

EVADNE;

OR, THE STATUE.

A Tragedy,

IN THREE ACTS.

Altered from Rivers and Shirley,

BY

RICHARD LALOR SHEIL,

AUTHOR OF

"The Apostate," "Bellamira," "The Huguenot,"
and (with BANIM) "Damon and Pythias."

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,

LONDON.

90967

First Performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden,
February 10th, 1819.

Characters.

KING OF NAPLES	MR. ABBOTT.
LUDOVICO (<i>his Favourite</i>)	MR. MACREADY.
COLONNA	MR. YOUNG.
VICENTIO	MR. C. KEMBLE.
SPALATRO	MR. CONNOR.
OFFICER	MR. NORRIS.
SERVANT	MR. HEALEY.
EVADNE (<i>Sister of Colonna</i>)	MISS O'NEILL.
OLIVIA (<i>in love with Vicentio</i>)	MRS. FAUCIT.

SCENE—NAPLES.

Costumes.

KING—Short crimson silk velvet shirt, edged with ermine, showing vest of white satin, white silk tights, velvet shoes, purple velvet robe, and cap with small drooping white and tinted feathers, jewelled collar, belt and dagger. 2nd Dress—Plain neat dress.

LUDOVICO—Dark velvet short shirt, hanging sleeves; puce satin vest and sleeves, silk tights, scarf, cap and feathers, sword, belt and dagger, dark shoes.

COLONNA—Black velvet short shirt trimmed with silver, hanging sleeves; vest and sleeves of white satin, white tights, black velvet shoes and hat with white feathers, black and white party-coloured scarf, sword, belt and dagger.

VICENTIO—Grey silk velvet trimmed with crimson, crimson satin vest and sleeves, red tights and shoes, cap with grey and red feathers, scarf, sword, belt and dagger.

SPALATRO and COURTIERS—Dresses similar in shape to the above, but of various colours.

OFFICER—Red suit, cuirass and helmet.

GUARDS—Ditto ditto.

SERVANTS—Plain suits, with badge on left arm.

EVADNE—Black velvet dress, open at sides, showing white satin under-dress, net for the hair.

OLIVIA—Black velvet dress open at sides, crimson under-dress, net for the hair.

Time in Representation, One Hour and Fifty Minutes.

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EVADNE;

OR, THE STATUE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Palace of the King of Naples.*

*The KING, SPALATRO, and COURTIERS, banners, &c.
and GUARDS discovered.*

KING. (*seated.*) Didst say the Marquis of Colonna prays
Admission to our presence.

SPAL. Ay, my liege.

He stands in the ante-chamber, with a brow
As stern as e'er was knitted in the folds
Of ranc'rous discontent.

KING. I have noted oft (*comes forward.*)
His absence from the court, the which I deem
His envy of our true Ludovico.

SPAL. Deem it no little benefit, my liege :

His deep and murky smile ; his gather'd arms,
In whose close pride he folds himself ; his raw
And pithy apothegms of scorn have made him
Our laughter and our hatred : we are all
Grown weary of this new Diogenes,
Who rolls his hard and new philosophy
Against all innocent usage of the court.

KING. We must not bid him hence—he has a sister—

SPAL. The fair Evadne !—

KING. Fairer than the morn. For her sake
We give him ample scope—bear his bitter gibes.

COLONNA. (*without, L. H.*) I'll hear no more.

Colonna does not often importune
With his unwelcome presence. Let me pass—
For once I must be heard.

Enter two COURTIERS and COLONNA, L. H.

My liege!—

1st. COURT. Hold back!

What right hast thou to rush before the sight
Of sacred royalty?

COLONNA. The right that all

Good subjects ought to have—to do him service.

My liege—

(COURTIERS *retire L. H., and SPALATRO crosses behind to R. H.*

KING. You are Welcome—

And would you had brought your lovely sister, too.

COLONNA. My sister, did you say? My sister, sir?

She is not fit for courts; she would be called
(For she has something left of nature still)

A simple creature here:

She is not fit for courts, and I have hope

She never will: but let it pass—I come

To implore a favour of you.

KING. Whatsoe'er

Colonna prays, sure cannot be refused.

COLONNA. The favour that I ask is one, my liege,
That princes often find it hard to grant.

'Tis simply this—that you will hear the truth.

KING. Proceed, and play the monitor, my lord.

COLONNA. I see your courtiers here do stand amazed.

Of them I first would speak: There is not one
Of this wide troop of glittering parasites
That circle you, but in soul

Is your base foe. These smilers here, my liege—

These sweet, melodious flatterers, my liege—

That flourish on the flexibility

Of their soft countenances—are the vermin

That haunt a prince's ear with the false buzz

Of villainous assentation. These are they
Who from your mind have flouted every thought
Of the great weal of the people. These are they
Who from your ears have shut the public cry,
And, with the poisoned gales of flattery,
Create around you a foul atmosphere
Of unresounding denseness, through the which
Their loud complaints cannot reverberate,
And perish ere they reach you.

KING. Who complains—
Who dares complain of us?

COL. All dare complain
Behind you—I before you. Do not think
Because you load your people with the weight
Of camels, they possess the camel's patience.
A deep groan labours in the nation's heart :
The very calm and stillness of the day
Gives augury of the earthquake. All without
Is as the marble, smooth ; and all within
Is rotten as the carcase it contains.
Though ruin knock not at the palace gate,
Yet will the palace gate unfold itself
To ruin's felt-shod tread.

KING. (*aside.*) Insolent villain !

COL. Your gorgeous banquets, your luxuries, your pomps,
Your palaces, and all the sumptuousness
Of painted royalty will melt away,
As in a theatre the glittering scene
Doth vanish with the shifter's magic hand,
And the mock pageant perishes. My liege,
A single virtuous action hath more worth
Than all the pyramids ; and glory writes
A more enduring epitaph upon
One generous deed, than the sarcophagus
In which Sesostris meant to sleep.

SPAL. (*coming forward.*) Forbear !
It is a subject's duty to arrest
Thy rash and blasphemous speech.

KING. Let him speak on.
The monarch who can listen to Colonna,
Is not the worthless tyrant he would make me.
(SPALATRO retires.)

COL. I deem not you that tyrant; if I did—

No! Nature, framing you, did kindly mean,
And o'er your heart hath sprinkled many drops
Of her best charities. But you are led
From virtue and from wisdom far away,
By men whose every look's a lie—whose hearts
Are a large heap of cankers, and of whom
The chief is a rank traitor!

KING. Traitor! Whom meanest thou?

COL. Your favourite—your minister, my liege.
That smooth-faced hypocrite, that—

KING. Here he comes!

COL. It is the traitor's self—I am glad of it,
That to his face I may confront—

Enter LUDOVICO, R. II.

LUD. (*he advances rapidly to the KING.*) My liege,
I hasten to your presence to inform you—
Colonna here! (*starting.*)

COL. The same—Colonna's here!

And if you wish to learn his theme of speech,
Learn that he spoke of treason and of you.

LUD. Did I not stand before the hallowed eye
Of majesty, I would teach thee with my sword
How to reform thy phrase. But I am now
In my king's presence, and, with awe-struck soul,
As if within religion's peaceful shrine,
Humbly I bend before him. What, my liege,
Hath this professor of austerity.

And practiser of slander, uttered
Against your servant's honour?

KING. He hath called you—

COL. A traitor! and I warn you to beware
Of the false viper nurtured in your heart.
He has filled the city with a band of men,
By fell allegiance sworn unto himself.
There are a thousand ruffians at his word
Prepared to cut our throats. The city swarms
With murderer's faces, and tho' treason now
Moves like a muffled dwarf, 'twill speedily
Swell to a blood-robed giant!—If my liege,
What have I said doth not unfilm your eye,

'Twere vain to tell you more.
I have said, my liege,
And tried to interrupt security
Upon her purple cushion ; he, perhaps,
Will find some drowsy syrup to lay down
Her opening eye-lids into sleep again,
And call back slumber with a lullaby
Of sweetest adulation.—Fare you well.

LUD. Hold back !

COL. Not for your summons ; my good lord,
The courtly air doth not agree with me,
And I respire it painfully. My lord,
Hear my last words—beware, Ludovico !

LUD. Villain, come back !

COL. I wear a sword, my lord. [Exit COLONNA, L. II.

LUD. He flies before me ; and the sight of him
He dares accuse, came like the morning sun
On the night-walking enemy of mankind,
That shrinks before the day-light—yes, he fled ;
And I would straight pursue him, and send back,
On my sword's point, his falsehoods to his heart—
But that I here, before the assembled court,
Would vindicate myself—a traitor ! Who,
In any action of Ludovico,
Finds echo to that word ?

KING. I cannot think
Thou hast repaid me with ingratitude.

LUD. I do not love to make a boisterous boast
Of my past services ; what I did
Was but my duty. Yet would I inquire
If he who has fought your battles—who oft
Has back to Naples, from the field of fight,
Led your triumphant armies—
He whose hand
Hath lined the oppressive diadem with down,
And ta'en its pressure from the golden round :
If he, whose cheek hath, at the midnight lamp,
Grown pale with study of his prince's weal,
Is like to be a traitor ? Who, my liege,
Hath oft transpierced
The hydra-headed monster of rebellion,

And stretched it bleeding at your feet? Who oft
Hath from the infuriate people exorcised
The talking demon, *liberty*, and choked
The voice of clamorous demagogues? I dare
To tell you 'twas Ludovico!

KING.

It was.

LUD. And yet he dares to call me traitor—he whose
Breath doth taint whate'er it blows upon.

Oh, my liege, my fortunes grow and flourish
But in your honoured love; and
Your giving audience to this rancorous man,
Who envies me the greatness of your smile,
Hath done me wrong, and stabs me thro' and thro.

A traitor!—Your Ludovico!

KING. My lord.

LUD. (*kneels.*) Here is my heart. If you have any mercy,
Strike thro' that heart, and as the blood flows forth,
Drown your suspicions in the purple stream.

KING. Rise, Ludovico, and do not think
I have harboured in my breast a single thought
That could dishonour thee. No!

(*raises and embraces him.*)
We have wronged thee, not by doubt,
But by our sufferance of Colonna's daring, and—
(*draws LUDOVICO aside.*) But that I hope that yet

I may possess me of his sister's charms.

LUD. There you have struck upon the inmost spring
Of all Colonna's hate; for in obedience
To your high will, unto her ear
I bore your proffered love, which he discovering,
Has tried to root me from my prince's heart.

KING. Where thou shalt ever flourish. But
Is there hope, my friend?

LUD. Colonna's lovely sister shall be yours; nay more—
But, mark my speech—Colonna's self shall
Lead you to her arms.

KING. But dost not fear
Her purposed marriage with Vicentio
May make some obstacle?

LUD. Vicentio, too, shall be
An instrument to crown you with her charms.

KING. She did prefer Vicentio.

LUD. She shall prefer your majesty.

KING. Tell her we'll shower all honour on her head.

And here, Ludovico, to testify

That we have given ourselves, bear to her heart
This image of her king! (*giving portrait.*)

LUD. I am in all your servant.

KING. Come, my friends, (*crosses to R. H.*)

Let's to some fresh-imagined sport, and while

The languid hours in some device of joy

To help along the lazy flight of time,

And quicken him with pleasure. Ludovico!

Remember!

[*Exeunt KING and COURTIERS, R. H. Banners and Guards, R. H. U. E.; SPALATRO, and four other CONSPIRATORS remain behind with LUDOVICO.*]

LUD. He is gone,

And my unloosened spirit dares again

To heave within my bosom!—Oh, Colonna,

With an usurious vengeance I'll repay thee,

And cure the talking devil in thy tongue!

(to SPALATRO.) We are safe, my friends,

And in the genius of Ludovico,

An enterprise shall triumph.

But Colonna! Oh, by the glorious star

Of my nativity, I do not burn

For empire, with a more infuriate thirst,

Than for revenge!

SPAL. My poniard's at your service.

(First and Second Conspirators half draw their daggers.

LUD. Not for the world, my friends!

I'll turn my vengeance to utility.

Whom think you

Have I marked out assassin of the king? Who but

Colonna—

SPAL. What! Colonna!

LUD. Colonna!—

SPAL. Impossible!

From his great father he inherited

A sort of passion in his loyalty:

In him it mounts to folly.

LUD. Yet Spalatro,
I'll make a murderer of him—know you not
He has a sister?

SPAL. Yes, the fair Evadne,
You once did love yourself.

LUD. There thou hast touched me.

And I am weak enough to love her yet!
She scorns me for that smooth Vicentio—
Not only does he thwart me in my love,
But, well I know his influence in the state
Would, when the king shall be no more,
Be cast between me and the throne—he dies!—
Colonna, too, shall perish, and the crown
Shall, with Evadne's love, be mine.

Enter OFFICER, L. H.

How now?

OFFICER. My lord, the lady Olivia
Waits on your highness.

LUD. I desired her presence here,
And will await her coming. [Exit OFFICER, L. H.
With a straw
A town may be consumed, and I employ
This woman's passion for Vicentio
As I would use a poison'd pin, to kill.
Leave me, friends.

[SPALATRO and COURTIERS *Exeunt* R. H.
(takes out the King's picture.) Come, kingly bauble,
Thou now must be employed.—
Even in this image, he bears the soft
And wanton aspect with the which he bid me
To cater for his villainous appetite—
And with what luxury?—Evadne's charms!—
Evadne that I love? He would supplant me, and for
that he dies.
Yes, royal trusting master, I will turn
Those glittering eyes, where love doth now inhabit,
To two dark hollow palaces, for death
To keep his mouldering state in.
He dares to hope that I will
Smooth the bed for his lascivious pleasures!

But I will teach his royalty
The beds I make are lasting ones, and lie
In the dark chambers of eternity !

Enter OLIVIA, R.

Oh, Olivia, welcome !

At length I have means to make Vicentio thine.
Straight he returns to Naples—the king doth love
Evadne,

Whom the lord Vicentio would wed.

I will poison his ear that she is flattered by the king's
passion.

Look here, this picture of himself which
His majesty now sends Evadne, you must exchange
For that of him she loves, it will confirm suspicions
I shall

Plant within his breast and truly make him thine.

(*giving her the King's picture.*)

OLIVIA. My own heart

Tells me 'tis a bad office,
But this unhappy passion for Vicentio drives me on,
And makes my soul your thrall. Thus I have crept,
Obedient to your counsels, meanly crept
Into Evadne's soft, and trusting heart,
And coiled myself around her. Thus, my lord,
Have I obtained the page of amorous sighs
That you enjoined me to secure. I own
'Twas a false deed, but I am gone too far
To seek retreat, and will obey you still.

LUD. And I will crown your passion with the flowers
Of Hymen's yellow garland—Trust me, Olivia,
That once dissevered from Evadne's love,
He will soon be taught to prize your nobler frame,
And more enkindled beauty. Well, 'tis known,
Ere he beheld the sorceress;
He deemed you fairest of created things,
And would have proffered love, had not—

OLIVIA. I pray you,
With gems of flattery do not disturb
The fount of bitterness within my soul;—
For dropped tho' ne'er so nicely, they but stir

The poisoned waters as they fall.—I have said
I will obey you.

LUD. With this innocent page

Will I light up a fire within Vicentio,—
But you must keep it flaming;—I have ta'en
Apt means to drive him into jealousy,
By scattering rumours (which have reached his ear)
Before he comes to Naples,—e'en in Florence
Have I prepared his soft and yielding mind
To take the seal that I would fix upon it.
I do expect him within the fleeting hour,—
For, to my presence he must come to bear
His embassy's commission, and be sure
He leaves me with a poison in his heart
Evadne's lips shall never suck away.

OLIVIA. Then will I hence, and if 'tis possible,
Your bidding shall be done.—Vicentio !

Enter VICENTIO, R. H.

VICENT. Hail to my lord !

LUD. Welcome, Vicentio !

I have not clasp'd your hand this many a day !
Welcome from Florence. In your absence, sir,
Time seemed to have lost his feathers.

VICENT. It was kind

To waste a thought upon me—Fair Olivia, (*crosses c.*)
Florence hath dimmed mine eyes, or I must else
Have seen a sunbeam sooner.

How does your lovely friend ?

OLIVIA. What friend, my lord ?

VICENT. I trust nought evil hath befallen Evadne,
That you should feign to understand me not.

How does my beautiful and plighted love ?

OLIVIA. How does she, sir ? I pray you, my good lord,
To ask such tender question of the king. [*Exit, L. H.*

VICENT. (*aside.*) What meant she by the king ?

LUD. You seem, Vicentio,

O'ershadowed with reflection—should you
Not have used some soft, detaining phrase to one
Who should, at least, be pitied ?

VICENT. I came here

To re-deliver to your hands, my lord,
The high commission of mine embassy,
That long delayed my marriage. You, I deem
My creditor, in having used your sway
In my recall to Naples.

LUD. In return for such small service,
I hope that you will not forget Ludovico,
When in the troop of thronging worshippers,
At distance you behold his stooping plume
Bend in humility.

VICENT. What means my lord ?

LUD. Act not this ignorance—your glorious fortune
Hath filled the common mouth—
Your image stands already in the mart
Of pictured ridicule—Come, do not wear
The look of studied wonderment—you know
Howe'er I stand upon the highest place
In the king's favour, that you will full soon
Supplant the poor Ludovico.

VICENT. I am no OEdipus.

LUD. You would have me speak in simpler phrase;
Vicentio,

You are to be the favourite of the king.

VICENT. The favourite of the king !

LUD. Certes, Vicentio.

In our Italian courts, the generous husband
Receives his monarch's recompensing smile,
That with alchymic power, can turn the mass
Of dull approbrious shame, to one bright heap
Of honour and emolument.

I bid you joy, my lord—why, how is this ?
Do you not yet conceive me ? Know you not
You are to wed the mistress of the king ?
Colonna's sister—ay, I have said it, sir,—

Now, do you understand me ?

VICENT. Villain, thou liest !

LUD. What, are you not to marry her ?

VICENT. Thou liest !

Tho' thou wert ten times what thou art already,
Not all the laurels heaped upon thy head
Should save thee from the lightning of my wrath !

LUD. If it were my will,

The movement of my hand should beckon death
To thy presumption. But I have proved too oft
I bore a fearless heart, to think you dare
To call me coward—and I am too wise
To think I can revenge an injury
By giving you my life. But I compassionate,
Nay, I have learned to esteem thee for a wrath,
That speaks thy noble nature.

Fare thee well! (*crosses to L. H.*)
Thy pulse is now too fevered for the cure
I honestly intended—yet, before
I part, here take this satisfying proof
Of what a woman's made of. (*gives him a letter.*)

VICENT. It is her character!

Hast thou shed phospor on the innocent page,
That it has turned to fire?

LUD. Thou hast thy fate.

VICENT. 'Tis signed, "Evadne."

LUD. Yes, it is—farewell!

VICENT. For Heaven's sake, hear me.—Stay.—Oh, pardon
me

For the rash utterance of a frantic man—
Speak, in mercy speak!

LUD. I will,

In mercy speak, indeed—In mercy to
That fervid generosity of heart
That I behold within thee.

VICENT. From whom is this?

LUD. From whom? Look there!

VICENT. Evadne!

LUD. Tis written to the king and to my hand.

For he is proud of it, as if it were
A banner of high victory, he bore it,
To evidence his valour.—It is grown
His cup-theme now, and your Evadne's name
Is lisped with all the insolence on his tongue
Of satiated triumph—he exclaims—
The poor Vicentio!

VICENT. The poor Vicentio!

LUD. What, shall he murder him?—(*aside.*)—no, no,—
Colonna!

The poor Vicentio!—and he oftentimes
Cries, that he pities you!

VICENT. He pities me!

LUD. I own that some time I was infidel
To all the bombast vaunting of the king.
But—

VICENT. 'Tis Evadne! Look you, my lord—
Thus as I rend the cursed evidence
Of that vile woman's falsehood—thus I cast
My love into the winds, and as I tread
Upon the poison'd fragments of the snake
That stings me into madness, thus, Ludovico,
Thus do I trample on her!

LUD. Have you ne'er heard,
For 'twas so widely scattered in the voice
Of common rumour, that the very wind,
If it blew fair for Florence—

VICENT. I have heard
Some whispers, which I long had flung away
With an incredulous hatred from my heart—
But now, this testimony has conjured
All other circumstances in one vast heap
Of damned certainty!—Farewell, my lord—

(crosses L. H.)

LUD. Hear me, Vicentio!
Vengeance is left you still—the deadliest too
That a false woman can be made to feel:
Take her example—be not satisfied
With casting her for ever from your heart,
But to the place that she has forfeited,
Exalt a lovelier than—but I perceive
You are not in a mood to hear me now—
Some other time, Vicentio—and, meanwhile,
Despite your first tempestuous suddenness,
You will think that I but meant your honour well
In this proceeding.

VICENT. I believe I owe you
That sort of desperate gratitude, my lord,
The dying patient owes the barbarous knife,

That delves in throes of mortal agony,
And tears the rooted cancer from his heart!

[*Exeunt L. H.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in Colonna's Palace.*

Enter EVADNE, c. d. looking at a miniature.

EVADNE. 'Tis strange he comes not! Thro' the city's gates

His panting courser passed before the sun
Had climbed to his meridian, yet he comes not!—
Ah, Vicentio,

To know thee near me, yet behold thee not,
Is sadder than to think thee far away;
For I had rather that a thousand leagues
Of mountain ocean should dissever us,
Than thine own heart,

Enter OLIVIA, R. U. E. and goes slowly to L. H.

Sure, Vicentio,
If thou didst know with what a pining gaze
I feed mine eyes upon thine image here,
Thou wouldst not now leave thine Evadne's love
To this same cold idolatry. Olivia!

OLIVIA. I have stolen unperceived upon your hours
Of lonely meditation, and surprised

Your soft soliloquies;—Nay, do not blush—

EVADNE. You mock me, fair Olivia—I confess
That musing on my cold Vicentio's absence,
I quarrelled with the blameless ivory.

OLIVIA. He was compelled as soon as he arrived,
To wait upon the great Ludovico;
(takes Vicentio's picture.) What a sweetness plays
On those half-opened lips!—He gazed on you
When those bright eyes were painted.

EVADNE. You have got

A heart so free of care, that you can mock
Your pensive friend with such light merriment
But hark; I hear a step. (*crosses L. H.*)

OLIVIA. (*aside.*) Now fortune aid me
In her precipitation.

EVADNE. It is himself:—Well I know
My lord Vicentio hastens to mine eyes!
The picture—pr'ythee give it back to me—

OLIVIA. It is in vain
To struggle with you then—with what a grasp
You rend it from my hand, as if it were
Vicentio that I had stolen away.

(*gives her the king's picture, which she has substituted, and which EVADNE places in her bosom.*)
I triumph!—(*aside.*) I must leave you,
Nor interrupt the meeting of your hearts
By my officious presence. [Exit R. H.

EVADNE. Swiftly he passes through the colonnade
Oh! Vicentio,
Thy coming bears me joy as bright as e'er
Beat through the heart of woman.

Enter VICENTIO, L. H.

Are you then come at last?—do I once more
Behold my bosom's lord, whose tender sight
Is necessary for my happiness
As light for day!

VICENT. (*aside.*) Dissembling woman!

EVADNE. How is this, my lord?—You look altered.

VICENT. But you do not look altered—would you did!

Let me peruse the face where loveliness
Stays, like the light after the sun is set.
Sphered in the stillness of those heaven-blue eyes,
The soul sits beautiful; the high white front,
Smooth as the brow of Pallas, seems a temple
Sacred to holy thinking! and those lips
Wear the sweet smile of sleeping infancy,
They are so innocent. Oh! Evadne,
Thou art not altered—would thou wert!

EVADNE. Vicentio!—You are not well, Vicentio.

VICENT. In sooth, I am not. There is in my breast

A wound that mocks all cure—no salve, nor anodyne,
Nor medicinal herb, can e'er allay

The festering of that agonizing wound
You have driven into my heart!

EVADNE. I?

VICENT. Why did you ever tell me that you loved me?

Why was I not in mercy spurned away,
Scorned, like Ludovico? For unto him
You dealt in honour, and despised his love;
But me you soothed and flattered—sighed and
blushed—
And smiled and wept, for you can weep; (even now)
To stab me with a falsehood yet unknown
In falsest woman's perfidy?

EVADNE. Vicentio,

Why am I thus accused? What have I done?

VICENT. What!—are you grown already an adept
In cold dissimulation? Have you stopped
All access from your heart into your face?
Do you not blush?

EVADNE. I do, indeed, for you.

VICENT. The king!

EVADNE. The king?

VICENT. Come, come, confess at once, and wear it high
Upon your towering forehead—swell your port—
Away with this unseemly bashfulness—
Confront the talking of the busy world—
Tell them you are the mistress of the king,
Tell them you are Colonna's sister, too;
But hark you, madam, do not say
You are Vicentio's wife.

EVADNE. Injurious man!

VICENT. The very winds from the four parts of heaven
Blew it throughout the city.

EVADNE. And if angels
Cried, trumpet-tongued, that I was false to you,
You should not have believed it.

Who dares to stain a woman's honesty,
Does her a wrong as deadly as the brand
He fears upon himself. Go, go, Vicentio;
You are not what I deemed you! Mistress? Fie!
Go, go, Vicentio! Let me not behold
The man who has reviled me with a thought

Dishonouring as that one ! (*crosses to L. H.*) Oh,
Vicentio,

Do I deserve this of you ? (*weeps.*)

VICENT. If I had wronged her—

EVADNE. I will not stoop

To vindicate myself—dare to suspect me !

My lord, I am to guess that you came here

To speak your soul's revolt, and to demand

Your plighted vows again ? If for this

You tarry here, I freely give you back

Your late repented faith. Farewell for ever !

(*going L. H.*)

VICENT. Evadne !

EVADNE. Well, my lord ?

VICENT. Evadne, stay !

EVADNE. Vicentio !

(*with a look of reproaching remonstance.*)

VICENT. Let me look in thy face.

Oh, 'tis impossible ! I was bemocked

And cheated by that villain ! Nothing false

Sure ever looked like thee—and yet, wilt thou

But swear—

EVADNE. What should I swear ?

VICENT. That you did not
Betray me to the king.

EVADNE. Never !

VICENT. Nor e'er

Didst write in love to him ?

EVADNE. Oh, never, never !

Some villain hath abused thy credulous ear.

I must hence betimes

To chase these blots of sorrow from my face ;

For if Colonna should behold me weep—

So tenderly does he love me—that I fear

His hot, tempestuous nature. Why, Vicentio,

Do you still wrong me with a wildered eye

That sheds suspicion ?

VICENT. I now remember

Another circumstance Ludovico

Did tell me as I came. (*aside.*) I do not see

My picture on her bosom.

EVADNE.

Well?

VICENT. When I departed hence, about your neck
I hung my pictured likeness.EVADNE. Vicentio, I have pillow'd your dear image on a
heart

You should not have distrusted.

Here it is. (*gives him the king's picture from her bosom.*
And now, my lord, suspect me if you can.VICENT. (*starting.*) A horrid phantom, more accursed
than e'er

Yet crossed the sleep of frenzy, stares at me!

Speak! speak at once!

Or—let it blast thee, too! (*shows her the picture.*)

EVADNE. Sure some dark spell—

Some fearful witchery! I am struck to ashes.

'Tis not Vicentio!

VICENT. It is the King!

EVADNE. No, no—it cannot be!

Give not thy senses credence. Oh,

I am confounded—maddened—lost!

'Tis not reality that stares upon me—

Oh, hide it from my sight!

VICENT. Chance has betrayed thee,

And saves my periled honour. Here, thou all fraud—

Thou mass of painted perjury—thou woman!

I have done with thee, and pray to heaven

I ne'er may see thee more. But hold!

Recall that wish again. The time will come

When I would look on thee; then, Evadne, then,

When the world's scorn is on thee, let me see

Thee, old in youth, and bending 'neath the load

Of sorrow, not of time—then let me see thee,

And mayest thou, as I pass, lift up thy head

But once from the sad earth, and then

Look down again for ever!

[Exit R. H.]

Enter COLONNA, C., in time to see VICENTIO go off.

EVADNE. (*at first not perceiving that he is gone, and recovering from her stupefaction*) I will swear!

Give it back to me—oh, I am innocent!

(she rushes up to COLONNA who advances to R. H., mistaking him for a moment for VICENTIO.

By heaven, I am innocent!

COL. Who dares to doubt it—

Who knows thee of that noble family
That cowardice in man, or wantonness
In woman never tarnished?

EVADNE. (*aside.*) He is gone!

COL. But how is this, Evadne? In your face

I read a wildered air in place
Of that placidity that used to shine
For ever on thy holy countenance.
One of love's summer clouds
Hath floated o'er you, tho' 'twere better far
That it had left no rain drops. What has happened?

EVADNE. There's nothing has befallen, only—

COL. What—only?

EVADNE. Pardon me, I must begone!

COL. Evadne, stay—let me behold you well.

Why do you stand at distance? Nearer still,
Evadne—

EVADNE. Well?

COL. Vicentio—

EVADNE. (*assuming an affected lightness of manner.*)

Why, Colonna,
Think you that I'm without my sex's art,
And did not practise all the torturings
That make a woman's triumph?

COL. 'Twas not well.

I hoped thee raised above all artifice
That makes thy sex but infancy matured.
I was at first inclined to follow him,
And ask what this might mean.

EVADNE. Then he had told

That I had played the tyrant. Had you seen
How like my peevish lap-dog he appeared,
Just beaten with a fan. Ha! ha! Colonna,
You will find us all alike. Ha! ha! (*aside.*) My heart
Will break! (*bursts into tears.*)

COL. Farewell!

EVADNE. What would you do?

COL.

Let all the world

Hold me a slave, and hoard upon my head
 Its gathered infamy—be all who bear
 Colonna's name scorn-blighted—may disgrace
 Gnaw off all honour from my family
 If I permit an injury to thee
 To 'scape Colonna's vengeance !

EVADNE. Hold, my brother—I will not leave thy sight.

COL. Then follow me.

And if thou art abandoned, after all
 Vicentio's plighted faith, thou shalt behold—
 By heavens, an emperor should not do thee wrong !
 Or if he did, though I had a thousand lives,
 I'd give them all to avenge thee. I'll inquire
 Into this business ; and if I find
 Thou hast lost a lover, I will give him proof
 I've my right arm, and thou thy brother still.

[*Exeunt R. H.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A street in Naples. Olivia's house, R. H.**Enter LUDOVICO and VICENTIO, L. H.*

LUD. There is Olivia's house.

VICENT. Thou hast resolved me.

I thank thee for thy counsel, and at once, (*crosses R.*
Speed to its dreadful performance.*Enter a SERVANT, R. H. D. F.*

'Bides the Lady Olivia in her home ?

SERVANT. She does, my lord.

VICENT. Thou sayest, Ludovico, [Exit, R. D. in F.

'Tis necessary for my fame ?

LUD. No less.

By marrying Olivia, you disperse
The noises that abroad did sully you,
Of having given consent to play the cloak
To the king's dalliance.

VICENT. Oh, speak of it

No more, Ludovico. Farewell, my friend,
I will obey your counsels. [Exit into Olivia's house

LUD. Fare you well,

My passionate, obsequious instrument
Whom now I scorn so much—I scarcely let thee
Reach to the dignity of being hated.

Enter the KING, l. h., disguised.

KING. My faithful servant—my Ludovico!

LUD. My prince!

KING. Shall she be mine, Ludovico?

LUD. My liege,

I marvel not at the impatient throb
Of restless expectation in your heart.
And know that not in vain I toil
To waft you to her bosom, for Vicentio
Renounces her forever, and—but moved
By my wise counsels—hath already prayed
The fair Olivia's hand.

KING. How didst thou accomplish this?

LUD. I turned to use

The passion of Olivia. While Evadne traced
A letter to Vicentio, suddenly
The news of his expected coming reached
Her, and, in the rush of joy,
Unfinished on the table did she leave
The page of amorous wishes, which the care
Of unperceived Olivia, haply seized,
And bore unto my hand.—Vicentio's name
Was drowned in hurried vocatives of love,
As thus—“ My lord—my life—my soul,” the which
I made advantage of, and did persuade him
'Twas written to your highness—and with lights
Caught from the very torch of truest love,
I fired the furies' brands—

KING. My faithful friend!

LUD. Then with your picture did Olivia work
 Suspicion into frenzy ; when he came
 From your Evadne's house, I threw myself,
 As if by fortune, in his path ; I urged
 His heated passions to my purposes,
 And bade him ask Olivia's hand, to prove
 How much he scorned her falsehood. Even now
 He makes his suit, for there Olivia dwells,
 And as you came he entered.

KING. But wherein

Will this promote the crowning of my love ?

LUD. I said Colonna's self should be the first
 To lead you to her arms.

KING. Thou didst, Ludovico,

The which performed, I'll give thee half my realm.

LUD. (*aside.*) You shall give all !

KING. Accomplish this, my friend ;

Thou art as the rich circle of my royalty.

Farewell, Ludovico, I shall expect

Some speedy tidings from thee—fare thee well !

To-night, Ludovico.

[*Exit R. H.*

LUD. To-night you perish !

Colonna's dagger shall let out your blood,
 And lance your wanton and high-swelling veins.
 Evadne here !

Enter EVADNE, L. H.

EVADNE. (*with some agitation.*) My Lord Ludovico—

LUD. The Beautiful Evadne !

What would the brightest maid of Italy
 Of her poor servant ?

EVADNE. Sir, may I entreat

Your knowledge where Count Vicentio
 'Bides at this moment ? I have been informed
 He 'companied you here.

LUD. If you desired to learn where now he 'bides,
 I can inform you.

EVADNE. Where, Ludovico ?

LUD. Yonder, Evadne, in Olivia's house.

EVADNE. Olivia's house ? What would he there ?

LUD. You know

Vicentio and Olivia are to-day—

EVADNE. My lord?

LUD. Are to be married—

EVADNE. Married?

Vicentio and Olivia to be married?

LUD. I am sorry that it moves you thus—Evadne;

Had I been used as that ingrate, be sure

I ne'er had proved like him. I would not thus

Have flung thee like a poppy from my heart—

A drowsy sleep-provoking flower. Evadne,

I had not thus deserted you!

[Exit, R. II.]

EVADNE. Vicentio!

Olivia and Vicentio to be married?

I heard it—yes, I am sure I did—Vicentio!

Olivia to be married!—and Evadne,

Whose heart was made of adoration—

Vicentio in her house? there—underneath

That woman's roof; behind the door that looks

To shut me out from hope. I will myself—

(advancing, then checking herself.)

I dare not do it; but he could not

Use me thus—no, he could not, ha! (sees him.)

Enter VICENTIO from Olivia's house, R. H. D. E.

VICENT. Evadne here?

EVADNE. Would I had been born blind,

Not to behold the fatal evidence

Of my abandonment!

VICENT. (advances R. H.) Does she come

To bate me with reproaches; or does she dare

To think that she can angle me again

To the vile pool wherein she meant to catch me?

I'll pass her with the bitterness of scorn,

Nor seem to know her present to my sight. (crosses L.)

Now I am at least revenged. (going.)

EVADNE. My lord, I pray you—entreat—Vicentio!—

VICENT. Who calls upon Vicentio? Was it you?

What would you with him, for I bear the name?

EVADNE. Sir, I—

VICENT. Go on. (aside.) I'll taunt her to the quick.

EVADNE. My lord, I—

VICENT. I pray you speak. I cannot guess
By such wild broken phrase, what you would have
Of one who knows you not?

EVADNE. Not know me?

VICENT. No!

Let me look in your face. There is, indeed,
Some faint resemblance to a countenance
Once much familiar to Vicentio's eyes—
But 'tis a shadowy one. She that I speak of
Was full of virtues, as the milky way,
Upon a frozen night, is thick with stars.
She was as pure as an untasted fountain;
Fresh as an April blossom; kind as love
And good as infants giving charity!
Such was Evadne—fare you well!

EVADNE. My lord,
Is't true what I've heard?

VICENT. What have you heard?

EVADNE. Speak! are you to be married? Let me hear
it—

Thank heav'n I've strength to hear it!

VICENT. I scarce guess
What interest you find in one that deems
Himself a stranger to you.

EVADNE. Sir—

VICENT. But if
You are indeed solicitous to learn
Aught that imports me, learn that I, to-day,
Have asked the fair Olivia's hand, in place of one—

EVADNE. You have bedewed with tears.

So then, Vicentio, fame did not wrong you.

You are to be married?

VICENT. To one within whose heart as pure a fire
As in the shrine of Vesta long has burned.
Not the coarse flame of a corrupted heart,
To every worship dedicate alike—

A false perfidious seeming.

EVADNE. Spare your accusations. I am come—

VICENT. Doubtless, to vindicate yourself.

EVADNE. Oh, no!

An angel now would vainly plead my cause

Within Vicentio's heart—therefore, my lord,
I have no intent to interrupt the rite
That makes that lady yours; but I am come
Thus breathless as you see me—would to heav'n
I could be tearless too!

Hear all the vengeance I intend.—I'll tell you.
May you be happy with that happier maid
That never could have loved you more than I do,
But may deserve you better!—May your days,
Like a long stormless summer, glide away,
And peace and trust be with you!—
And when at last you close your gentle lives,
Blameless as they were blessed, may you fall
Into the grave as softly as the leaves
Of two sweet roses on an autumn eve,
Beneath the soft sighs of the western wind;
For myself—(*sobbing.*) I will but pray
The maker of the lonely beds of peace
To open one of his deep hollow ones,
Where misery goes to sleep, and let me in;—
If ever you chance to pass beside my grave,
I am sure you'll not refuse a little sigh,
And if with my friend, (I still will call her so)
My friend, Olivia, chide you, pr'ythee tell her
Not to be jealous of me in my grave.

VICENT. The picture! In your bosom—near your heart—
There on the very swellings of your breast,
The very shrine of chastity, you raised
A foul and cursed idol!

EVADNE. You did not give me time—no—not a moment
To think what villainy was wrought, to make me—
It is too late, you are Olivia's—
You have renounced me—

VICENT. Come, confess—confess—

EVADNE. What should I confess? But that you, that
heaven,
That all the world seem to conspire against me;
Oh, Vicentio, pr'ythee avoid Colonna's sight!

VICENT. Evadne?—

You do not think to frighten me with his name?

EVADNE. Vicentio, do not take away from me

All that I've left to love in all the world !
 Avoid Colonna's sight to day.—I will find
 Some way to reconcile him to my fate—
 I'll lay the blame upon my hapless head !—
 Only to-day, Vicentio.

Enter COLONNA, R. H. 2 E.

COL. (R. H.) Ha ! My sister !

Where is thy dignity ? Where is the pride
 Meet for Colonna's sister ?—hence ! My lord—

VICENT. (L. H.) What would you, sir ?

COL. Your life :—you are briefly answered.

Look here, sir.—To this lady you preferred
 Your despicable love ! Long did you woo,
 And when at last by constant adoration,
 Her sigh revealed that you were heard, you gained
 Her brother's cold assent. Well then—no more—
 For I've no patience to repeat by clause
 The wrong that thou hast done her. It has reached
 Colonna's ear that you have abandoned her—
 It rings thro' Naples, my good lord—now, mark me—
 I am her brother—

VICENT. Well—

EVADNE. (*in centre.*) Forbear ! forbear !

I have no injury you should resent
 In such a fearful fashion. I—my brother—
 I am sure I never uttered a complaint
 Heaved with one sigh, nor shed a single tear.
 Look at me, good Colonna !—now, Colonna
 Can you discern a sorrow in my face ?
 I do not weep—I do not—look upon me—
 Why I can smile, Colonna. (*bursts into tears.*)
 Oh, my brother !—

COL. You weep, Evadne, but I'll mix your tears
 With a false villain's blood.—If you have left
 A sense of aught that's noble in you still—

VICENT. My lord, you do mistake, if you have hope
 Vicentio's name was e'er designed to be
 The cloak of such vile purpose—

COL. Is't true, my lord, you have abandoned her ?

VICENT. Is't true, my lord,

That to the king—

COL. The king?

VICENT. And could you think

That I am to be made an instrument

For such a foul advancement? do you think

That I would turn my name into a cloak?

EVADNE. Colonna, my dear brother! Oh, Vicentio!

For heaven's sake, I do implore you here—

COL. Sir, you said something, if I heard aright,

Touching the king; explain yourself.

VICENT. I will!

I will not wed his mistress!

EVADNE. (with reproach.) Oh, Vicentio!

COL. Whom mean you, sir?

VICENT. Look there!

COL. Evadne, ha?

VICENT. Evadne!

COL. (crosses to centre, and strikes him with his glove.)

Here's my answer, follow me!

Beyond the city's gates, I shall expect you.

[Exit L. H.]

EVADNE. (clinging to VICENTIO, who has his sword drawn, and kneeling to him.) You shall not stir!

VICENT. If from his heart I poured

A sea of blood, it would not now content me.

Insolent villain! Dost thou stay me back?

Away, unloose me!

EVADNE. Olivia, hear me—listen to my cry—

It is thy husband's life that now I plead for;

Save, oh, save him!

VICENT. Then must I fling thee from me.—Now I am free,

And swift as lightning on the whirlwind's wings,

I rush to my revenge! [Exit L. H.]

EVADNE. (who has fallen upon her knees in her struggle with VICENTIO.) Oh, my poor heart!

Choke not, thou struggling spirit in my breast.

Hear me, Olivia?—Olivia, hear me!

Enter OLIVIA from her house.

OLIVIA. (R. H.) Is't Evadne calls

Like one that with a frantic energy
In fire cries out for life?

EVADNE. (L. H.) I cry for life—
Vicentio's life—Colonna's life—Oh, my friend!
Colonna, maddened at my miseries,
And I confess that I am miserable,
Hath vowed a horrid vengeance, and even now
He struck Vicentio!

OLIVIA. Heaven!

EVADNE. I pr'ythee, look not
Misdoubtingly upon me—
Hast thou not wings to save him?

OLIVIA. Thou art avenged, Evadne!—to himself
I dare not own it—but to thee reveal
The vileness I have practised.

EVADNE. Speak!

OLIVIA. In the wild tremour of thy joy,
I seized advantage of Vicentio's coming,
And placed within thine unsuspecting hand—

EVADNE. The portrait of the king—
That horrid image that appeared to fill
My bosom with perdition!
'Twas you—my friend Olivia!

OLIVIA. But I—I myself,
Will to the king, and bid him send his power
To interpose between them—thou, Evadne,
Wilt speak my guilt.

EVADNE. Oh, my Vicentio!

I fly to save and comfort you!

[Exit R. H.]

[Exit L. H.]

SCENE II.—*The Bay, and View of Naples.*

Enter COLONNA and VICENTIO, L. H. 2. E. with their swords drawn;—passing across to R. H.

COL. Yonder, my lord, beside the cypress grove,
Fast by the church-yard—there's a place, methinks
Where we may 'scape the eye of observation.

VICENT. I follow, sir—the neighbourhood of the grave

Will suit our purpose well, for you or I
Must take its measure ere the sun be set.

[*Exeunt R. H.*

Enter LUDOVICO, L. 2 E. as they go off.

LUD. Ha, there they go!—the furies, with their whips
Of hissing serpents, lash you to your fate—
My dull and passionate fools—you fall at last
Into the pit I have dug for you—the grave.
You grasp the murdering hilt, while I, in thought,
Already clench the glorious staff of empire.
I hate you both! One of you has denounced me—
The other, robbed me of a woman's love.
They have already entered grove
Of funeral cypress.—Now they are lost
Amid the crowded trunks—and yet a moment
And they will be about it!—Now, Vicentio,
Thy fate is sealed.—Colonna's arm—
Ha! Who comes here?
Evadne!—Yes—my eyes deceive me not—
'Twas happiest chance that led me to the field—
She must be interrupted—let me think—
I have it—

Enter EVADNE, L. H. 2 E.

EVADNE. Ha, Ludovico! Oh, speak!
My lord, my lord—my brother, and Vicentio—

LUD. I know it all—and I shall thank the fate
That made Ludovico the messenger
Of such blest tidings to Evadne's ear—
They are secure—

EVADNE. Secure!

My brother and Vicentio secure!

LUD. By providential circumstance, before
Their purpose was accomplished, both were seized,
And all their furious passions are as hushed
As the still waters of yon peaceful bay.

EVADNE. Where, how, and when was this? What blessed
hand—

Speak, my lord.

LUD. 'Twas I!

EVADNE. You, Ludovico?

LUD. The same!

Hearing Olivia's marriage with Vicentio,
I saw the dreadful issue, and I flew
With the strong arm of power to intercept them.

EVADNE. On my knees,

And at your feet I thank you. (*kneels.*)

LUD. Beautiful Evadne!

Loveliest beneath the skies, where everything
Grows lovely as themselves—Nay do not bend
Your eyes, and hide beneath these fleecy clouds
Stars beaming as the evening one, nor turn
That cheek away, that, like a cold rose, seems
Besprinkled with snow!—Nor strive to win from me
Those hands, which he who formed the lily, formed
With imitative whiteness—I will presume,
For your dear sight hath made a madman of me,
To press my rapture here. (*kisses her hand.*)

EVADNE. My lord—but no, I will not chide

I go to seek my brother.

LUD. And Vicentio!

You would fly me thus,
To rush at once into my rival's arms—
Nay, do not start—he well deserves the name—
I know him by no other.

EVADNE. Sir, I hope

You will not revive a subject that has long
Between us been forgotten.

LUD. What! forgotten?

I did not think to hear it—said you forgotten?
Nay, do not think you leave me; in return
For such small service as I have done to-day,
I beg your audience; tell me what's forgotten?
I would hear it from your lips.

EVADNE. I did not mean—

Forgive, and let me go. (*crosses R.*)

LUD. What, what forgotten?

Your heartlessness to all the maddening power
Of the tumultuous passions in my heart!
What, what forgotten? All the injuries
You have cast upon my head—the stings of fire

You have driven into my soul—my agonies,
My tears, my supplications, and the groans
Of my indignant spirit! I can hold
My curbed soul no more—it rushes out!
What, what forgotten?—me—Ludovico?

EVADNE. Ludovico,

What may this sudden fury mean?

Did you not say you saved Vicentio?

LUD. I will permit you shortly to embrace him—

I will not long detain you from his arms—

But you will find him grown as cold a lover

As moonlight statues—his fond arms will hang

In loosened idleness about your form—

And from those lips where you were wont t'imbibe

The fiery respiration of the heart,

You will touch the coldness of the unsunned snow,

Without its purity.

If you can wake his heart to love again,

I'll hold you for a sorceress—no, Evadne,

You ne'er shall be Vicentio's—but mine!

EVADNE. Yours!

LUD. Mine!—I have said it, and before to-night

I'll verify the prophesy. Ha! (*seeing COLONNA.*)

By heavens, it is himself!—

All is accomplished—and upon my front

Methinks I clasp the round of royalty!

Already do I clasp thee in mine arms!—

Evadne!—There—look there—Colonna comes,

And on that weapon flaming from afar

He bears the vengeance of Ludovico.

[*Exit L. H.*

Enter COLONNA, R. H., with his sword bloody.

COL. Evadne here!

EVADNE. My brother!

COL. Call me so—

For I have proved myself to be thy brother.

Look here!—

EVADNE. There's blood upon it!

COL. And there should be.

EVADNE. Thou hast—

COL. I have revenged thee!

EVADNE. Villain, thou hast slain Vicentio ?

COL. I have revenged thee—

For any wrong done to my single self,
I should, perhaps, repent me of the deed ;
But, for a wrong to thee—Why dost thou look
Up to the heavens with such a bewildered gaze ?

EVADNE. To curse thee, myself, and all the world !

Oh, thou hast slain Vicentio !—thou hast slain him
Who was as dear as life unto my frantic heart,
Vicentio ! My lord ! My soul, my joy—my love !—
Vicentio ! Vicentio !—(crosses.)

COL. Thy passionate grief

Doth touch me more than it beseems mine honour.

EVADNE. Colonna, kill me !

COL. Pr'ythee, Evadne,

Let me conduct thy grief to secrecy—

I must from hence prepare my speedy flight,
For now my head is forfeit to the law !

Enter SPALATRO, with OFFICER and GUARDS R. H.

SPAL. Behold him here. Sir, I am sorry for
The duty which mine office hath prescribed !
You are my prisoner.

COL. Sir, there is need

Of little words to excuse you—I was talking
Of speeding me from Naples, as you came,
But I scarce grieve you interrupt my flight—
Here is my sword.

SPAL. You are doomed to death !

EVADNE. To death !

SPAL. The king himself,

Hearing your combat with Vicentio,
Hath sworn, that who survived, shall by the axe—

COL. You speak before a woman. I was well

Acquainted with my fate before you spoke it.

EVADNE. Death ! must you die, Colonna ?

Oh, no—no—no ! not die, sir. (crosses c.)

COL. My sweet sister !

I pray you gentlemen, one moment more—
This lady is my sister, and indeed

My only kin in all the world,
And I must die for her sake ! My sweet sister.

EVADNE. No, my brother—not die, not die !

COL. Evadna, sweet Evadne ! Let me hear

(EVADNE becomes gradually insensible.

Thy voice before I go—I pr'ythee speak !

That even in death I may remember me
Of its sweet sounds, Evadne—she has fainted !

Sir, I have a prayer to you.

SPAL. It shall be granted.

COL. My palace is hard by—let some of these
Good guardians of the law attend me thither.

Evadne, for thy sake, I am almost loth
To leave a world, the which, when I am gone
Thou wilt find, I fear, a solitary one !

[Exit, bearing EVADNE, and followed by SPALATRO
and GUARDS, L. H.

SCENE III.—*A Prison.*

Enter LUDOVICO, R. H., meeting SPALATRO, L. H.

LUD. Where is Colonna ? Not yet arrived ?

SPAL. Guarded he bore
His sister to his palace, from the which
He will be soon led here.

LUD. Spalatro, as I passed, a rumour came,
Colonna's sword had but half done the work,
And that Vicentio was not stabbed to death—
If he still lives—but till I am sure of it,
No need to speak my resolution,
Thou art his friend.

SPAL. Such I'm indeed accounted,
But, save yourself, none doth deserve the name.

LUD. Then, hie thee hence, Spalatro, to inform me,
If yet Vicentio breathes—(SPALATRO crosses to R. H.
and afterwards,
I'll make some trial of thy love to me.

Exit SPALATRO, R. H.

Enter COLONNA, OFFICER, and GUARDS, L. H.

COL. Conduct me to my dungeon!—I have parted
From all that bound my bosom to the world—
Ludovico!

LUD. The same.

COL. Come you, my lord,
To swill with drunken thirst, the poor revenge
That makes a little mind's ignoble joy?

LUD. Guards, I discharge Colonna from your care;
He is no more your prisoner—Hence!

[*Exeunt OFFICER and GUARDS, L. H.*

My lord,

Such is the vengeance of Ludovico!

COL. What is a man doomed to the stroke of death
To understand by this?

LUD. That I am his friend
Who called me traitor!

COL. Such I call you still.

LUD. Well then, I am a traitor, but listen:

Your father was the tutor of the king,
And loyalty is your inheritance—
I am not blind to such exalted virtue,
And I resolved to win Colonna's heart,
As hearts like his are won! Unto the king
Soon as Vicentio's fate had reached mine ear,
I hastened and implored your life.

COL. My life!

Well, sir, my life? (*with indifference.*)

LUD. Upon my knees I fell,

Nor can I speak the joy that in my heart—

Leaped, when I heard him say, that thou should'st live.

COL. I am loth to owe you gratitude, my lord,
But, for my sister's sake, whom I would not
Leave unprotected on the earth, I thank you!

LUD. You have no cause to thank me; for, Colonna,
He did pronounce your death, e'en as he said
He gave you life.

COL. I understand you not.

LUD. Your honour's death, Colonna, which I hold
The fountain of vitality.

COL. Go on !

I scarce did hear what did concern my life,
But aught that touches honour—

LUD. Oh, Colonna,

I almost dread to tell thee !

COL. Pr'ythee, speak !

You put me on the rack !

LUD. Wilt thou promise me,—

I will not ask thee to be calm, Colonna,—
Wilt promise me, that thou wilt not be mad ?

COL. Whate'er it be, I will contain myself.

You said 'twas something that concern'd mine honour,
The honour of mine house—he did not dare
To say my blood should by a foul attaint
Be in my veins corrupted ; from their height
The mouldering banners of my family,
Flung to the earth ; the 'scutcheons of my fame
Trod by dishonour's foot, and my great race
Struck from the list of nobles ?

LUD. No, Colonna,

Struck from the list of men !—He dared to ask
As a condition for the life, (my tongue
Doth falter as I speak it, and my heart
Can scarcely heave) by Heavens he dared to ask
That, to his foul and impious clasp, thou shouldst
Yield up thy sister.

COL. Ha !

LUD. The king doth set a price

Upon thy life, and 'tis thy sister's honour.

COL. My sister !

LUD. Ay, thy sister, Evadne !

COL. By yon heaven,

Tho' he were born with immortality,
I will find some way to kill him !

My sister !

LUD. Do not waste in idle wrath—

COL. My fathers, do you hear it in the tomb ?

Do not your mouldering remnants of the earth
Feel horrid animation in the grave,
And strive to burst the ponderous sepulchre,
And throw it off?—My sister, oh, yon heavens ;
Was this reserved for me ? For me,—the son

Of that great man that tutored him in arms,
 And loved him as myself?—I know you wonder
 That tears are dropping from my flaming eye-lid ;
 But 'tis the streaming of a burning heart,
 And these are drops of fire—my sister !

LUD. Now—

Do you now call me traitor ? Do you think
 'Twas such a crime from off my country's heart
 To fling this incubus of royalty ?—
 Am I a traitor ? Is't a sin, my lord,
 To think a dagger were of use in Naples ?

COL. Thou shalt not touch a solitary hair

Upon the villain's head !—his life is mine ;
 His heart is grown my property, Ludovico,
 None kills him but myself!—I will, this moment,
 Amid the assembled court, in face of day,
 Rush on the monster, and without a sword
 Tear him to pieces ! (*going L. H.*)

LUD. Nay, Colonna,

Within his court he might perchance escape you ;
 But, if you do incline to do a deed
 Antiquity would envy, with the means
 He hath furnished you himself !—He means, Colonna,
 In your own house that you should hold to-night
 A glorious revelry, to celebrate
 Your sovereign's sacred presence ; and so soon
 As all the guests are parted, you yourself
 Should lead your sister to him.

COL. That I should

Convert the palace of mine ancestors
 Into a place of brotheltry—myself ;
 Tell me no more, I prithee, if thou would'st
 I should be fit for death !—

LUD. In honour be

A Roman, an Italian in revenge.
 Waste not in idle and tempestuous sound
 Thy great resolve. The king intends to bear
 The honour of his presence to your house,—
 Nay, hold !—I'll tell him you consent—he straight
 Will fall into the snare, and then, Colonna,
 Make offering of his blood to thy revenge !

COL. I thank thee for thy warning—'tis well thought on—

I'll make my vengeance certain, and commend
Thy wisdom in the counselling.

LUD. Then, hie thee hence!

And make fit preparation for the banquet.

I'll straight return and tell him you're all joy
In the honour of his coming.

COL. The rigorous muscles of my clenched hand

Already feel impatience for the blow

That strikes the crowned monster to the heart!

[*Exeunt, COLONNA, L. H.; LUDOVICO, R. H.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A vast hall in Colonna's Palace filled with statues. The moon streams in through the Gothic windows, and appears to fall upon the statues. A chamber door at the back.*

Enter LUDOVICO and the KING, R. H. U. E.

LUD. This is the way, my liege. Colonna bade me
Conduct you to your chamber, while he went
To seek the fair Evadne, and conduct
Her to your highness' arms.

KING. Ludovico, thou hast proved thyself, to-day,
The genius of my happier destiny :
Thee must I thank, for 'twas thy rarer wit
Did guide me on to heaven.

LUD. (*aside.*) I'll send you there.

KING. When first I heard Vicentio fell beneath
The hot Colonna's sword, I do confess
It smote me sore ; but now 'tis told abroad
That he hath passed all peril.

LUD. I am glad
His death doth not conduct you to your joys.

Vicentio bears a slight unarming wound
That sheds his blood, but perils not his life :
But let him pass—let not a thought of him
Flit round the couch of love.

KING. Good night, my friend ;
And, pr'ythee, bid Colonna swiftly lead her
To the expecting transports of my heart.

LUD. I will bid him speed her coyness.

KING. Hie thee, Ludovico,
For every moment seems an age.

[*Exit into chamber, R. 3 E.*

LUD. An age !
For you, nor minute, hour, nor day, nor year,
Nor age shall, shortly be.
'Tis now the dead of night—That sounds to me
Like an apt word ; for nature doth to me
Show, like a giant corse ;—h is mighty world,
Its wide and highly-vaulted sepulchre,
And yonder moon a tomb-lamp ! When the king
Lies dead to boot, all things will then appear
In a more full proportion. Ha ! he comes !
My dull and unconscious instrument—Colonna !

Enter COLONNA with a dagger, L. 2 E.

Welcome, my friend, for such I dare to call you.
The king's already to his bed retired,
Where death will be his paramour.

COL. I have heard
Vicentio was not wounded unto death.
Would this were sooner known.

LUD. Why, my good lord ?
COL. Because the king would not have offered me
Such an indignity, nor should I now
Tread in to murder.

LUD. Murder ! I had hoped
You would not on the threshold of the deed
Stay tottering thus. One would deem
It was a deed of sin, and not of honour,
That you had undertaken.

COL. By yon heaven,
I cannot stab him like a slave that's hired

To be a blood-shedder ! I cannot clench
 This hand—accustomed to a soldier's sword—
 Around this treacherous hilt, and, with the other,
 Squeeze the choked spirit from the gasping throat.
 Then kneel upon his bosom, and press out
 The last faint sigh of life ! Down, damned steel !
 Fit instrument for cowards ! (*throws down the dagger*
near R. H.) I will play

A warrior's part, and arm him for the fight !
 Give me thy sword, that I may put my defence
 Into the tyrant's hand, and nobly kill him !
 Come forth ! (*going to R. 3 E.*)

LUD. Hold, madman, hold !—What wouldest thou do ?

COL. Bravely encounter him, not take his life
 Like a mercenary stabber.

LUD. Hast thou thought
 That he may be the victor, too ?

COL. My death
 Will not be thought inglorious.

LUD. There's some praise
 In falling by the hand of royalty ;
 But when you are laid within your sepulchre,
 And rot most honourably, then I fear me
 A lesser shame will not befall your house
 For all the graven marbles on your tomb.
 Your sister—

COL. Ha !

LUD. Your sister will not find,
 When you are dead, a bulwark in your grave.
 Where will she find a guardian arm ? Thine arm
 Will be the food of the consuming worm ;
 While in the hot embraces of the king—

COL. I did not think on that.

LUD. But I perhaps mistake you all this while.
 You had better thought upon the dignity
 He means your house.

COL. You do not dare—

LUD. I dare to tell you this :—
 Who can forgive such injury as thine,
 Hath half consented to it. How is it
 The glorious resolve hath cooled within thee ?

Hath anything befallen that should have blown
 On the red iron of thy heated wrath,
 And steeped thee back to meekness ? Was the touch
 Of his warm amorous hand, wherein he palmed
 Her struggling fingers, ice upon your rage ?
 When he did tread upon her yielding foot
 Beneath the cloth of gold—

COL. If I had seen it,
 He had not lived an instant.

LUD. When you turned,
 He flung his arms around, and on her cheek
 He pressed his ravenous lips. 'Sdeath, sir, consider :
 You pray the King of Naples to your roof ;
 You hail his coming in a feast that kings
 Could scarce exceed in glory ; it is blown
 Thro' all the city that he sleeps to-night
 Within your sister's bed ; and, it is said,
 That you yourself have smoothed the pillow down.

COL. Where is he ? Let me see him who presumes
 To think the blasphemy.

LUD. Behold him here !
 I, sir—yes, I—Ludovico, dare think
 With every man in Naples, if the king
 Should leave your roof with life, that he has tasted
 The fruit he came to pluck.

COL. No more—no more !
 He perishes, Ludovico !

LUD. That's well !
 I am glad to see you pull into your heart
 (*takes up dagger.*)

Its brave resolve again ; and if there be
 Aught wanting to confirm thee, think, Colonna,
 Think that you give your country liberty,
 While you revenge yourself ! Go, my Colonna :
 Yonder's the fated chamber ; plunge the steel

(*gives the dagger.*)

Into his inmost heart, and let the blood
 Flow largely.

COL. I'll call to thee when it is done.

LUD. Hark thee ! he'll cry for life ; and well I know
 The pleading for existence may have power

Upon thy noble nature ; then, Colonna,
Drown every shriek with chaste Evadne's name,
And stab him as thou criest it ! [Exit, 1 E. L.

(COLONNA advances towards the chamber door in centre.

COL. I will do it—yes, I will do it !

EVADNE. (without, L. H. U. E., exclaims.) Hold !

COL. (starting.) It was only

My thought informed the air with voice around me—
Why should I feel as if I walked in guilt,
And trod to common murder ? He shall die !
Come, then, enraging thought, into my breast,
And turn it into iron !

EVADNE. (without, L. H. U. E.) Hold !

COL. It shot

With keen reality into mine ear.

A figure, in the shadow of the moon,

Moves slowly on my sight.

What art thou ?

EVADNE advances, L. H. U. E., from behind the Statues

EVADNE. My brother !

COL. How, my sister !

Came you across my purpose ?

EVADNE. From my chamber I did behold you.

In dreadful converse with Ludovico.

And, I as soon had seen thee

Commune with the great foe of all mankind.

What wouldest thou do ? Murder ?

COL. Murder !

EVADNE. What else, Colonna,

Couldst thou have learned from Ludovico ?

COL. In yonder chamber lies the king : I go

To stab him to the heart.

EVADNE. 'Tis nobly done !

I will not call him king, but guest.

Remember, you have called him here—remember,

You have pledged him in your father's golden cup ;

Have broken bread with him. The man, Colonna—

COL. Who dares to set a price upon my life.

What thinks't thou 'twas ?

EVADNE. I think there's nought too dear
To buy Colonna's life.

COL. 'Twas a vast price
He asked me then; you were to pay it, too—
It was my Evadne's honour.

EVADNE. Ha!

COL. Now, if thou wilt, abide thee here, Evadne,
Where thou mayest hear his groan. (*going in.*)

EVADNE. Forbear, Colonna!

Let not this hand be blotted over with blood.
COL. Evadne!

EVADNE. Well?

COL. The king expects me to
Conduct you to his chamber. Shall I do so?

EVADNE. I pr'ythee be not angry with me,
But bid him come to me.

COL. What! bid him come to thee?

EVADNE. And leave me with him here.
I implore it of thee.

COL. Yes, I will try her.

I know not what she means, but, hitherto,
I deemed her virtuous.

EVADNE. Send him to me.

COL. There's a wild purpose in her solemn eye.

I not not if 'tis sin, but I will make

A terrible experiment. (*aside.*) What, ho!

My liege, I bear fulfilment of my promise—
Colonna bears Evadne to your arms!

Enter the KING from the chamber, R. 3 E.

KING. Colonna, my best friend, how shall I thank thee?

I not only give thee life,

But place thee near myself; henceforth thou wilt
bear

A nobler title in thy family,

And to thy great posterity we'll send

My granted dukedom.

COL. Sir, you honour me.

My presence is no longer needed here.

(*aside.*) A word's consent despatches them!

(conceals himself behind the pillars, R. H. U. E.)

KING. My fair Evadne, lay aside thy sad

And drooping aspect in this hour of joy.

Stoop not thy head, that like a pale rose bends
Upon its yielding stalk.

I'll place thee high in honour.

EVADNE. (L. H.) Honour, sir?

KING. (R. H.) Yes; I'll exalt thee into dignity—

Adorn thy name with titles.

Come, my Evadne, what a form is here?

The imaginers of beauty did of old

O'er three rich forms of sculptured excellence

Scatter the graces; but the hand

Of mightier nature hath in thee combined

All varied charms together.

EVADNE. You were speaking of sculpture, sir.

Here, my lord, (*pointing to the statues.*)

Is matter for your transports!

KING. Fair Evadne,

Do you not mean to mock me?

EVADNE. Nay, it is my wish

That you should look upon those reverend forms,

That keep the likeness of mine ancestry.

Behold! (*going to a statue, R. H. S. E.*)

The glorious founder of my family!

It is the great Rodolpho! Charlemagne

Did fix that sun upon his shield, to be

His glory's blazoned emblem.

With what austere and dignified regard

He lifts the type of purity, and seems

Indignantly to ask, if aught that springs

From blood of his, shall dare to sully it

With a vapour of the morning!

KING. It is well;

His frown has been attempered in the lapse

Of generations to thy lovely smile.

EVADNE. Another of mine ancestors, my liege—

(*pointing to a statue, L. U. E.*) Guelfo, the murderer!

KING. The murderer!

I knew not that your family was stained

With the reproach of blood.

EVADNE. We are not wont

To blush, tho' we may sorrow for his sin—
 If sin indeed it be. His castle walls
 Were circled by the siege of Saracens :
 He had an only daughter whom he prized
 More than you do your diadem ; but when
 He saw the fury of the infidels
 Burst through his shattered gates, and on his child
 Dishonour's hand was lifted, with one blow
 He struck her to the heart, and, with the other,
 He stretched himself beside her.

KING. Fair Evadne,
 I must no more indulge you, else I fear
 You would scorn me for my patience ; prithee, love,
 No more of this wild phantasy !

EVADNE. My liege,
 But one remains, and when you have looked upon it,
 And thus complied with my request, you will find me
 Submissive to your own. Look here, my lord ;
 Know you this statue ? (*pointing to a statue, L. 2 E.*)

KING. It is your father !

EVADNE. (*breaking into exultation.*) Ay ! 'tis indeed my
 father—'tis my good,
 Exalted, generous, and god-like father !
 Whose memory, though he had left his child
 A naked, houseless roamer through the world,
 Were an inheritance a princess might
 Be proud of for her dower ! Who was my father ?

(*with a proud and conscious interrogatory.*)
 KING. One, whom I confess
 Of high and many virtues.

EVADNE. Is that all ?
 I will help your memory, and tell you, first,
 That the late King of Naples looked among
 The noblest in his realm for that good man,
 To whom he might entrust your opening youth,
 And found him worthiest. His whole life
 Was given to your uses, and his death—
 Ha ! do you start, my lord ? On Milan's plain
 He fought beside you, and when he beheld
 A sword thrust at your bosom, rushed between—
 it pierc'd him !

He fell down at your feet!—He perished to preserve
you!

Breathless image, (*rushes to the statue.*)

Altho' no heart doth beat within that breast,
No blood is in those veins, let me enclasp thee!

Now, sir, I am ready.

Come take me from this neck of senseless stone;
Come and unloose me from my father's arms;
Come, if you dare, and in his daughter's shame
Reward him for the last drops of the blood

Shed for his prince's life!

KING. Thou hast wrought

A miracle upon thy prince's heart,
And lifted up a vestal lamp to show
My soul its own deformity—my guilt!

EVADNE. (*disengaging herself from the statue.*) Ha!

have you a soul? have you yet left
One relic of a man?

Heart! do not burst in ecstacy too soon;
My brother! my Colonna! hear me—hear!
In all the wildering triumph of my soul
I call upon thee!

(*turning, she perceives COLONNA advancing from among the statues, R. U. E.*

There he is—my brother!

COL. (*in centre.*) Let me behold thee!

Let me compress thee here! Oh, my dear sister!
A thousand times mine own! I glory in thee;
More than in all the heroes of my name!
I overheard your converse, and methought
It was a blessed spirit that had ta'en
Thy heavenly form to show the wondering world
How beautiful was virtue!—Sir—(*to the KING.*)

EVADNE. (*L. H.*) Colonna—there is your king!

COL. Thou hast made him so again;

Thy virtue hath re-crowned him; and I kneel
His faithful subject here!

KING. (*R. H.*) Arise, Colonna!

You take the attitude that more befits
The man who would have wronged you, but whose
heart

Was by a seraph call'd again to heaven !
Forgive me !

COL. Yes, with all my soul I do !
And I will give you proof how suddenly
You are grown my prince again. Do not enquire
What I intend, but let me lead you here
Behind these statues.

(places the king behind the statues R. U. E.
Retire, my best Evadne ! [Exit EVADNE L. U. E.
Ho, Ludovico !
What ! ho there !—Here he comes !

Enter LUDOVICO, L. 1 E.

Ludovico,
I have done the deed !

LUD. He is dead ?

COL. Thro' his heart,
E'en as thou badest me, did I drive the steel ;
And, as he cried for life, Evadne's name
Drowned his last shriek !

LUD. So !

COL. Why do you
Stand thus rapt ? Why does your bosom heave
In such wild tumult ? Why is it you place
Your hand upon your brow ? What hath possessed
you ?

LUD. (with a strong laugh of irony.) Fool !

COL. How is this ?

LUD. So, thou hast slain the king ?

COL. I did but follow your advice, my lord.

LUD. Therefore, I call ye—fool ! From the king's head
Thou hast ta'en the crown, to place it on mine own !
Therefore I touched my brow, for I did think
That palpably, I felt the diadem
Wreathing its golden round about my brow.
But, by yon heaven, scarce do I feel more joy
In climbing up to empire, than I do
In knowing thee my dupe !

COL. I know, my lord,
You bade me kill the king,

LUD. And since thou hast slain him,

Know more :—'twas I that first within his heart
Lighted impurity ; 'twas I, Colonna—
Hear it—'twas I that did persuade the king
To ask thy sister's honour as the price
Of thine accorded life !

COL. You ?

LUD. Wouldst hear more ?
To-morrow sees me king ! I have already
Prepared three thousand of my followers
To call me to the throne ; and, when I am there,
I'll try thee for the murdering of the king,
And then—What ho, there ! guards !—then, my good
lord,
When the good trenchant axe hath struck away
That dull and passionate head of thine—What, ho !—

Enter OFFICER and EIGHT GUARDS, L.

I'll take the fair Evadne to mine arms,
And thus— On yonder traitor seize !—
With sacrilegious hand he has ta'en away
The consecrated life of majesty,
And—

The KING comes forward in centre from R. U. E.

What do I behold ? Is not my sense
Mocked with this horrid vision
That hath started up
To make an idiot of me ? Is it not
The vapour of the senses that has framed
The only spectacle that ever yet
Appalled Ludovico ?

KING. Behold thy king !

LUD. He lives ! I am betrayed—but let me not
Play traitor to myself :—befriend me still
Thou guarding genius of Ludovico !
My liege, my royal master, do I see you
Safe from the plots of yon accursed traitor ?
And, throwing thus myself around your knees,
Do I clasp reality ?

KING.

Traitor, arise!

Nor dare pollute my garments with a touch!
I know thee for a villain!—Seize him, guards!

LUD. (*drawing his sword.*) By this right arm, they dare
not—this right arm

That to the battle oft hath led them on;
Whose power to kill they know, but would not feel!
I am betrayed—but who will dare to leap
Into the pit wherein the lion's caught,
And hug with him for death?—not one of this
Vile herd of trembling wretches!

(*to the KING.*) Thou art meet alone to encounter me;
And thus in the wild bravery of despair,
I rush into thy life!

(COLONNA *intercepts and stabs him.* LUDOVICO falls, L.
Colonna, thou hast conquered!—Oh, that I could,
Like an expiring dragon, spit upon you!
That I could—thus I fling the drops of life
In showers of poison on you—May it fall,
Like Centaur blood, and fester you to madness!
Oh, that I could— (*he grasps his sword, and in an
effort to rise, dies.*)

Enter EVADNE, L. H., and crosses to COLONNA.

EVADNE. Oh, my brother!

KING. Thou hast a second time preserv'd thy prince!
Fair Evadne, we will repair our injuries to thee,
And wait in all the pomp of royalty
Upon the sacred day that gives thy hand
To thy beloved Vicentio!

VICENTIO enters, L. 1 E.

VICENT. Where is she—my Evadne? Oh, I have heard all!
Olivia hath confessed how she hath wronged thee.

At thy feet I throw myself, and sue for pardon.

EVADNE. Evadne grants it with a throbbing heart.

COL. So does Colonna with a welcome hand.

VICENT. My liege—

KING. Thy liege! who blushing for the past,
Thus joins thy hand to one who, for the future,

Will ever throw around thee the halo of true happiness.

COL. And the nuptials

Shall at the pedestal be solemnized
Of our great father !

EVADNE. And ever, as in this blest moment, may

His guardian spirit, with celestial love,
Spread its bright wings to shelter us from ill ;
With nature's tenderest feelings looking down
Benignant on the fortunes of his child.

Disposition of the characters when the curtain falls :

OFFICER. GUARDS. LUDOVICO.

COLONNA. EVADNE. VICENT. KING.

R.

L.