
Nobody was paler  
Than wee, wee tailor;  
And nobody was thinner.  
Hast thou mutton-chops for dinner,  
My small-beer sinner,  
My starveling rat,—but haler,—  
Wee, wee tailor?

Below his starving garret  
Lived an old witch and a parrot,—  
Wee, wee tailor,—  
Cross, horrid and uncivil,  
For her grandson was the Devil  
Or a chimney-sweeper evil;  
She was sooty too, but paler,—  
Wee, wee tailor.

Her sooty hen laid stale eggs,  
And then came with his splay legs  
Wee, wee tailor,  
And stole them all for dinner.  
Then would old witch begin her  
Damnations on the sinner,—  
'May the thief lay eggs,—but staler;'  
Wee, wee tailor.

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Wee, wee tailor,  
Witch watched him like a jailor.  
Wee, wee tailor  
Did all his little luck spill.  
Tho' he swallowed many a muck's pill,  
Yet his mouth grew like a duck's bill,  
Crowed like a hen,—but maler,—  
Wee, wee tailor.

Near him did cursed doom stick,  
As he perched upon a broomstick,—  
Wee, wee tailor.  
It lightened, rained and thundered,  
And all the doctors wondered  
When he laid above a hundred  
Gallinaceous eggs,—but staler,—  
Wee, wee tailor.

A hundred eggs laid daily;  
No marvel he looked palely,—  
Wee, wee tailor.  
Witch let folks in to see some  
Poach'd tailor's eggs; to please 'em  
He must cackle on his besom,  
Till Fowl-death did prevail o'er  
Wee, wee tailor. [Exeunt,

*Enter Fishermen*

*1st Fisherman.* Away to the water, the moon 's cloudy.

*2nd Fisherman.* Push off quick: there 's something like a murder in the air.

*1st Fisherman.* Will it thunder to-night?

*2nd Fisherman.* Ay, gaily. 'Twere a right evening to die in.

*1st Fisherman.* Of the ailing of availing ale: let thy nose die purple on strong beer, and stout be thy porter



## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

to paradise. Death shall not catch me in his gin till the swallow comes again,

*2nd Fisherman.* My wife died on such a night, we had no money to have her buried, and she was sunk into the sea. When the moon looks up at me from the water, I always think of her last look. O that last look! I shall ne'er forget it.

*1st Fisherman.* Come away: the robbers are at our heels. Off, I say. *[They row off singing.]*

### I

As mad sexton's bell, tolling  
For earth's loveliest daughter  
Night's dumbness breaks rolling  
Ghostlily:  
So our boat breaks the water  
Witchingly.

### II

As her look the dream troubles  
Of her tearful-eyed lover,  
So our sails in the bubbles  
Ghostlily  
Are mirrored, and hover  
Moonily.

## XXV. The Warning

*Duke....* Now proclaim me.  
Let my name burn through all dark history  
Over the waves of time, as from a lighthouse,  
Warning approach.

*Wolfr.* I will avenge me, Duke, as never man.

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

### *Song from the Waters*

As sudden thunder  
Pierces night;  
As magic wonder,  
Mad affright  
Rives asunder  
Men's delight:  
Our ghost, our corpse and we  
Rise to be.

As flies the lizard  
Serpent fell;  
As goblin vizard,  
At the spell  
Of pale wizard,  
Sinks to hell;  
Our life, our laugh, our lay  
Pass away.

As wake the morning  
Trumpets bright;  
As snowdrop, scorning  
Winter's might,  
Rises warning  
Like a sprite:  
The buried, dead, and slain  
Rise again.

## XXVI. *End of Act I*

*Sibyl....* Who did this, Wolfram?

*Wolfr.*

'Tis well done, Sibylla;

So burst the portals of sepulchral night

Before th' immortal rising of the sun,

*Sibyl.* Who did this, Melveric?

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

*Duke.* Let him die in quiet.  
Hush! there 's a thought upon his lips again.  
*Sibyl.* Wilt thou die, Wolfram? Can I die for thee?  
*Duke.* I — I should do it, but for love of thee.  
*Wolfr.* Love Melferic, if thou canst. For me,  
Sibylla,  
I may be lonely in the grave without thee,  
For I must die too soon. I have oft thought,  
(Thou art so beautiful above all women,)  
I might be you; but then 'twas happier still  
To be another and admire and love thee.  
Now, I must die alone, see thee no more.  
Yet, can man die? Ay, as the sun doth set:  
The earth it is that falls away from day;  
Fixed in the heavens, although unseen by us,  
The immortal life and light remains triumphant. [*Dies.*

. . . . .

### *Song from the Waters*

The swallow leaves her nest,  
The soul my weary breast;  
But therefore let the rain  
On my grave  
Fall pure; for why complain?  
Since both will come again  
O'er the wave.

The wind dead leaves and snow  
Doth hurry to and fro;  
And, once, a day shall break  
O'er the wave,  
When a storm of ghosts shall shake  
The dead, until they wake  
In the grave.

DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

FROM ACT II, SCENE II

*XXVII, The Death of Wolfram*

A Y E, nobly doffed he his humanity.  
The bodily cloud that veiled his majesty  
Melted away into the elements  
As clouds from off a sunny mountain's pinnacle:  
Twas to die nobly.

*XXVIII Sibylla at Wolfram's Bier*

[Sibyl.] Dead, is he? What's that further than a word,  
Hollow as is the armour of a ghost  
Whose chinks the moon he haunts doth penetrate.  
Belief in death is the fell superstition,  
That hath appalled mankind and chained it down,  
A slave unto the dismal mystery  
Which old opinion dreams beneath the tombstone.  
Dead is he, and the grave shall wrap him up?  
And this you see is he? And all is ended?  
Aye this is cold, that was a glance of him  
Out of the depth of his immortal self;  
This utterance and token of his being  
His spirit hath let fall, and now is gone  
To fill up nature and complete her being.  
The form, that here is fallen, was the engine,  
Which drew a great motion of spiritual power  
Out of the world's own soul, and made it play  
In visible motion, as the lofty tower  
Leads down the animating fire of heaven  
To the world's use. That utensil is broken,  
Which did appropriate to human functions  
A portion of the ghostly element,  
And in another sphere the spirit works:

This then is all your Death. Say not he 's dead,—  
The word is vile—but that he is henceforth  
No more excepted from eternity.

*[Sibyl.]* Yet if I shed a tear,  
It is not for his death, but for my life.  
Aye, say you that he 's dead? You mean he is  
No more excepted from Eternity.  
If he were dead I should indeed despair.  
Can a man die? Ay, as the sun doth set:  
It is the earth that falls away from light;  
Fixed in the heavens, although unseen by us,  
The immortal life and light remains triumphant.  
And therefore you shall never see me wail,  
Or drop base waters of an ebbing sorrow;  
No wringing hands, no sighings, no despair,  
No morning weeds will I betake me to;  
But keep my thought of him that is no more,  
As secret as great nature keeps his soul,  
From all the world; and consecrate my being  
To that divinest hope, which none can know of  
Who have not laid their dearest in the grave.

Sorrow, lie still and wear  
No tears, no sighings, no despair,  
No trembling dewy smile of care,  
    No mourning weeds,  
Nought that discloses  
    A heart that bleeds;

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

But looks contented I will bear,  
And o'er my cheeks strew roses.  
Unto the world I may not weep,  
But save my sorrow all, and keep  
A secret heart, sweet soul, for thee,  
As the great earth and swelling sea—\*

### XXXI. *hbrandat Wolfram's Bier*

Y E T my eyes are weary, Siegfried; are heavy as if all the salt water of an ocean pressed against them as against a broad staring Fish's. Oh Friend, I'd give a thousand crowns for leave to weep one tear. But I dare not, not one, and why not, Siegfried? Do you see this? So should every honest man be: cold, dead, and leaden-coffined. This was one who would be in friendship constant, and the pole wanders: one who would be immortal, and the light that shines upon his pale forehead now, through yonder gewgaw window, undulated from its star hundreds of years ago. That is constancy, that is life. O moral nature!

## FROM ACT II, SCENE IV

### XXXII. *Wolfram's Translation*

[*lsbr.*] By still murderous starlight  
When the conniving winds held still their breath  
And the impatient stars scarce dared to pant,  
While the bewitched moon let the earth's shadow  
Like to a lid, sink over her jaundiced eye  
Came I, with mattocks of such sturdy spells  
That raise the dead quicker than exorcisms  
Of necromants, whispering doomsday's cue

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

And forcing her from earth, placed my dead brother  
To play her corpse's part within her coffin.

### XXXIII. Ziba's Origin

[Duke.] I FOUND him in a buried city I went by  
torchlight through—

I followed once a fleet and mighty serpent  
Into a cavern in a mountain's side;  
And, wading many lakes, descending gulphs,  
At last I reached the ruins of a city,  
Built not like ours but of another world,  
As if the aged earth had loved in youth  
The mightiest city of a perished planet,  
And kept the image of it in her heart,  
So dream-like, shadowy, and spectral was it.  
Nought seemed alive there, and the very dead  
Were of another world the skeletons.  
The mammoth, ribbed like to an arched cathedral,  
Lay there, and ruins of great creatures else  
More like a shipwrecked fleet, too great they seemed  
For all the life that is to animate:  
And vegetable rocks, tall sculptured palms,  
Pines grown, not hewn, in stone; and giant ferns,  
Whose earthquake-shaken leaves bore graves for nests.

## FROM ACT III, SCENE III

### XXXIV. Duke Awaiting Resurrection of His Wife

[Duke.]... A gentle feel.—

She cometh and pours out before her coming  
Hopes, soothing as the infancy of light  
Which warms the sky of the unrisen moon.

DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

FROM ACT IV, SCENE I

*XXXV. The Murderer's Haunted Couch*

[Isbr.] So buckled tight in scaly resolution,  
Let my revenge tread on, and if its footsteps  
Be graves, the peering eye of critic doubt,  
All dazzled by the bold, reflected day,  
May take the jaws of darkness that devour 5  
My swift sword's flash, as ravening serpent's famine  
Locks up birds' sunny life in black eclipse,  
For pity's dewy eyelid closing over  
Love's sparkles. I have seen the mottled tigress  
Sport with her cubs as tenderly and gay, 10  
As lady Venus with her kitten Cupids;  
And flowers, my sagest teachers, beautiful  
Or they were fools, because death-poisonous:  
And lies, methinks, oft brighten woman's lips,  
And tears have the right pearly trickle and diamond  
shoot 15  
When they bowl down false oaths. World, I will win  
thee;  
Therefore I must deceive you, gentle World.  
Let Heaven look in upon my flaming wrath  
As into Ætna's hell: the sides man sees  
I clothe with olives, promising much peace. 20  
But what's this talk? Must I be one of those  
That cannot keep a secret from himself?  
The worst of confidants, who oft goes mad,  
Through bites of conscience, after many years.  
I came to see thee, brother: there thou art 25  
Even in this suit, from which no blood, save his,  
This purple doffed by thy imperial life  
Shall wash away. To the amazed foe  
I will appear thyself returned, and smite him  
Ere he has time to doubt or die of horror. 30  
I would I were, thus iron-hooped and sworded,



# DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Thy murderer's dream this night, to cry, Awake!  
 Awake, Duke Melveric! Duke Murderer!  
 Wrap thee up quickly in thy winding sheet,  
 Without ado! The hearse is at the door, 35  
 The widest gate of Hell is open for thee,  
 And mighty goblins summon thee to Death.  
 Come down with me! [*He seizes the sleeping DUKE*].  
 Nay, I will shake thy sleep off,  
 Until thy soul falls out.

What voice more dreadful  
 Than one at midnight, blood-choaked, crying murder?  
 Why, Murder's own! His murder's, and now thine! 41  
 But cheer up. I will let thy blood flow on  
 Within its pipes to-night.

[*Duke.*] Angel of Death!  
 Can it be? No, 'tis a grave-digging vision:  
 The world is somewhere else. Yet even this 45  
 Methought I dreamt, and now it stands beside me,  
 Rattling in iron.

[*Isbr.*] Aye, the murderer's vision  
 Is ever so: for at the word, 'I'm murdered',  
 The gaolers of the dead throw back the grave-stone,  
 Split the deep ocean, and unclosethe the mountain, 50  
 And let the buried pass. I am more real  
 Than any airy spirit of a dream,  
 As Death is mightier, stronger, and more faithful  
 To man, than Life.

[*Duke.*] Wolfram!—Nay thy grasp  
 Is warm, thy bosom heaves, thou breath'st, imposter—  
 Let iron answer iron, flesh crush flesh; 56  
 Thou art no spirit, fool.

[*Isbr.*] Fool, art thou murderer,  
 My murderer, Wolfram's? To the blood-stained hand  
 The grave gives way: to the eye, that saw its victim  
 Sigh off the ravished soul, th' horrid world of ghosts 60  
 Is no more viewless; day and night 'tis open,

# DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Gazing on pale and bleeding spectres ever.  
 Come, seat thee; no vain struggle. Write thou here,  
 (And with my blood I trace it on thy brain,) 65  
 Thy sentence; which by night in types of fire  
 Shall stand before thee, never to be closed,—  
 By night the voice of blood shall whisper to thee,  
 Word slowly after word, and ne'er be silent.  
 Melveric, thy conscience I will sing to sleep  
 With softest hymnings; thou shalt not despair, 70  
 But live on and grow older than all men,  
 To all men's dread: like an old, haunted mountain,  
 Icy and hoary, shalt thou stand 'mid life;  
 And midnight tales be told in secret of thee,  
 As of crime's beacon. Thou shalt see thy son 75  
 Fall for a woman's love, as thy friend fell,  
 Beneath the stabs of him, with whom together  
 He was at one breast suckled. Thou shalt lose  
 Friends, subjects, crown, strength, health and all  
 power,  
 Even despair; thou shalt not dare to break 80  
 All men's contempt, thy life, for fear of worse:  
 Nor shalt thou e'er go mad for misery.  
 Write on. I leave the voice with thee, that never  
 Shall cease to read thee, o'er and o'er, thy doom.  
 It will the rest, the worst of all, repeat 85  
 Till it be written.

Thou art doomed: no trumpet  
 Shall wake the bravery of thy heart to battle;  
 No song of love, no beam of child's glad eye,  
 Drown that soft whisper, dazzle from thy sight  
 Those words indelible.

Follow him, dearest curse; 90  
 Be true to him, invisible to others,  
 As his own soul. [Exit.

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

*Duke.* Hold! mercy!... Tis enough...  
Curse shoulders curse, as in a bloody river.  
I will no more.

*Enter TORWALD*

*Torw.* Arise, my lord; the sun is broad and busy, 95  
Lighting about the creatures of the day.  
Now is our time to work.

*[Duke.]* Art there again?  
Forth; Horror, to thy grave; I'll no more haunting.

*[Torw.]* My lord!

*[Duke.]* Ah! Torwald. Ah! methinks I  
dreamt—

Of one—Away! Why, stands he there again? 100  
What! dare the buried morning? Or is this  
The work of necromantic conscience? Ha!  
'Tis nothing but a picture. Curtain it.  
Strange visions, my good Torwald, are begotten  
When sleep overshadows waking.—Right, you seek  
The instructions: here.

*[Torw.]* Duke Melveric? 106

*[Duke.]* I saw him though, I heard his armour ring  
And feel even now his gauntlet's numbing grasp.—  
You spoke?

*[Torw.]* What read I?

*[Duke.]* Read! 'Tis clear as trumpet's cry:  
Despair thou of despair. Thou shalt not die: 110  
Life shall despise thee, Death reject thee ever.

## XXXVI. *Life a Thousand Graves*

*Duke*\_\_\_\_\_LUCKLESS man  
Avoids the miserable bodkin's point,  
And, flinching from the insect's little sting,  
In pitiful security keeps watch,

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

While 'twixt him and that hypocrite the sun,  
To which he prays, comes windless pestilence,  
Transparent as a glass of poisoned water  
Through which the drinker sees his murderer smiling;  
She stirs no dust, and makes no grass to nod,  
Yet every footstep is a thousand graves,  
And every breath of her 's as full of ghosts  
As a sunbeam with motes.

### *XXXVII. Love is Wiser than Ambition*

[*Amaia.*] O give not up the promise of your time  
For me: for what? an evanescent woman,  
A rose-leaf scarce unfolded ere it falls. Your life  
Should be a wood of laurels evergreen;  
Seek glory!—

[*Adalmar.*] Glory! To be sung to tuneless harps!  
A picture, and a name; to live for death!  
Seek glory? Never. The world's gossip, Fame  
Is busy in the market-place, the change,  
At court or wrangling senate, noting down  
Him of the fattest purse, the fabulous crest,  
The tongue right honied or most poisonous.  
If Glory goes among the bristling spears,  
Which war is mowing down; or walks the wave,  
When Fate weighs kingdoms in their battle-fleets;  
Or watches the still student at his work,  
Reading the laws of nature, in the heavens  
Or earth's minutest creature; she may find me:  
If not, I am contented with oblivion,  
As all the other millions. My sweet fair,  
One little word of confidence and love,  
From lips beloved, thrilleth more my heart

## DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

Is washed away for ever,  
As lions' footmark on the ocean sands;  
While we, Adam's coevals, carry in us  
The words indelible of buried feelings,  
Like the millennial trees, whose hoary barks  
Grow o'er the secrets cut into their core.

### FROM ACT V, SCENE IV

#### *XLI. Isbrand Dying*

*Isbr*—————Can I, that stand  
So strong and powerful here, even if I would,  
Fall into dust and wind?...  
Imagine not that I'm weak enough to perish;  
The grave, and all its arts, I do defy.

#### *XLII*

*Isbr*——I jest and sing, and yet alas! am he,  
Who in a wicked masque would play the Devil;  
But jealous Lucifer himself appeared,  
And bore him—whither? I shall know to-morrow,  
For now Death makes indeed a fool of me.

#### *XLIII*

ASUNDER, burst asunder Chains or Heart,  
And let my ghost go shrieking through the night,  
Like a Death-angel lighted on the spire  
Of Capitol asleep, bellowing woe.

POEMS

*chiefly from 'The Ivory Gate'*

[Composed 1829-48]



## *Doomsday*

IF I can raise one ghost, why I will raise  
And call up doomsday from behind the east.  
Awake then, ghostly doomsday!  
Throw up your monuments, ye buried men  
That lie in ruined cities of the wastes! 5  
Ye battle fields, and woody mountain sides,  
Ye lakes and oceans, and ye lava floods  
That have overwhelmed great cities, now roll back!  
And let the sceptred break their pyramids,  
An earthquake of the buried shake the domes 10  
Of arched cathedrals, and o'erturn the forests,  
Until the grassy mounds and sculptured floors,  
The monumental statues, hollow rocks,  
The paved churchyard, and the flowery mead,  
And ocean's billowy sarcophagi, 15  
Pass from the bosoms of the rising people  
Like clouds! Enough of stars and suns immortal  
Have risen in heaven: to-day in earth and sea  
Riseth mankind. And first yawn deep  
Ye marble palace-floors, 20  
And let the uncoffined bones, which ye conceal,  
Ascend, and dig their purple murderers up,  
Out of their crowned death. Ye catacombs  
Open your gates, and overwhelm the sands  
With an eruption of the naked millions, 25  
Out of old centuries! The buried navies  
Shall hear the call, and shoot up from the sea  
Whose wrecks shall knock against the hollow moun-  
tains  
And wake the swallowed cities in their hearts.  
Forgotten armies rattle with their spears 30  
Against the rocky walls of their sepulchres:  
An earthquake of the buried shakes the pillars



## THE IVORY GATE

Of the thick-sown cathedrals; guilty forests,  
Where bloody spades have dug 'mid nightly storms;  
The muddy drowning-places of the babes; 35  
The pyramids, and bony hiding-places,—

• • • • •  
'Thou rainbow on the tearful lash of doomsday's  
morning star  
Rise quick, and let me gaze into that planet deep and  
far,  
As into a loved eye;  
Or I must, like the fiery child of the Vesuvian womb,  
Burst with my flickering ghost abroad, before the sun  
of doom 41  
Rolls up the spectre sky.'

A lowly mound, at stormy night, sent up this ardent  
prayer  
Out of a murderer's grave, a traitor's nettly bed,  
And the deeds of him, more dread than Cain, whose  
wickedness lay there, 45  
All mankind hath heard or read.

• • • • •  
'What's o'clock?'—  
'It wants a quarter to twelve,  
And to-morrow 's doomsday.'

### *Song*

'Oh doomsday, doomsday come! thou creative morn  
Of graves in earth, and under sea, all teeming at the  
horn 51  
Of angels fair and dread.  
As thou the ghosts shalt waken, so I, the ghost, wake  
thee;  
For thy rising sun and I shall rise together from the sea,  
The eldest of the dead.' 55  
• • • • •

## THE IVORY GATE

'World, wilt thou yield thy spirits up and be convulsed  
and die?

And as I haunt the billowy main, thy ghost shall haunt  
the sky,

A pale unheeded star,

When doomsday, doomsday, doth dawn at length for  
me.'

So having prayed in moonlight waves, beneath the  
shipwrecked sea 60

In spectral caverns far,

On moonlight o'er the billowy main an old ghost  
stepped,

And the winds their satire sung.

## *The Old Ghost*

OVER the water an old ghost strode

To a churchyard on the shore,

And over him the waters had flowed

A thousand years or more,

And pale and wan and weary

Looked never a sprite as he;

For it's lonely and it's dreary

The ghost of a body to be

That has mouldered away in the sea.

Over the billows the old ghost stepped,

And the winds in mockery sung;

For the bodiless ghost would fain have wept

Over the maiden that lay so young

'Mong the thistles and toadstools so hoary.

And he begged of the waves a tear,

But they shook upwards their moonlight glory,

And the shark looked on with a sneer

At his yearning desire and agony.

## THE IVORY GATE

### *Dream-Pedlary*

I

IF there were dreams to sell,  
What would you buy?  
Some cost a passing bell;  
Some a light sigh,  
That shakes from Life's fresh crown  
Only a roseleaf down.  
If there were dreams to sell,  
Merry and sad to tell,  
And the crier rung the bell,  
What would you buy?

II

A cottage lone and still,  
With bowers nigh,  
Shadowy, my woes to still,  
Until I die.  
Such pearl from Life's fresh crown  
Fain would I shake me down.  
Were dreams to have at will,  
This would best heal my ill,  
This would I buy.

III

But there were dreams to sell,  
I didst thou buy;  
Life is a dream, they tell,  
Waking, to die.  
Dreaming a dream to prize,  
Is wishing ghosts to rise;  
And, if I had the spell  
To call the buried, well,  
Which one would I?

## THE IVORY GATE

### IV

If there are ghosts to raise,  
What shall I call,  
Out of hell's murky haze,  
Heaven's blue hall?  
Raise my loved longlost boy  
To lead me to his joy.  
There are no ghosts to raise;  
Out of death lead no ways;  
Vain is the call.

### V

Know'st thou not ghosts to sue?  
No love thou hast.  
Else lie, as I will do,  
And breathe thy last.  
So out of Life's fresh crown  
Fall like a rose-leaf down.  
Thus are the ghosts to woo;  
Thus are all dreams made true,  
Ever to last!

### *Alpine Spirit's Song*

As I passed over the bridge I raised involuntarily my eyes and looked towards the perpendicular central rock of the Tödi towering above his mountainous brothers. At that moment a ray of the unseen sun broke through a slit in the cloudy mass in the sky and touched his snowy scalp. At another time I should have thought it more like inspiration descending on a hoary prophet, but now it reminded me of the last pale smile of my unknown fair. As I yet stood and looked, a song burst from the window of the hotel behind me:

## THE IVORY GATE

### I

'O'er the snow, through the air, to the mountain,  
With the antelope, with the eagle, ho!  
With a bound, with a feathery row,  
To the side of the icy fountain,  
Where the gentians blue-belled blow.  
Where the storm-sprite, the raindrops counting,  
Cowers under the bright rainbow;  
Like a burst of midnight fire,  
Singing shoots my fleet desire,  
Winged with the wing of love,  
Earth below and stars above.

### II

Let me rest on the snow, never pressed  
But by chamois light and by eagle fleet,  
And the hearts of the antelope beat  
'Neath the light of the moony cresset,  
Where the wild cloud rests his feet,  
And the scented airs caress it  
From the alpine orchis sweet:  
And about the Sandalp lone  
Voices airy breathe a tone,  
Charming with the sense of love,  
Earth below and stars above.

### III

Through the night, like a dragon from Pilate  
Out of murky cave, let us cloudy sail  
Over lake, over bowery vale,  
As a chime of bells at twilight  
In the downy evening gale,  
Passes swimming tremulously light;  
Till we reach yon rocky pale

## THE IVORY GATE

Of the mountain crowning all,  
Slumber there by waterfall,  
Lonely like a spectre's love,  
Earth beneath, and stars above.'

The music of the Sandalp she sang of could not have  
come more startlingly to the brain of solitary shepherd  
than these sounds to me.

## *Love-in-Idleness*

I

*He:* 'Shall I be your first love, lady, shall I be your  
first?

Oh! then I'll fall before you down on my velvet knee  
And deeply bend my rosy head and press it upon  
thee,

And swear that there is nothing more for which my  
heart doth thirst,

But a downy kiss and pink  
Between your lips' soft chink.'

II

*She:* 'Yes, you shall be my first love, boy, and you  
shall be my first,

And I will raise you up again unto my bosom's fold;  
And when you kisses many one on lip and cheek  
have told,

I'll let you loose upon the grass, to leave me if you  
durst;

And so we'll toy away  
The night besides the day.'

## THE IVORY GATE

### III

*He:* 'But let me be your second love, but let me be your  
second,  
For then I'll tap so gently, dear, upon your window  
pane,  
And creep between the curtains in, where never man  
has lain,  
And never leave thy gentle side till the morning star  
hath beckoned,  
Within the silken lace  
Of thy young arms' embrace.'

### IV

*She:* 'Well thou shalt be my second love, yes, gentle  
boy, my second,  
And I will wait at eve for thee within my lonely  
bower,  
And yield unto thy kisses, like a bud to April's  
shower,  
From moonset till the tower-clock the hour of dawn  
hath reckoned,  
And lock thee with my arms  
All silent up in charms.'

### V

*He:* 'No, I will be thy third love, lady, aye I will be the  
third,  
And break upon thee, bathing, in woody place alone,  
And catch thee to my saddle and ride o'er stream  
and stone,  
And press thee well, and kiss thee well, and never  
speak a word,  
'Till thou hast yielded up  
The margin of love's cup.'

## THE IVORY GATE

### VI

*She:* Then thou shalt not be my first love, boy, nor my  
second, nor my third;  
If thou'rt the first, I'll laugh at thee and pierce thy  
flesh with thorns;  
If the second, from my chamber pelt, with jeering  
laugh and scorns;  
And if thou darest be the third, I'll draw my dirk un-  
heard  
And cut thy heart in two, ---  
And then die, weeping you.'

### *Epilogue to Ernest's Story*

*Sung by* NORMAN

H A S no one seen my heart of you?  
My heart has run away;  
And if you catch him, ladies, do  
Return him me, I pray.

On earth he is no more, I hear,  
Upon the land or sea;  
For the women found the rogue so queer,  
They sent him back to me.

In heaven there is no purchaser  
For such strange ends and odds,  
Says a jew who goes to Jupiter  
To buy and sell old gods.

So there 's but one place more to search,  
That's not genteel to tell,  
Where demonesses go to church:  
So Christians fair, farewell.



THE IVORY GATE

*Epilogue to Chapter I*

EDWARD'S Song

I

I THINK of thee at daybreak still  
And then thou art my playmate small,  
Beside our straw-roofed village rill  
Gathering cowslips tall,  
And chasing oft the butterfly  
Which flutters past like treacherous life.  
You smile at me and at you I,  
A husband boy and baby wife.

II

I think of thee at noon again,  
And thy meridian beauty high  
Falls on my bosom like young rain  
Out of a summer sky:  
And I reflect it in the tear  
Which 'neath thy picture drops forlorn,  
And then my love is bright and clear  
And manlier than it was at morn.

III

I think of thee by evening's star,  
And softly, melancholy slow,  
An eye doth glisten from afar,  
All full of lovely woe.  
The air then sighingly doth part  
And, or from Death the cold or Love,  
I hear the passing of a dart,  
But hope once more and look above.

## THE IVORY GATE

### IV

I think of thee at black midnight,  
And woe and agony it is  
To see thy cheek so deadly white,  
To hear thy grave-worm hiss.  
But looking on thy lips is cheer,  
They closed in love, pronouncing love;  
And then I tremble, not for fear,  
But in thy breath from heaven above.

### *Epilogue to Human Woe*

By KENELM

#### I

WHEN we were girl and boy together,  
We tossed about the flowers  
And wreathed the blushing hours  
Into a posy green and sweet.  
I sought the youngest, best,  
And never was at rest  
Till I had laid them at thy fairy feet.  
But the days of childhood they were fleet  
And the blooming sweet-briar breathed weather,  
When we were boy and girl together.

#### II

Then we were lad and lass together,  
And sought the kiss of night  
Before we felt aright,  
Sitting and singing soft and sweet.  
The dearest thought of heart  
With thee 'twas joy to part,

## THE IVORY GATE

And the greater half was thine, as meet.  
Still my eyelid 's dewy, my veins they beat  
At the starry summer-evening weather,  
When we were lad and lass together.

### III

And we are man and wife together,  
Although thy breast, once bold  
With song, be closed and cold  
Beneath flowers' roots and birds' light feet.  
Yet sit I by thy tomb  
And dissipate the gloom  
With songs of loving faith and sorrow sweet.  
And fate and darkling grave kind dreams do cheat,  
That, while fair life, young hope, despair and death  
are,  
We're boy and girl and lass and lad and man and  
wife together.

## *The Tale of the Lover to His Mistress*

AFTER the fall of Jupiter came Love one night to Psyche: it was dark in her cottage and she began to strike a light. 'Have done,' said he, in a low whispering tone—in which the hinge of some dreadful dark truth out of another world seemed to turn. 'Youth, power, and heaven have passed away from the gods: the curse of age has changed their shapes:—then seek not to look on me, Psyche; but if thou art faithful, kiss me, and we will then go into the darkness for ever.'—'How art thou changed?' asked she; 'methinks you do but try me, jestingly, for thou canst only have grown more beautiful. That thou art more powerful I hear, for the

## THE IVORY GATE

night air is full of rushing arrows, and many are struck and sigh. Hast thou lost thy wings that were so glorious?'—'Aye, but I am swifter than of old.'—Thy youth?'—'Aye, but I am stronger: all must fall before me.'—Thy charms and wiles?'—'Aye, but he whom I have once stricken, is mine for ever and ever.'—'Why should I not see thee then? art thou Love no more?'—'Aye; but not fleeting, earthly: eternal, heavenly Love.'—Just then the moon rose, and Psyche saw beside her a gaunt anatomy, through which the blue o' th' sky shone and the stars twinkled, gold promises beaming through Death, armed with arrows, bearing an hour-glass. He stepped with her to the sea-side, and they sank where Venus rose.

## *Dirge and Hymeneal*

THE Bells rang out suddenly with a merry peal; on one side was a newly opened grave for the devoted head of [one of] the two youthful maidens, on the other the open church door at which the clergyman was waiting to pronounce the happiest blessing of life on the wreathed brow of the other\_\_\_\_. So the jester of the Duke and the pet fool of the murdered Sebald were alone in the place. The former sate in the church porch playing with the wedding garlands, the latter with folded arms and vile melancholy under the ancient yew, half in the new-dug grave, and thus they sung:

### SEBALD'S FOOL

Woe! woe! this is death's hour  
Of spring; behold his flower!  
Fair babe of life, to whom  
Death and the dreamy tomb

## THE IVORY GATE

Was nothing yesterday  
And now is all!  
The maiden from her play  
Beside her lover gay  
The churchyard voices call  
Tolling so slow,  
Woe! woe!

## DUKE'S JESTER

Joy! joy! it is love's day;  
Strew the young conqueror's way  
With summer's glories young  
O'er which the birds have sung,  
Bright weeds from fairy rings;  
Here, there, away!  
Joy, joy, the tree-bird sings,  
Joy, joy, a hundred springs'  
Melodies ever say,  
Maiden and boy,  
Joy! joy!

## THE FOOL

She cut the roses down  
And wreathed her bridal crown.  
Death, playful, culled her blossom  
And tore her from life's bosom.  
Fair maiden or fair ghost—  
Which is thy name?—  
Come to the spectral host;  
They pity thee the most  
And to the cold world's shame  
Soft cry they, low,  
Woe! woe!

## THE IVORY GATE

### *The Two Archers*

#### I

AT break of bright May morning,  
When triumphing o'er dark  
The sun's inspired lark,  
All sprites and spectres scorning,  
And laughing at all creatures' joys  
Who could not hang and dive and poise  
In their own web and flood of noise,  
Dropped out of his heart's treasure  
The sunbeam's path along  
Sparks and dews of song,  
As if there were no pleasure  
But to rise and sing and fly  
Winged and all soul into the sky:

#### II

At break of this May morning  
A maiden young and coy  
Saw a wild archer boy  
Flying around and scorning,  
Birdlike, a withered bowman's arts  
Who aimed, as he, at roses' hearts.  
Each cried 'Come buy our darts,  
They are with magic laden  
To deify the blood;  
An angel in the bud,  
Half-closed, is a maiden,  
Till opened by such wound she fly  
Winged and all soul into the sky.'

## THE IVORY GATE

### III

'You archers of May morning;  
Said she, 'if I must choose,  
Such joy is to peruse  
In the star-light adorning  
The urchin's eye, that my desire  
Is for his darts, whose breath fans higher  
The smitten roses like a fire.'  
So Love—'twas he—shot smiling  
His shaft, then flew away;  
Alas! that morn of May!  
Love fled, there 's no beguiling  
Repentance, but by hopes to fly  
Winged and all soul into the sky.

### IV

So one December morning,  
When the bold lark no more  
Rebuked the ghosts so sore,  
When dews were not adorning  
Aught but that maiden's cheek where wide  
The blushes spread their leaves, to hide  
The broken heart which such supplied;  
She sought the pair of May-day,  
And to the old one saith,  
'Let thy dart, steadfast Death,  
Cure a forsaken lady;  
Its point is but for those who'd fly  
Winged and all soul into the sky.'

## THE IVORY GATE

### *The Lily of the Valley*

WHERE the hare-bells are ringing  
Their peal of sunny flowers,  
And a bird of merry soul  
Sings away the birthday hours  
Of the valley-lily low,  
Opening dewily and slow  
Petals dear to young and fair  
For the prophecy they bear  
Of the coming roses—  
The free bold bird of merry soul  
Amidst his leaves cannot control  
His triumphant love of spring.

Thou bird of joyous soul,  
Why can'st thou not control  
Thy triumphant love of spring?  
I know that thou dost rally  
Thy spirit proud to sing,  
Because to-day is born  
The lily of the valley.  
Oh! rather should'st thou mourn;  
For that flower so meek and low,  
Born with its own death-bell,  
Only cometh to foretell  
Unpitying winter's doom,  
Who in scorn doth lay it low  
In the tomb.

Vain is all its prayer:  
It may flatter, as it will,  
The ungente hours  
With its ring of toying flowers;  
Unrelenting they must kill  
With their scornful breath,



## THE IVORY GATE

For the very petals fair  
Which the destined flower uncloses  
In its innocence,  
To plead for its defence,  
By the prophecy they bear  
Of the coming roses,  
Sign the warrant for its death.

### *Dirge*

LET dew the flowers fill;  
No need of fell despair,  
Though to the grave you bear  
One still of soul—but now too still,  
Since the still soul fled—  
One fair—but now too fair,  
The lily being dead.—  
For beneath your feet the mound,  
And the waves that fleet around,  
Have meaning in their grassy and their watery smiles;  
And with a thousand sunny wiles  
Each says, as he reproves,  
Death's arrow oft is Love's.  
Aye, doubt'st thou of the reading there,  
About all nature's movements seek:  
Thou'lt find Death has his dimples every where,  
Love only on the lovely cheek.

### *Fragment*

As veined petal closes over  
A dewy spark  
Ere Eve is dark,  
And starry fireflies flit and hover,

## THE IVORY GATE

Dreams of the Rose  
O'er it repose;  
So bend thy head, and sleep awhile  
In the Moon's visionary smile.

## *The Rosy Hour*

A N D in that rosy rosy hour  
When bird sung out and scented flower  
Came words to me from heaven above:  
'Awake, young heart, awake and love.'

## *The Flowery Alchemist*

HIST, oh hist!  
My pretty pale young violet,  
Thy moony cheek uncover;  
Lift that hood of fallen sky,  
And my lips once more I'll wet  
Against the dew-ball of thine eye.  
Hist, oh hist!

So a leafy whisper said  
Underneath a sweet-briar shade.  
Guess the lady-blossom's lover!  
'Twas the flowery Alchymist,  
A stinging gay intriguing fellow,  
The wildest bee in black and yellow.

Hist, oh hist!  
My pretty pale young violet!  
Glowworm's lightning blind me

## THE IVORY GATE

When I leave my bud's embrace,  
When I traitorously forget  
Thy cerulean baby's grace.  
Hist, oh hist!

The very next night he told the tale  
To a little lily of the vale,  
And the poor young violet died of shame.  
Oh! fie, thou flowery Alchymist,  
Thou stinging, gay, intriguing fellow,  
Thou wildest bee in black and yellow!

## *Song of the Stygian Naiades*

'WHAT do you think the mermaids of the Styx were  
singing as I watched them bathing the other day'—

|

Proserpine may pull her flowers,  
Wet with dew or wet with tears,  
Red with anger, pale with fears;  
Is it any fault of ours,  
If Pluto be an amorous king  
And come home nightly, laden  
Underneath his broad bat-wing  
With a gentle earthly maiden?  
Is it so, Wind, is it so?  
All that I and you do know  
Is that we saw fly and fix  
'Mongst the flowers and reeds of Styx,  
Yesterday,  
Where the Furies made their hay  
For a bed of tiger cubs,  
A great fly of Beelzebub's,

## THE IVORY GATE

The bee of hearts, which mortals name  
Cupid, Love, and Fie for shame.

### II

Proserpine may weep in rage,  
But ere I and you have done  
Kissing, bathing in the sun,  
What I have in yonder cage,  
She shall guess and ask in vain,  
Bird or serpent, wild or tame;  
But if Pluto does 't again,  
It shall sing out loud his shame.  
What hast caught then? What hast caught?  
Nothing but a poet's thought,  
Which so light did fall and fix  
'Mongst the flowers and reeds of Styx,  
Yesterday,  
Where the Furies made their hay  
For a bed of tiger cubs,  
A great fly of Beelzebub's,  
The bee of hearts, which mortals name  
Cupid, Love, and Fie for shame.

## *Silenus in Proteus*

OH those were happy days, heaped up with wine-skins,  
And ivy-wreathed-and thyrsus-swinging days,  
Swimming like streamy-tressed wanton Bacchantes,  
When I was with thee and sat kingly on thee,  
My ass of asses. Then quite full of wine—  
Morning, eve-and leaning on a fawn,  
Still pretty steady, and on t'other side  
Some vinous-lipped nymph of Ariadne,  
Her bosom a soft cushion for my right:  
Half dreaming and half waking, both in bliss,

## THE IVORY GATE

I sat upon my ass and laughed at Jove  
But thou art dead, my dapple, and I too  
Shall ride thee soon about the Elysian meadow,  
Almost a skeleton as well as thou:  
And why, oh dearest, could'st not keep thy legs  
That sacred pair, sacred to sacred me?  
Was this thy gratitude for pats and fondlings,  
To die like any other mortal ass?  
Was it for this, oh son of Semele,  
I taught thee then, a little tumbling one,  
To suck the goatskin oftener than the goat?

## *Lord Alcohol*

'BEFORE we proceed to the solemnity of the coronation,' said Norman who had now recovered some spirits out of a bottle of Madeira before him (thanks to the adulterators), after offering his congratulations to the conqueror—'let me sing you a hymn of triumph, in which I defend my own opinions on the subject of this night's discussion——'

## *Song*

|

W H O tames the lion now?  
Who smoothes Jove's wrinkles now?  
Who is the reckless wight  
That in the horrid middle  
Of the deserted night  
Doth play upon man's brain,  
As on a wanton fiddle,  
The mad and magic strain,  
The reeling, tripping sound,  
To which the world goes round?  
Sing heigh! ho! diddle!

## THE IVORY GATE

And then say—  
Love, quotha, Love? Nay, nay!  
It is a spirit fine  
Of ale or ancient wine,  
    Lord Alcohol, the drunken fay,  
    Lord Alcohol alway!

## II

Who maketh pipe-clay man  
Think all that nature can?  
Who dares the gods to flout,  
    Lay fate beneath the table,  
And maketh him stammer out  
    A thousand monstrous things,  
    For history a fable,  
    Dish-clouts for kings?  
And sends the world along  
Singing a ribald song  
    Of heigho! Babel?  
    Who, I pray—  
Love, quotha, Love? Nay, nay!  
It is a spirit fine  
Of ale or ancient wine,  
    Lord Alcohol, the drunken fay,  
    Lord Alcohol alway!

## *An Unfinished Draft*

•   •   •   •   •   •  
The snow falls by thousands into the sea;  
    A thousand flowers are shedding  
    Their leaves all dead and dry;  
A thousand birds are threading  
    Their passage through the sky;  
A thousand mourners treading

## THE IVORY GATE

The tearful churchyard way  
In funeral array:  
Birds, whither fly ye?—whither, dead, pass ye?  
The snow falls by thousands into the sea.

## *The City of the Sea*

FLOWED many a woodbird's voice, and insects played  
On wings of diamond o'er the murmuring tide,  
So on the billows of thy ocean's heaven,  
Dark with the azure weight of midnight hours,  
Thy marble shadow like a root of towers  
Young city of the sea,—

## *The Father of the Deep*

W H O passed by sea or land  
Beheld an ancient monumental man  
Aye sitting by coeval ocean's side,  
Titanic, upright, with large eyes whose use  
Was but to weep to them invisible  
And therefore twice dread woes. His watch no man  
Had seen begun, nor yet hath seen him end.  
Turned towards sunset, wishing for his own,  
He there expects the coming of his son,  
Eldest of things created save himself,  
Over the western billow—

## THE IVORY GATE

### *Lament of Thanatos*

I WAS to wait, to wait my only time of youth away—  
As many a maiden isle far in the sea  
    From Adam to Columbus did for him  
    Who was its destined finder—  
Silent as a mountain before it falls, or as the world  
    shall be on doomsday eve,  
    Keeping the secret of to-morrow's morn,  
    Still as a summer's noon—

### *Thanatos to Kenelm*

*And the Song by* THANATOS

' I HAVE no feeling for the monuments of human labour,' she would say, 'the wood and the desert are more peopled with my household gods than the city or the cultivated country. Even with the living animals and the prevailing vegetation of the forests in this hemisphere, I have little sympathy. I know not the meaning of a daisy, nor what nature has symbolized by the light bird and the butterfly. But the sight of a palm with its lofty stem and tuft of long grassy leaves, high in the blue air, or even such a branch as this' (breaking off a large fern leaf) 'awake in me a feeling, a sort of nostalgia and longing for ages long past. When my ancient sire used to sit with me under the old dragon tree or *Dracaena*, I was as happy as the ephemeral fly balanced on his wing in the sun, whose setting will be his death-warrant. But why do I speak to you so? You cannot understand me.'—And then she would sing whisperingly to herself:



## THE IVORY GATE

The mighty thoughts of an old world  
Fan, like a dragon's wing unfurled,  
    The surface of my yearnings deep;  
And solemn shadows then awake,  
Like the fish-lizard in the lake,  
    Troubling a planet's morning sleep.

My waking is a Titan's dream,  
Where a strange sun, long set, doth beam  
    Through Montezuma's cypress bough:  
Through the fern wilderness forlorn  
Glisten the giant harts' great horn  
    And serpents vast with helmed brow.

The measureless from caverns rise  
With steps of earthquake, thunderous cries,  
    And graze upon the lofty wood;  
The palmy grove, through which doth gleam  
Such antediluvian ocean's stream,  
    Haunts shadowy my domestic mood.

### *Threnody.*

FAR away,  
    As we hear  
The song of wild swans winging  
    Through the day,  
The thought of him, who is no more, comes ringing  
    On my ear.

Gentle fear  
    On the breast  
Of my memory comes breaking,  
    Near and near,  
As night winds' murmurous music waking  
    Seas at rest.

## THE IVORY GATE

As the blest  
Tearful eye  
Sees the sun behind the ocean  
Red i' th' west,  
Grow pale, and in changing hues and fading motion  
Wane and die:

So do I  
Wake or dream

### *Lines Written in Switzerland*

WHAT silence drear in England's oaky forest,  
Erst merry with the redbreast's ballad song  
Or rustic roundelay! No hoof-print on the sward,  
Where sometime danced Spenser's equestrian verse  
Its mazy measure! Now by pathless brook 5  
Gazeth alone the broken-hearted stag,  
And sees no tear fall in from pitiful eye  
Like kindest Shakespeare's. We, who marked how fell  
Young Adonais, sick of vain endeavour  
Larklike to live on high in tower of song; 10  
And looked still deeper thro' each other's eyes  
At every flash of Shelley's dazzling spirit,  
Quivering like dagger on the breast of night,  
That seemed some hidden natural light reflected  
Upon time's scythe, a moment and away: 15  
Darkness unfathomable over it  
We, who have seen Mount Rydal's snowy head  
Bound round with courtly jingles; list so long  
Like old Orion for the break of morn,  
Like Homer blind for sound of youthful harp; 20  
And, if a wandering music swells the gale,  
'Tis some poor solitary heartstring burst.  
Well, Britain; let the fiery Frenchman boast

## THE IVORY GATE\*

That at the bidding of the charmer moves  
 Their nation's heart, as ocean 'neath the moon      25  
 Silvered and soothed. Be proud of Manchester,  
 Pestiferous Liverpool, Ocean-Avernus,  
 Where bullying blasphemy, like a slimy lie,  
 Creeps to the highest church's pinnacle,  
 And glistening infects the light of heaven.      30  
 O flattering likeness on a copper coin!  
 Sit still upon your slave-raised cotton ball,  
 With upright toasting fork and toothless cat:  
 The country clown still holds her for a lion.  
 The voice, the voice! when the affrighted herds      35  
 Dash heedless to the edge of craggy abysses,  
 And the amazed circle of scared eagles  
 Spire to the clouds, amid the gletscher clash  
 When avalanches fall, nation-alarums—  
 But clearer, though not loud, a voice is heard      40  
 Of proclamation or of warning stern.

Yet, if I tread out of the Alpine shade,  
 And once more weave the web of thoughtful verse,  
 May no vainglorious motive break my silence;  
 If I have sate unheard so long, it was in hope      45  
 That mightier and better might assay  
 The potent spell to break, which has fair Truth  
 Banished so drear a while from mouths of song.  
 Though genius, bearing out of other worlds  
 New freights of thought from fresh-discovered mines,  
 Be but reciprocated love of Truth:      51  
 Witness kind Shakespeare, our recording angel,  
 Newton, whose thought rebuilt the universe,  
 And Galileo, broken-hearted seer,  
 Who, like a moon attracted naturally,      55  
 Kept circling round the central sun of Truth.  
 Not in the popular playhouse, or full throng  
 Of opera-gazers longing for deceit;  
 Not on the velvet day-bed, novel-strewn,  
 Or in the interval of pot-and pipe;      60

## THE IVORY GATE

Not between sermon and the scandalous paper,  
May verse like this e'er hope an eye to feed on't.  
But if there be, who, having laid the loved  
Where they may drop a tear in roses' cups,  
With half their hearts inhabit other worlds; 65  
If there be any—ah! were there but few—  
Who watching the slow lighting up of stars,  
Lonely at eve, like seamen sailing near  
Some island city where their dearest dwell,  
Cannot but guess in sweet imagining— 70  
Alas! too sweet, doubtful, and melancholy—  
Which light is glittering from their loved one's home:  
Such may perchance, with favourable mind,  
Follow my thought along its mountainous path.  
Now then to Caucasus, the cavernous.— 75

### *Fragment of the Same*

Y E T who hath looked into the eye of truth  
And seen mankind after the will of nature,  
Should live the fair and innocent life of flowers.

### *The Phantom- Wooer*

#### I

A GHOST, that loved a lady fair,  
Ever in the starry air  
Of midnight at her pillow stood;  
And, with a sweetness skies above  
The luring words of human love,  
Her soul the phantom wooed.

## THE IVORY GATE

Sweet and sweet is their poisoned note,  
The little snakes of silver throat,  
In mossy skulls that nest and lie,  
Ever singing 'die, oh! die/

### II

Young soul put off your flesh, and come  
With me into the quiet Tomb,

Our bed is lovely, dark, and sweet;  
The earth will swing us, as she goes,  
Beneath our coverlid of snows,

And the warm leaden sheet.  
Dear and dear is their poisoned note,  
The little snakes of silver throat,  
In mossy skulls that nest and lie.  
Ever singing 'die, oh! die.'

### *On Himself*

POOR bird, that cannot ever  
Dwell high *in* tower of song:  
Whose heart-breaking endeavour  
But palls the lazy throng.

# On the Enemies of D. F. Strauss

[First published 1839]

Manuscript für des Nachtwächlers Freunde.

---

**AntiSt - rausslan - ossianisch - oceanischer**

**Graus - Gruss**

an einen

**HERRN ANTISTES**

VON

**Struthio Camelus,**

*gehaltlos - pensionirtem Professor in Zürich, nunmehr*

**Nachtwächter in Bülaach,**

*Freunde der Religion in Gefahr, Mitglieder aller gelehrten Gesellschaften,  
sämmlicher Orden Inhaber.*

---

Parturiunt montes, nascetur Radicalis-mus.

HOR.

---

Die alte Baubo kommt allein,  
Sie reitet auf einem Mutterarkwein  
So Elze dem, wem Ehre gebührt!  
Frau Baubo vor! und angeführt!  
Ein tüchtig Schwerm und Mutter drauf.  
Da folgt der ganz Menkenhauf -

FRANK

Upon a sowdome, whose farrows were nine,  
Old Baubo rideth alone  
Honour to her, to whom honour is due  
Old mother Baubo, honour to you!  
An able sow, with old Baubo upon her  
Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour  
Shelley's translation

---

Herausgegeben von der Gesellschaft für Veredlung  
des Abtriti-Papiers.

Ueberall die Libellen alle wiederhallend knallend fallen ,  
 Und die orthodoxen Ochsen Theorie-asch-grau<sup>1)</sup> und Bauer-harn-be-  
 schauer-Auer-Ochsen grochzend bochsen.  
 Darum ist es, Herr Anlises, Anlichristcs wusten Zwistes  
 Bald ein Ende : Und ich sende drum bchende, olin' Umstände, in die  
 Hauser, und die Lauser-knackend Hande  
 Der geehrten, lieb-und-werthen langst bechrten Schrift-Gelehrten  
 (Die nebst Eulen, uod Poslg-äulen und Froschk-eulen waren unsers Athens  
 Saulcn,) diese ungefeiltcn Eilen -zeilen.  
 Kein Kreutz-oiler Holleutoller Oil-cid-oiler,  
 Kein bigoller hugen-ott nota-BIUnschilll-gesotlen Colta-stolteriid, lotlei-  
 biibiscli, rallen- rotten -fangend-fuhrend, Golt die Schtote legend.  
 Mchloternd Spotter,  
 Kein Zopf, Nachttopf, klopf d'rauf mein Tropf, grutz- und grcnzen-  
 los verstopfter, kropfig Goldschmidls kupfer-knoplgi, klopfcrnas-  
 liornmannisch, Knopper-kopf.  
 Auch kein momenlo-mori-grinsend Semilory,  
 Audi kein winselnd Insel - Piusel<sup>2)</sup>,  
 Sondern floller Paulus Poller<sup>3)</sup>  
 Sollte schildern kuhn in Bildern <sup>4)</sup> das Verwildern  
 Unserer puren Winterthur- und Zurcher Buuren, die nach Uhren, nicht  
 Obsc-uliren gingen , fuliren ,  
 Sich richteten, sichlelen, und wie die Unterrichteten, aus der Kirche  
 fluchteten,  
 Bis die Macht die hull in Pacht Zion's W'acht auferwacht, gab nun Achl.  
 und sah kuss.-statt Miller - nachf  
 ieuchten durch die Geister-schlachl  
 Ja, Anlises, Wahrheit ist es ; Hinter-list es  
 Leugnet nicht: manches Licht,,  
 Das der Blunlschli nicht gezgen ,  
 Manche schwere Irrlichts-Lehrc, und des Schicksals Donner-hasjch-  
 schwaben - lichlpulz - scheere

---

1) Grau, lieber Freund, ist alle Diarrho - Faust.

2) Bin angelnder Anglikaner.

3) Grosser niederlandischer Vichmaler. Sein bestes Stuck (in Hang).  
 die pissende Kuh, erinnert ~~an~~ an manchs verehlichtc Hornvich, welches  
 mit harnsauren Thranen , wegen der Religion in Gefahr den wilden Sihl  
 strom vermehrt.

4) In Kuh-Bildern. MS. Bodleian Cott. Nr. 666666 Z.

Hat sich auf dem Stuhl gewogen.

: Frech und dreist, wo kein Geist<sup>5)</sup>, sondern feister Leib, und weiss der  
Guck-guck allermeist

Die Nacht<sup>6)</sup> der Papst<sup>7)</sup> und Sie mit Ehren allein gehören:  
Denn per se, eine chaise percée

Ist der Stuhl, wo nicht Verkehrtheit, sondern göttliche Gelehrtheit,  
und ehrwürdige Elwertheit<sup>8)</sup>

Sass nicht demokr-atisch, Atfisch, sondern dogm- und Elephanten  
akrob-atisch.

Doch, Neumünster hat's vollbracht. Genug getagt!

Es werde finster! hat's gesagt,

Drum Hochschule, gute Nacht!<sup>9)</sup>

Das unmündige, sündige, in Windeln (Religionsch-Windeln) befindige  
Volk sagt mit Populi-Bei-vox,

Fiat Nox!

Und am Herge steht der Ochs<sup>10)</sup>.

Nicht der Schweizer Alexander, auch ein Glaubens-salamander, noch  
Ferdinand der Stillste-Stander<sup>11)</sup>.

5) Neuerlich kuirte ein hiesiger grosser Mediciner einen Geistes-  
schenkenden Kranken auf überraschende Art, er schickte ihn in den Versamm-  
lungssaal vom Glaubenscomité, wo er durchaus keinen Geist mehr sehen  
konnte. Dem Foll werde ich weillüftiger erzählen in der viel-el-esel-en  
Zeitschrift des Ritters von Pommer, Professors an der Alt-Hochschule.

6) Jeder kann sich ein sprechend ähnliches Bildniss von einem Haupt-  
Finsternüss-Knacker, wie der Angeredete, leicht verschaffen. Man nimmt  
irgend einen gewöhnlichen Stuhl und thut etwas Nacht oder Leib hinzu,  
und da hat man einen Nacht- oder Leib-Stuhl fertig.

7) Wegen des bekannten Mythos von der Päpstin Johanna ward jeder  
neu-erwählte Papst auf einem lopf-losen Nachstuhl haarsarsch sitzend, von  
den Cardinälen von unten beschaut. Habeine testes? fragt vox pop. Haber,  
sagt violetter Strumpf-Chor, S. P. Q. Turicensis thut das wohl nicht bei der  
Bürgermeisterwahl.

8) Der Parrer Elwert war als Gelehrter wohl eher dick als gross; doch  
tanzte er blindlings unter den Dogmen-Eiern bei weitem linker als z. B. E.  
S. und ohne allen Anstoss mit den Kneen, wie Melchior.

9) Einige behaupten, die Anstalt bestche noch; offenbar eine optische  
Täuschung. Ein grusser Mediciner übt sich schon auf's Theetrinken für  
Berlin ein, spottet darüber, dass der Zürcher-Thee (Universität) zu Wasser  
geworden sei u. s. w.

10) Ja wohl steht er; bald wird er aber verrecken an einem Antist-  
es-El-ende.

11) Warum, fragt man unter allen Ständen, brachte man den Stillstand  
nicht auf die Polizei, als er dem Ver-Stande die Fenster einschlug? Ad  
vocem bitte ich in diesem meinem verständigen Vera-Tande die Aeusserung  
von keiner Nation, ausser der Indig-nation, erblicken zu wollen.



Nicht Gottes Hofnarr, Pfarrer Zeller,  
 Nicht der fromme Mond-anbeller  
 Dort in Peter, schreiend Zeter,  
 Nicht Fraubasen-bebrillte-naseweisen göttlichen Tagblätter-Läuse<sup>12)</sup>.  
 Nicht die greise Schlangenspeise<sup>13)</sup>  
 Hieb den Knolen stark entzwei,  
 Sondern deine Sauer-Ei<sup>14)</sup>.  
 Ja. Antistes, Wahrheit ist es:  
 Darum wend' ich diese Spende ohne Eode,  
 Reich mit Lobes-Elementen  
 Der Kreuz-Spinne der Kreuz-Kirche, und dem  $\frac{1}{2}$  Correspondenten,  
 Nebst den andern Sacramenten.

Blindes Simson-Volk! Den Stempel  
 Drückt das Schicksal auf dein Leben.  
 Warst gerufen in den Tempel  
 Voll des Saft's der geist'gen Reben  
 Wie der riesig Juden-held;  
 Deine Stärke sollst du zeigen.  
 Zieh! die Säulen torkeln, weichen.  
 Die Gesetzes-Tafel schwankt,  
 Kracht das Dach, der Boden wankt.  
 Wissenschaft und Freiheit fällt.  
 Hier liegt Zürich! liest die Welt.

Ja, du Volk, die Wahrheit ist es,  
 Ja auf Ehre, Herr Antistes.

T. L. BARBOUS.

12) Es ist bekannt, dass quadrupede Esel nicht aufkommen können im Canton, wegen zu starker Concurrenz von Seiten D. Bs. und anderer. Gerold Meyer führt in seiner Statistik nicht einen auf. Wenn der üsliche B. sich mit hinlänglich langen Ohren, wie z. B. mit den Pant-Ohren in Andellungen, Schwammendingen oder Stüfa versehen wollte, so könnte er als equus — hand equus — Asinus allenthalben mit Ehren auftreten. jetzt ist er wenig mehr als ein Maülthier.

13) Nach dem Buche Genesis, Staob. Die Glaubensarmen soll mehr als ein Stäubchen in sich aufgenommen haben. Schade, dass in deren Reihen ein Major, der nicht mehr in auswärtigen Diensten steht, nicht zu finden war: der Major Amica Veritas.

14) Gelegt in's Straussens-nest. Man nennt sie auch Predigt. Ed. Filisli Sudel-ci

# INDEXES



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