

# *Count Julian by Walter Savage Landor*

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COUNT JULIAN

INTRODUCTION.

Walter Savage Landor was born on the 30th of January, 1775, and died at the age of eighty-nine in September, 1864. He was the eldest son of a physician at Warwick, and his second name, Savage, was the family name of his mother, who owned two estates in Warwickshire-- Ipsley Court and Tachbrook--and had a reversionary interest in Hughenden Manor, Buckinghamshire. To this property, worth 80,000 pounds, her eldest son was heir. That eldest son was born a poet, had a generous nature, and an ardent impetuous temper. The temper, with its obstinate claim of independence, was too much for the head master of Rugby, who found in Landor the best writer of Latin verse among his boys, but one ready to fight him over difference of opinion about a Latin quantity. In 1793 Landor went to Trinity College, Oxford. He had been got rid of at Rugby as unmanageable. After two years at Oxford, he was rusticated; thereupon he gave up his chambers, and refused to return. Landor's father, who had been

much tried by his unmanageable temper, then allowed him 150 pounds a year to live with as he pleased, away from home. He lived in South Wales--at Swansea, Tenby, or elsewhere--and he sometimes went home to Warwick for short visits. In South Wales he gave himself to full communion with the poets and with Nature, and he fastened with particular enthusiasm upon Milton. Lord Aylmer, who lived near Tenby, was among his friends. Rose Aylmer, whose name he has made through death imperishable, by linking it with a few lines of perfect music, {1} lent Landor "The Progress of Romance," a book published in 1785, by Clara Reeve, in which he found the description of an Arabian tale that suggested to him his poem of "Gebir."

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

"Gebir" was written nine years after the outbreak of the French

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the close of 1805 Landor's father died, and the young poet became a man of property. In 1808 Southey and Landor first met. Their friendship remained unbroken. When Spain rose to throw off the yoke of Napoleon, Landor's enthusiasm carried him to Corunna, where he paid for the equipment of a thousand volunteers, and joined the Spanish army of the North. After the Convention of Cintra he returned to England. Then he bought a large Welsh estate--Llanthony Priory--paid for it by selling other property, and began costly improvements. But he lived chiefly at Bath, where he married, in 1811, when his age was thirty-six, a girl of twenty. It was then that he began his tragedy of "Count Julian." The patriotic struggle in Spain commended at the same time to Scott, Southey, and Landor the story of Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings, against whom, to avenge wrong done to his daughter, Count Julian called the Moors in to invade his country. In 1810 Southey was working at his poem of "Roderick the Last of the Goths," in fellowship with his friend

Landor, who was treating the same subject in his play. Scott's "Roderick" was being printed so nearly at the same time with Landor's play, that Landor wrote to Southey early in 1812 while the proof-sheets were coming to him: "I am surprised that Upham has not sent me Mr. Scott's poem yet. However, I am not sorry. I feel a sort of satisfaction that mine is going to the press first, though there is little danger that we should think on any subject alike, or stumble on any one character in the same track." De Quincey spoke of the hidden torture shown in Landor's play to be ever present in the mind of Count Julian, the betrayer of his country, as greater than the tortures inflicted in old Rome on generals who had committed treason. De Quincey's admiration of this play was more than once expressed. "Mr. Landor," he said, "who always rises with his subject, and dilates like Satan into Teneriffe or Atlas when he sees before him an antagonist worthy of his powers, is probably the one man in Europe that has adequately conceived the situation, the stern self-dependency, and the monumental misery of Count Julian. That sublimity of penitential grief, which cannot accept consolation from man, cannot bear external reproach, cannot condescend to notice insult, cannot so much as SEE the curiosity of bystanders; that awful carelessness of all but the troubled deeps within his own heart, and of God's spirit brooding upon their surface and searching their abysses; never was so majestically described."

H. M.

CHARACTERS.

COUNT JULIAN.

RODERIGO, King of Spain.

OPAS, Metropolitan of Seville.

SISABERT, betrothed to Covilla.

MUZA, Prince of Mauritania.

ABDALAZIS, Son of Muza.

TARIK, Moorish Chieftain.

COVILLA, Daughter of Julian.

EGILONA, Wife of Roderigo.

HERNANDO, }

OSMA, } Officers.

RAMIRO, &c. }

FIRST ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Camp of JULIAN.

OPAS. JULIAN.

OPAS. See her, Count Julian: if thou lovest God,

See thy lost child.

JUL. I have avenged me, Opas,

More than enough: I only sought to hurl

The brands of war on one detested head,  
And die upon his ruin. O my country!  
O lost to honour, to thyself, to me,  
Why on barbarian hands devolves thy cause,  
Spoilers, blasphemers!

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

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

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

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

OPAS. And faith?

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

OPAS. Yes, at this very hour.

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

OPAS. No pity for the thousands fatherless,  
The thousands childless like thyself, nay more,  
The thousands friendless, helpless, comfortless -  
Such thou wilt make them, little thinking so,  
Who now perhaps, round their first winter fire,  
Banish, to talk of thee, the tales of old,

Shedding true honest tears for thee unknown:  
Precious be these, and sacred in thy sight,  
Mingle them not with blood from hearts thus kind.  
If only warlike spirits were evoked  
By the war-demon, I would not complain,  
Or dissolute and discontented men;  
But wherefore hurry down into the square  
The neighbourly, saluting, warm-clad race,  
Who would not injure us, and cannot serve;  
Who, from their short and measured slumber risen,  
In the faint sunshine of their balconies,  
With a half-legend of a martyrdom  
And some weak wine and withered graces before them,  
Note by their foot the wheel of melody  
That catches and rolls on the sabbath dance.  
To drag the steady prop from failing age,  
Break the young stem that fondness twines around,  
Widen the solitude of lonely sighs,  
And scatter to the broad bleak wastes of day  
The ruins and the phantoms that replied,  
Ne'er be it thine.

JUL. Arise, and save me, Spain!

FIRST ACT: SECOND SCENE.

MUZA enters.

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

JUL. I follow. Could my bitterest foes  
Hear this! ye Spaniards, this! which I foreknew  
And yet encountered; could they see your Julian  
Receiving orders from and answering  
These desperate and heaven-abandoned slaves,  
They might perceive some few external pangs,  
Some glimpses of the hell wherein I move,  
Who never have been fathers.

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

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

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

JUL. Calamities like mine alone implore.

No virtues have redeemed them from their bonds;

Wily ferocity, keen idleness,

And the close cringes of ill-whispering want,

Educate them to plunder and obey;

Active to serve him best whom most they fear,

They show no mercy to the merciful,

And racks alone remind them of the name.

OPAS. O everlasting curse for Spain and thee!

JUL. Spain should have vindicated then her wrongs

In mine, a Spaniard's and a soldier's wrongs.

OPAS. Julian, are thine the only wrongs on earth?

And shall each Spaniard rather vindicate

Thine than his own? is there no Judge of all?

Shall mortal hand seize with impunity

The sword of vengeance, from the armoury

Of the Most High? easy to wield, and starred

With glory it appears: but all the host

Of the archangels, should they strive at once,

Would never close again its widening blade.

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

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

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

FIRST ACT: THIRD SCENE.

Guard announces a herald. OPAS departs.

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

JUL. Conduct him in.

RODERIGO enters as a herald.

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

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

JUL. What they would  
They cannot: thee of kingdom and of life  
'Tis easy to despoil, thyself the traitor,  
Thyself the violator of allegiance.  
Oh would all-righteous Heaven they could restore  
The joy of innocence, the calm of age,  
The probity of manhood, pride of arms,  
And confidence of honour! the august  
And holy laws trampled beneath thy feet.  
And Spain! O parent, I have lost thee too!  
Yes, thou wilt curse me in thy latter days,  
Me, thine avenger. I have fought her foe,  
Roderigo, I have gloried in her sons,  
Sublime in hardihood and piety:  
Her strength was mine: I, sailing by her cliffs,  
By promontory after promontory,  
Opening like flags along some castle-towers,

Have sworn before the cross upon our mast  
Ne'er shall invader wave his standard there.

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

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

ROD. Which thy treason  
Surrendered to the Infidel.

JUL. 'Tis hard  
And base to live beneath a conqueror:  
Yet, amid all this grief and infamy,  
'Twere something to have rushed upon the ranks  
In their advance; 'twere something to have stood  
Defeat, discomfiture; and, when around  
No beacon blazes, no far axle groans  
Through the wide plain, no sound of sustenance  
Or succour soothes the still-believing ear,  
To fight upon the last dismantled tower,  
And yield to valour, if we yield at all.  
But rather should my neck lie trampled down  
By every Saracen and Moor on earth,

Than my own country see her laws o'erturned  
By those who should protect them: Sir, no prince  
Shall ruin Spain; and, least of all, her own.  
Is any just or glorious act in view,  
Your oaths forbid it: is your avarice,  
Or, if there be such, any viler passion,  
To have its giddy range, and to be gorged,  
It rises over all your sacraments,  
A hooded mystery, holier than they all.

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

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

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

JUL. So lost to me! So generous, so deceived!

I grieve to hear it.

ROD. Come, I offer grace,

Honour, dominion: send away these slaves,

Or leave them to our sword, and all beyond

The distant Ebro to the towns of France

Shall bless thy name, and bend before thy throne.

I will myself accompany thee, I,

The king, will hail thee brother.

JUL. Ne'er shalt thou

Henceforth be king: the nation in thy name

May issue edicts, champions may command

The vassal multitudes of marshalled war,

And the fierce charger shrink before the shouts,

Lowered as if earth had opened at his feet,

While thy mailed semblance rises toward the ranks,

But God alone sees thee.

ROD. What hopest thou?

To conquer Spain, and rule a ravaged land?

To compass me around, to murder me?

JUL. No, Don Roderigo: swear thou, in the fight

That thou wilt meet me, hand to hand, alone,

That, if I ever save thee from a foe -

ROD. I swear what honour asks--first, to Covilla

Do thou present my crown and dignity.

JUL. Darest thou offer any price for shame?

ROD. Love and repentance.

JUL. Egilona lives:

And were she buried with her ancestors,

Covilla should not be the gaze of men,

Should not, despoiled of honour, rule the free.

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

JUL. And Egilona--what hath she deserved,

The good, the lovely?

ROD. But the realm in vain

Hoped a succession.

JUL. Thou hast torn away

The roots of royalty.

ROD. For her, for thee.

JUL. Blind insolence! base insincerity!

Power and renown no mortal ever shared,

Who could retain or grasp them to himself:

And, for Covilla? patience! peace! for her?

She call upon her God, and outrage Him

At His own altar! she repeat the vows

She violates in repeating! who abhors

Thee and thy crimes, and wants no crown of thine.

Force may compel the abhorrent soul, or want

Lash and pursue it to the public ways;

Virtue looks back and weeps, and may return

To these, but never near the abandoned one

Who drags religion to adultery's feet,

And rears the altar higher for her sake.

ROD. Have then the Saracens possessed thee quite,

And wilt thou never yield me thy consent?

JUL. Never.

ROD. So deep in guilt, in treachery!

Forced to acknowledge it! forced to avow

The traitor!

JUL. Not to thee, who reignest not,

But to a country ever dear to me,

And dearer now than ever: what we love

Is loveliest in departure! One I thought,

As every father thinks, the best of all,

Graceful, and mild, and sensible, and chaste:

Now all these qualities of form and soul

Fade from before me, nor on anyone

Can I repose, or be consoled by any.

And yet in this torn heart I love her more

Than I could love her when I dwelt on each,

Or clasped them all united, and thanked God,

Without a wish beyond.--Away, thou fiend!

O ignominy, last and worst of all!

I weep before thee--like a child--like mine -

And tell my woes, fount of them all, to thee!

FIRST ACT: FOURTH SCENE.

ABDALAZIS enters.

ABD. Julian, to thee, the terror of the faithless,

I bring my father's order, to prepare

For the bright day that crowns thy brave exploits:

Our enemy is at the very gate!

And art thou here, with women in thy train,

Crouching to gain admittance to their lord,

And mourning the unkindness of delay!

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

I am prepared: Prince, judge not hastily.

ABD. Whether I should not promise all they ask,

I too could hesitate, though earlier taught

The duty to obey, and should rejoice

To shelter in the universal storm

A frame so delicate, so full of fears,

So little used to outrage and to arms,

As one of these; so humble, so uncheered

At the gay pomp that smoothes the track of war.

When she beheld me from afar dismount,

And heard my trumpet, she alone drew back,

And, as though doubtful of the help she seeks,

Shuddered to see the jewels on my brow,

And turned her eyes away, and wept aloud.

The other stood awhile, and then advanced:

I would have spoken, but she waved her hand

And said, "Proceed, protect us, and avenge,

And be thou worthier of the crown thou wearest."

Hopeful and happy is indeed our cause,

When the most timid of the lovely hail

Stranger and foe -

ROD. [unnoticed by ABDALAZIS.]

And shrink but to advance.

ABD. Thou tremblest? whence, O Julian! whence this change?

Thou lovest still thy country.

JUL. Abdalazis!

All men with human feelings love their country.

Not the highborn or wealthy man alone,

Who looks upon his children, each one led

By its gay handmaid, from the high alcove,

And hears them once a day: not only he

Who hath forgotten, when his guest inquires

The name of some far village all his own;

Whose rivers bound the province, and whose hills

Touch the last cloud upon the level sky:

No; better men still better love their country.

'Tis the old mansion of their earliest friends,

The chapel of their first and best devotions;

When violence or perfidy invades,

Or when unworthy lords hold wassail there,

And wiser heads are drooping round its moats,

At last they fix their steady and stiff eye

There, there alone--stand while the trumpet blows,  
And view the hostile flames above its towers  
Spire, with a bitter and severe delight.

ABD. [taking his hand.]

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

JUL. He comes as herald.

ROD. Thou shalt know full soon,  
Insulting Moor.

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

And princes stoop to feed them in their courts.

FIRST ACT: FIFTH SCENE.

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

MUZA [sternly to EGILONA.]

Enter, since 'tis the custom in this land.

EGI. [passing MUZA disdainfully, points to ABDALAZIS, and says to JULIAN.]

Is this our future monarch, or art thou?

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

ROD. To-morrow's dawn  
Proves that.

MUZA. What art thou?

ROD. [drawing his sword.] King.

ABD. Amazement!

MUZA. Treason!

EGI. O horror!

MUZA. Seize him.

EGI. Spare him! fly to me!

JUL. Urge me not to protect a guest, a herald -

The blasts of war roar over him unfelt.

EGI. Ah fly, unhappy!

ROD. Fly! no, Egilona -

Dost thou forgive me? dost thou love me? still?

EGI. I hate, abominate, abhor thee--go,

Or my own vengeance -

ROD. [taking JULIAN's hand, and inviting him to attack MUZA and  
ABDALAZIS.]

Julian!

JUL. Hence, or die.

SECOND ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Camp of JULIAN.

JULIAN and COVILLA.

JUL. Obdurate! I am not as I appear.

Weep, my beloved child, Covilla, weep

Into my bosom; every drop be mine

Of this most bitter soul-empoisoning cup:

Into no other bosom than thy father's

Canst thou, or wouldst thou, pour it.

COV. Cease, my lord,

My father, angel of my youth, when all

Was innocence and peace.

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

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

JUL. Thou shalt see  
Her and thy brothers.

COV. No! I cannot look  
On them, I cannot meet their lovely eyes,  
I cannot lift mine up from under theirs.  
We all were children when they went away;  
They now have fought hard battles, and are men,  
And camps and kings they know, and woes and crimes.  
Sir, will they never venture from the walls  
Into the plain? Remember, they are young,  
Hardy and emulous and hazardous;  
And who is left to guard them in the town?

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

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

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

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

JUL. Child, thou wert in thy nursery short time since,  
And latterly hast passed the vacant hour  
Where the familiar voice of history  
Is hardly known, however nigh, attuned  
In softer accents to the sickened ear;  
But thou hast heard, for nurses tell these tales,  
Whether I drew my sword for Witiza

Abandoned by the people he betrayed,  
Though brother to the woman who of all  
Was ever dearest to this broken heart,  
Till thou, my daughter, wert a prey to grief,  
And a brave country brooked the wrongs I bore.  
For I had seen Rusilla guide the steps  
Of her Theodofred, when burning brass  
Plunged its fierce fang into the founts of light,  
And Witiza's the guilt! when, bent with age,  
He knew the voice again, and told the name,  
Of those whose proffered fortunes had been laid  
Before his throne, while happiness was there,  
And strained the sightless nerve tow'rd where they stood  
At the forced memory of the very oaths  
He heard renewed from each, but heard afar,  
For they were loud, and him the throng spurned off.

COV. Who were all these?

JUL. All who are seen to-day  
On prancing steeds richly caparisoned  
In loyal acclamation round Roderigo;  
Their sons beside them, loving one another  
Unfeignedly, through joy, while they themselves  
In mutual homage mutual scorn suppress.  
Their very walls and roofs are welcoming  
The king's approach, their storied tapestry

Swells its rich arch for him triumphantly

At every clarion blowing from below.

COV. Such wicked men will never leave his side.

JUL. For they are insects which see nought beyond

Where they now crawl; whose changes are complete,

Unless of habitation.

COV. Whither go

Creatures unfit for better, or for worse?

JUL. Some to the grave--where peace be with them! some

Across the Pyrenean mountains far,

Into the plains of France; suspicion there

Will hang on every step from rich and poor,

Grey quickly-glancing eyes will wrinkle round,

And courtesy will watch them day and night.

Shameless they are, yet will they blush, amid

A nation that ne'er blushes: some will drag

The captive's chain, repair the shattered bark,

Or heave it from a quicksand to the shore,

Among the marbles of the Libyan coast;

Teach patience to the lion in his cage,

And, by the order of a higher slave,

Hold to the elephant their scanty fare,

To please the children while the parent sleeps.

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

JUL. All are not Spaniards who draw breath in Spain;

Those are, who live for her, who die for her,

Who love her glory and lament her fall.

Oh, may I too -

COV. But peacefully, and late,

Live and die here!

JUL. I have, alas! myself

Laid waste the hopes where my fond fancy strayed,

And view their ruins with unaltered eyes.

COV. My mother will at last return to thee.

Might I once more, but--could I now behold her,

Tell her--ah me! what was my rash desire?

No, never tell her these inhuman things,

For they would waste her tender heart away

As they waste mine; or tell when I have died,

Only to show her that her every care

Could not have saved, could not have comforted.

That she herself, clasping me once again

To her sad breast, had said, Covilla! go,  
Go, hide them in the bosom of thy God!  
Sweet mother, that far-distant voice I hear,  
And passing out of youth and out of life,  
I would not turn at last, and disobey.

SECOND ACT: SECOND SCENE.

SISABERT enters.

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

JUL. All--or this day had never seen me here.

SIS. O falsehood! worse than woman's!

COV. Once, my cousin,  
Far gentler words were uttered from your lips.  
If you loved me, you loved my father first,

More justly and more steadily, ere love

Was passion and illusion and deceit.

SIS. I boast not that I never was deceived,

Covilla, which beyond all boasts were base,

Nor that I never loved; let this be thine.

Illusions! just to stop us, not delay;

Amuse, not occupy! Too true! when love

Scatters its brilliant foam, and passes on

To some fresh object in its natural course,

Widely and openly and wanderingly,

'Tis better! narrow it, and it pours its gloom

In one fierce cataract that stuns the soul.

Ye hate the wretch ye make so, while ye choose

Whoever knows you best and shuns you most.

COV. Shun me then: be beloved, more and more.

Honour the hand that showed you honour first,

Love--O my father! speak, proceed, persuade,

Thy voice alone can mutter it--another -

SIS. Ah lost Covilla! can a thirst of power

Alter thy heart thus to abandon mine,

And change my very nature at one blow?

COV. I told you, dearest Sisabert, 'twas vain

To urge me more, to question, or confute.

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

JUL. Young man, avenge our cause.

SIS. What cause avenge?

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

SIS. Will be now consoled.

Thy father comes to mount my father's throne;  
But though I would not a usurper king,  
I prize his valour and defend his crown:  
No stranger and no traitor rules o'er me,  
Or unchastised inveigles humbled Spain.  
Covilla, gavest thou no promises?

Nor thou, Don Julian? Seek not to reply -  
Too well I know, too justly I despise,  
Thy false excuse, thy coward effrontery;  
Yes, when thou gavest them across the sea,  
An enemy wert thou to Mahomet,  
And no appellant to his faith or leagues.

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

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

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

COV. Father! O father!

SIS. I will not implore  
Of him or thee what I have lost for ever.  
These were not when we parted thy alarms;

Far other, and far worthier of thy heart  
Were they; which Sisabert could banish then.  
Fear me not now, Covilla! thou hast changed -  
I am changed too--I lived but where thou livedst,  
My very life was portioned off from thine.  
Upon the surface of thy happiness  
Day after day I gazed, I doted--there  
Was all I had, was all I coveted;  
So pure, serene, and boundless it appeared:  
Yet, for we told each other every thought,  
Thou knowest well, if thou rememberest,  
At times I feared; as though some demon sent  
Suspicion without form into the world,  
To whisper unimaginable things.  
Then thy fond arguing banished all but hope,  
Each wish, and every feeling, was with thine,  
Till I partook thy nature, and became  
Credulous, and incredulous, like thee.  
We, who have met so altered, meet no more.  
Mountains and seas! ye are not separation:  
Death! thou dividest, but unitest too,  
In everlasting peace and faith sincere.  
Confiding love! where is thy resting-place?  
Where is thy truth, Covilla? where!--Go, go,  
I should adore thee and believe thee still.  
[Goes.

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

JUL. He must think thee so.

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

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

COV. Fallen, unpitied, unbeliev'd, unheard!  
I should have died long earlier: gracious God!  
Desert me to my sufferings, but sustain

My faith in Thee! O hide me from the world,  
And from thyself, my father, from thy fondness,  
That opened in this wilderness of woe  
A source of tears--it else had burst my heart,  
Setting me free for ever: then perhaps  
A cruel war had not divided Spain,  
Had not o'erturned her cities and her altars,  
Had not endangered thee! Oh, haste afar  
Ere the last dreadful conflict that decides  
Whether we live beneath a foreign sway -

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

COV. Not remember!  
What have the wretched else for consolation!  
What else have they who pining feed their woe?  
Can I, or should I, drive from memory  
All that was dear and sacred, all the joys  
Of innocence and peace? when no debate  
Was in the convent, but what hymn, whose voice,  
To whom among the blessed it arose,  
Swelling so sweet; when rang the vesper-bell  
And every finger ceased from the guitar,  
And every tongue was silent through our land;

When, from remotest earth, friends met again  
Hung on each other's neck, and but embraced,  
So sacred, still, and peaceful was the hour.  
Now, in what climate of the wasted world,  
Not unmolested long by the profane,  
Can I pour forth in secrecy to God  
My prayers and my repentance? where besides  
Is the last solace of the parting soul?  
Friends, brethren, parents--dear indeed, too dear  
Are they, but somewhat still the heart requires,  
That it may leave them lighter, and more blest.

JUL. Wide are the regions of our far-famed land:  
Thou shalt arrive at her remotest bounds,  
See her best people, choose some holiest house;  
Whether where Castro from surrounding vines  
Hears the hoarse ocean roar among his caves,  
And, through the fissure in the green churchyard,  
The wind wail loud the calmest summer day;  
Or where Santona leans against the hill,  
Hidden from sea and land by groves and bowers.

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

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

In injury, disaster, or distress.

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

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

COV. Thither let us depart, and speedily.

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

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

JUL. Unconquerable land! unrivalled race!  
Whose bravery, too enduring, rues alike

The power and weakness of accursed kings -  
How cruelly hast thou neglected me!  
Forcing me from thee, never to return,  
Nor in thy pangs and struggles to partake!  
I hear a voice--'tis Egilona--come,  
Recall thy courage, dear unhappy girl,  
Let us away.

SECOND ACT: THIRD SCENE.

EGILONA enters.

EGI. Remain, I order thee.

Attend, and do thy duty: I am queen,  
Unbent to degradation.

COV. I attend

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

EGI. Oh! I sink under gentleness like thine.

Thy sight is death to me; and yet 'tis dear.

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

JUL. Depart, my daughter--'twere as well to bear  
His presence as his praise--go--she will dream  
This phantasm out, nor notice thee depart.  
[COVILLA goes.]

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

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

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

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

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

JUL. Spain then was conquered  
When fell her laws before time traitor king.

SECOND ACT: FOURTH SCENE.

Officer announces OPAS.

O queen, the metropolitan attends  
On matters of high import to the state,

And wishes to confer in privacy.

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

[JULIAN goes before OPAS enters.

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

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

OPAS. A spring of mind  
That rises when all pressure is removed,

Firmness in pious and in chaste resolves,  
But weakness in much fondness; these, O queen,  
I did expect, I own.

EGI. The better part

Be mine; the worst hath been--and is no more.

OPAS. But if Roderigo have at length prevailed

That Egilona willingly resigns

All claim to royalty, and casts away,

Indifferent or estranged, the marriage-bond

His perjury tore asunder, still the church

Hardly can sanction his new nuptial rites.

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

OPAS. Thou knowest not?

EGI. Am I a wife; a queen?

Abandon it! my claim to royalty!

Whose hand was on my head when I arose

Queen of this land? whose benediction sealed

My marriage vow? who broke it? was it I?

And wouldst thou, virtuous Opas, wouldst thou dim

The glorious light of thy declining days?

Wouldst thou administer the sacred vows,  
And sanction them, and bless them, for another,  
And bid her live in peace while I am living?  
Go then; I execrate and banish him  
For ever from my sight: we were not born  
For happiness together; none on earth  
Were even so dissimilar as we.  
He is not worth a tear, a wish, a thought -  
Never was I deceived in him--I found  
No tenderness, no fondness, from the first:  
A love of power, a love of perfidy,  
Such is the love that is returned for mine.  
Ungrateful man! 'twas not the pageantry  
Of regal state, the clarions, nor the guard,  
Nor loyal valour, nor submissive beauty,  
Silence at my approach, awe at my voice,  
Happiness at my smile, that led my youth  
Toward Roderigo! I had lived obscure,  
In humbleness, in poverty, in want,  
Blest, oh supremely blest! with him alone:  
And he abandons me, rejects me, scorns me,  
Insensible! inhuman! for another!  
Thou shalt repent thy wretched choice, false man!  
Crimes such as thine call loudly for perdition;  
Heaven will inflict it, and not I--but I  
Neither will fall alone, nor live despised.  
[A trumpet sounds.

OPAS. Peace, Egilona, he arrives; compose

Thy turbid thoughts, meet him with dignity.

EGI. He! in the camp of Julian! trust me, sir,

He comes not hither, dares no longer use

The signs of state, and flies from every foe.

[Retires some distance.

SECOND ACT: FIFTH SCENE.

Enter MUZA and ABDALAZIS.

MUZA [to ABDALAZIS.] I saw him but an instant, and disguised,

Yet this is not the traitor; on his brow

Observe the calm of wisdom and of years.

OPAS. Whom seekest thou?

MUZA. Him who was king I seek.

He came arrayed as herald to this tent.

ABD. Thy daughter! was she nigh? perhaps for her

Was this disguise.

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

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

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

EGI. [rushing forward.] 'Tis true--and I proclaim it -

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

[OPAS goes abruptly.]

EGL. I give it--I am Egilona, queen

Of that detested man.

ABD. I touch the hand

That chains down fortune to the throne of fate;

And will avenge thee; for 'twas thy command,

'Tis Heaven's--My father! what retards our bliss?

Why art thou silent?

MUZA. Inexperienced years

Rather would rest on the soft lap, I see,

Of pleasure, after the fierce gusts of war.

O Destiny! that callest me alone,

Hapless, to keep the toilsome watch of state;

Painful to age, unnatural to youth,

Adverse to all society of friends,

Equality, and liberty, and ease,

The welcome cheer of the unbidden feast,

The gay reply, light, sudden, like the leap

Of the young forester's unbended bow;

But, above all, to tenderness at home,

And sweet security of kind concern

Even from those who seem most truly ours.

Who would resign all this, to be approached,

Like a sick infant by a canting nurse,

To spread his arms in darkness, and to find

One universal hollowness around?

Forego, a little while, that bane of peace.

Love may be cherished.

ABD. 'Tis enough; I ask

No other boon.

MUZA. Not victory?

ABD. Farewell,

O queen! I will deserve thee; why do tears

Silently drop, and slowly, down thy veil?

I shall return to worship thee, and soon;

Why this affliction? Oh, that I alone

Could raise or could repress it!

EGI. We depart,

Nor interrupt your counsels, nor impede;

Oh, may they prosper, whatsoever they be,

And perfidy soon meet its just reward!

The infirm and peaceful Opas--whither gone?

MUZA. Stay, daughter; not for counsel are we met,

But to secure our arms from treachery,

O'erthrow and stifle base conspiracies,

Involve in his own toils our false ally -

EGI. Author of every woe I have endured!  
Ah, sacrilegious man! he vowed to Heaven  
None of his blood should ever mount the throne.

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

THIRD ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Palace in XERES.

RODERIGO and OPAS.

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

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

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

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

ROD. To speak then calmly,

Since thine eyes open and can see her guilt -

Infamous and atrocious! let her go--

Chains

OPAS. What! in Muza's camp?

ROD. My scorn supreme!

OPAS. Say pity.

ROD. Ay, ay, pity--that suits best.

I loved her, but HAD loved her; three whole years

Of pleasure, and of varied pleasure too,

Had worn the soft impression half away.

What I once felt, I would recall; the faint

Responsive voice grew fainter each reply:

Imagination sank amid the scenes

It laboured to create; the vivid joy

Of fleeting youth I followed, and possessed.

'Tis the first moment of the tenderest hour,

'Tis the first mien on entering new delights,

We give our peace, our power, our souls, for these.

OPAS. Thou hast; and what remains?

ROD. Myself--Roderigo -

Whom hatred cannot reach, nor love cast down.

OPAS. Nor gratitude nor pity nor remorse

Call back, nor vows nor earth nor heaven control.

But art thou free and happy? art thou safe?

By shrewd contempt the humblest may chastise

Whom scarlet and its ermine cannot scare,

And the sword skulks for everywhere in vain,

Thee the poor victim of thy outrages,

Woman, with all her weakness, may despise.

ROD. But first let quiet age have intervened.

OPAS. Ne'er will the peace or apathy of age

Be thine, or twilight steal upon thy day.

The violent choose, but cannot change, their end:

Violence, by man or nature, must be theirs:

Thine it must be, and who to pity thee?

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

OPAS. Proclaim we those the happiest of mankind

Who never knew a want? Oh, what a curse

To thee this utter ignorance of thine!

Julian, whom all the good commiserate,  
Sees thee below him far in happiness:  
A state indeed of no quick restlessness,  
No glancing agitation, one vast swell  
Of melancholy, deep, impassable,  
Interminable, where his spirit alone  
Broods and o'ershadows all, bears him from earth,  
And purifies his chastened soul for heaven.  
Both heaven and earth shall from thy grasp recede.  
Whether on death or life thou arguest,  
Untutored savage or corrupted heathen  
Avows no sentiment so vile as thine.

Rod. Nor feels?

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

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

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

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

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

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

OPAS.--the throne of guilt

Obdurate, without plea, without remorse.

ROD. What power hast thou? perhaps thou soon wilt want

A place of refuge.

OPAS. Rather say, perhaps

My place of refuge will receive me soon.

Could I extend it even to thy crimes,

It should be open; but the wrath of heaven

Turns them against thee, and subverts thy sway:

It leaves thee not, what wickedness and woe

Off in their drear communion taste together,

Hope and repentance.

ROD. But it leaves me arms,

Vigour of soul and body, and a race

Subject by law, and dutiful by choice,

Whose hand is never to be holden fast

Within the closing cleft of gnarled creeds;

No easy prey for these vile mitred Moors.

I, who received thy homage, may retort

Thy threats, vain prelate, and abase thy pride.

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

ROD. Judge now: for, hear the signal.

OPAS. And derides

The buoyant heart the dubious gulfs of war?

Trumpets may sound, and not to victory.

ROD. The traitor and his daughter feel my power.

OPAS. Just God! avert it!

ROD. Seize this rebel priest.

I will alone subdue my enemies. [Goes out.

THIRD ACT: SECOND SCENE.

RAMIRO and OSMA enter from opposite sides.

RAM. Where is the king? his car is at the gate,

His ministers attend him, but his foes

Are yet more prompt, nor will await delay.

OSMA. Nor need they--for he meets them as I speak.

RAM. With all his forces? or our cause is lost.

Julian and Sisabert surround the walls.

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

RAM. Perhaps ere now they enter.

OSMA. Sisabert

Brings him our prisoner.

RAM. They are friends! they held

A parley; and the soldiers, when they saw

Count Julian, lowered their arms and hailed him king?

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

RAM. He leads them; but amid that acclamation

He turned away his head, and called for vengeance.

OSMA. In Sisabert, and in the cavalry

He led, were all our hopes.

OPAS. Woe, woe is theirs

Who have no other.

OSMA. What are thine? obey

The just commands of our offended king:

Conduct him to the tower--off--instantly.

[Guard hesitates: OPAS goes.

Ramiro, let us haste to reinforce -

RAM. Hark! is the king defeated? hark!

OSMA. I hear

Such acclamation as from victory

Arises not, but rather from revolt,

Reiterated, interrupted, lost.

Favour like this his genius will retrieve

By time, or promises, or chastisement,

Whiche'er line choose--the speediest is the best -

His danger and his glory let us share;

'Tis ours to serve him.

RAM. While he rules 'tis ours.

What chariot-wheels are thundering o'er the bridge?

OSMA. Roderigo's--I well know them.

RAM. Now, the burst

Of acclamation! now! again, again.

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

RAM. Stay, I entreat thee--one hath now prevailed.

So far is certain.

OSMA. Ay, the right prevails.

RAM. Transient and vain their joyance, who rejoice

Precipitately and intemperately,

And bitter thoughts grow up where'er it fell.

OSMA. Nor vain and transient theirs, who idly float

Down popularity's unfertile stream,

And fancy all their own that rises round?

RAM. If thou still lovest, as I know thou dost,

Thy king -

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

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

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

RAM. Yes, brighter scenes arise.

The disunited he alone unites,

The weak with hope he strengthens, and the strong

With justice.

OSMA. Wait: praise him when time hath given

A soundness and consistency to praise:

He shares it amply who bestows it right.

RAM. Doubtest thou?

OSMA. Be it so: let us away;

New courtiers come -

RAM. And why not join the new?

Let us attend him, and congratulate;

Come on: they enter.

OSMA. This is now my post

No longer: I could face them in the field,

I cannot here.

RAM. To-morrow all may change;

Be comforted.

OSMA. I want nor change nor comfort.

RAM. The prisoner's voice!

OSMA. The metropolitan's?

Triumph he may--not over me forgiven.

This way, and through the chapel--none are there.

[Goes out.

THIRD ACT: THIRD SCENE.

OPAS and SISABERT.

OPAS. The royal threat still sounds along these halls:

Hardly his foot hath passed them, and he flees

From his own treachery; all his pride, his hopes,

Are scattered at a breath; even courage fails

Now falsehood sinks from under him. Behold,

Again art thou where reigned thy ancestors;

Behold the chapel of thy earliest prayers,

Where I, whose chains are sundered at thy sight

Ere they could close around these aged limbs,

Received and blest thee, when thy mother's arm

Was doubtful if it loosed thee! with delight  
Have I observed the promises we made  
Deeply impressed and manfully performed.  
Now, to thyself beneficent, O prince,  
Never henceforth renew those weak complaints  
Against Covilla's vows and Julian's faith,  
His honour broken, and her heart estranged.  
Oh, if thou holdest peace or glory dear,  
Away with jealousy; brave Sisabert,  
Smite from thy bosom, smite that scorpion down.  
It swells and hardens amid mildewed hopes,  
O'erspreads and blackens whate'er most delights,  
And renders us haters of loveliness,  
The lowest of the fiends: ambition led  
The higher on, furious to dispossess,  
From admiration sprung and frenzied love.  
This disingenuous soul-debasing passion,  
Rising from abject and most sordid fear,  
Stings her own breast with bitter self-reproof,  
Consumes the vitals, pines, and never dies.  
Love, Honour, Justice, numberless the forms,  
Glorious and high the stature, she assumes;  
But watch the wandering changeful mischief well,  
And thou shalt see her with low lurid light  
Search where the soul's most valued treasure lies,  
Or, more embodied to our vision, stand  
With evil eye, and sorcery hers alone,  
Looking away her helpless progeny,

And drawing poison from its very smiles.

For Julian's truth have I not pledged my own?

Have I not sworn Covilla weds no other?

SIS. Her persecutor have not I chastised?

Have not I fought for Julian, won the town,

And liberated thee?

OPAS. But left for him

The dangers of pursuit, of ambushade,

Of absence from thy high and splendid name.

SIS. Do probity and truth want such supports?

OPAS. Griffins and eagles, ivory and gold,

Can add no clearness to the lamp above;

But many look for them in palaces

Who have them not, and want them not, at home.

Virtue and valour and experience

Are never trusted by themselves alone

Further than infancy and idiocy:

The men around him, not the man himself,

Are looked at, and by these is he preferred.

'Tis the green mantle of the warrener

And his loud whistle, that alone attract

The lofty gazes of the noble herd:

And thus, without thy countenance and help  
Feeble and faint is still our confidence,  
Brief perhaps our success.

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

OPAS. But Egilona.

SIS. Vainly she upbraids  
Roderigo.

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

SIS. She may forgive him yet.

OPAS. Ah, Sisabert!

Wretched are those a woman has forgiven:

With her forgiveness ne'er hath love returned.

Ye know not till too late the filmy tie

That holds heaven's precious boon eternally

To such as fondly cherish her; once go

Driven by mad passion, strike but at her peace,

And, though she step aside from broad reproach,

Yet every softer virtue dies away.

Beaming with virtue inaccessible

Stood Egilona; for her lord she lived,

And for the heavens that raised her sphere so high:

All thoughts were on her--all, beside her own.

Negligent as the blossoms of the field,

Arrayed in candour and simplicity,

Before her path she heard the streams of joy

Murmur her name in all their cadences,

Saw them in every scene, in light, in shade,

Reflect her image; but acknowledged them

Hers most complete when flowing from her most.

All things in want of her, herself of none,

Pomp and dominion lay beneath her feet

Unfelt and unregarded: now behold

The earthly passions war against the heavenly!

Pride against love, ambition and revenge

Against devotion and compliancy:

Her glorious beams adversity hath blunted;

And coming nearer to our quiet view

The original clay of coarse mortality

Hardens and flaws around her.

SIS. Every germ

Of virtue perishes, when love recedes

From those hot shifting sands, the female heart.

OPAS. His was the fault; be his the punishment

'Tis not their own crimes only, men commit,

They harrow them into another's breast,

And they shall reap the bitter growth with pain.

SIS. Yes, blooming royalty will first attract

These creatures of the desert--now I breathe

More freely--she is theirs if I pursue

The fugitive again--he well deserves

The death he flies from--stay! Don Julian twice

Called him aloud, and he, methinks, replied.

Could not I have remained a moment more,

And seen the end? although with hurried voice

He bade me intercept the scattered foes,

And hold the city barred to their return.

May Egilona be another's wife

Whether he die or live! but oh!--Covilla -  
She never can be mine! yet she may be  
Still happy--no, Covilla, no--not happy,  
But more deserving happiness without it.  
Mine never! nor another's--'tis enough.  
The tears I shed no rival can deride;  
In the fond intercourse, a name once cherished  
Will never be defended by faint smiles,  
Nor given up with vows of altered love.  
And is the passion of my soul at last  
Reduced to this? is this my happiness?  
This my sole comfort? this the close of all  
Those promises, those tears, those last adieus,  
And those long vigils for the morrow's dawn?

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

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

OPAS. Corruption may subvert  
What force could never.

SIS. Traitors may.

OPAS. Alas

If traitors can, the basis is but frail.

I mean such traitors as the vacant world

Echoes most stunningly: not fur-robed knaves

Whose whispers raise the dreaming bloodhound's ear

Against benighted famished wanderers;

While with remorseless guilt they undermine

Palace and shed, their very father's house,

O blind! their own, their children's heritage,

To leave more ample space for fearful wealth.

Plunder in some most harmless guise they swathe,

Call it some very meek and hallowed name,

Some known and borne by their good forefathers,

And own and vaunt it thus redeemed from sin.

These are the plagues heaven sends o'er every land

Before it sink, the portents of the street,

Not of the air, lest nations should complain

Of distance or of dimness in the signs,

Flaring from far to Wisdom's eye alone:

These are the last! these, when the sun rides high,

In the forenoon of doomsday, revelling,

Make men abhor the earth, arraign the skies.

Ye who behold them spoil field after field,

Despising them in individual strength,

Not with one torrent sweeping them away

Into the ocean of eternity,  
Arise! despatch! no renovating gale,  
No second spring awaits you--up, begone -  
If you have force and courage even for flight -  
The blast of dissolution is behind.

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

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

SIS. Is not thy vengeance for the late affront,  
For threats and outrage and imprisonment -

OPAS. For outrage, yes--imprisonment and threats  
I pardon him, and whatsoever ill  
He could do ME.

SIS. To hold Covilla from me!  
To urge her into vows against her faith,

Against her beauty, youth, and inclination,  
Without her mother's blessing, nay without  
Her father's knowledge and authority -  
So that she never will behold me more,  
Flying afar for refuge and for help  
Where never friend but God will comfort her -

OPAS. These, and more barbarous deeds were perpetrated.

SIS. Yet her proud father deigned not to inform  
Me, whom he loved and taught, in peace and war,  
Me, whom he called his son, before I hoped  
To merit it by marriage or by arms.  
He offered no excuse, no plea; expressed  
No sorrow; but with firm unfaltering voice  
Commanded me--I trembled as he spoke -  
To follow where he led, redress his wrongs,  
And vindicate the honour of his child.  
He called on God, the witness of his cause,  
On Spain, the partner of his victories,  
And yet amid these animating words  
Rolled the huge tear down his unvisored face -  
A general swell of indignation rose  
Through the long line, sobs burst from every breast,  
Hardly one voice succeeded--you might hear  
The impatient hoof strike the soft sandy plain:  
But when the gates flew open, and the king

In his high car came forth triumphantly,  
Then was Count Julian's stature more elate;  
Tremendous was the smile that smote the eyes  
Of all he passed. "Fathers, sons, and brothers,"  
He cried, "I fight your battles, follow me!  
Soldiers, we know no danger but disgrace!"  
"Father, and general, and king," they shout,  
And would proclaim him: back he cast his face,  
Pallid with grief, and one loud groan burst forth;  
It kindled vengeance through the Asturian ranks,  
And they soon scattered, as the blasts of heaven  
Scatter the leaves and dust, the astonished foe.

OPAS. And doubttest thou his truth?

SIS. I love--and doubt -

Fight--and believe: Roderigo spoke untruths -

In him I place no trust; but Julian holds

Truths in reserve--how should I quite confide!

OPAS. By sorrows thou beholdest him oppressed;

Doubt the more prosperous: march, Sisabert,

Once more against his enemy and ours:

Much hath been done, but much there still remains.

FOURTH ACT.--FIRST SCENE.

Tent of JULIAN.

RODERIGO and JULIAN.

JUL. To stop perhaps at any wickedness  
Appears a merit now, and at the time  
Prudence and policy it often is  
Which afterward seems magnanimity.  
The people had deserted thee, and thronged  
My standard, had I raised it, at the first;  
But once subsiding, and no voice of mine  
Calling by name each grievance to each man,  
They, silent and submissive by degrees,  
Bore thy hard yoke, and, hadst thou but oppressed,  
Would still have borne it: thou hast now deceived;  
Thou hast done all a foreign foe could do,  
And more, against them; with ingratitude  
Not hell itself could arm the foreign foe:  
'Tis forged at home, and kills not from afar.  
Amid whate'er vain glories fell upon  
Thy rainbow span of power, which I dissolve,  
Boast not how thou conferredst wealth and rank,  
How thou preservedst me, my family,  
All my distinctions, all my offices,  
When Witiza was murdered, that I stand  
Count Julian at this hour by special grace.  
The sword of Julian saved the walls of Ceuta,

And not the shadow that attends his name:  
It was no badge, no title, that o'erthrew  
Soldier, and steed, and engine--Don Roderigo,  
The truly and the falsely great here differ:  
These by dull wealth or daring fraud advance;  
Him the Almighty calls amid his people  
To sway the wills and passions of mankind.  
The weak of heart and intellect beheld  
Thy splendour, and adored thee lord of Spain:  
I rose--Roderigo lords o'er Spain no more.

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

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

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

JUL. I tried it in the front of thousands.

ROD. Death

At least vouchsafe me from a soldier's hand.

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

ROD. Defy it, say thou rather.

JUL. Death itself

Shall not be granted thee, unless from God;

A dole from his and from no other hand.

Thou shalt now hear and own thine infamy -

ROD. Chains, dungeons, tortures--but I hear no more.

JUL. Silence, thou wretch, live on--ay, live--abhorred.

Thou shalt have tortures, dungeons, chains, enough -

They naturally rise and grow around

Monsters like thee, everywhere, and for ever.

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

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

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

JUL. No, thou shalt study soon another tongue,  
And suns more ardent shall mature thy mind.  
Either the cross thou bearest, and thy knees  
Among the silent caves of Palestine  
Wear the sharp flints away with midnight prayer;  
Or thou shalt keep the fasts of Barbary,  
Shalt wait amid the crowds that throng the well  
From sultry noon till the skies fade again,  
To draw up water and to bring it home  
In the cracked gourd of some vile testy knave,  
Who spurns thee back with bastinadoed foot  
For ignorance or delay of his command.

ROD. Rather the poison or the bowstring.

JUL. Slaves

To other's passions die such deaths as those:

Slaves to their own should die -

ROD. What worse?

JUL. Their own.

ROD. Is this thy counsel, renegade?

JUL. Not mine;

I point a better path, nay, force thee on.

I shelter thee from every brave man's sword

While I am near thee: I bestow on thee

Life: if thou die, 'tis when thou sojournest

Protected by this arm and voice no more;

'Tis slavishly, 'tis ignominiously,

'Tis by a villain's knife.

ROD. By whose?

JUL. Roderigo's.

ROD. O powers of vengeance! must I hear? endure?

Live?

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

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

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

Rod. Julian, thy gloomy soul still meditates -  
Plainly I see it--death to me--pursue  
The dictates of thy leaders, let revenge  
Have its full sway, let Barbary prevail,  
And the pure creed her elders have embraced:

Those placid sages hold assassination  
A most compendious supplement to law.

JUL. Thou knowest not the one, nor I the other,  
Torn hast thou from me all my soul held dear!  
Her form, her voice, all, hast thou banished from me;  
Nor dare I, wretched as I am! recall  
Those solaces of every grief, erewhile.  
I stand abased before insulting crime -  
I falter like a criminal myself.

The hand that hurled thy chariot o'er its wheels,  
That held thy steeds erect and motionless  
As molten statues on some palace-gates,  
Shakes, as with palsied age, before thee now.

Gone is the treasure of my heart, for ever,  
Without a father, mother, friend, or name.  
Daughter of Julian--such was her delight -  
Such was mine too! what pride more innocent,  
What, surely, less deserving pangs like these,  
Than springs from filial and parental love!

Debarred from every hope that issues forth  
To meet the balmy breath of early life,  
Her saddened days, all, cold and colourless,  
Will stretch before her their whole weary length  
Amid the sameness of obscurity.

She wanted not seclusion, to unveil  
Her thoughts to heaven, cloister, nor midnight bell;

She found it in all places, at all hours:

While, to assuage my labours, she indulged

A playfulness that shunned a mother's eye,

Still, to avert my perils, there arose

A piety that, even from ME, retired.

ROD. Such was she! what am I! those are the arms

That are triumphant when the battle fails.

O Julian, Julian! all thy former words

Struck but the imbecile plumes of vanity;

These, through its steely coverings, pierce the heart.

I ask not life nor death; but, if I live,

Send my most bitter enemy to watch

My secret paths, send poverty, send pain -

I will add more--wise as thou art, thou knowest

No foe more furious than forgiven kings.

I ask not then what thou wouldst never grant:

May heaven, O Julian, from thy hand receive

A pardoned man, a chastened criminal.

JUL. This further curse hast thou inflicted; wretch,

I cannot pardon thee.

ROD. Thy tone, thy mien,

Refute those words.

JUL. No--I can NOT forgive.

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

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

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

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

ROD. Hasten the hour of trial, speak of peace.  
Pardon me not, then--but with purer lips  
Implore of God, who WOULD hear THEE, to pardon.

JUL. Hope it I may--pronounce it--O Roderigo!  
Ask it of him who can; I too will ask,

And, in my own transgressions, pray for thine.

ROD. One name I dare not -

JUL. Go--abstain from that,

I do conjure thee: raise not in my soul

Again the tempest that has wrecked my fame;

Thou shalt not breathe in the same clime with her.

Far o'er the unebbing sea thou shalt adore

The eastern star, and--may thy end be peace.

FOURTH ACT.--SECOND SCENE.

RODERIGO goes: HERNANDO enters.

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

JUL. A welcome messenger, my brave Hernando.

How fares it with the gallant soul of Tarik?

HER. Most joyfully; he scarcely had pronounced  
Your glorious name, and bid me urge your speed,  
Than, with a voice as though it answered heaven,  
"He shall confound them in their dark designs,"

Cried he, and turned away with that swift stride  
Wherewith he meets and quells his enemies.

JUL. Alas, I cannot bear felicitation,  
Who shunned it even in felicity.

HER. Often we hardly think ourselves the happy  
Unless we hear it said by those around.

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

JUL. Hernando, look not back: a narrow path  
And arduous lies before thee; if thou stop

Thou fallest; go right onward, nor observe

Closely and rigidly another's way,

But, free and active, follow up thy own.

HER. The voice that urges now my manly step

Onward in life, recalls me to the past,

And from that fount I freshen for the goal.

Early in youth, among us villagers

Converse and ripened counsel you bestowed.

O happy days of (far departed!) peace,

Days when the mighty Julian stooped his brow

Entering our cottage door; another air

Breathed through the house; tired age and lightsome youth

Beheld him, with intensest gaze: these felt

More chastened joy; those, more profound repose.

Yes, my best lord, when labour sent them home

And midday suns, when from the social meal

The wicker window held the summer heat,

Praised have those been who, going unperceived,

Opened it wide, that all might see you well:

Nor were the children blamed, upon the mat,

Hurrying to watch what rush would last arise

From your foot's pressure, ere the door was closed,

And not yet wondering how they dared to love.

Your counsels are more precious now than ever,

But are they--pardon if I err--the same?

Tarik is gallant, kind, the friend of Julian,

Can he be more? or ought he to be less?

Alas! his faith!

JUL. In peace or war, Hernando?

HER. Oh, neither--far above it; faith in God -

JUL. 'Tis God's, not thine--embrace it not, nor hate it.

Precious or vile, how dare we seize that offering,

Scatter it, spurn it, in its way to heaven,

Because we know it not? the Sovereign Lord

Accepts his tribute, myrrh and frankincense

From some, from others penitence and prayer:

Why intercept them from his gracious hand?

Why dash them down? why smite the suppliant?

HER. 'Tis what they do?

JUL. Avoid it thou the more.

If time were left me, I could hear well-pleased

How Tarik fought up Calpe's fabled cliff,

While I pursued the friends of Don Roderigo

Across the plain, and drew fresh force from mine.

Oh! had some other land, some other cause,

Invited him and me, I then could dwell

On this hard battle with unmixed delight.

HER. Eternal is its glory, if the deed

Be not forgotten till it be surpassed:

Much praise by land, by sea much more, he won;

For then a Julian was not at his side,

Nor led the van, nor awed the best before;

The whole, a mighty whole, was his alone.

There might be seen how far he shone above

All others of the day: old Muza watched

From his own shore the richly laden fleet,

Ill-armed and scattered, and pursued the rear

Beyond those rocks that bear St. Vincent's name,

Cutting the treasure, not the strength, away;

Valiant, where any prey lies undevoured

In hostile creek or too confiding isle:

Tarik, with his small barks, but with such love

As never chief from rugged sailor won,

Smote their high masts and swelling rampires down;

And Cadiz wept in fear o'er Trafalgar.

Who that beheld our sails from off the heights,

Like the white birds, nor larger, tempt the gale

In sunshine and in shade, now almost touch

The solitary shore, glance, turn, retire,

Would think these lovely playmates could portend

Such mischief to the world, such blood, such woe;

Could draw to them from far the peaceful hinds,

Cull the gay flower of cities, and divide  
Friends, children, every bond of human life;  
Could dissipate whole families, could sink  
Whole states in ruin, at one hour, one blow.

JUL. Go, good Hernando--who WOULD think these things?

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

FOURTH ACT.--THIRD SCENE.

EGILONA enters: HERNANDO goes.

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

JUL. What would Egilona

That Julian's power with her new lords can do?

Surely her own must there preponderate.

EGI. I hold no suit to them--restore, restore Roderigo.

JUL. He no longer is my prisoner.

EGI. Escapes he then?

JUL. Escapes he--dost thou say?

O Egilona! what unworthy passion -

EGI. Unworthy, when I loved him, was my passion;

The passion that now swells my heart is just.

JUL. What fresh reproaches hath he merited?

EGI. Deeprooted hatred shelters no reproach.

But whither is he gone?

JUL. Far from the walls.

EGI. And I knew nothing!

JUL. His offence was known

To thee at least.

EGI. Will it be expiated?

JUL. I trust it will.

EGI. This withering calm consumes me.

He marries then Covilla! 'twas for this

His people were excited to rebel,

His sceptre was thrown by, his vows were scorned,

And I--and I -

JUL. Cease, Egilona!

EGI. Cease?

Sooner shalt thou to live, than I to reign.

FIFTH ACT: FIRST SCENE.

Tent of MUZA.

MUZA. TARIK. ABDALAZIS.

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

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

MUZA. Of thyself  
All this vain boast?

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

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

TARIK. Say rather, who without one exhortation,

One precious drop from true believer's vein,  
Marched, and discomfited our enemies.  
I found in him no treachery. Hernando,  
Who, little versed in moody wiles, is gone  
To lead him hither, was by him assigned  
My guide, and twice in doubtful fight his arm  
Protected me: once on the heights of Calpe,  
Once on the plain, when courtly jealousies  
Tore from the bravest and the best his due,  
And gave the dotard and the coward command:  
Then came Roderigo forth--the front of war  
Grew darker--him, equal in chivalry,  
Julian alone could with success oppose.

ABD. I doubt their worth who praise their enemies.

TAR. And theirs doubt I who persecute their friends.

MUZA. Thou art in league with him.

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

MUZA. Am I to bear all this?

TAR. All this, and more:

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

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

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

FIFTH ACT: SECOND SCENE.

HERNANDO enters. TARIK continues.

Here comes Hernando from that prince himself -

MUZA. Who scorns himself to come.

HER. The queen detains him.

ABD. How? Egilona?

MUZA. 'Twas my will.

TAR. At last

He must be happy; for delicious calm

Follows the fierce enjoyment of revenge.

Her. That calm was never his, no other will be!

Thou knowest not, and mayst thou never know,

How bitter is the tear that fiery shame

Scourges and tortures from the soldier's eye.

Whichever of these bad reports be true,

He hides it from all hearts, to wring his own,

And drags the heavy secret to the grave.

Not victory, that o'ershadows him, sees he!

No airy and light passion stirs abroad

To ruffle or to soothe him; all are quelled

Beneath a mightier, sterner stress of mind:

Wakeful he sits, and lonely and unmoved,

Beyond the arrows, views, or shouts of men;

As oftentimes an eagle, when the sun

Throws o'er the varying earth his early ray,

Stands solitary, stands immovable  
Upon some highest cliff, and rolls his eye,  
Clear, constant, unobservant, unabased,  
In the cold light, above the dews of morn.  
He now assumes that quietness of soul  
Which never but in danger have I seen  
On his staid breast.

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

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

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

HER. The gentlest, as the bravest, of mankind.  
Therefore shall memory dwell more tranquilly  
With Julian, once at rest, than friendship could,  
Knowing him yearn for death with speechless love.  
For his own sake I could endure his loss,  
Pray for it, and thank God; yet mourn I must  
Him above all! so great, so bountiful,  
So blessed once! bitterly must I mourn.

'Tis not my solace that 'tis his desire;  
Of all that pass us in life's drear descent  
We grieve the most for those that wished to die.  
A father to us all, he merited,  
Unhappy man! all a good father's joy  
In his own house, where seldom he hath been,  
But, ever mindful of its dear delights,  
He formed one family around him, ever.

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

HER. What could I not endure, O gallant man,  
To hear him spoken of as thou hast spoken!  
Oh! I would almost be a slave to him  
Who calls me one.

MUZA. What? art thou not? begone.

TAR. Reply not, brave Hernando, but retire.

All can revile, few only can reward.

Behold the meed our mighty chief bestows!

Accept it, for thy services, and mine.

More, my bold Spaniard, hath obedience won

Than anger, even in the ranks of war.

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

[Goes.

MUZA to TAR. Into our very council bringest thou

Children of reprobation and perdition?

Darkness thy deeds and emptiness thy speech,

Such images thou raisest as buffoons

Carry in merriment on festivals;

Nor worthiness nor wisdom would display

To public notice their deformities,

Nor cherish them nor fear them; why shouldst thou?

TAR. I fear not them nor thee.

FIFTH ACT: THIRD SCENE.

EGILONA enters.

ABD. Advance, O queen.

Now let the turbulence of faction cease.

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

EGI. He goes; he is afar; he follows her;

He leads her to the altar, to the throne.

For, calm in vengeance, wise in wickedness,

The traitor hath prevailed, o'er him, o'er me,

O'er you--the slaves, the dupes, the scorn, of Julian.

What have I heard! what have I seen!

MUZA. Proceed.

ABD. And I swear vengeance on his guilty head

Who intercepts from thee the golden rays

Of sovereignty; who dares rescind thy rights;

Who steals upon thy rest, and breathes around

Empoisoned damps o'er that serenity

Which leaves the world, and faintly lingers here.

MUZA. Who shuns thee -

ABD. Whose desertion interdicts

Homage, authority, precedency -

MUZA. Till war shall rescue them -

ABD. And love restore.

EGI. O generous Abdalazis! never! never!

My enemies--Julian alone remains -

The worst, in safety, far beyond my reach,

Breathe freely on the summit of their hopes;

Because they never stopped, because they sprang

From crime to crime, and trampled down remorse.

Oh! if her heart knew tenderness like mine!

Grant vengeance on the guilty; grant but that,

I ask no more; my hand, my crown, is thine.

Fulfil the justice of offended heaven,

Assert the sacred rights of royalty,

Come not in vain, crush the rebellious crew,

Crush, I implore, the indifferent and supine.

MUZA. Roderigo thus escaped from Julian's tent.

EGI. No, not escaped, escorted, like a king.

The base Covilla first pursued her way  
On foot; but after her the royal car,  
Which bore me from San Pablos to the throne,  
Empty indeed, yet ready at her voice,  
Rolled o'er the plain, amid the carcasses  
Of those who fell in battle or in flight:  
She, a deceiver still, to whate'er speed  
The moment might incite her, often stopped  
To mingle prayers with the departing breath,  
Improvident! and those with heavy wounds  
Groaned bitterly beneath her tottering knee.

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

EGI. Insulting man!

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

ABD. I will tell  
Without his answer: yes, my friends; yes, Tarik,

Now will I speak, nor thou, for once, reply.  
There is, I hear, a poor half-ruined cell  
In Xeres, whither few indeed resort;  
Green are the walls within, green is the floor  
And slippery from disuse; for Christian feet  
Avoid it, as half-holy, half accursed.  
Still in its dark recess fanatic sin  
Abases to the ground his tangled hair,  
And servile scourges and reluctant groans  
Roll o'er the vault uninterruptedly,  
Till, such the natural stillness of the place  
The very tear upon the damp below  
Drops audible, and the heart's throb replies.  
There is the idol maid of Christian creed,  
And taller images, whose history  
I know not, nor inquired--a scene of blood,  
Of resignation amid mortal pangs,  
And other things, exceeding all belief.  
Hither the aged Opas of Seville  
Walked slowly, and behind him was a man  
Barefooted, bruised, dejected, comfortless,  
In sackcloth; the white ashes on his head  
Dropped as he smote his breast; he gathered up,  
Replaced them all, groaned deeply, looked to heaven,  
And held them, like a treasure, with clasped hands.

EGl. Oh! was Roderigo so abased?

MUZA. 'Twas he.

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

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

MUZA. For thee, for thee alone, we wished him here,  
But other hands released him -

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

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

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

EGI. Yes, Abdalazis! soon, abundantly.  
If he had only called upon my name,  
Seeking my pardon ere he looked to heaven's,  
I could have--no! he thought not once on me!  
Never shall he find peace or confidence;  
I will rely on fortune and on thee,  
Nor fear my future lot: sure, Abdalazis,  
A fall so great can never happen twice,  
Nor man again be faithless, like Roderigo.

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

FIFTH ACT: FOURTH SCENE.

JULIAN enters.

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

MUZA. Justly, Don Julian--but respect for rank

Allays resentment, nor interrogates

Without due form--justly may we accuse

This absence from our councils, from our camp:

This loneliness in which we still remain

Who come invited to redress your wrongs.

Where is the king?

JUL. The people must decide.

MUZA. Imperfectly, I hope, I understand

Those words, unworthy of thy birth and age.

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

MUZA. Who then amid such turbulence is safe?

JUL. He who observes them: 'tis no turbulence,

It violates no peace: 'tis surely worth

A voice, a breath of air, thus to create

By their high will the man, formed after them

In their own image, vested with their power,

To whom they trust their freedom and their lives.

MUZA. They trust! the people! God assigns the charge:

Kings open but the book of destiny

And read their names, all that remains for them

The mystic hand from time to time reveals.

Worst of idolaters! idolater

Of that refractory and craving beast

Whose den is in the city, at thy hand

I claim our common enemy, the king.

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

TAR. Surrender him, my friend: be sure his pains

Will not be softened.

JUL. 'Tis beyond my power.

TAR. To-morrow--if in any distant fort

He lies to-night: send after him.

JUL. My faith

Is plighted, and he lives--no prisoner.

EGI. I knew the truth.

ABD. Now, Tarik, hear and judge.

Was he not in thy camp? and in disguise?

TAR. No: I will answer thee.

MUZA. Audacious man!

Had not the Kalif Walid placed thee here,

Chains and a traitor's death should be thy doom.

Speak, Abdalazis! Egilona, speak.

Were ye not present? was not I myself?

And aided not this Julian his escape?

JUL. 'Tis true.

TAR. Away then friendship; to thy fate

I leave thee: thou hast rendered Muza just,

Me hostile to thee. Who is safe! a man

Armed with such power and with such perfidy!

JUL. Stay, Tarik! hear me; for to thee alone

Would I reply.

TAR. Thou hast replied, already. [Goes.

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

JUL. Is there no gain to live in amity?

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

JUL. From the hour

That he was vanquished I have laid aside

All power, all arms.

MUZA. How can we trust thee, once

Deceived, and oftener than this once despised?

Thou camest hither with no other aim

Than to deprive Roderigo of his crown

For thy own brow.

EGI. Julian, base man, 'tis true.

He comes a prince, no warrior, at this hour.

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

ABD. Julian, I feel less anger than regret.

No violence of speech, no obloquy,

No accusation shall escape my lips:

Need there is none, nor reason, to avoid

My questions: if thou value truth, reply.

Hath not Roderigo left the town and camp?

Hath not thy daughter?

EGI. Past the little brook

Toward the Betis--from a tower I saw

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

MUZA. Deny it, if thou canst.

JUL. I ordered it.

ABD. None could besides: lo! things in such a mass  
Falling together on observant minds,  
Create suspicion and establish proof:  
Wanted there fresh--why not employ our arms?  
Why go alone?

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

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

MUZA. Pay she shall -

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

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

MUZA. Let order then prevail.

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

JUL. Never by me.

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

JUL. O Egilona! were thine also feigned?

ABD. Say, lovely queen, neglectful of thy charms

Turned he his eyes toward the young Covilla?

Did he pursue her to the mad excess

Of breaking off her vows to Sisabert,

And marrying her, against the Christian law?

MUZA. Did he prefer her so?

ABD. Could he prefer

To Egilona -

EGI. Her! the child Covilla?

Eternal hider of a foolish face,

Incapable of anything but shame,

To me? old man! to me? O Abdalazis!

No: he but followed with slow pace my hate.

And cannot pride check these unseemly tears.

[Goes.

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

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

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

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

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

MUZA. After our manifold and stern assaults,  
With every tower and battlement destroyed,

The walls of Ceuta still were strong enough -

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

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

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

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

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

ABD. I feared them not.

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

JUL. Never, oh never, hast thou worked a wile  
So barren of all good! speak out at once,

What hopest thou by striking this alarm?

It shocks my reason, not my fears or fondness.

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

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

MUZA. Their father's.

JUL. Oh, support me, Heaven!  
Against this blow! all others I have borne.  
Ermenegild! thou mightest, sure, have lived!  
A father's name awoke no dread of thee!  
Only thy mother's early bloom was thine!  
There dwelt on Julian's brow--thine was serene -  
The brightened clouds of elevated souls,  
Feared by the most below: those who looked up

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

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

MUZA. Ay, and unsepulchred.

JUL. Nor wept nor seen

By any kindred and far-following eye?

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

JUL. O cruelty--to them indeed the least!

My children, ye are happy--ye have lived

Of heart unconquered, honour unimpaired,

And died, true Spaniards, loyal to the last.

MUZA. Away with him.

JUL. Slaves! not before I lift

My voice to heaven and man: though enemies

Surround me, and none else, yet other men

And other times shall hear: the agony

Of an oppressed and of a bursting heart

No violence can silence; at its voice

The trumpet is o'erpowered, and glory mute,

And peace and war hide all their charms alike.

Surely the guests and ministers of heaven

Scatter it forth through all the elements;  
So suddenly, so widely, it extends,  
So fearfully men breathe it, shuddering  
To ask or fancy how it first arose.

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

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

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

JUL. Many, nor those alone of tenderer mould,  
For me will weep--many alas through me!  
Already I behold my funeral.  
The turbid cities wave and swell with it,  
And wrongs are lost in that day's pageantry:  
Oppressed and desolate, the countryman  
Receives it like a gift; he hastens home,  
Shows where the hoof of Moorish horse laid waste

His narrow croft and winter garden-plot,  
Sweetens with fallen pride his children's lore,  
And points their hatred; but applauds their tears.  
Justice, who came not up to us through life,  
Loves to survey our likeness on our tombs,  
When rivalry, malevolence, and wrath,  
And every passion that once stormed around,  
Is calm alike without them as within.  
Our very chains make the whole world our own,  
Bind those to us who else had passed us by,  
Those at whose call brought down to us, the light  
Of future ages lives upon our name.

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

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

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

Many who feared not death have dragged along

A piteous life in darkness and in chains.

Never was man so full of wretchedness

But something may be suffered after all,

Perhaps in what clings round his breast, and helps

To keep the ruin up, which he amid

His agony and frenzy overlooks,

But droops upon at last, and clasps, and dies.

JUL. Although a Muza send far underground,

Into the quarry whence the palace rose,

His mangled prey, climes alien and remote

Mark and record the pang. While overhead

Perhaps he passes on his favourite steed,

Less heedful of the misery he inflicts

Than of the expiring sparkle from a stone;

Yet we, alive or dead, have fellow men

If ever we have served them, who collect

From prisons and from dungeons our remains,

And bear them in their bosom to their sons.

Man's only relics are his benefits;

These, be there ages, be there worlds, between,

Retain him in communion with his kind:

Hence is our solace, our security,

Our sustenance, till heavenly truth descends -

Losing in brightness and beatitude  
The frail foundations of these humbler hopes -  
And, like an angel guiding us, at once  
Leaves the loose chain and iron gate behind.

MUZA. Take thou my justice first, then hope for theirs.

I, who can bend the living to my will,  
Fear not the dead, and court not the unborn:  
Their arm will never reach me, nor shall thine.

ABD. Pity, release him, pardon him, my father.

Forget how much thou hatest perfidy;  
Think of him, once so potent, still so brave,  
So calm, so self-dependent in distress -  
I marvel at him--hardly dare I blame,  
When I behold him fallen from so high,  
And so exalted after such a fall.

Mighty must that man be who can forgive

A man, so mighty; seize the hour to rise,  
Another never comes. Oh, say, my father,  
Say, "Julian, be my enemy no more."

He fills me with a greater awe than e'er  
The field of battle, with himself the first,  
When every flag that waved along our host  
Drooped down the staff, as if the very winds  
Hung in suspense before him--bid him go  
And peace be with him, or let me depart.

Lo! like a god, sole and inscrutable,  
He stands above our pity.

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

MUZA. Now hast thou sealed thy doom.

JUL. And thou thy crimes.

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

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

ABD. He who ne'er shrank from danger might shrink now,

And ignominy would not follow here.

MUZA. Peace, Abdalazis! how is this? he bears

Nothing that warrants him invulnerable:

Shall I then shrink to smite him? shall my fears

Be greatest at the blow that ends them all?

Fears? no! 'tis justice--fair, immutable,

Whose measured step, at times, advancing nigh,

Appalls the majesty of kings themselves.

Oh, were he dead! though then revenge were o'er.

FINAL ACT.--FIFTH SCENE.

OFF. Thy wife, Count Julian -

JUL. Speak!

OFF. --Is dead.

JUL. Adieu,

Earth, and the humblest of all earthly hopes,

To hear of comfort, though to find it vain.

Thou murderer of the helpless! shame of man!

Shame of thy own base nature! 'tis an act

He who could perpetrate could not avow,

Stained, as he boasts to be, with innocent blood,  
Deaf to reproach, and blind to retribution.

OFF. Julian, be just; 'twill make thee less unhappy.

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

JUL. She?

OFF. And the youth her son.

JUL. Receive them to thy peace, eternal God!

O soother of my hours, while I beheld  
The light of day, and thine! adieu, adieu!  
And, my Covilla! dost thou yet survive?  
Yes, my lost child, thou livest yet--in shame!  
Oh, agony past utterance! past thought!  
That throwest death, as some light idle thing,  
With all its terrors, into dust and air,  
I will endure thee; I, whom heaven ordained  
Thus to have served beneath my enemies,  
Their conqueror, thus to have revisited

My native land with vengeance and with woe.  
Henceforward shall she recognise her sons,  
Impatient of oppression or disgrace,  
And rescue them, or perish; let her hold  
This compact, written with her blood, and mine.  
Now follow me--but tremble--years shall roll,  
And wars rage on, and Spain at last be free.

Footnote:

{1} "Ah, what avails the sceptred race,  
Ah, what the form divine!  
What every virtue, every grace!  
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

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