I have a right to rule thee—and the power
Is in my hands. I’ll use it.

Riv. Right! what right,
Deceiver and betraycr of my soul,
Hast thou? But it were madness, I confess,
With thee to argue. For thy heart obdured
Admits no plea of reason or of nature.—
But Durstan this at least may comprehend,
I am resolved, immutable, to die.
And who can hinder me? Aboard thy fleet,
Amidst thy warriors, in the field, the hall,
In the dark dungeon or the vaulted cell,
Alike my soul is free to take its flight.
No chains, no fetters, can the spirit bind;
Which makes each instrument of opposition
The weapon of its will. Art thou convinced?
Or wouldst thou have me call those horrors forth
Which here inhabit, and to thy confusion
Blazon and vindicate my just despair?
Tell thee, if words can tell—

Dur. ’Tis loss of time
To listen to thy words— [Lays hold of Rivine.

Riv. Is there no help? what will my brother
think,
And Ronan, when they hear I am with Durstan?
Tear me in pieces!—

[Struggling.]

Ronan, behind the scenes.

Ron. Villain, quit thy prey,
And guard thyself.—

Dur. Eurian, bring up my men:
I'll stop his course.—

[Exit Eurian.

[Durstan holding Rivine with one hand,
and drawing his sword with the other.

Enter Ronan.

Dur. Halt. If thou dost advance
One step, Rivine on the motion dies.

Ron. Inhuman murderer! withdraw thine arm
And drop thy point. Thou see'st I do not stir.

Dur. Keep farther off; bend not thy body forward,
As if preparing to spring in upon me,
And I will talk with thee.—What would'st thou have?

Why comest thou with thy weapon, ruffian-like,
To rob a husband of his wedded wife?
Is she not mine?
Ron. No, traitor! robber, no!
Fraud is the sole foundation of thy right,
And therefore thou hast none. If thou dar'st trust
Thy valour, or thy cause, let go her arm,
And in her presence with thy sword defend
Thy title like a man.—Ha! dost thou smile
And mock at me? Thou coward! thou assassin!
Basetest of men! less valiant than the deer
That graze the hills. They for their mates will bleed,
And in their sight are bold.

Dur. Rage on, rail on,
Thy ineffectual passion I enjoy.
Our nations, Ronan, ever have been foes.
In enmity our fathers lived and died,
And we were born and nursed in mortal hate
Hereditary, ne'er to be appeased.
To fill the measure up—thou wast my rival;
I triumph'd o'er thee, and I triumph now.
Behold this woman here! is she not fair?
Though frowardness has somewhat marr'd her beauty.
Thou doat'st upon her, and she loves thee too;
But I——

Ron. Insulting villain!—
Dur. If thou lift'st
Thine arm, she dies.

Riv. Advance, and let me die,
For I have lived too long.—Ah! dost thou shrink,
Lean on thy sword and gnaw thy quiv'ring lip,
More tender of my life than of my fame,
Or peace of mind? Thou but prolong'st the term
Of shame and anguish. Know, I was resolved
(Though I dissembled, to appease thee, Ronan)
Before this dreadful parley, not to live.
That Durstan knows full well.

Dur. I know not that.
I know the nature of a woman's mind,
Direct in passion for a moment only,
And shifting like a whirlwind, as it flies
To every point of heaven.

Riv. Thou speak'st the truth.
I change my purpose now. And be assured
If I escape from thee, I shall return
To him, to Ronan, to the rightful lord
Of me and my affections. Do not risk,
By frivolous delay, thy dear revenge:
Wer't thou stuck round with eyes on ev'ry side,
And hung with hands to wield a thousand swords,
Yet thou might be surprised: strike while thou can'st,
And disappoint thy rival.

_Dur_. Though, indeed,
I seldom do believe what women say,
Yet, from my soul, I do believe thee now.—
This rage of death, this fury, this despair,
Are but the smoke and vapour of that fire,
That amorous fire which in your bosom burns.
Give it the air of hope.

_Ron_. Curse on thy tongue!
What dost thou mean in such discourse as this,
Self-loving Durstan, to consume the time?
Thou can'st not 'scape from hence. Connan is near,
With all the youth of Elig at his side.
E'er he arrives, once more I offer thee
The equal combat. If thou doubt'st thine arm,
Commit Rivine to her father's care.

_Dur_. Commit Rivine to her father's care?
To Roan's care, to her dear lover's care!
He will be tender of her, and perhaps
May reconcile her to the love of life.

[Looking to the side-scene.

Now, mighty warrior, of thy valour vain,
And trusting for success to force alone,
I have amused thee, till the hour is past,
The moment of equality between us:
For though I deem mine arm as strong as thine,
Chance might have thrown the advantage on thy side.

Behold—

_Riv._ Ha! Euran with the Picts returns.
Now let the spirit of her race inspire,
In this extreme, the daughter of the Isles.
O, Prince of Morven! guard thy noble life.
From shame, from Durstan, this shall save Rivine.

_[Stabs herself._

_Ron._ O dreadful act! [To Durstan.

On thee, thou wretch accursed!
Author of all our woes, I'll be revenged.

[They fight, and are both wounded.
This to thy heart, and this—down to the ground.

_[As Durstan falls, Euran enters with the Picts, and receives him in his arms._

_Dur._ Thou hast it too. I leave thee to enjoy
Thy conquest, and thy love.

_1 Pict._ Hence: Connan comes.

[They bear him off.

_Ron._ He's dead—Dishonour rest upon his name!
My love, my love!—How could’st thou?—But ’tis done.
I shall not long survive thee, that’s my comfort.

_Riv._ O that’s the torture which I cannot bear. I was prepared for death, but not for thine. For me there was no refuge but the tomb: With thee I could not, nor without thee, live.

_Ron._ O do not speak so tenderly, nor look With such heart-piercing eyes.

_Riv._ I had one hope On which I lean’d, now I am all despair. I thought (when I was dead) that from the cloud Of grief, my hero would break forth again; And run his course of glory, and of fame. But thou art snatch’d away; I have undone thee; Blasted thy youth, cut short thy noble life; This is the fruit that thou hast gather’d, Ronan! The only fruit of curst Rivine’s love.

_Ron._ O! I could speak such things, but not to thee,

Whose gen’rous heart, regardless of thyself, Amidst despair and death for Ronan mourns. ’Tis not thy fault. Fortune has cross’d our love; But I would rather be what now I am, Than love thee less, or yet be less beloved.
Riv. Beloved thou art. I die; give me thy hand.

Ron. My heart, my soul are thine.

Riv. O, best of men!
And best beloved! farewell, farewell for ever!

[Dies.

Ron. Flow fast my blood—why dost thou linger, death?

My heart is torn with agonizing thoughts.
O, memory, would I could fly from thee,
And give my moments to a softer sorrow!
Caught in an eddy, up and down the stream
I drive, and wheeling to one point return.
That monster there! that villain!—Land of ghosts!
Shall I forget it there?

[Dies.

Enter Calmar hastily.

Cal. Alas, my lord!
Too true the traitor's words.

Enter Connan, with his Warriors.

Con. Oh, Ronan! Ronan!
O, my ill-fated sister! love of thee
Brought down the tow'ring eagle of the war,
From his high rock of fame. Let me not blame;
Pity forbid that I should blame the dust
Of poor Rivine.—Bear the bodies hence.
Let not old Kathul see his daughter's blood:—
I left him standing by the corse of Euran,
O'erwhelm'd and dumb with grief.

Enter Kathul.

Kath. I am the cause
Of all that has befall'n. Thy father's steps
Turn to his hall no more: deaf is mine ear
For ever to the voice of youth and joy.
Orellan's lonely cave shall hide my grief.
There will we dwell together, and decay
Like two old trees, whose roots hang uppermost
On some bare mountain's side, from which each storm
Wasteth a portion of the mould'ring soil,
Till down they fall.

Con. Do not indulge
Such melancholy thoughts.

Kath. I am resolved:
To thee, my son, the sceptre I resign;
I trust 'twill prosper in thy stedfast hand.
Thou wilt not listen to the tale of lies,
Nor in rash mood forsake thine ancient friends.
Oh, friend of Ronan! be the people's friend.
Still let thy open gate receive the stranger,
Who from the hill or from the ship descends;
So shall thy name, like grateful odour, spread
From thy own dwelling to far distant lands.
I have no other wish. My son, farewell.

[Exit Kathul.

Con. To-morrow we a monument shall raise
To mark the place where mighty Ronan rests
With fair Rivine, in the house of death.
If right my soul forebodes, they shall not lie
In dark oblivion: on their buried woes
The light refulgent of the song shall rise,
And brighten the sad tale to future times.
The brave, the fair, shall give the pleasing tear
Of nature, partial to the woes of love.

[Exeunt.
EPILOGUE,

WRITTEN BY MR GARRICK.

SPOKEN BY MRS ABINGTON.

[Enters in a hurry.]

Forgive my coming thus, our griefs to utter—
I'm such a figure!—and in such a flutter—
So circumstanced, in such an awkward way,
I know not what to do, or what to say.

Our bard, a strange unfashionable creature,
As obstinate, as savage in his nature,
Will have no epilogue!—I told the brute—
"If, sir, these trifles don't your genius suit;
We have a working prologue-smith, within,
Will strike one off, as if it were a pin.
Nay, epilogues are pins, whose points, well-placed,
Will trick your Muse out, in the tip-top taste!"—
"Pins, madam!" frown'd the bard, "the Greeks used
none,"

(Then muttering Greek—something like this—went on)

"Pinnos, painton, patcheros, non Græco Modon."
I coax'd, he swore—"That tie him to a stake,
He'd suffer all for Decency's fair sake;
No bribery should make him change his plan."—
There's an odd mortal. Match him if you can.
"Hab, sir!" said I, "your reasoning is not deep. For when at tragedies spectators weep, *They oft, like children, cry themselves asleep. And if no jogging epilogue you write, Pit, Box, and Gallery, may sleep all night."—
"Better," he swore, "a nap should overtake ye, Than folly should to folly's pranks awake ye; Rakes are more harmless nodding upon benches, Than ogling to ensnare poor simple wenches; And simple girls had better close their eyes, Than send 'em gadding after butterflies. Nay, should a statesman make a box his nest, Who, that his country loves, would break his rest? Let come what may, I will not make 'em laugh, Take for an epilogue—this epitaph. For as my lovers lives I would not save, No pois'nous weeds shall root upon their grave."— 'Tis thus these pedant Greek-read poets vapour— Is it your pleasure I should read the paper?

Here, in the arms of death, a matchless pair, A young loved hero, and beloved fair, Now find repose.—Their virtues tempest-tost, Sea-sick, and weary, reach the wish'd-for coast. Whatever mortal to this spot is brought, O may the living by the dead be taught! May here Ambition learn to clip her wing, And Jealousy to blunt her deadly sting; Then shall the poet every wish obtain, Nor Ronan and Rivine die in vain.

* Like harmless infants mourn themselves asleep.—ALEX.
ALONZO;

A

TRAGEDY.

Et mentem strinxit patris pietatis imago.

Virgil.
PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR PALMER.

Whilst ardent zeal for India's reformation,
Hath fired the spirit of a generous nation;
Whilst patriots of presented lacks complain,
And courtiers bribery to excess arraign;
The maxims of Bengal still rule the stage,
The poets are your slaves from age to age.
Like Eastern Princes in this house you sit,
The Soubahs and Nabobs of suppliant wit;
Each bard his present brings, when he draws near,
With prologue, first, he sooths your gracious ear;
We hope your clemency will shine to-day,
For though despotic, gentle in your sway.
These conscious walls, if they could speak, would tell,
How seldom by your doom, a poet fell:
Your mercy oft suspends the critic's laws,
Your hearts are partial to an author's cause.
Pleased with such lords, content with our condition,
Against our charter we will ne'er petition.
If certain folks should send us a committee,
(Like that which lately visited the city)
Who without special leave of our directors,
At the stage door should enter as inspectors;
Although their hearts were arm'd with triple brass,
Through our resisting scenes, they could not pass.
Lions and dragons too keep watch and ward,
Witches and ghosts the awful entrance guard;
Heroes who mock the pointed sword are here,
And desperate heroines, who know no fear;
If as Rinaldo stout each man should prove,
To brave the terrors of the enchanted grove,
Here on this spot, the centre of our state,
Here on this very spot they meet their fate.
The prompter gives the sign and down they go;
Alive descending to the shades below.
To you whose empire still may heaven maintain,
Who here by ancient right and custom reign,
Our lions couch, our dragons prostrate fall,
Witches and ghosts obey your potent call.
Our heroines smile on you with all their might,
Our boldest heroes tremble in your sight;
Even now with anxious hearts they watch your eyes,
Should you but frown, even brave Alonzo flies.
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King.
Alonzo.
Alberto, his Son.
Costollo.
Sebastian.
Hamet.
Velasco.
Messenger.

Ormisinda.
Teresa.

Officers and Attendants, &c.
ALONZO.

ACT I.

SCENE,—A Hall in the Palace of the Kings of Spain.

ORMISINDA, TERESA.

Ormís. This roll contains the secret of my life, And of the state: My marriage with Alonzo, The story of my son, my injured child, Bred in a desert, though the heir of Spain. To thee, my faithful friend, my loved Teresa! This precious record I commit. Oh! keep it From sight of human eye, till better times: For still I hope that better times may come, Though not to me, to this afflicted land. My hand hath sign'd it, and my act to-day Shall give it faith and credence with mankind.
This will explain the mystery of my fate,  
And tell the world why Ormisinda died.

[<i>Gives the writing.</i>

<i>Ter. </i>Do not too soon despair.

<i>Ormis. </i>I wait the last  
Decisive moment. But to guard my soul  
Against the sallies of a rash despair,  
Against the weakness which attends surprisc,  
I have forecast whatever may befall,  
And framed to the event my firm resolve.  
This is the day appointed for the combat,  
Between a Moorish and a Christian knight,  
To end the wars of Spain, and fix the fate  
Of the contending nations.

<i>Ter. </i>Ancient times,  
If tales of ancient times may be believed,  
Have known such combats. In her infant state,  
Against her rival Alba, Rome was pledged,  
As now Asturia is: But later times  
Afford no parallel.

<i>Ormis. </i>There never was,  
Nor will there ever, while the world endures,  
Be found a parallel to my distress—  
I am the victor’s prize—whoe’er prevails  
He gains the princess, and the crown of Spain.
Such is the solemn treaty, sworn, confirm'd,
By every rite, which either nation owns.
Meanwhile I am Alonzo's wedded wife—
I am a mother—by the false Alonzo,
Who from his hate to me abandons Spain,
Which he alone can save. No other arm
Can match Mirmallon's force. Proud of his strength,
Already in the lists the Moor exults,
Secure of victory. The setting sun
Concludes the dreadful period of suspense,
And death alone from infamy can save me.

Ter. He yet may come. Far in the Nubian
wilds,
That guard the secret sources of the Nile,
Velasco found the chief. The wind of spring,
The constant east, this year forgot its season,
And only since this moon her light renew'd
Began to blow upon the western shore.
On that I build a hope.

Ormit. I have no hope!
Review the story of my life, Teresa,
And by the past conjecture of the future.
First my lamented brother, blindly led
By proud Ramirez, quarell'd with Alonzo,
Then by Alonzo's sword Ramirez fell.
For that offence to banishment condemn'd,
Alonzo won me to accept his hand
Before he left this kingdom. Since that time,
What I have suffer'd, Heaven, and you can tell.
It was the fifth, a memorable day,
After our marriage, when he fail'd to come,
At the appointed place to meet his bride.
Then 'midst my fear, anxiety, and sorrow,
For only death, I thought, or dangerous harm,
Could keep him from my arms, amazed I heard
That he was gone for Asia. To this hour,
Even to this present hour, no cause assign'd
But these distracted lines long after sent:
"Thou never shalt behold Alonzo more;
The foul, foul cause thy guilty conscience knows."
My conscience knows no cause, so help me heaven!
Now, in my utmost need, this dreadful day,
When I must struggle with despair and death,
To keep myself a chaste, a blameless wife,
And to my silent grave the secret bear,
That my dear son and his may live to wield
The sceptre of his fathers!

Ter. To this hour,
Thy husband knows not that he is a father.
Ormis. His ears, his eyes are shut. Oft have I sent
Letters, that would have pierced a heart of stone;
Pleading for pity, begging but to know,
Whercin I had unwittingly offended:
But every letter, with unbroken seal,
To me return'd. He will not read one word
From my detested hand.

Ter. 'Tis very strange,
And much unlike the way of other men.
For though they are inconstant in their love,
'There is a course and process in the change.
Ardent at first, their ardour lasts not long.
With easy, full, secure possession cloy'd,
Their passion palls, and cold indifference comes,
As chilly autumn steals on summer's prime,
Making the green leaf yellow. Then it is
That some new beauty takes their roving eyes,
And fires their fancy with untasted charms.
But in a moment, from excess of love,
'To the extreme hate of Alonzo pass'd
Without a cause. Nor did another come
Between thee and the current of his love.
'Tis moon-struck madness, or the dire effect
Of incantation, charm, compulsive spell,
By magic fasten'd on his wretched soul.
It can be nothing else.

Ormis. Whate'er it is,
He shuns all woman-kind. His life is spent
In war and in devotion. When the field
Is won, the warrior lays aside his spear,
Takes up the pilgrim's staff, and all alone,
Obscured in homely weeds, he bends his course
To some remote, religious, holy place,
Where he exceeds the strictest penitent,
In penances severe and sad austerity.
Sometimes in deeper melancholy wrapt,
He lothes the sight of man, and to the cliffs
Of hoary Caucasus or Atlas flies,
Where all the dreary winter he remains,
And, desolate, delights in desolation.
My faithful servant Juan saw him once
Upon the ledge of Atlas; on a rock,
Beside the empty channel of a brook.
He stood and gazed intent, a cataract,
Which, as it tumbled from a cliff, the blast
Had caught mid-way and froze before it fell.
Juan drew near and call'd. He turn'd about,
Look'd at him for a space, then waved him back,
And, mounting swiftly, sunk behind the hill.
Wan was his face, and like a statue pale!
His eye was wild and hagard! Oh, Teresa,
Amidst my woes, my miseries, my wrongs,
My bosom bleeds for him!

_Ter._ Something there is
Mysterious and unfathomable here,
Which passes human wisdom to divine.
The hand of fate is on the curtain now.
Within my breast a firm persuasion dwells,
That in the lists Alonzo will appear.
Behold, in haste the king your father comes,
And seems the messenger of welcome tidings.

_Enter the King._

_King._ I come in this alarming hour, my child,
To pour a ray of comfort on thy heart.
A valiant Moor, once captive of my sword,
And ever since my firm but secret friend,
Acquaints me that a champion is at hand,
Shunning those honours which the Moors would pay:

_Dark and reserved he travels through their towns,
Without a name. I judge it is Alonzo;
For the description best accords with him.
Scorning his foes, offended with his friends,
Shrouded in anger and in deep disdain,
Like some prime planet in eclipse he moves,
Gazed at and feared.

Ormis. It is! It is Alonzo!
Welcome, most welcome, in whatever shape.
The hero comes to save his native land,
To save the honour of the Christian name,
And o'er the fading crescent of the Moor
Exalt the holy cross.

King. And, even as thine,
In the consenting voice of all the land,
The hope of Spain on brave Alonzo rests.
In this I see the ruling hand of heaven:
Which to its own eternal purpose leads,
By winding paths, the steps of erring man!
Painful it were to speak of those events,
Sad and disastrous, which have laid us low.
Unjustly was Alonzo banish'd hence,
And happily the hero now returns.
For since my son, your valiant brother, fell,
With an impartial mind I have inquired
And traced the story of Alonzo's birth.
He is the offspring of our ancient kings,
The rightful heir of Riccaredo's line,
Called the Catholic, who reign'd in Spain,
Before the first invasion of the Moors.
Lost in the gen’ral wreck, buried and hid
Beneath the ruins of a fallen state,
Obscure, unknown, the royal infant lay,
When I, indignant of a foreign yoke,
In wild Asturia rose against the Moors.
The righteous cause prevail’d; the baffled foe
Retired, and left us and our mountains free.
The grateful people chose their leader king.
I knew not then, nor did my people know;
Aught of Alonzo.

Ormí. I have heard him own
The justice of thy title to command
And rule the state thy valour had restored.
Enough, he said, remain’d for him to conquer:
The fertile provinces of ample Spain,
Which still the Moor usurps.

King. Of all mankind,
He is the champion whom my soul desires
This day to fight for Spain, and for my daughter;
Not only for his great renown in arms,
But for his birth, his lineage, and his blood.
If his unconquer’d arm in fight prevails,
The ancient monarchy shall rise again,
In all its splendour and extent of empire.
The streams of royal blood divided now,
Shall roll a tide united through the land.

Ormis. Thy heart dilates with pleasing hopes,
my father!
And fond anticipates its own desire.
But who can tell the purpose of Alonzo?
His strange approach no friendly aspect bears:
He comes the foe determined of the Moors,
But not to us a friend.

King. Of that no fear.
I know him proud, impetuous, and fierce,
Haughty of heart, and high of hand: Too prompt
On all occasions to appeal to arms.
But he was ever gentle to my daughter:
The proud Alonzo bow'd the knee to thee.
At his departure I observed thy grief,
And in my mind—— [A Trumpet sounds.

Ormis. What means that shout of war?

King. The trumpet sounds to arms.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Thy presence, sir,
Is at the camp required. Both nations arm,
And rush to battle: Loud the Moors complain
Of violated faith. A Spanish knight,
They say, has broke the treaty, and attack'd
Their bands, of peace secure.

*King.* 'Tis basely done!
Command my guards to meet me at the gate.
Farewell.  

[Exit the King.

*Ter.* Who can this headlong warrior be?
Too well Alonzo knows the laws of war,
Too much reveres the treaty seal'd and sworn,
To make a rash attempt upon the Moors.

*Ormis.* If it is he, 'tis no deliberate act,
No treacherous intention to assail
The Moors unguarded. Yet it may be he:
My mind misgives me that it is Alonzo.
Ill would his swelling spirit brook the sight
Of Moorish tents and arms on yonder plain.
If, as he pass'd, one slighting word was dropt,
With tenfold scorn to that he would reply,
Nor hesitate alone to draw his sword
Amidst a host of Moors.

*Ter.* The clamour sinks.
Whate'er it was, the tumult is appeased.
And now what does my Ormisinda think
Of my predictions?

*Orm.* Oh! my dear Teresa! ——
Thy fond desire to cheer my hopeless heart
Makes thee for ever to my mind present
The fairest side of things.

_Ter._ Ha! dost thou doubt
Still of his coming?

_Orm._ No, I think 'tis he;
But hope and fear alternate sway my mind:
Like light and shade upon a waving field
Coursing each other, when the flying clouds
Now hide and now reveal the sun of heaven.
I tremble for the issue of the combat;
And if my lord should, as I hope, prevail,
I tremble for myself: Afraid to see,
Though sick with strong impatience to behold him,
And learn why he forsook his Ormisinda.
He says I know the cause. Oh, most unjust!
Was it because I loved him to excess,
Although his title shook my father's throne?
Was it because I join'd my fate to his,
And fondly chose to wed a banish'd man?
For such are my demerits.

_Ter._ 'Tis but vain
Thus to torment thyself, and rack thy mind
With sad conjectures, at a time like this,
When the reality will soon be known.

_Orm._ I know one thing that's real, 'tis a fault,
An imperfection which I cannot cure;
Eighteen long years are past since I beheld him,
And grief and care, those tenants that deface
The sad and dreary mansion they inhabit,
Have dwelt with me. Am I not alter'd much?
The ghost and shadow of what once I was?

_Ter._ No, Ormisinda, I perceive no change,
That in the least impairs thy lovely form.
The beam that gilds the early morn of youth
Yields to the splendour of a riper hour:
The rose that was so fair in bud, is blown;
And grief and care, though they have dwelt with thee,
Have left no traces of their visitation,
But an impression sweet of melancholy
Which captivates the soul. Unskilful they
Who dress the Queen of Love in wanton smiles:
Brightest she shines amidst a shower of tears;
The graces that adorn her beauty most.
Are softness, sensibility, and pity.

_Orm._ Oh! how ingenious thou art, Teresa,
How subtle to elude my simple fears!
Still they advance and gather round my heart.—
If nothing can recall Alonzo's love,
Let him but own his son, and I'll renounce
The title of his wife, and of a queen;
Then in a convent hide me and my sorrows.
The saddest sister of the holy train,
Whose watchful zeal prevents the midnight bell,
Shall find me kneeling on the marble floor.
Oh! it will be the luxury of grief,
To weep incessant in the vaulted cell,
To lift my hands, and send my vows to heaven,
Invoking every power that dwells above,
To guard and bless my husband and my son!
Perhaps some friend, most likely my Teresa,
When I am quite forsaken and forgot
By all the world, will still remember me;
Will come and tell me of Alonzo's wars;
Tell how my boy in his first battle fought,
At once the rival of his father's fame.

[Exeunt.]
ACT II.

SCENE,—A Hall, &c. as before.

Enter the King and a Moorish Officer, with Moors and Spaniards.

King. Hamet, impartial justice shall be done, And thou I know as justly wilt report it: Thou art the friend of peace.

Ham. Therefore I sought This office; for in yonder camp, O king! Some counsellors there are who urged the Caliph To take advantage of this fair occasion And hold the treaty void.

King. That I believe, But with your aid I hope to disappoint them; My guards are gone to bring the offender hither.

Ham. Yonder they come, and through their files I see A prisoner.
Enter Guards with a Young Man armed.

King. Ha! by heaven, he's but a youth,
A beardless boy, and like a woman fair.
He moves my pity much.—Unhappy youth!

[To the Prisoner.
Art thou the chief of that unruly band,
Who broke the treaty and assail'd the Moors?
Youth. No chief, no leader of a band am I.
The leader of a band insulted me,
And those he led basely assail'd my life;
With bad success indeed. If self-defence
Be criminal, O king! I have offended.

King. [To Hamet.] With what a noble con-
fidence he speaks!
See what a spirit through his blushes breaks!
Observe him, Hamet.

Ham. I am fix'd upon him.

King. Didst thou alone engage a band of Moors,
And make such havock? Sure it cannot be.
Recall thy scattered thoughts. Nothing advance
Which proof may overthrow.

Youth. What I have said
No proof can overthrow. Where is the man,
Who speaking from himself, not from reports
And rumours idle, will stand forth and say
I was not single when the Moors attack’d me?

_Ham._ I will not be that man, though I confess,
That I came hither to accuse thee, youth,
And to demand thy punishment.—I brought
The tale our soldiers told.

_Youth._ The tale was false.

_Ham._ I thought it true; but thou hast shook
my faith.

The seal of truth is on thy gallant form,
For none but cowards lie.

_King._ Thy story tell,
With every circumstance which may explain
'The seeming wonder; how a single man
In such a strife could stand?

_Youth._ 'Twill cease to be
A wonder, when thou hear’st the story told.
This morning, on my road to Oviedo,
A while I halted near a Moorish post.
Of the commander I inquired my way,
And told my purpose, that I came to see
The famous combat. With a scornful smile,
With taunting words and gestures he replied,
Mocking my youth. Advised me to return
Back to my father’s house, and in the ring
To dance with boys and girls. He added too,
That I should see no combat. That no knight
Of Spain durst meet the champion of the Moors.
Incensed I did indeed retort his scorn.
The quarrel grew apace, and I defied him
To a green hill, which rose amidst the plain,
An arrow's flight or farther from his post.
Alone we sped: at once we drew, we fought.
The Moorish captain fell. Enraged, his men
Flew to revenge his death. Secure they came
Each with his utmost speed. Those who came first
Single I met and slew. More wary grown
The rest together join'd, and all at once
Assail'd me. Then I had no hopes of life.
But suddenly a troop of Spaniards came,
And charged my foes, who did not long sustain
The shock, but fled, and carried to their camp
That false report which thou, O king! hast heard.

King. Now, by my sceptre, and my sword, I
swear,
Thou art a noble youth. An angel's voice
Could not command a more implicit faith
Than thou from me hast gain'd.—What think'st
thou, Hamet?
Is he not greatly wrong'd?
Ham. By Allah! yes.
The voice of truth and innocence is bold,
And never yet could guilt that tone assume.
I take my leave, impatient to return,
And satisfy my friends that this brave youth
Was not th' aggressor.

King. I expect no less
From generous Hamet.

[Exeunt Hamet and Moors.

King. Tell me, wond'rous youth!
For much I long to know,—what is thy name?
Who are thy parents? Since the Moor prevail'd,
The cottage and the cave have oft conceal'd
From hostile hate the noblest blood of Spain;
Thy spirit speaks for thee. Thou art a shoot
Of some illustrious stock, some noble house,
Whose fortunes with their falling country fell.

Youth. Alberco is my name. I drew my birth
From Catalonia; in the mountains there
My father dwells, and for his own domains
Pays tribute to the Moor. He was a soldier;
Oft I have heard him of your battles speak,
Of Cavadonga's and Olalles' field.
But ever since I can remember aught,
His chief employment and delight have been
To train me to the use and love of arms;
In martial exercise we past the day;
Morning and evening, still the theme was war.
He bred me to endure the summer’s heat,
And brave the winter’s cold: To swim across
The headlong torrent, when the shoals of ice
Drove down the stream. To rule the fiercest steed
That on our mountains run. No savage beast
The forest yields that I have not encounter’d.
Meanwhile my bosom beat for nobler game;
I long’d in arms to meet the foes of Spain.
Oft I implored my father to permit me,
Before the truce was made, to join the host.
He said it must not be, I was too young
For the rude service of these trying times.

King. Did he permit you now?

Alb. A strange adventure
Forced me from home. Not many days ago,
When hunting in the woods, I heard a voice,
A woman’s voice, calling aloud for help.
I rush’d into the thicket; there I saw
A Moorish lord, for brutal licence famed,
Who shamefully abused a rural maid
Of Spanish race. I freed her from his arms.
The Moor spake not a word, but, mad with rage,
Snatch'd up his lance, which stood against a tree,
And at me flew. I turn'd his point aside,
And with a slender javelin pierced his heart.
I hasten'd home, but did not find my father;
Nor was it safe to wait for his return.
I took the fairest armour in the hall,
And hither bent my course. The rest thou know'st.

King. Thou art a prodigy, and fill'st my mind
With thoughts profound and expectation high.—
When in a nation, humbled by the will
Of Providence, beneath a haughty foe,
A person rises up, by nature rear'd,
Sublime, above the level of mankind;
Like that bright bow, the hand of the Most High
Bends in the wat'ry cloud: He is the sign
Of prosp'rous change and interposing heav'n:
And thou, if right I read”——

Enter Messenger.

Mess. The champion, sir,
Who comes to fight for Spain, is near at hand:
One of our scouts has seen him and his train,
But brings a strange report, which damps the heart
Of every Spaniard: It is not Alonzo.
King. What say'st thou? God of heaven! Not Alonzo!
Who is he then?

Mess. That is not fully known.
Clad in the flowing vesture of the east,
A Persian turban on his head he wears,
Yct he's a Christian knight. To mark his faith,
Holy, and adverse to Mahommed's law,
Before his steps a silken banner borne
Streams in the wind, and shews a golden cross.

King. Send out another scout.

Mess. There is not time
To go and to return.

King. Begone, begone,
And let me be obey'd. Alas! my hopes
Are vanish'd like a dream. [Exit Messenger.

Alb. I grieve to see
The king afflicted.

King. Ah! Thou dost not know
How deep these tidings strike.

Alb. ——Is not the king
Free to accept or to refuse the aid
This stranger offers?

King. If I am, what then?

Alb. Be not offended, sir, at my presumption,
ACT II.

ALONZO.

For from my heart I speak, a loyal heart,
True to my sov'reign and my native land.
If this is not Alonzo, why should he,
Or any stranger, fight the cause of Spain?
Are there not warriors born of Spanish race,
Who court the combat?

King. To my words attend.
The Moorish champion is of great renown;
In stature like the giant race of old,
Like Anak’s true, or Titan’s fabled sons.
Against the foe nor sword nor spear he lifts,
But in his might secure, a mace he wields,
Whose sway resistless breaks both shield and arm,
And crushes head and helmet. Thus he fights,
Whose fatal prowess turn’d the doubtful scale
Of three successive battles. He is deem’d
Invincible but by Alonzo’s arm:
Therefore our warriors, though they know no fear,
No fear of aught that can themselves befall,
Anxious for Spain, to great Alonzo yield,
And on his valour rest.

Alb. Oft have I heard
My father speak of brave Alonzo’s deeds;
What can withhold him when his country calls?
Perhaps the last of combats he has fought,
And in the silent tomb the hero rests.
But, since he's absent, from whatever cause,
O! let no stranger knight his place assume,
To bring dishonour on the Spanish name.
If this gigantic champion of the Moors,
Clad in the glory of his battles won,
Dazzles the warriors, and confounds their valour;
Let me, though young in arms, the combat claim;
On me his fame has no impression made.
I'll meet the giant with a fearless heart.
It beats for battle now. Oft have I kill'd
The wolf, the boar, and the wild mountain bull,
For sport and pastime. Shall this Moorish dog
Resist me fighting in my country's cause?

King. By heaven and earth, thou movest me much! thy words
Have stirr'd the embers of my youthful fire.
Thon makest me wish I could recall those days,
When of an age like thine, and not unlike
To thee in face and form, I raised the spear
Against the Moor, in Cava's bloody field.
Then by my hand the great Alchammon fell,
The strength and pillar of the Caliph's host.
Then I was fit to meet Mirmallon's arm.
But now, my hairs are gray, my steps are slow,
My sword descending breaks the shield no more:
Our foes have known it long.

_Alb._ O king! thou art
Thy country's great deliverer, and the sole
Restorer of the state. Pelagio's fame
Shall never die: But let thy counsel now
(As oft thy valour) save this land from shame.
Let not a foreign warrior take the field,
And snatch the glory from the lance of Spain.

_King._ My voice alone cannot determine that,
The council sit assembled near the lists,
To them I will present thee. If this knight
Unknown, who from that distant region comes,
Where the bright sun lights up his golden lamp,
Bears not some high pre-eminence about him,
Which marks him out our surest safest choice,
My voice is for a Spaniard, and for thee.

_Alb._ Upon my knees, that ne'er were bow'd before
To mortal man, I thank thee.

_King._ Rise, Alberto!
To me no thanks are due. A greater king,
The King of Kings, I deem hath chosen thee
To be the champion of his law divine
Against the Infidel.—If not for this,
For some great purpose sure thou art ordain’d;
Bred in the desert, and by heaven endued
With force and valour marvellously great,
Conducted by a hand unseen, thyself
Not knowing whither, and this day produced
Before the nations.

_Alb._ Ah, my soul’s on fire!
Should such a glorious destiny be mine!
May I entreat to go without delay?
I fear some gallant warrior may step forth,
And claim the fight before me,

_King._ Stay, Sebastian,
And to my daughter tell what has befall’n.

_[Exeunt King and Alberto._

_Manet Sebastian._

_Seb._ How many changes mark this awful day!
What must the Princess suffer! Well I know
That she, above all others, wish’d Alonzo.

_Enter Ormisinda and Teresa._

_Ter._ It is a false report. In times like these
The minds of men are credulous and weak:
To rumour’s shifting blast they bow and bend,
Like corn of slender reed, to every wind.
Thou know'st that from the east Alonzo comes;
Might not the hasty messenger mistake
For him some turban'd warrior of his train?

Orm. O, good Sebastian, canst thou tell me
  aught?

Is it Alonzo?

Seb. If report speaks truth,
And so the king believes, 'tis not Alonzo.

Orm. Then I am lost, Teresa.

Ter. Hast thou heard,
If not Alonzo, who this stranger is?

Seb. His garb bespeaks him native of the east.
But from whatever clime the warrior comes,
I hope, my princess! that he comes in vain.
Another warrior, and of Spanish race,
Now claims the combat for his native land.

Orm. Of Spanish race! Who is this knight of
  Spain?

Seb. A wonder! never was his equal seen,
For daring valour and address in arms.
He has not yet attain'd the prime of youth;
His look partakes more of the boy than man;
But he hath vanquish'd men. This day the Moors
Have felt his hand.
Orm. Ha! Is it he, Sebastian,
Who was the author of the late alarm?

Seb. The same.

Orm. And whence does this young hero come?
Seb. From Catalonia. In the deserts there
His sire, obscure, though once a warrior, dwells.

Orm. From Catalonia! In the desert bred!—
Teresa! All that's possible I fear:
What if this youth—

Ter. O, think how many youths

[To Ormisinda.

Of Spanish race in Catalonia dwell.
Be recollected whilst I ask Sebastian
A question that at once all doubt resolves.—
Has this youth no name? Hast thou not heard
How he is call'd?

[To Sebastian.

Seb. He calls himself Alberto.

Orm. Mother of God!

Ter. [To her.] Beware!—The Princess grieves,
That Spain, deprived of great Alonzo's aid,
Should rest her safety on a stripling's arm.

[To Sebastian.

Orm. No judge of warriors or of combats I;
But sure this youth, though ne'er so brave and bold,
Of tender years, who has not reach’d his prime,
Is most unfit to cope with strong Mirmallon.

*Seb.* Heroes must not be judged by common rules.

Irregular like comets in their course,
Who can compute the period when they shine?
Lady! if thou had’st seen this gallant youth,
If thou had’st heard him, when, obliged to speak
In self-defence, he told his wondrous deeds,
As if he thought them nothing; thy faint heart
Would from his fire have caught the flame of hope;
Thou would’st, even as thy royal father did,
Believe he was created and ordain’d,
By Heaven supreme, the champion of his country.

*Ter.* Sebastian, go, and find this gallant youth.
Tell him, the Princess, partial to the brave,
Desires his presence.

*Seb.* Gladly I obey. [Exit Sebastian.

*Orm.* He’s gone. Now I may speak.—My son! my son!

My hope, my comfort, in despair and death!
The only star in my dark sky that shone!
Must thy unhappy mother live to see
Thy light extinguish’d? I will not permit
This most unequal combat. I'll proclaim
My fatal story; and declare his birth.

Ter. Think what must follow. Absolute per-
dition!

Orm. Is not his death perdition? Can he meet
The Moor and live? How should his tender youth
Resist the giant, who has overthrown
Squadrons entire, and trampled on the necks
Of firmest warriors?

Ter. 'Tis not yet decreed
That he shall fight the Moor. The stranger knight,
Who was at first mistaken for Alonzo,
Comes not so far, without a name in arms,
To gain the suffrage of the peers of Spain,
When once that name is known.

Orm. Teresa, no.
My fate has still one even tenor held,
From bad to worse. When I had framed my
mind
To one disaster, then a greater came.
I had made death familiar to my thoughts;
I could embrace the spectre like a friend:
But still I kept a corner of my heart
Safe and untouch'd. My dearest child was there:
Amidst the ruins of the wife and queen,
The mother stood secure.—O thou, Alonzo!
If yet thine eyes behold the light of day,
What sorrow and remorse must be thy portion,
When thou shalt hear—Now promise me, Teresa,
That when my son and I are laid in dust,
(For each event accelerates our doom,)
Thou wilt seek out and find this cruel man;
Tell him how Spain, the kingdom of his fathers,
By him deserted, was for ever lost:
How his forsaken wife in honour died—
But that's not much—for me he will not mourn.
Then tell him of his son, to wring his heart!
Truly describe the boy! how brave he was!
How beautiful! how from the cloud obscure
In which his careful mother had involved him,
He burst the champion of his native land:
Then tell him how the springing hero fell
Beneath a stronger arm, fighting for Spain,
And for his mother; fighting with the foe
His father should have fought, and could have vanquish'd!

Ter. Sebastian comes.
Enter Sebastian.

Seb. All is reversed again:
The stranger knight is for Abdallah known,
The Persian prince, Alonzo's chosen friend,
His only equal in the strife of arms.
To him the combat is decided.

Orm. I know
His story well; he is the Sophy's son,
The eldest born and Persia's rightful heir;
But by his mother's zeal a Christian bred:
True to his faith, he lost his father's throne.
What says he of Alonzo?

Seb. Sent by him,
The brave Abdallah comes to fight for Spain.
They march'd together, from the falls of Nile
To Damietta. There, a wound, received
In Asia's wars, broke out, and forced Alonzo,
Full of regret, in Egypt to remain.
His friend for him appears. The king, thy father,
With all his peers, in honour of the prince,
Go forth to meet him.

Orm. Hast thou seen Alberto?

Seb. I have, and told him what I had in charge;
Then hasten'd hither to report these tidings, 
At which Alberto droops.

_Ter._ Return, I pray,
To my apartment guide the young Alberto.
The princess will be there. [Exit _Sebastian._
Did not I say,
Alonzo never would abandon Spain?
Abdalla comes to conquer in his name.
Now I can read the characters of fate,
And spell the will of Heaven. This boy of yours
Will win your husband back. When he beholds
The image of his valour so express,
His heart will melt. The husband and the father
Will rush upon him with a flood of joy.

Orm. Is he not like him? Mark his coming forth!
Behold Alonzo in his daring son!
Full of the spirit of his warlike sire,
His birth unknown, he felt his princely mind,
Advanced undaunted on the edge of war,
And claim'd the post of danger for his own.

_Ter._ A mother's tongue cannot exceed the truth
In praising him. There never was a prince,
Since old Iberia first excell'd in arms,
Broke out with so much lustre on mankind.
But in this interview with prudence check
The transport of affection from thy son.
Cautious conceal the secret of his birth.
Safest he is while to himself unknown.

Orm. How could his faithful guardian let him go?

Perhaps the brave Costollo lives no more.

Ter. Alberto will inform thee.

Orm. Not Alberto;
Alonzo is his name! I go to meet him. [Exeunt.]
ACT III.

SCENE,—A View of the Country near the City.

Enter Abdalla.

Abd. O, city! once the seat of all I loved! O, hills and dales! haunts of my youthful days! O, scenes well known! unalter'd you remain: But I approach you with an alter'd mind, Hate what I loved, and loath what I desired. Intolerable state! My soul is void! A chaos without form. Why, Nature, why Art thou so watchful o'er the brutal tribes, And yet so careless of the human race? By certain instinct beasts and birds discern Their proper food: For them the fairest fruit Untouch'd, if pois'rous, withers on the bough: But man, by a fair outside still deceived, And by his boasted reason more betray'd,
Gives the affection of his soul to beauty,
Devours the deadly bane.

*Enter Velasco.*

*Vel.* My lord, thy people,
Where thou commandest, halt, and wait thy coming.

*Abd.* 'Tis well. I wish'd to speak with thee alone.—

Velasco! though to thee but little known,
I did in part reveal my secret soul,
Told thee the feign'd Abdallah was Alonzo.
Further than that, thou hast not sought to know,
Though many a lonely hour we two have worn
On sea and shore, that some men would have thought

Most opportune.

*Vel.* My lord, there are some men
Who having once been trusted with a little,
Avail themselves of that, some more to learn,
And penetrate the bosom of a friend,
Even with the wedge his easiness had furnish'd—
Such men should not be trusted.

*Abd.* True, Velasco;
But thou art not like them: I have observed thee,
Warm in affection, but in temper cool:
A steady judgment guides thee through the world.
Thy gen’rous mind pursues the path of honour,
Unbias’d and unmoved.

*Vel.* From early youth,
The chosen confidant of my companions,
I never yet from perfidy betray’d,
From babbling vanity, divulged a secret.

*Abd.* I have a tale to tell, that will amaze,
Confound, and strike thee dumb. The deserts vast
Of Asia and of Africa have heard it;
The rocky cliffs of Caucasus and Atlas
Have echoed my complaints: But never yet
The human ear received them. Thou hast heard
Already more than ever mortal did.
Thou know’st the Princess?

*Vel.* Ormisinda?

*Abd.* Her.

*Vel.* Not many of the court have been more
honour’d
With opportunities to know her worth;
And there is none who more her worth reveres.

*Abd.* Her worth! Thou may’st as well revere a
fiend;
The blackest fiend, that dwells in burning hell,
Is not more opposite to all that's good
Than Ormisinda.

_Vel._ What a strain is this?

_Abd._ 'Tis true, by every high and holy name,
That binds a soldier's and a prince's vow:
I swear, Velasco, she's the vilest woman
That e'er disgraced her sex. The most abandon'd,
The hardiest, most determined in her vice,
That ever wrong'd a fond believing heart.

_Vel._ Great God!

_Abd._ You start and shudder like a man
Struck with a heavy blow.

_Vel._ And so I am.

_Abd._ And now you lift your eye-lids up, and stare
With looks full of conjecture and suspicion,
As if you doubted of my sober mind.
I am not mad, Velasco, though sometimes
I have been near, yes, very near to madness;
By that bad woman crazed.

_Vel._ O, would to Heaven
That this afflict ing moment of my life
Were a delirious dream! Unreal all
That's heard and spoken now! But how, my lord,
Art thou so much affected by her crimes?
Abd. I am—her husband.

Vel. Heaven for that be praised!

Abd. How darest thou thus profane the name
of Heaven,
And mock my misery? Thou art mad, I think;
The phrenzy which thou wished’st has come upon
thee.
Beware! for if this ecstasy endures,
My sword secures thy silence.

Vel. O, forgive me,
Noble Alonzo! royal, I should say,
Doubly my master now. There’s not a man,
Whose veins contain one drop of Spanish blood,
Who does not wish thee wedded to the princess.
And for her virtue! Thou hast long been absent,
And know’st not what an angel’s life she leads!
Reserved, retired, and sad. I’ll stake my soul,
Some villain has belied thy faithful wife,
And snared thy easy faith.

Abd. Take heed, take heed!
I am the villain who accuse the princess,
And thou shalt be her judge,

Vel. Eternal Power!
What shall I think of this?
Abd. Listen to me.
I have perplex'd thee, and have marr'd the story
By my abruptness. 'Tis a serious story,
Not to be told in parcels and by starts,
As I from impotence of mind began;
But I will bear my swelling passion down,
And utter all my shame.—Thou dost remember
How I was banish'd from my native land?

Vel. For killing young Ramirez.

Abd. At that time
I doated on the princess. She conjured me
With earnest prayers, with deluges of tears,
Not to resist her father, nor advance
My better title to the crown of Spain,
As I had once resolved. My rage she soothed;
Pride, anger, interest, yielded all to love.
With her I made a merit of obedience,
And pleaded so effectually my cause,
That she consented to a private marriage,
Before I left the kingdom. We were married,
And met together, four successive nights,
In the sequester'd cottage of the wood,
Behind the palace garden. O! I thought
Myself the happiest and the most beloved
Of all mankind. She mock'd me all the while;
Meant me the cover of her loose amours,
A cloak to hide her shame. O God! O God!
Did I deserve no better?

Vel. Good, my lord!

What circumstance to warrant such conclusion?
What evidence?

Abd. The evidence of sight—
Mine eyes beheld: I saw myself dishonour'd.

Vel. Your eyes beheld!

Abd. By heav'n and hell—they did.
The night preceding the appointed day
Of my departure from the realm of Spain,
I flew impatient to the place of meeting,
Before the hour was come. To wear away
The tedious time, for every minute seem'd
An age to me, I struck into the wood
And wander'd there, still steering to the gate
By which she was to enter. Through the trees,
The moon, full orb'd, in all her glory shone.
My am'rous mind a sportful purpose form'd,
Unseen to watch the coming of my bride,
And wantonly surprise her. Near the gate
There stood an aged tree. It was a beech,
Which far and wide stretch'd forth its level arms
Low, near the ground, and form'd a gloomy shade.
Behind its trunk I took my secret stand;
The gate was full in view, and the green path
On which it open'd. There I stood a while,
And soon I heard the turning of the key.
My heart beat thick with joy—and forth she came:

Not as I wish'd. She had a minion with her;
A handsome youth was tripping by her side,
Girt with a sword, and dress'd in gay attire.
He seem'd to court her, as they pass'd along,
Coy, but not angry, for I heard her laugh.
She flung away. He follow'd, soon o'ertook her,
Embraced her—

Vel. Ah, the Princess Ormisinda!

Abd. I drew my sword, that I remember well,
And then an interval like death ensued.
When consciousness return'd, I found myself
Stretch'd at my length upon the naked ground
Under the tree: My sword lay by my side.
The sudden shock, the transport of my rage,
And grief, had stopp'd the current of my blood,
And made a pause of life.

Vel. Alas, my lord!
'Twas piteous indeed. What did'st thou do, 
When life and sense return'd? 

*Abd.* With life and sense, 
My rage return'd. Stumbling with haste, I ran 
To sacrifice them to my just revenge. 
But whether they had heard my heavy fall, 
Or that my death-like swoon had lasted long, 
I know not, but I never saw them more. 
I search'd till morning; then away I went, 
Resolved to scorn the strumpet, and forget her. 
But I have not been able to forget 
Nor to despise her; though I hate her more 
Than e'er I loved her, still her image haunts me 
Where'er I go. I think of nothing else 
When I'm awake, and never shut my eyes 
But she's the certain vision of my dream. 
Sometimes, in all her loveliness she comes, 
Without her crimes: In exctacy I wake, 
And wish the vision had endured for ever. 
For these deceitful moments, O! my friend, 
Are the sole pleasant moments which Alonzo 
For eighteen years has known. 

*Vel.* Within that time, 
What regions barbarous hast thou explored,
What strange vicissitudes of life endured
In action and repose!

_Abd._ Extremes of both

I courted, to relieve my tortured mind:
But the tormentor still my steps attends;
Behind me mounts, when through the ranks of war
I drive my fiery steed; and when I seek
The hermit’s cell, the fiend pursues me there.
Time, which they say the wounds of passion cures
In other hearts, inflames and festers mine.
There’s but one remedy.

_Vel._ Would I could name one!

_Alb._ Her life. The unction for the serpent’s bite

Is the fell serpent’s blood. I’ll have her life.
Th’ adultress with infamy shall die,
By public justice doom’d. With this intent
Disguised I come. If in my proper shape
I had appeared, alarmed she would have fled,
And baffled my revenge.

_Vel._ My lord, permit me
One thing to mention, which these eyes beheld,
Although it squares not just with thy opinion.

_Abd._ Opinion!
Vel. Good my lord! with patience hear.
When first I was to this employment named,
Which since I have so happily discharged,
The Princess sent and call'd me to her presence.
The treaty with the Moor engross'd her thoughts.
That sad and pensive air she always wears,
Was settled to a thicker gloom of grief.
Her voice was low and languid; few her words,
And the short periods ended with a sigh.
But when I gave her hopes of thy return,
A sudden gleam of joy spread o'er her face,
Like morning breaking in a cloudy sky.
With earnest voice, still rising as she spoke,
She urged dispatch, exhorted me to zeal
And perseverance; never to desist
'Till I had found thee: For her fate, she said,
The fate of Spain, depended on Alonzo.
Her passion then burst in a flood of tears
That choak'd her utterance.

Abd. And thou didst believe
That every word she spoke was most sincere?
How to interpret her let me instruct thee.
Whate'er she utters with unusual warmth,
As the effusion genuine of her heart,
Receive and construe in another sense
Reverse and opposite; for that's the truth.
The words she spoke, her sighs, the tears she shed,
Were all from apprehension of my coming,
Not as they seem'd, for fear I should not come.

\textit{Vel.} 'Tis dreadful that.

\textit{Abd.} 'Tis horrible, 'tis monstrous!
When I for her had waived my right to reign,
The right undoubted of the Gothic line,
And stoop'd, enamour'd, to that base decree
From Spain, which banish'd the true heir of Spain,
That she should pitch on me to be her fool,
And pour such infinite contempt upon me.
But four days married! Fond, to madness fond!
And on the very eve of my departure!
She would not for a single day refrain,
But rush'd to prostitution!

\textit{Vel.} I have heard
Stories and tales enough of female falsehood,
Some that were true, and others that were feign'd,
By spiteful wits maliciously devised,
But this surpasses all.

\textit{Abd.} All wicked women,
Compared with her, are saints. She is a foil
To set them off, and make their foulness fair.
In her incontinence she stands unrivall'd,
Burning in fires peculiar to herself,
Phœnix in lewdness.

_Vel._ May I ask my lord
How he intends?—But see, the king draws near.

_Abd._ He's much impaired.

_Vel._ When sore affliction comes
In the decline of life, 'tis like a storm,
Which, in the rear of autumn, shakes the tree
That frost had touch'd before; and strips it bare
Of all its leaves.

_Enter the King, with Attendants._

_[As he advances, speaks to Velasco.]_

_King._ We thank thy care, Velasco!

_[To Abdallah.]_ Illustrious prince! whom love
of glory brings
From regions so remote, to fight for Spain,
Accept the thanks a grateful nation pays
To her defender.

_Abd._ Monarch of Asturia!
The nations of the East have heard thy praise.
Had not the hand of time unstrung thine arm,
Spain never would have sought for foreign aid
To quell her foes.

King. 'Tis better far for Spain
That I am old: For in my warlike days,
When in the prime of flow'ring youth I fought,
I equall'd not thy friend. Above his own,
Above the strength of every mortal arm,
Alonzo thine exalts.

Abd. Three times we fought
With equal fortune on the Wolga's banks;
He for the Monguls, I against them stood.
But at our last encounter, on my helm
His faithless blade broke short, and in his hand
The useless hilt remain'd. My sword I dropt,
And in my arms the valiant chief embraced.
Our friendship thus commenced, and since that time
We have been brothers sworn, and leaged in arms.

Alonzo, fighting in my cause, received
That wound which now detains him from the field.
Urged by affection, and by honour bound,
For him I come against the foes of Spain.
But of myself more than enough is said;
'Tis time to act. The Moorish knight, I hear, Is in the lists already.

King. Prince of Persia!
The terms to thee are known.

Abd. The first of men
With pride such honours might from Spain receive;
But never can these honours grace Abdallah.
Long since my heart and hand were given away;
And though the custom of the East permits Unnumber'd consorts, me my faith restrains.
But if victorious in the strife of death,
I have an earnest and a just request
To thee, O king! which, at a proper time,
I shall be bold to make.

King. Whate'er it is,
I pledge my honour and my faith, to grant it.

Enter Sebastian and Alberto.

[Alberto goes to the King.]

King. Advance, Alberto! to the prince himself, Deliver thou thy message and the present.

Alb. Great sir! the Princess Ormisinda greets The gen'rous champion of her country's cause,
Wishes that victory may sit to-day,
And ev'ry day of battle, on his sword.
This costly bracelet from her arm she sends
To Prince Abdallah, to Alonzo's friend.

*Abd.* [Looking steadfastly on *Alberto.*]
The Princess is most bountiful, as thou,
Who hast the honour to attend her, know'st.
Her gracious present humbly I accept,
And thank her for her goodness to Alonzo,
Who will be proud to be by her remember'd.
The combat ended, I propose to pay
My homage to her beauty. At this time
My mind is in the lists.—The Moorish knight
Will think me tardy. [To the King.

*King.* Let our trumpets sound
A sprightly charge. The warrior's heart beats time
To that brave music. Onward from this place
A path direct to thy pavilion leads.

[The King turns and gives orders.

*Abd.* [To *Velasco.*] Another minion! View
him well, Velasco.

How insolent! See what a crest he rears,
Eblated with her favour. O, vile woman!
Insatiate and inconstant.
Vel. Ah, my lord!
Truce with such thoughts! Sure this is not a time!
The combat claims a cool and present mind.

Abd. Fear not the combat.

Vel. Thou art waited for;
The king himself intends with thee to walk.

[Exeunt. Abdallah looking back at Alberto.

Manent Alberto, Sebastian.

Alb. That Prince of Persia is composed of pride;
He did not deign to look upon the present,
But stretch'd his sun-burnt hand straight out be-
fore him,
Like a blind man, and would have stood so still,
Had I not made his fingers feel the pearls.
And all the while he stared me in the face,
As if he meant to oppress me with his eye,
And fright me with his fierce and uncouth looks.
I blush'd at first, but anger came at last,
And bore me up.

Seb. Those Princes of the East,
Used to the servile manners of their country,
Where every prostrate slave adores his lord,
Without intention shock the sons of Europe.

Alb. O! how unlike to him the King of Spain,
And that most gentle Princess, Ormisinda!
Her look, her voice, benign and mild, dispel
The awe her rank inspires, and reassure
The modest mind. Would'st thou believe, Sebastian,
She talk'd to me, I cannot tell how long,
Before thou cam'st, and question'd me minutely
How I had lived, how past my youthful days?
I fear I was too copious in my answers.
What signifies my rural life to her?
And yct she seem'd to listen with delight,
As if she had an interest in my fate;
And once or twice, when I of danger spoke,
From which I hardly had escaped with life,
Methought I saw her tremble. Much she blamed
My rashness; yet she praised my courage too.
With all her tenderness of heart, I see
That she admires true valour.

Seb. So she does.
The bravest knight that e'er was clad in steel,
Alonzo, was the lover of her youth:
And since he left this land she ne'er rejoiced.
But of these matters I will tell thee more
At a convenient season. Let us follow,
And join the train before they reach the lists.

Ald. I would not lose one moment of this sight
For half the lands of Spain. Though I abhor
The Persian, yet I pray devoutly for him.

[Exeunt.]
ACT IV.

SCENE,—The City.

Enter Ormisinda and Teresa.

Ormis. This city looks as if a pestilence
Had swept the whole inhabitants away.
The solitary streets, the empty squares,
Appal me more than the deserted palace.
Let us go back again.

Ther. ’Tis time we should.
You trembled at the howling of a dog,
That broke the silence and increased the horror.
If we stay here we shall be fancy-struck,
Mistake some statue for a pale-faced ghost,
And think it beckons with its marble arm.

Ormis. Why should this desolation frighten
me?

Why should I fear to see a grave-clad ghost,
Who may so soon be number’d with the dead,
And be myself a ghost?—What noise is that?
Didst thou not hear, Teresa?

_Ter._ Yes, I did,
I heard an uncouth sound.

_Orms._ Uncouth indeed!
An universal groan!—Hark! there again.

_Ter._ 'Tis not the same. This has another tone,
A shout of triumph and a burst of joy.

_Orms._ The combat's over, and my fate's determined.

Now death or life!        [The trumpets sound.

_Ter._ Long may the Princess live,
And every hour be fortunate as this!
The Spanish trumpets sound, the sign I know.
Thy champion has prevail'd.
The lists are near, and we shall quickly learn.

_Ter._ Look yonder, flying swifter than the wind,
A horseman comes; now at the gate he lights,
And hastens across the square. It is Sebastian.
His look, his gesture, speak his tidings good.

_Enter SEBASTIAN._

_Seb._ Joy to the princess! Victory and peace!
The Moor is slain by brave Abdallah's hand.
Orm. Blest be thy tongue, Sebastian! Thou shalt find
Some better recompence than barren thanks
For these glad tidings. But the gen'rous prince
Who fought for Spain——

Seb. Safe and without a wound,
Fresh for another foe, Abdallah stands.
Short was the combat: Soon the boaster fell,
Who durst defy the Christian world to arms.

Ormis. The God of battles, whom Abdallah serves,
Has overthrown the infidel, whose trust
Was in his own right arm.

Seb. If I should live
Ten thousand years, I never could forget
The solemn prelude and the fierce encounter.
Thou know'st the place appointed for the combat,
An amphitheatre by nature form'd.

Ormis. I know it well.

Seb. The hills, of various slope
And shape, which circle round the spacious plain,
Were cover'd with a multitude immense
Of either sex, of every age and rank,
Christian and Moor; whose faces and attire
Strangely diversified the living scene.
Within the lists a gallery was raised,
In which thy father and the Moorish prince
Sat with their peers, the judges of the field.
To them the knights with slow and stately pace
Approach'd; and, bound by sacred oaths, declared
That they no charm nor incantation used,
But trusted in their valour and their arms.
With low obeisance then they both fell back;
And first the Moor (for he the challenge gave)
March'd to the middle of the listed field;
There seized his ponderous mace, beneath whose weight,
The brawny bearer bow'd; and round his head,
Like a light foil, he flourish'd it in air.
On him with different thoughts the nations gazed.
But suddenly a flash of light and flame
Struck ev'ry eye from brave Abdallah's shield,
Cover'd till then. 'Twas made of polish'd steel,
Which shone like adamant; and to a point
Rose in the centre, slanting on each side.
This shield, the Persian Prince, advancing, bore,
On his left arm outstretch'd, and in his right,
Thrown back a little, gleam'd a pointed sword.
Erect and high the bold Mirmallon stood,
And sternly eyed his near-approaching foe;
Then forward sprung, and on the flaming shield
Discharged a mighty blow, enough to crush
A wall, or split a rock. The Spaniards gave
A general groan.

Ormio. That was the dreadful sound
We heard, Teresa.

Seb. Glancing from the shield,
Aside the mace descended. Then enraged,
Once more the Moor his thund’ring weapon rear’d.
In stept the Prince, and raising high his shield,
Midway he met the blow; and with the strength
And vigour of his arm, obliquely down
The pond’rous mace he drove. Then quick as
thought,
His better hand and foot at once advancing,
Plunged in Mirmallon’s throat his thirsty blade.
The giant stagger’d for a little space;
Then, falling, shook the earth. The Christians
raised
A shout that rent the air. Away I came,
Happy to be the bearer of such tidings.

Ormio. Behold, they come in triumph from the
field.
O glorious man! And yet forgive me, heaven,
I grudge the conquest to Alonso's friend,
And wish Alonso in Abdallah's place.

Enter the King, Abdallah, Velasco, Alberito, &c.

Abd. [To Velasco.] See where she stands. O heavens!
Vel. My lord Alonso,
Compose thy thoughts.

Abd. Behold her how she looks,
As if she knew no ill. That harden'd heart
Against remorse, and fear, and shame is arm'd;
But I shall wring it now.

King. Daughter, draw near!
This godlike Prince all recompence disclaims,
Save thanks from Spain. The pleasing task be thine
To greet the saviour of thy native land,
And speak our gratitude.

Ormis. No words can speak
The gratitude I feel. Believe it great
As my deliverence, vast as my distress!
Like sad Andromeda, chain'd to the rock,
I stood a living prey, when this brave Prince
Came, like another Perseus from the sky,
And saved me from destruction. I forget,
Wrapt in myself, the charge my father gave
To thank the saviour of my native land;
Another voice shall give thee thanks for Spain,
Alonzo's voice shall thank thee for his country,
His friends, his people—saved.

_Abd._ Ah! if I hear
This syren longer, she will charm my rage;
But I remember where I heard her last.—_[Aside._
Princess of Spain, I merit not thy praise.
Sent by Alonzo, to this land I came:
What has been done, for him I have perform'd.
Now of his promise I remind the king,
To grant me one request.

_King._ Speak! It is granted.

_Ormis._ If I conjecture right, even that request
Will prove one favour more on Spain conferr'd.

_Abd._ Perhaps it may.

_King._ Proceed, illustrious Prince!
And make me happy to fulfill thy wish.

_Abd._ Not for myself I speak, but for my friend;
And in his name, whose person I sustain,
I ask for justice on a great offender.
King. Thou shalt have ample and immediate justice.

Nor favour nor affinity shall screen
The guilty person.—Prince, why art thou troubled?
Thou shak'st from head to foot. Thy quiv'ring lip
Is pale with passion. On thy forehead stand
Big drops. Almighty God! What dreadful birth
Do these strong pangs portend?

Abd. The guilty person,
Whom with a capital offence I charge,
Stands by thy side.

King. My daughter!

Abd. Yes, thy daughter!
'Tis her I mean, the Princess Ormisinda.
Here in the presence of the peers of Spain,
I charge her with a crime, whose doom the laws
Of Spain have wrote in blood: Adultery.
I read astonishment in ev'ry face!
Who would suspect that one so highly born,
With év'ry outward mark of virtue graced,
Had given her honour to a worthless wretch,
And driven a noble husband to despair!

King. Am I awake! Is this the light of day?
Art thou, O Prince! with sudden phrenzy seized?
Or is the madness mine? Renown'd Abdallah!
What answer can be made to such a charge?
This strange demand of justice on my daughter,
For an offence that she could not commit?
My daughter ne'er was married.

_Abd._ Ask her that!

Hear if she will deny she has a husband!

_King._ My child, thou art amazed!

_Orm._ No, not so much
As thou wilt be, my father, when thou hear'st
Thy daughter's tongue confess she has a husband.

_King._ Hast thou a husband? God of heaven
and earth!

Since thou hast thus dissembled with thy father,
Perhaps thou hast deceived thy husband too.

Who is thy husband? Speak!

_Orm._ The Prince Alonzo.

_King._ And hast thou been so long in secret
wedded?

'Tis eighteen years since he departed hence.

_Orm._ O! I have reason to remember that.

There is no calendar so just and true
As the sad mem'ry of a wife forsaken.
The years, the months, the weeks, the very days,
Are reckon'd, register'd, recorded there!