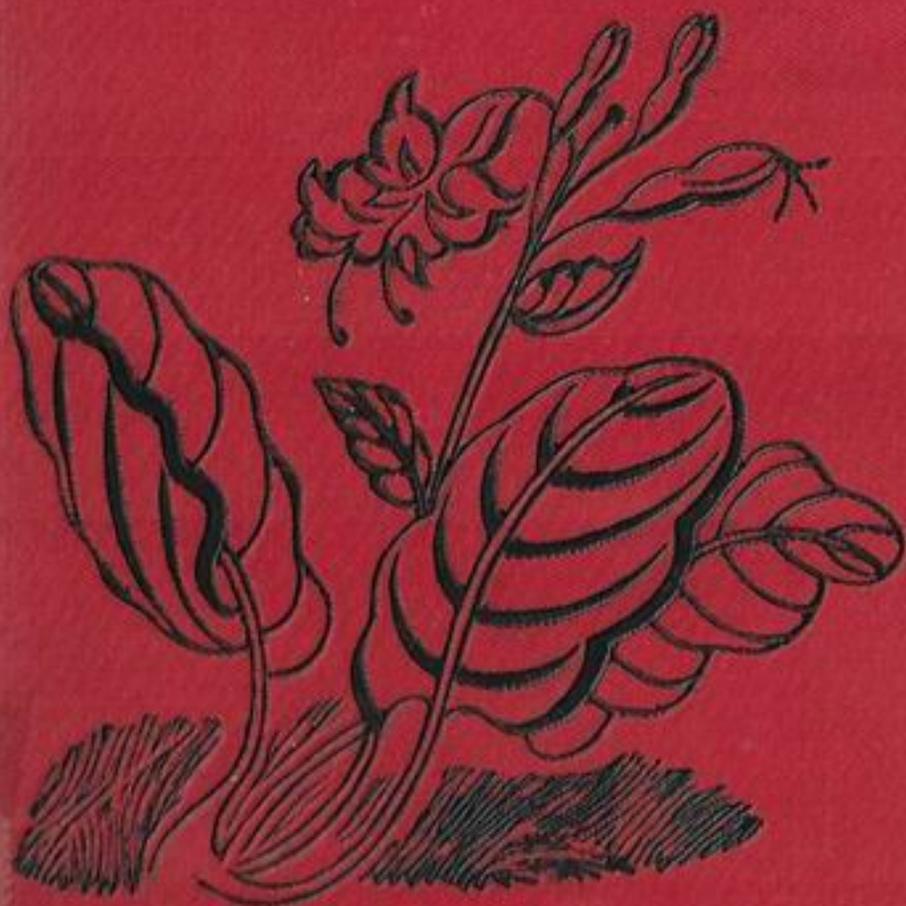


A DRAMA AND LYRICS

C. G. O'BRIEN



A DRAMA
AND
LYRICS
C. G. O'BRIEN



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A TALE OF VENICE:

A Drama.

AND

LYRICS.

BY

CHARLOTTE G. O'BRIEN,

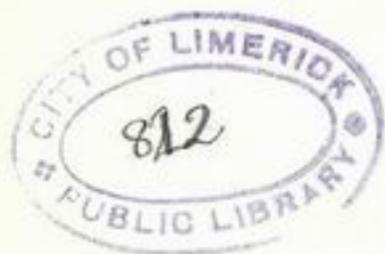
AUTHOR OF "LIGHT AND SHADE."

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A Tale of Venice.

Dramatis Personæ.

SEVERO, *A Merchant from Verona.*
ALESSIO, *A Youth of Venice.*
MANTURA, *Father to Alessio.*
GIUSEPPE, *Gondolier.*
DOGE, LORDS, &c.
LELLIA, *Sister to Severo.*
BRIGIDA, *Cousin to Lellia.*
ABBESS, &c.

SCENE—*Venice.*

A TALE OF VENICE.

Act I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Venice. Evening.*
Enter SEVERO to BRIGIDA.

BRIGIDA.

Whence comest thou, Severo, this still night?

SEVERO.

From the Piazza. The new-risen moon
Its silver shafts sped o'er the trembling wave,
And from the sculptured columns, white as
snow,

Thrust back the night and darkness.

BRIGIDA.

'Tis a sight

Fairer than man could dream, and thou so
late

Within this town abiding, joy to see it.

SEVERO.

You from Verona are new come, methinks?

BRIGIDA.

This very night. I came upon your bidding.

SEVERO.

I thank you much, Brigida: you did well.

You know my sister, the young Lellia?

BRIGIDA.

Thrice have I seen her : first a new-born babe,
Nestling, unformed, upon her mother's breast,
Yet, to a woman's eye, most gracious, love-
like—

That mother, as thou knowest, died too
soon—

I saw her then a child and sorrowless,
In joyous cadence on my listening ear
Her rippling laughter rang; once yet again
I looked on her a girl all robed in white;
Her eyes had found some new unspoken
depths.

Her soul had wakened in her as she knelt
First to the holy rite.—But since that day
I have not seen her.

SEVERO.

For since that same day
The convent walls have guarded her pure
youth;
And such as on that day so is she still,
All innocent, unknowing of all wrong;
Now in the flower of maidenhood, alone,
An orphan, but for me without one friend,
She steps abroad to breathe the air of love,
To meet man's love and falsehood.
Say, dear cousin,
You know me wealthy?

BRIGIDA.

Ay, I know your ship
Full freighted tosses on th' uncertain seas—
Grant it once sheltered in your still lagoons
Then were you rich, in truth—but what of that?

SEVERO.

Even this, Brigida. Would you live with us,
Tend my young sister and direct her steps,
As womanhood and virtue show the way?
You shall show kindness to me doing this
To Lellia, love and goodness.

BRIGIDA.

Well, Severo,
I'll cast it over in my dreams to-night,
And for my love to my dear cousin, Lellia,
Believe me, it was born even at her birth:
As so it is, we know not why, but women
Will love one child, and let all others be;
Not for their beauty or respect of worth,
But for some hidden secret of the mind,
That draws the blood in one strong, yearning
pulse,
Throbs in the quivering breasts, and stirs the
hands
To clasp the sleeping babe close and more
close,
Still nearest to the heart; and such a love
Had I to Lellia.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

The Signor Alessio.

BRIGIDA.

Oh, then, good-night, Severo; I retire.

[Exit.

SEVERO.

Good-night, dear cousin, think of what I say;
I trust the morn will hold a kindly answer.

Enter ALESSIO.

Welcome, Alessio. How comest thou so early?

ALESSIO.

I come, but on my way to what's to come—
The play—and then the dance—and then the
cards—

What after that, Severo, if not morn?

SEVERO.

Who knows? Not I? Alessio, dear Alessio,
You fling yourself from madness into vice:
Will you not turn to measure your lost life,
Ere folly lays aside her gorgeous cloak
And shows the ruin under?

ALESSIO.

Ruin! Ruin!

Who talks of ruin?

SEVERO.

I do, dear Alessio.

I, your old friend, to whom in schoolboy days
You came for help; I ask you, make a stand

Now while you can, while yet you are your
own,
Ere heaven's misfortunes crush you, or ere hell
Lays hold of you with guilt.

ALESSIO.

Nay, nay, Severo,

Guilt is an evil word; I am not wicked.

SEVERO.

Not in the reckoning of the youths of Venice;
But, take a higher mark.

ALESSIO.

Ah, well, Severo,

You are not I; thank heaven, I am not you—

“We have but one hour to carol our play,

Then weary old age looks in—well-a-day.”

And such as you, Severo, spend that hour

In moaning o'er the future, or the past;

While such as I—had I but money—well!

Enter LELLIA, *not seeing* ALESSIO, *goes to*

SEVERO.

(Aside.)—Ha, by the grapes of Bacchus! What
a maid!

LELLIA.

Oh, brother dear, dear brother, I have come
To tell you how I love you, and to feel
A little love from you about my heart,
To lay my hands upon your clustering hair,
To lay my cheek against your dear white
hand,

To love you, yes, to love you, and to know
That never more the cruel convent walls
Will shut you from my sight. Ah! could you
guess

How I have suffered, wanting you, dear brother,
To draw me to your heart and hold me there,
Rich in our wealth of fair, clear-sighted love—
Ah, could you know! But—do you love me
still?

SEVERO.

Yes, sister, dearest sister, little one;—
But see, my Lellia, the Signor Alessio
Gives you his greeting.

LELLIA.

Sir, the night is fair,
And fair are all the wishes I give you.

[ALESSIO, *kneeling, kisses her hand.*

ALESSIO.

Full often have I kissed full many a hand
Fresh as the flowers of summer-scented May
Or soft as autumn's fruits;—but thine! oh,
thine!

As lily buds in the new-breathed June
Unclasp their snow-white tips; the wander-
ing winds

Bent o'er those chalice, deep, and silvery wells,
Forget the lights of heaven, and linger on—

SEVERO.

Hold, hold, Alessio, stay thine honied words—
Farewell, sweet sister, 'tis the time for prayer.

LELLIA.

Farewell, dear brother, and, kind sir, good-
night.

[*Exit.*

ALESSIO.

A vision! Oh, ye saints, ye virgin saints!
I thank you for this sight! Why, why, Severo!
I think the devil might be purified
And all his angels, too, through seeing her.
I go to meditate. Adieu, Severo!
Yea! what a treasure lies within my heart.

[*Exit.*

SEVERO (*alone.*)

Fair lilies, said he—lily buds in June?
But, oh! sweet flowers, how swift ye fade and
die,
How soon the brown, dark hues of soiled
earth
Dim o'er your frost-bright blossoms. Shall I
think

That she, perchance, will stain?

No! no! Oh, no!

O God, that made the angels!—angels fell—
The flowers droop and fall, yea, and all things
Most beautiful die utterly—

But you,

Oh, woman, pure in your God-given youth,
You stand in heaven's light, your brow is
crowned

With glory as the stars, your lips are honoured,

Earth's hope and manhood's future bend their
 eyes
 And watch your steps—
 But—stained! O God! if stained?

SCENE II.—LELLIA'S *Boudoir*. *Night*.

LELLIA and BRIGIDA.

LELLIA.

Cousin, I fear you find this life but weary;
 But pardon it. My brother, as you know—

BRIGIDA.

Ay, ay, your brother.—Well! I'm bound—
 I'm bound,
 And bound to silence, too!

LELLIA.

Nay, my good cousin—

BRIGIDA.

Yea, my good cousin! Why?—I speak one
 word;—
 I do but hint that girls, both fair and young,
 Must needs some life, some laughter, and some
 lovers.
 Straightway he blackens as a thundercloud,
 Strange lightnings flash from 'neath his folded
 brows,
 Disgrace, and crime, and death seem all before
 him,
 He speaks unheard-of words.

LELLIA.

Alas! 'tis true.

BRIGIDA.

He's mad!—that's true, and I do fear me much
 He'll drive you mad ere long.

LELLIA.

Oh! say it not.

It is not madness; 'tis but love that runs him
 To this excess; he dreads—I know not what.

BRIGIDA.

I'll tell you, then. He doubts you and mis-
 trusts;
 Your innocent girl laughter is to him
 A thing corrupt, or at the best a trifle
 Leading to evil. Would that I had told him,
 That I must guide and lead you as I would,
 But now I dare not.

LELLIA.

No; nor would I even
 Break from this bondage, though I feel it such.
 Who would not?—all the glories of this city,
 Known to me only by your far report;
 No hope of friendships formed—

BRIGIDA.

No hope of love!

Yes; that's the point—to mew a poor girl up
 With an old woman and a lunatic!

LELLIA.

Stop, cousin, stop, your words are hard, they hurt me.

BRIGIDA.

I will not stop, for once I'll speak the truth. What is it to me or you that he is good, Kind, charitable, gentle, and the rest, Wealthy and wise? So he is mad to us; Let him be sane to others, if so like him To us he's mad.

LELLIA.

If you but loved him, cousin, You would not blame him.

BRIGIDA.

Nay, I should, I should.

LELLIA.

I too must long that he would trust me more. Think you that, being so honoured with his trust, The love I have to him would bear me through, Unstained, in this sad world?

BRIGIDA.

Call you it sad?

LELLIA.

Ay, sad—is it not so? I am but twenty, Nor even so much, yet could I lay me down Here on this couch and ask no more, no better, Than to sleep on and rest.

BRIGIDA.

Just so, just so.

Did I not say that he would make you mad Even as himself? You saw Signor Alessio?

LELLIA.

But for a moment. I remember him.

BRIGIDA.

You'll not forget him quick, I'll warrant you! Lock a girl up, but leave her eyes and ears, She yet shall see and hear.

LELLIA.

What of this, cousin?

BRIGIDA.

This only, darling—Hush! did I not hear Your brother's footstep coming?

LELLIA.

No; 'tis nothing.

Speak, cousin; I would hear.

BRIGIDA.

And I will speak:

Signor Alessio, as I walked last night Beneath the magic domes of fair San Marco, Sudden appeared. Oh! Lellia, he was bright, Most beautiful to look on, as an angel Wrought by the hand of Raphael the divine.— Seemed he not so to you?

LELLIA.

I dream him fair,

And in his voice all noted music strives In harmony of sweetness.

BRIGIDA.

True, most true ;
It was a voice to stay the pale, white clouds
Upon their onward paths—to call the winds
From forth deep, waving meads.

LELLIA.

But what?—but what
Said he to you, dear friend?

BRIGIDA.

What think you, Lellia?

LELLIA.

I know not.

BRIGIDA.

Know not! nay, but you may guess it.
Young men, you know, they have not many
thoughts,
And such they have are common to their kind.

LELLIA.

My brother—he has thoughts, yet he is young.

BRIGIDA.

Your brother! Oh, your brother—he is mad—
A genius, or a scholar, or a saint,
As you may take him. Not of him I speak,
Or of his like, but of the genus—man—
Man, the young man, the crude, raw stuff of
passion,
Vice, folly, lust, indulgence—what you will!

LELLIA.

Is this your picture of Signor Alessio?

BRIGIDA.

Nay, not this merely; but in him blood flows,
Heart beats, and hands take the occasion fit
To gain his will. He is no washed-out
pattern—

No; nor no fiend of melancholy madness—
But, hear! He bade me tell you if I loved
you—

Oh! could I but remember all his words
The delicate, phrased words he hid it in.
This was the pith—that since the night he
saw you

His heart still beat the rhythm of your name—
His eyes, through all the murky midnight
darkness,

Still held remembrance of your snow-white
brow—

Your drifts of golden hair—his ears, enchanted,
Sang o'er and o'er the music of your voice—
What else? Can you not fancy? Ah, what
blushes!

LELLIA.

Oh, silence, cousin. Could my brother hear—

BRIGIDA.

'Tis well he cannot. Let me tell you, Lellia,
Others are in the world besides your brother.
What will you do when he brings home his
wife?

Men love their wives, not sisters.

LELLIA.

Cousin, spare me!

BRIGIDA.

He'll do it some fine day, and that you'll see.
But stay—'tis he.

Enter SEVERO.

SEVERO.

My Lellia, I have come,
Having returned but now to bid good-
night.

You look but weary, dearest—is it so?

LELLIA.

Oh, brother, I am weary, weary, weary!

BRIGIDA.

And well she may be too, Signor Severo!
What right have you within these garden
walls

To imprison this fair face? Give her but air,
Life, laughter, and the world—all will be well!

SEVERO.

Is it Lellia speaks in this, or you, Brigida?

BRIGIDA.

'Tis I, then, if you like. I say 'tis wicked!—
How do you hope to marry her?

SEVERO.

Be silent!

Lellia, do you, too, seek that folly—marriage

LELLIA.

No, brother, no! I do but ask for freedom.

SEVERO.

Child, that's a word that hides an evil slough
Beneath a snowy front. Freedom of thought—
Yea, and a man in following of that beacon
Falls headlong, drowned in doubt. Freedom
of will—

That leads him on to lust, to fierce ambition,
To cruel, cold self-pleasing—you ask freedom!
You know not what you ask.

LELLIA.

I do; I know.

SEVERO.

No, Lellia, you know not. Know you passion?
Passion that draws the life-blood from the
heart,

And leaves a wasted corpse—that comes of
freedom.

Doubts that drag down the clear, eternal
heavens,

And sweep them forth to chaos. This is free-
dom.

Freedom is pain, is agony, despair,
Crime, suicide, and hell! Yet you ask freedom.

LELLIA.

Oh, brother, not such freedom do I ask;
Only a little air—I am but young.

SEVERO.

Yes, all too young to brave the world, dear
Lellia.

Now, little one, safe here within your cage
You beat the bars and cry but, could I ope
The doors and let you go, too soon all
wounded,

Breathless, affrighted would you turn again
To these young innocent days. But, ah! my
sister,

Those doors once open never close again,
That heart once wounded never heals again,
Those feathers soiled can ne'er be pure again.

LELLIA.

Severo, am not I as other girls?
Why should you fear me wicked?

SEVERO.

Nay, I do not.

To-morrow, or soon after you shall stand
Entranced, and gaze upon the quivering lips
of Titian's mighty virgin—you shall see
The gondoliers strike past, and hear their
cries

Ring round the cabled corners of old houses.
Dream of it, love, for I must go. Good-night.

SCENE III.—*The Bridge of Sighs. Starlight.*
SEVERO and ALESSIO. *Lights of the City*
Reflected in the Water.

ALESSIO.

Full many a time since that first day we met,
My gratitude and I have been companions
To praise your name; and now once more I
thank you.

You take my debt upon you, give your bond,
And I—can give but thanks.

SEVERO.

Enough, Alessio;

For what is friendship, if not sacrifice?
Beside, I count this bond but worth the parch-
ment

Whereon 'tis writ, for sure your father's credit
May stand this sum and more, dared you but
ask him.

ALESSIO.

I thank you having saved me from that need:
You know not, dear Severo, how his hand
Grasps ever after gold.

SEVERO.

Our ship returned
Will free us both or ere the month be out.

ALESSIO.

Let us be merry in the mean, Severo ;
 Luck's with the young, you know, and we are
 young—
 Or should be, were your brains but as your
 years.

SEVERO.

I have had years enough to measure sorrow ;
 You, yet unscathed, may wear the plumes of
 youth—
 Keep them but pure, Alessio—keep them
 pure !

ALESSIO.

You leave me youth at least, and with it joy ?

SEVERO.

Such joy as comes of youth—yes, yours it is.
 You as a gull upon the waters sway,
 Now up now down, no motion of your own,
 But, aye your purse, your eyes, your ears
 must guide you.

ALESSIO.

And in good time, too.

Enter MASKS.

See ! oh, see, Severo,
 Where maskèd beauties o'er the Bridge of
 Sighs
 Draw hitherward to greet us.

SONG.

“ Oh ! the night is ours,
 And for the dawn—
 Why should we remember,
 The coming of the dawn ?
 Why, amid June flowers,
 Think of drear December ?
 Why, when wine is sparkling,
 Think of waters darkling,
 Think of the dawn ?”

SEVERO.

Oh ! to me
 Most miserable sight—And will ye die ?
 Is there no mercy in God's holy heaven,
 To slay them in their youth still innocent ?

FIRST WOMAN.

Mad ?

SECOND WOMAN.

Is he mad ?

THIRD WOMAN.

He looks so terrible.

(SEVERO *springs forward and grasps a young
 girl.*)

ALL.

O Virgin Mother, save us ! Catarina !
 See, see, our youngest ! Lord, if he be mad !

SEVERO.

Oh, girl ! oh, woman ! you so young, so young,
 Turn ! turn ! oh, seek yon salt and restless
 waters,

Take of their waves for tears to wash your
stains.

(He pushes her from him.)

God! that a woman should be so bright, so
fair,
So loathsome, and so stained!

WOMEN.

Oh, Catarina!

ALESSIO.

Hush, hush, Severo! art thou mad, indeed?
These maids are pure as thou, and come but
now
From some gay wedding or quaint maskèd
ball.—

Dear ladies, pass, fear not, my friend is still.

[Exit women.]

Severo, if you love me, tell me now,
Why still in woman you see naught but evil,
I naught but good?

SEVERO.

Oh, ask me not, Alessio!

ALESSIO.

Nay, nay, but tell me; it will ease your mind,
Which now, believe me, is too sore o'er-
burdened.

SEVERO.

Thou think'st me mad—is it not so? Be true.

ALESSIO.

Most truly, then, I think, that to be true
In this one thing I would not trust you, friend;
Your eye, distempered by this one disease,
Sees blackness in each fairest form of light,
Full sure some cause must lie behind this cause,
To you of sorrow, darkness, and mistrust.

SEVERO.

Be silent, then, you who must fathom grief,
As a young child that lightly tears a wound,
In its mere life, nor knows the agony—
And I will tear for you my inmost heart,
My secret and my pain *** Look! look! The
stars

Gleam in these depths of water! Are they
eyes?

Eyes of my love to haunt me through the
world!

Oh, loved and hated! God! O God forgive
thee!

ALESSIO.

Guard you, Severo! To whom speakest thou?

SEVERO.

Oh, I love her, Alessio—loved her, say you?
You did not love her!—you did not betray me?
No! no! no! no!

Oh, mind; catch back thy clue.—

What is it, Alessio?

ALESSIO.

Hush, Severo, hush!

Come home to-night, for I would know no more.

SEVERO.

Nay, but you shall, else would you laugh, and laugh,
Hide your gay face, and say, "He's mad for love."

But could you see her face, hers whom he loves,

Your flesh would shudder. She is dead, Alessio!
Dead! ay and drowned, Alessio!—dead and drowned!

She and her lover, too.

ALESSIO.

You murdered them?

SEVERO.

I would have done it, before God, Alessio!
But she—she saved my hand, she stabbed him here,

Then asked my love. Yea, even then I loved her,

Fiend as she was, Alessio. God stood by me;
I thrust the murderess back; she turned and cursed me,

Those cursing glittering eyes, they haunt the stars—

The stars, Alessio; yes, those distant stars,

Alive with flaming eyes. Oh! she was foul,
Foul as the circled hell—and yet I loved her.

ALESSIO.

She is dead, Severo?

SEVERO.

Yes; thus cursing, she

Turned from me to the bridge—there—where
thou leanest;

And ere the startled night received my cry,
The waters closed above her!—Am I mad?
Have I not cause?

ALESSIO.

God knows, and cause enough

If all be true?

SEVERO.

If all be true? If all be true, Alessio?

Too long, too long, my love, too strong for
doubt

Scotched every question as a poisoning sin,
Malignant to my life * * * Vain! vain! oh,
vain!

Whisper, Alessio!—have you learned it? No?
Fair women can be traitors; ay, they can.

ALESSIO.

I never doubted it;—but so can men.

SEVERO.

Men bear the devil's seal upon their brows
When he has set his seal upon their hearts;

Woman alone will wear an angel's brow
 Upon a devil's heart.— Are they all foul?
 All! all! all! all! * * *
 Foul as the slime beneath those glistening
 waves?

ALESSIO.

Surely, your sister—

SEVERO.

Speak you of my sister?

Ay, dog! you spoke of her!—you spoke of
 Lellia.

Is her name foul!—Draw! draw! Is her
 name foul?

Speak of my sister!

ALESSIO.

Oh, Severo, quiet!

Come home, come home, dear friend; I would
 not hurt you,

Not for my life's defence. Come, dearest
 friend;

The very latest stars before the dawn
 Flash o'er the eastern waters. See, Severo!

SEVERO.

Ay, ay! her eyes—the stars—the stars—the
 stars,—

Oh, dear Alessio, I am faint and weary.

Come in, come in, come in; I am most weary.

Act II.

SCENE I.—*Mid-day. The Piazza in front of St.
 Mark's. Enter procession. After them
 LELLIA and BRIGIDA, who seats herself in a
 portico.*

BRIGIDA.

Here, Lellia, let us rest. The ardent sun,
 Full blazing in the noon so fires the air,
 That even the dove's low-cooing seek the shade
 In carved roof recesses, dim and cool.
 Surely you cannot think you wrong Severo,
 In one such little pause, though he be absent?

LELLIA.

I do not, cousin; his strange, anxious mind
 Beats o'er the bounds that mark obedience
 due

From younger unto elder, weak to strong:
 The woman to the man—obedience resting
 On the firm ground of reason, love, protection.
 Owing Severo this, in love I yield
 Even to his fancies; but I know them fancies,
 Nor hold them sacred. Here we'll rest awhile.

BRIGIDA.

Ay, let us rest and save your sweet young
 roses

From the rude kisses of the boisterous sun.
 I, too, was fair!—but well! Those days are
 gone;

Yet what I've left of beauty, let it live!

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Woman alone will wear an angel's brow
 Upon a devil's heart.— Are they all foul?
 All! all! all! all! * * *
 Foul as the slime beneath those glistening
 waves?

ALESSIO.

Surely, your sister—

SEVERO.

Speak you of my sister?

Ay, dog! you spoke of her!—you spoke of
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Is her name foul!—Draw! draw! Is her
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Speak of my sister!

ALESSIO.

Oh, Severo, quiet!

Come home, come home, dear friend; I would
 not hurt you,

Not for my life's defence. Come, dearest
 friend;

The very latest stars before the dawn
 Flash o'er the eastern waters. See, Severo!

SEVERO.

Ay, ay! her eyes—the stars—the stars—the
 stars,—

Oh, dear Alessio, I am faint and weary.

Come in, come in, come in; I am most weary.

Act II.

SCENE I.—*Mid-day. The Piazza in front of St.
 Mark's. Enter procession. After them
 LELLIA and BRIGIDA, who seats herself in a
 portico.*

BRIGIDA.

Here, Lellia, let us rest. The ardent sun,
 Full blazing in the noon so fires the air,
 That even the dove's low-cooing seek the shade
 In carved roof recesses, dim and cool.
 Surely you cannot think you wrong Severo,
 In one such little pause, though he be absent?

LELLIA.

I do not, cousin; his strange, anxious mind
 Beats o'er the bounds that mark obedience
 due

From younger unto elder, weak to strong:
 The woman to the man—obedience resting
 On the firm ground of reason, love, protection.
 Owing Severo this, in love I yield
 Even to his fancies; but I know them fancies,
 Nor hold them sacred. Here we'll rest awhile.

BRIGIDA.

Ay, let us rest and save your sweet young
 roses

From the rude kisses of the boisterous sun.
 I, too, was fair!—but well! Those days are
 gone;

Yet what I've left of beauty, let it live!

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LELLIA.

See how the air with quivering inward motion
Glow's o'er the marble as a breathless flame,
Invisible yet clear—a spirit fire.
Beyond the water, still, and full, and smooth
Lips the gray bases of the wealth of Venice.

BRIGIDA.

Aside.)—Did ever girl upon her first free day
Talk of such folly, and her lover near?
But, then, she knows not. Ha! let her but see
him

She'll think of other things than waves and
colours!

Why comes he not? I bade him meet me
here,

Not promising for her, though. Could I know
What maiden freak would take her wise young
mind

If she but guessed my purpose. Come! he's
here!

Enter ALESSIO, behind.

LELLIA.

Cousin, 'tis very happiness to live
Here in this wondrous living growth of beauty!

ALESSIO.

Oh! wondrous living growth of beauty, thou,
More spiritual, more perfect, even than those
Forms of clear beauty wrought by master
hands

From saintly vision through God-seeking
prayer!

LELLIA *rises.*

Signora, oh, forgive me, that I come—
One moment only! Oh, deny me not;
For scarce one moment have mine eyes beheld
thee,
And yet what moment hath my heart forgot
thee,
Since that first moment love was born from
thee?

LELLIA.

Sir, of myself I would not fear to answer,
Even gently, kindly, to your gentle words,
As a maid might unto her brother's friend.

ALESSIO.

Severo is my friend, and I am his.
Oh, count me so for ever!

LELLIA.

To Verona,
His ancient home and mine, he went last
night;
Nor would he now desire that I should linger
In converse even with you, although his friend.

[LELLIA *goes.*

ALESSIO.

Oh, stay! oh, stay, dear lady! Hear me
speak;

For I must love you, though you love me not.
 Can I forbear to love you? No; I dare not;
 For without love for thee my life were dead,
 And without love of thine, yon glorious sun,
 God-head of life, fountain of light, of joy,
 To the unknowing world, the woods, the
 streams,
 And the wide reaches of the endless sea,
 Were blinded, darkened, strong, indeed, to
 scorch
 My bare and wounded eyes, my aching heart,
 That lies within its light, a sapless vine,
 Wrenched from the bough that bore it—broken,
 fallen.

BRIGIDA.

(*Aside.*)—He sues her close; her colours speak
 for her.

ALESSIO.

Oh, love! will you not love me! One low
 word
 From thee, my love, my fair one, my delight—
 * * * * *
 Silent! still silent!—Silence on my heart
 Lays her chill hands. Fool! hoping still,
 though hopeless,
 I cried for judgment. Lo! I stand condemned—
 Condemned, for what I am—weak, weak and
 sinful—
 Yes, love! 'tis well you know me—what I am.

So never in the dark repenting hours,
 Shall you bear pain for this pain that I bear—
 Slight, worthless, weak, and sinful—only
 loving.

LELLIA.

“For she loved much,” and love is strong!—is
 strong!
 My honour to my brother asks my silence;
 But this one word awake within my heart,
 Beats round my lips for leave to fly to thee—
 “There have been some have loved not more
 than I.”

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—SIGNOR MANTURA *in his Study.*

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Signor Mantura, the Signor Alessio
 Bade me deliver this, and also say,
 He asks to wait upon your honour here.

MANTURA.

He's here? Within the house, is he so?
 sirrah?

SERVANT.

Oh, yes, your honour, writing this but late;
 He called me to him in the grand saloon.

MANTURA.

Ay, ay! 'tis like him! sending sealed letters;
 Parchment and pens and ink all wasted here.

Has he no voice? Bid him come in to me.

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

Waste, waste, and folly! Who would be a
father?—

To toil as I have done from year to year
Sowing the seed of boundless wealth in earth,
And now, the harvest ripening, to bow down
Even to that earth, and see this spendthrift
ride

Rough-footed o'er the golden-headed grain!
Myself more low;—but no! not yet awhile;—
Not yet, not yet hath he laid hands upon me,
That master miser death. They call me
miser,

They that, amid the gauds and toys of earth,
Dally their wasted hour and call it life!
This, this, at least, is mine—sinews laid by
For the young strength, young mind. But
what is this?

[*Reads.*]

“Father, prepare; for know, my ship is
wrecked;

My debts are many, and the bond I spoke of,
Signed by Signor Severo, now falls due.

I seek your help; oh, father! fail me not.

Your son, Alessio.”

Never son to me!

Spendthrift and fool! But, no! but, no! he's
safe;

He's safe, per Baccho! The Signor Severo,
His name is bound; ay, let him pay the debt.
He burns his fingers now for all he's wise.
Still meddling in our matters; let him pay
it.

Well, well, Alessio, not so bad a stroke
For one so young. A freightage of such
value,

Safely returned were wealth worth looking to!
Lost! more's the pity; but Severo chanced it,
Trusting my wealth belike to back my son.
Let him but see it! Hush; he's here at
hand.

Turns to table. Enter ALESSIO. MANTURA
takes no notice of him.

ALESSIO.

Father, forgive me. Father—father—father!
Touches MANTURA, *who turns on him.*

MANTURA.

You, sir! What do you here? See that's the
door.

I see no beggars here. This room's my own!
Go to the convent gates if you must beg;
I give no alms to thieves or beggars. Go!

ALESSIO.

No, father! If this grief were only mine
You should not need to drive me from your
door,

Or heap on insults thus; but, being guilty,
Alas, too guilty, toward my friend of friends,

I, like to one, in battle sore beset,
Have pierced my friend in guarding my own
heart,
And therein pierced my heart. Father, have
pity!

MANTURA.

Tell me, my boy, am I to pity you—
You or your friend, Severo? What's the tune
That you would have me play to my own son?
A pretty one it must be, that I'm certain,
With two such artists to the making of it!
Come, sound the notes.

ALESSIO.

Oh, father, what is this?—
Speak you in earnest? Do you jest at this?

MANTURA.

What was my question?—what sir? Answer
first,

Then ask me what you will. In simple words,
How much have you and he tossed overboard?

ALESSIO.

Ten thousand pounds. The bond, the ship,
the freight.

The half was his.

MANTURA.

And for the other half?

ALESSIO.

It stood upon my name, being of those moneys
Placed in my hands by her, my late dead
mother.

MANTURA.

You flew your kite, weighted with golden knots,
To catch the birds in air, ay, you were wise.
Well, for the bond? And what did you with
bonds,
Rapiers for men not boys—leave them to me.

ALESSIO.

Shame in this thing makes slow my utterance,
For folly cast her nets about my feet,
And I—I fell, having no strength to stand:
I fell and cared but little—asked a help
Of one, a Jew, Benoni—gave a bond
Upon the ship, or failing this Severo—
For so he lent his name—and this has bound
Dishonour on my brow if you, my father,
Pluck it not thence. The bond is due this day.

MANTURA.

Signor Severo—he is wealthy?—ay?

ALESSIO.

He was, and is, if you will pay this debt.
But as with other merchants, this great loss
May tide him on even to a greater loss,
His credit being shaken.

MANTURA.

Yes, forsooth!

And you would have me back his with my credit,
As he did yours?—so like a flock of sheep,
We'll jump the cliff together, all for love—
A pretty story surely!

ALESSIO.

Sir, my father,
I have been heretofore a worthless son—
Idle, luxurious, apt to sin and folly—
But yet my honour have I held as bright
As this now sheathed sword; will you but trust
me
Redeem me from this stain, this branding
stain,
I vow to thrust aside the slights of youth,
And steadfast work your bidding, in so far
As honour may allow it.

MANTURA.

Pshaw! Your honour!
When you have lived as many years as I
You'll know the worth of honour: 'tis the chaff
That makes fine show and guards the golden
grain,
Wise men they know to rub that golden grain
And let the chaff fall through—fool's meat is
honour!

ALESSIO.

Then, father, then—there is no help from you?

MANTURA.

Yes, this much, son: Go, thank the gods
devoutly
His name was on the bond, not yours or mine;
You buy your wisdom cheap, thank heaven
for it. [Exit.

ALESSIO.

God knows! God knows! Oh, stained, oh,
rusted sword!
Will blood wash thee?—no! Coward, stay
thine hand.
Life may wash out this stain—no easy death,
But patience, labour, sacrifice of self.
Severo, lo, in payment of this debt,
You hold my life; and you, my Lellia, hold
My love, my life, my sword, my hopes, my all!

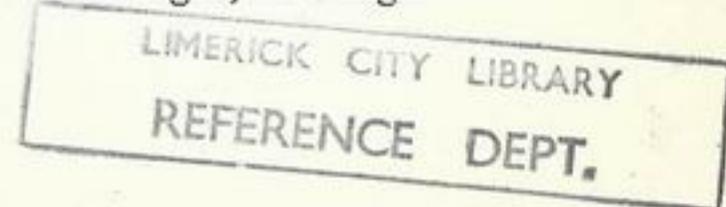
SCENE III.—*Garden. Room opening on garden.*
SEVERO *within*, LELLIA *outside. Sunset.*

LELLIA.

Severo, come, all sweet scents of the night
Are sweeter than their wont, the dewy airs
Lay softest fingers on day's drowsy lids;
The heat-oppressed sun bends low to kiss
Yon snow-crowned alpine heights; and lo! the
stars
Arise and glow, and gleam, and fill the night
With their great rush of wonder—Oh! Severo,
You who first gave me this, to stand clear-eyed,
In presence of the infinite, come forth!

SEVERO.

I come, dear Lellia,
(*Aside.*) Yet this night, this night



I would the heavens were pallèd all in black;
I would those stars had veiled their hopeless
eyes!

Oh, Summer! thou hast ripened, thou hast died;
Oh, Winter! meeting death, he gave thee Spring
And Summer, children fair, more fair than thou,
Even since this hour struck down my whole-
some life,

Poisoned my blood, tainted my will, and left me
But half my own!

(He steps forth.)

LELLIA.

Severo, do but look
On this pale flower; see, still its fragile cup
Of delicate pure colour giving forth
Of light the latest light:—I call it oft
“The Virgin’s heart.” What, think you, is
its name?

SEVERO.

“The evening primrose?” But, my Lellia,
Tell me the thought within the name you gave
it?

LELLIA.

Then I must sing it to you. May I, brother?

(Sings.)

Pale and pure, O Virgin Mother,
Through the darkest night,
Thy sad eyes shine on above us,
Thy bleeding heart glows bright.

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Purest heart of love, oh, Mother,
Through life’s darkest night,
Pain nor death can hide thee from us,
Thy bleeding heart glows bright.

SEVERO.

I know not, Lellia, why; but still your voice
Soothes the rude throbbings of my troubled
heart,

Even in its saddest moods.—But, hush! my
sister,

For steps draw nigh! See yonder clustering
vines,

Their tendrilled stems have laid a russet veil
Beset with amethysts dim and topaz pure
From tree to tree, there rest thee while I
speak

To my young friend Alessio, for ’tis he.

(Aside.)—I would not she should meet him,
his wild blood

Springs as a fountain uncontrollable.

Such love, as waters from blue glacial heights,
All crystal clear salute the longing lips

A draught divinely perfect, but what comes?—
Thirst! through each vein a burning, quench-
less thirst!

Have I not drunk? Have I not known?—
Alessio!

ALESSIO.

Severo!

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SEVERO.

Well, Alessio?

ALESSIO.

Oh, Severo!

SEVERO.

Alessio, speak, what stays your tongue at last?
You are not wont to find the words are flown
When you turn round to seek them. What is it?

ALESSIO.

It is Severo— Oh! I have no words
To speak my shame—to say, "Can you for-
give?"

SEVERO.

Alessio, you may find, if you will try,
That in this breast of mine there dwells a heart
Apt at forgiveness. What! in some new
scrape?

ALESSIO.

No! Ruined! Not myself—oh, that were
nothing!

But you, Severo—you—and the signora—
Your fair and gentle sister—oh, Severo!

SEVERO.

Alessio, heed, let not my sister's name
Pass your light lips unbidden; there are words
For which lives no forgiveness. But what
said you?—

Somewhat—I know not—ere you spoke of
her?

What is it that beats upon my wandering
brain?—

Some words, some words;—they touched a note
that mars

All thought clear framed.—Lellia!—you spoke
of her?

ALESSIO.

Of her, of you, Severo. You are ruined;
Struck down by this my hand, though this
my heart

Would bind itself a slave beside your steps,
Would count itself the dust beneath your feet—
A traitor!—scorn me—hate me—I am he!

SEVERO.

A traitor! No, Alessio, I have seen her!—
You are not such as she. No, no! her eyes
Glowed in the night, her lips all ruby red
Pressed close to mine—see!—they were red
with blood!—

See here, this stain, here even upon my cheek—
Here, where she pressed her kiss—with blood!
with blood!

ALESSIO.

No, no, Severo, such as that I am not.

(*Aside.*)—He heeds me not; stay, I must speak
right out.

(*To SEVERO, taking his arm.*)

Listen! Your ship is lost!—your bond is lost!—
My father will not help—you know I cannot—
Is not this ruin?

SEVERO.

What! My ship is lost!—
My bond is lost!—your father will not help!—
Why, then, Alessio—

ALESSIO.

Yes! What, then, Severo?

SEVERO.

Look at this hand, Alessio. Is it not white,
Most delicate and fair, as well becomes
One long descended from an ancient race?

ALESSIO.

It is, in truth.

(*Aside.*) And, Lellia, thine, methinks,
Lies in the touch of this!

SEVERO.

See now, Alessio,
The whiteness of this hand is as a stain;
For she—that one you know of—she would
swear
She loved it;—and she did—she loved the
wealth,
The idleness, the weakness, that it tokened:
Now shall I bruise it, brown it, feel its strength,
Ay, feel its strength, and feel my own once
more—
Feel the warm blood swing through my heart
again,

In the rich tide of labour. You, wealth!—
gold!—

My curse go with you! Traitors, I am free!
Alessio, I am free. Farewell, Alessio!

ALESSIO.

But stay, but stay, Severo! Have you heard?
What wild mad words are these!

SEVERO.

Ay; I was mad.—

Mad, 'neath the burden of mad memories,
Mad, in this house, where I had thought to live
With one—with one— Farewell, oh, cursèd
home!—

Alessio, if one innocent breathed here,
And loved an innocent love, think you that
stain

Might fall from off these walls, or—blight and
kill it?

ALESSIO.

I think, Severo, you forget to think
Of one most innocent, pure, childlike love
These walls have known and know.

SEVERO.

What is it, Alessio?—

What innocent love unknown? Oh, show me it,
That it may heal me from these haunting
thoughts

That so surround me and so shut me in!—
I know not what you mean.

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ALESSIO.

I have seen one
Pure as the starry, wild, scent-crowned wood-
ruff
Cast her sweet arms about you; then methought
I knew the beauty of love, and she it is
Of whom I speak.

SEVERO.

The dimness on my eyes
Lies as a cloud. Speak yet again, Alessio!
[Enter BRIGIDA—calls.]

BRIGIDA.

Ho! Lellia, are you there? The night grows
dark,
And darker will your brother be anon
If he should find you missing—well-a-day!

ALESSIO [*aside to SEVERO.*]

Do you know now, Severo?

SEVERO.

Yes, I know.

Could but your heart know of the passionate
love
That guards her innocence!—But see, she
stands;
My Lellia, come, draw near.

ALESSIO [*aside.*]

How strangely works,
Even as a spell, this passionate love he
speaks of!

Oh, maiden, let all men henceforth be silent,
Or only speak to praise thee! Blind and dumb,
I kneel before your dazzling purity.

BRIGIDA [*to LELLIA.*]

I am glad, indeed, that I have found you here,
And with your brother. (To Severo)—Such a
bound my heart
Gave in the thought that you might know her
gone,
And I no count of her!—Oh, yes; 'tis well.
You've trained me well, you see, Signor
Severo!

SEVERO.

'Tis true, indeed, and I should ask your
pardon;
But sometimes, my good cousin, a slight word
Will set me all ajar. How's this, Alessio?
Have you no greeting for my little sister!
[SEVERO turns to BRIGIDA.]

ALESSIO to LELLIA.

Signora, I would bend the knee before you,
And ask to kiss your hand;—but, no! you feel
not,
Not yet, not yet, the stab my hand has given.
Oh! do not look upon me with those eyes,
They shame me to the earth. Sweet eyes,
turn back;—
That still sad look of pity bears me down.

LELLIA.

Signor, it grieves me much to see you grieved,
Not knowing of the cause.

ALESSIO.

Ask me not this,
I dare not, cannot speak; oh, ask it not.

LELLIA.

I would not hurt you, sir; I ask no word;
'Tis only that a pain about my heart
Has found a rest; I think it came from you.

BRIGIDA.

Good heavens, Severo! What is this you
say—

That all your wealth is gone! Oh, Lellia,
You heard not! He!—he wrecked, burned,
sacked your ship,
Ruined your brother, and left you a beggar!
Begone, sir!—we have woe enough without
The sully of your presence.

LELLIA.

Hush! Brigida!
Yes, hush, my cousin.

(To Alessio.)

And was this the cause
That with such grief dimmed all your once
bright face?

ALESSIO.

It was, signora—yes.

LELLIA.

Nay do not think
That this my brother or myself are made
Of such poor stuff that we cannot disjoin
The heedless wound from the friend's hand
that gave it;

The loss is yours as ours, for in your eyes
I traced a deeper sorrow than now rests
Upon my brother. Yes, signor, go forth;
The night draws deep;—but first, receive my
hand,

A trusty token of an unchanged mind—
Is it not so, Severo? Friends are friends,
Born not of gold, but love.

SEVERO.

Yes, dear Alessio,
I never loved you better than this day.

ALESSIO.

Thanks would I give if but my tongue had
words.

Lady, my lips are still, but my heart throbs
With one low cry of love, love, love to thee.

Act III.

SCENE I.—*Small room, poorly furnished.*

LELLIA. BRIGIDA.

BRIGIDA.

Heard you Severo when last night he entered?

LELLIA.

No; it was late; so late, the early dawn
Showered silver lights along the gray lagoons,
The black-crossed sails grew red, and as I
watched

San Marco's domes all gold, defiant blazed
Athwart the kindled air, towards the sun;
Then weary, pale, and all o'er watchèd he,
His gondola left floating on the tide,
And as I ran to greet him he bent low,
Kissed, and went past me lightly, but was
silent.

BRIGIDA.

Believe me, Lellia, that this life is one
He'll not endure for long, and well he may
not;

For shame it is that he should so forget
His ancient house, his name, his father's
honour;

Yes, even his own, he tosses it aside,

Yet, I'll be bound he'll look that men should
keep it,
Fresh gilt, for ready service when 'tis asked
for.

He'll find respect a keen and shapely sword,
Slow welded, fire proved, no childish toy;
Handle it well, it guards your life, your fame,
But let it rust or strain it, and 'tis worthless.
A gondolier!—such ill respect to you.

LELLIA.

No, Brigida; had he done as you asked—
Borrowed, and fawned, and begged, and lived
his life,

Dependent on each whim of each rich friend—
That were, indeed, an ill respect to me.

BRIGIDA.

As like with like, so you with your wise
brother

Go your own ways, and so, in sooth, it must be;
"Each bird to its own nest or fowl or fair,"
Was ever a true proverb. Well, be it folly;—
Folly, we know, is woman's chiefest charm,
A little will not harm you. For Severo—
The bat must fly in its own hour or none!

LELLIA.

Yes, and the eagle in its own pure air!—
But that I grieve to see him so o'erwrought
With unaccustomed toil, and nights of labour

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I could rejoice even in our fortune's change
For this: that his clear mind now knows
itself—

No more a sudden darkness dims his eyes,
No more his hands with fitful ceaseless strain,
Are wrought in one or drag the empty air.

BRIGIDA.

Yes, yes; 'tis true, he's now quite common
man,—

God's love be with him!—may he long be so!

LELLIA.

I praise God for it, cousin—yet—oh! yet!—

BRIGIDA.

What is it then? What means your “yet!—
oh, yet?”

LELLIA.

Can you not think? But no, 'tis nought, 'tis
nought.

BRIGIDA.

A heavy sigh for nought! Ay, I can tell
you—

There's no Signor Alessio coming now—
He's too fine for us now that we are poor.

LELLIA.

Ah, no, Brigida! Do not think it so,
My brother, though he loves him, holds him
off,

And for myself, I am forbid to see him;

Severo will have none but his own craft
Within these doors; he says he'll mate with
equals.

BRIGIDA.

Yes, even such equals as Giuseppe here.

LELLIA.

Giuseppe! he is hateful—how my heart
Chills through within me when I hear his
voice!

Enter SEVERO in Gondolier's dress.

SEVERO.

Good-morrow, Lellia. Has the morning sun
Drunk off the dew from those fresh lips of
thine?

LELLIA.

No, no, Severo. You have had your kiss
'Twixt night and morn; you think, like morn-
ing dreams,
'Twas all untrue. Oh, you were weary then.

SEVERO.

And being so, was I not duly cautious?
Did I not know when birds have tuned their
songs
To the clear air of morn, an answering note
Will make a flood of music through the
boughs.

Even such a bird wert thou—I dreaded thee!

LELLIA.

Ye birds that haunt the still, gray dews of
dawn,
Look on me as your sister, not as his!
But, oh, Severo! see, those cruel oars
Have wounded all your hands—your dear,
dear hands,—
Stay, they were bleeding, now I know too
well,
You hid them as you past this morn in silence!

SEVERO.

'Tis nothing, Lellia, nothing, they are chafed;
A few more days and you shall see them hard,
And brown, and stiff, and coarse.

*Enter GIUSEPPE.*SEVERO (*aside to LELLIA.*)

As are our friend's.

LELLIA (*aside to SEVERO.*)

Never, Severo, neither hand nor mind.

GIUSEPPE (*to LELLIA, in part aside.*)

Good-morning, fair signora. Mayn't I kiss
Those pretty little fingers?

(LELLIA draws back.)

Well! no, no!

Such pretty hands were made for kissing, lady.

(Aside)—Such pretty lips too! Ay, I'll know
their touch.

To BRIGIDA.

Good-morning, madam; a fair day, Severo;
You were in luck last night—a noble service.

(SEVERO shows gold silently.)

In gold! in gold! Well, luck be with your
gold!

(Aside)—In gold! gold!—such as he they take
the bread

From 'twixt our teeth; his cursèd airs and
manners,

His delicate, fine hands, his gleaming eyes:
The nobles note these things, they would have
one

Like to themselves to serve them. They'll
serve me, too,

They'll help to my revenge, and to my love!

SEVERO.

You, who have ever earned your honest bread,
Know not how sweet it tastes to one like me
To labour unaccustomed, and it's honour.
See you this gold? Why, I have held such coin
As valued merely for the passing want;
Now 'tis a token of my manhood's strength,
A right of life among my fellow-men,
A knot that binds my hours to work and God.

GIUSEPPE.

Keep it then, friend, I grudge that not—not
that;—

But it were well were all gold as well earned!
Let secrets still be secrets, and I silent.

SEVERO.

Secrets, Giuseppe; I have now no secrets!
I am clear to the wide heavens, the bright
day,

The blue, far-stretching waters, and the
clouds!

They, they alone, reflect their life in mine;
I stand, forgotten of man, but in God's world
I lie on the bosom of nature, and am still.

GIUSEPPE.

Where is that spark—your once so seeming
friend—

Signor Alessio—he that ruined you?
Severo, have you measured all his wit?

SEVERO.

Surely, Giuseppe, I have known him long;
I love him, and he loves me: 'tis enough.

GIUSEPPE.

Enough? But, hush, Severo! There is one
He loveth more than you. Beware, Severo!

SEVERO.

Of what, Giuseppe? He is still my friend.

GIUSEPPE.

Man that desires woman, from his heart
Trust, friendship, honour, all are swept away!—
He comes not here, why? If he loves you
still?

SEVERO.

Because I would not he should see my sister.

GIUSEPPE.

Because you would not he should see your
sister!

SEVERO.

Why do you pause? Is it not wisely done?

GIUSEPPE.

Yes, and he loves her; you, a sheltering rock,
Stand in his path; again I say—"Beware!"

BRIGIDA.

Giuseppe, sit and eat, we break our fast.
Come, there is room for four where three can
sit.

SEVERO (*aside.*)

What mean you, Giuseppe? Know you aught?

GIUSEPPE.

Oh, no! I know of nothing; how should I?

To BRIGIDA.

I cannot, madam. There's a search to-day
Throughout all Venice, every house and ship.
The traitor, Lord Henrico, so 'tis said
Lies hidden, where men know not, but in
Venice.

Take care, Severo, or they'll think you he:
Your feignèd name, your dainty hands, your
bearing,

That and Verona's language on your lips—
For he is of Verona, as you know.

SEVERO.

No need to fear. Those papers you have seen
Can prove my name on the instant. They are
safe.

GIUSEPPE (*aside.*)

Yes, safe enough!—safe from your use of them.
You showed your cards to one that held the
trump:

Be scornful, pretty maid; your brother gone,
I'll teach you, scorn in faith!

(*Aloud.*) Rest you all well,
I must away; the morning sun grows hot.

SCENE II.—*Outside San Marco.* DOGE, COUN-
SELLORS, &c.

MESSENGER.

Here's one, my lord, that claims the promised
gold.

He says he can deliver, even now,
The traitor, Lord Henrico.

DOGE.

Bring him forth.

(*Enter GIUSEPPE.*)

What know you, sirrah, of the Lord Henrico?

GIUSEPPE.

Truly, my lord, I have no surety of it;
But I can use my eyes and my ears too.
Enough! I see a man, young, grave, and pale—
None of your common rubbish, if I know;

Face, voice, and bearing noble, of the nobles.
I see this man throughout the crowded day,
Shunning all converse, often wrapped in prayer
(Prayer it may be, or thought—'tis much the
same),

'Neath sacred dim recesses arched with gold,
Where no man heeds him but the silent saints:
Yet all night long a gondolier is he,
Much sought of all the nobles, why I know not.
Methought there might be reasons—

DOGE.

Ay, there may.

GIUSEPPE.

My lord, I watched and watched, and sought
a time

To know his secret. Men there be, my lord,
Who never love to let a thing go by
Unknown to them, but still will search and pry
Till all lies straight before them—I am one
Of that same make, my lord—

DOGE.

Well, sirrah, on—

Make no more words than need.

GIUSEPPE.

I haste, my lord.

It being so, I sought him day by day,
Was rough with him, but yet so seeming honest
That after many fencings he gave in,
Bade me his house, spoke of his feignèd name;
Oh, yes, I fathomed him, my lord, believe me!

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DOGE.

A true and worthy friend you've proved to
him—

That's nought to us, however. Where is he?

GIUSEPPE.

Even at this moment in the church, my lord,
He and a maid, his sister—so he says—

Who knows? Not I; but you, young fiery sirs,
If you would keep your eyes, 'twere well you
went

Blindfold awhile. Behind yon glowing por-
tals

The saints look down on one young golden
head,

More beautiful than morn— But are you
saints?

DOGE.

Sirrah, we ask no more of you but silence.
Lead him apart. Exchange no word with him.

SCENE III.—*Inside San Marco.*

SEVERO *kneeling*. LELLIA, DOGE, OFFI-
CERS, &c.

DOGE *to* OFFICER.

Thy duty, sirrah!

OFFICER, *touching* SEVERO.

I arrest you, sir,

And charge you as a traitor to this State,
And to the State of Florence, now in league
And faithful amity with this republic.

LELLIA.

O God! O man, have mercy! Oh, sweet
Lord,

He is my brother, and most innocent!

SEVERO *to* OFFICER.

Whom do you hold me for, that you should lay
This rough charge on me, sir?

DOGE.

Yourself should know.

We holding you to be the Lord Henrico,
Arrest you here.

LELLIA.

Severo!

SEVERO.

Prince, in Venice

Justice is strong and patient, open eared.
The State, a mother to her children's wants,
Stoops to defend the oppressed and clear the
weak.

Then may I trust to justice and to Venice,
Not being Lord Henrico, or of him
Ought knowing.

DOGE.

Thou but answerest as we deemedst.
Think you, then, 'tis enough? You say "I am
not."

I ask then, who?—reply! No gondolier
Of common breeding, if all signs speak truth.

SEVERO.

My lord, 'tis true that here I ply a trade
Not such as I was born to: is this, then,
A crime in Free Venetia?

DOGE.

Crime it is not;
But princes, fathers of the common people,
May rightly call their sons and bid them answer
What do you here? And this I ask of you,
"What do you here? Why bear a feigned
name?"

SEVERO.

My lord, I much desired to hold that secret;
To you alone I will give reasons full
For this, and all that may seem strange in me.

[*They walk apart.*]

DOGE.

Severo!—Art thou he?—Can this be true?
'Tis known throughout all Venice that his loss
Wrought on his o'erstrained brain and mad-
dened him,
His sister in a convent found her home,
He in a monastery on the slopes of Como.
Myself have seen Severo. You to him
May bear a certain likeness, one, methinks,
More in a trick of feature than the express
Stamp of the mind and coinage of the life
That seals two men apart. I knew Severo,
As one sad-browed, afflicted, even in wealth,

When all the world smiled round him; you I
see,
Bright, with a sunny semblance in your eyes
Even now, in poverty, disgrace, and danger.
How may this be?

SEVERO.

My lord, an inward wound
Bled ever, day and night in those sad days;
God freed me from that burden, giving me
In place thereof the pure, sweet air all night,
The lustre of the morning, and the sun,
And simple quiet days of peaceful joy.

DOGE.

How of this tale?—this tale of madness, then?

SEVERO.

Men spoke it, and I left it as they said;
Because, in truth, a madness bound me down
In that ill time. Beneath it as a veil
I thought to hide my secret, and to live
Unsought of all my friends, or seeming friends.

DOGE.

This may be truth; but truly it seems strange
To shake off madness thus. 'Tis very strange!
What proof for this? Do any know you here?

SEVERO.

But as you know me, prince, not certainly.
I never sought men out, and men of late
Had feared my gloom, had feared even worse
than that.

One loved me yet, for all my embittered
heart;

I pray you send for him—the young Alessio—
Alessio, son of the Signor Mantura.

DOGE *to* SERVANT.

Go, sirrah; call him; bid him come forth-
with.

SIGNOR BENEDICKO.

My lord, I heard he left the town this morn.

DOGE.

What called him hence? You know him then,
my lord?

SEVERO (*aside.*)

What fiend has caught that whispered word
"Beware?"

What echo! No, Alessio, thou art true!

BENEDICKO.

By dark Verona's ever-hasteful river
There stands an aged house, dull, damp, and
lone;

A miser's hoards lie there; this miser's
daughter

Signor Mantura asks for his young son.

'Tis said the marriage is arranged, and sure
The marriage bed should be full, soft, and
downy,

Stuffed as it is with nobles.

LELLIA (*falls against a pillar.*)

SEVERO.

Lellia! love!

Sweetheart, look up! My loved one, my own
sister—

(*He lays her on a bench.*)

(*Aside.*)—And is it thus?—oh, faithless to thy
love,

Faithless to all, Alessio; fare thee well!

Did I not love thee? Yes, and trusted thee.

Farewell, oh, cruel friend; farewell, my trust;

I being bare of trust, and thou of honour,

Have we not lost alike? Thou losing honour,

And I a friend and faith!

(*Turns to LELLIA, stoops over her.*)

But, God! my sister!

Villain, see here my sister; look you here.

Look on this face, wan as the moonlit seas,

This chill, cold hand, this heart! Oh, it has
fallen,

Fallen at the touch of what it scarce yet
knows.

(*He raises LELLIA, others assist.*)

Rest on me, Lellia, rest here on my heart.

Thou lovest thy brother, Lellia, trust his love,

It will not fail you, sister, even in death.

LELLIA (*to* SEVERO.)

Oh, lead me hence, Severo, all men gaze

Full-eyed upon my weakness and my shame

But thou, Severo!

SEVERO.

Nay, I cannot go,
Stand back, nor heed them, sister; I must
speak

To the Doge once more. (*Aside*)—Can it be
he is false?

And yet—who other? False, Alessio, false!—
False sunshine playing on a mirrored water!—
My lord, I would I knew who turned your eyes
On one so humble.

DOGE.

No, I cannot answer.
Such service must be secret.

SEVERO (*aside.*)

Who but him?—

Alessio! Oh! this bosom nurtures traitors.
But why, Alessio, should you sting me thus?—
Why? Was it Lellia? What! what word was
that,

Thrust on my brain and crushed it? Hear it,
heavens!—

“Man that desires woman!” Ha! he marries,
Marries and loves not—loves my spotless sister,
Who as a child all helpless should I leave her?
Were at his mercy. God! what fiends can live,
Drink thy pure wine of health, and bare those
brows

That should show blackness as the sulphurous
smoke

Of deepest hell, even clear to heaven's front,
Unmarked, rejoicing!

DOGE.

Sir, we linger here,
No proof as yet have we of your word's truth;
Truth is not common to the lips of traitors.

SEVERO.

Ay, true, true, true, that truth is seared within;
My Lellia, haste. Those papers and that seal
You oft have seen; bring them straight with
you. Haste!

[*Exit* LELLIA.]PRIESTS *come forward.*

PRIEST.

Lord prince, this man is here in sanctuary,
The limits of your power these doors may show;
Usurp not, then, the Church's privilege.

(To SEVERO.)

Prisoner, uplift thine eyes; behold those wings
Of angels pictured on these sacred roofs:
Symbols of heaven's legions, countless, armed,
They guard the poor, the weak, the faint, the
frail;

Beneath those wings extended thou art safe.

SEVERO.

Yea, Holy Father.

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DOGE.

Priest, your power usurped
Spreads broader day by day! No State can
bear

Such tyranny of growth; in forest depths
Dark pines there are that strangle all beneath;
Methinks your church, if men should give it
way,
Would strangle law, and State, and common
weal.

SEVERO.

Fathers, and you, lord prince, I claim no guard
But innocence, who present with a man
Frees him, though bound, though tortured,
though rejected,
His own soul being free. My lord, I go.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—*Near the Bridge of Sighs. Persons
as before. DOGE and SEVERO in front.*

DOGE.

Henrico, or Severo, thou art bold.
Being Henrico, thou hast laid thine head
Beneath the cold, gray axe. But being Severo,
The Church forgets no slight, no, nor forgives.

SEVERO.

My lord, I fear not; I am innocent.

DOGE.

So may you be, and yet the proof be wanting.
I trust these papers will bear out your words,

Else all unwilling, for indeed I trust you,
The council of the ten must hear you speak.

[*Enter LELLIA, in haste.*]

LELLIA.

Oh, brother! they are gone; I sought around
As one that seeks her child; I sought in vain!

FIRST LORD.

All up with his fine tale; it is Henrico.

SECOND LORD.

Nay, I deem other. See, the maiden weeps;
She holds him true at least; I swear by her.

BENEDICKO.

'Tis piteous to see her, being so fair;
Tears are a sacrilege to eyes like hers.

[*DOGE turns to guards with a gesture, LELLIA
throws herself before him and LORDS.*]

LELLIA.

Oh, noble gentlemen, indeed he's true!
He is my brother! Sure, full sure you know
How brothers bear within their strong, warm
hearts

Their sister's very life; poor woman faints
Along the sun-parched road—her brother's
hands

Uplift her as she falls, and tenderly
With the sweet wine of love renew her lips.
Wandering she goes through terror-haunted
night,

Fear wraps her close, her anguish cries aloud;
Then strong arms grow around her, and she
rests!

Oh, brother!—you who love me, if you go,
If in those silent eyes of love, no more
I read my life, unspoken—if you leave me,
Then, as the young bird in its ruined nest,
I would turn round and die!

BENEDICKO.

Nay, gentle lady,
So sweet of voice, so fair of form, so young,
Such song-birds are too rare to perish thus;
Yea, even within this gray and battered cage
A nest for thee were found.

SEVERO.

Prince, in my life
I sought for love—and lo! 'twas treachery.
I trusted one, my friend; his venom'd stab
Grows to a spreading poison: for this maid—
If ever brother loved one only sister,
I have loved her; if ever guileless child
Were sheltered from all stain, it still was she.
Sister, beware! beware! Flee from Alessio!
His breath is poison, and his treacherous hands
Are strained to reach thee—and, alas! thou
goest
Alone, poor lamb, along the unguarded wilds!

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My lord, I had thought my heart had borne
the utmost
That man could bear of pain, but never yet
Have those unfathomed depths of grief been
sounded.
No; for the heart breaks first.

DOGE.

Prisoner, we sorrow,
Because our duty and this strong suspicion
Must lay you under bonds. Then, bid fare-
well
To this sweet maiden.

LELLIA.

Oh! Severo! brother!—
Bid me not leave thee. Yes, my lord, a prison
With him were all I ask. Forbid it not.

DOGE.

It could not be, signora, could not be.

SEVERO.

Lellia, 'tis true; the prisons of fair Venice
Are all too foul to shelter such as thee.
Rest thee at home, dear love, for sure full soon
I shall return in freedom, seeking thee.
Keep with Brigida close, and there is one,
I know you love him not but he is honest,
It may be coarse and homely, yet he's honest,
And honesty, a firm grain in the wood
Is well to trust to. See, you trust him, then.

[GUARDS *close round* SEVERO.]

LELLIA (*aside.*)

Oh, brother, yet once more you are mistook.
I know him for a traitor, for my heart
Draws back when he creeps nigh. His lustful
eyes

Look into mine—I shudder! Woman hears
Unspoken secrets in the heart of man.

(*Turns and sees SEVERO led away.*)

One moment yet!—Turn back!—Severo!—
brother!

(*Faints.*)

[*Exit SEVERO.*]

Act IV.

SCENE I.—LELLIA alone on the sea-shore. *The Lido. Time, early morning. She gathers shells.*

LELLIA sings.

Oh! rippling waters of the sad, lone sea,
Ye murmur low;
Your voices whisper near me, round my feet
Ye come and go!

Your song is one—in joy and grief all one,
Ye murmur low;
Our hearts hear their own music, but the waves
They come and go!

They come and go, and so last year they came
And rippled round my feet, when I, a child,
With the veiled sisters from the convent walls
Spent here a long child's day. A year—no
more:

The sea that day sang to the burnished shells
A low, low song of joy. I heard its waves
Break on strange isles unknown, I saw wild
shores

Lapped by the deep green ocean, and dark
birds

Hooted beside their young; but I the while
Watched from these golden sands the domes
of Venice

Within the air uplifted, silent, gray.—

Oh! cruel city, thou hast trampled down
 That child's life joy! Oh! sorrow, sorrow,
 sorrow,
 Draw near unveiled, for thee a place is
 found.—
 Yet, brother, grief for thee but deepens love,
 For thou art true; but bitterness unmeasured
 That love should fail of trust. Wert thou,
 Alessio,
 But false to me, then could I bid this heart
 Forget words spoken—call my eyes but
 traitors
 That saw love's presence, felt his passionate
 thrill,
 And trembling sank before him. Love, dear
 love!
 Though thou be false, I love thee. Nature
 gives
 But one sad strength to woman. This—to
 love
 Most deeply, when most suffering, most be-
 trayed.

Enter GIUSEPPE behind.

(Aside, on seeing LELLIA, unseen by her.)

GIUSEPPE.

Ha! pretty one! so I have found you out,
 Here, and alone, per Bacho! All the saints
 Be praised for luck! Well, well, signora mia!
 The air that o'er those briny sands blows soft,

Lays kisses on your lips but cold and chill,
 Then passes on unresting, yet the blood
 Glows answer to those chaste, unfelt em-
 braces,—
 Making the air a lover with my fancies,
 I paint my own delights! But stay, she sees
 me!

To LELLIA.

You are well met, signora; seeking you
 I have attempted oft your silent door,
 But neither found you nor your honoured
 cousin.

LELLIA.

I thank you, sir; I would not ask your trouble.
 My brother, when he comes, shall thank you
 better.

[Goes.]

GIUSEPPE.

Stay, stay, fair maid, you throw me back in-
 deed,
 And yet I know your brother bade you trust
 This trusty heart; you know it beats for you.

LELLIA.

And how, sir, know you of my brother's
 words?

GIUSEPPE.

I heard him, sweet one; yes, with these good
 ears.

LELLIA.

You heard him, then, and you stood silent by,
 Nor spoke of that you knew?

GIUSEPPE.

Why, lady, what
 Could I have told of him?—the selfsame tale
 He told the doge in vain. No words of mine
 Had power to save him—me they well might
 harm.

LELLIA.

A friend, methinks, had not so justly weighed
 The value of his help. Why, even a dog
 Hath better knowledge of the strength of love.
 I leave you, sir. Your careful mind had need
 To weigh these words, for him who trusts you
 next!

GIUSEPPE.

So, so, signora, you reject my love?

LELLIA.

I love no traitors, sir! (*Aside.*)—Oh! traitorous
 heart,

Ring true to that true note!

GIUSEPPE.

You go, signora?—

Ha! ha! my girl, the wide and silent sea
 Hath given thee to my ward, not all in vain!

[LELLIA springs away, he catches her.]

Nay, pretty one, no harm shall touch that head,
 Whose golden, sun-dyed tresses through my
 hands,
 Show all their glistening threads like woven
 light.

LELLIA.

O Saints! O Christ! be with me. Save me,
 save me!

GIUSEPPE.

Be pitiful, dear maid, those small white hands
 Were safer in my keeping than thus wildly
 Beating the air unheard—so! now they're
 safe.

[ALESSIO appears. LELLIA frees herself, springs
 to him, and falls.]

LELLIA.

Alessio! oh, Alessio! help, oh, help!

ALESSIO.

What! Hateful villain, dared you touch this
 lady?

Die, reptile, most accurst! (*Stabs GIUSEPPE.*)
 (*Bends over LELLIA.*)—Oh, Lellia, rouse,
 Sweet love, fear thou no more. Lift up thine
 eyes!

They tremble and she shudders! Dear, dear,
 love,

Awake, for I am thine, thine own Alessio.

LELLIA.

Thou! thou! Alessio! oh, I dare not look;—
 But save me!—save me! Do not leave me,
 love!

ALESSIO.

Never, oh, never, shall I leave thee, love!

LELLIA.

Oh, no! no! no! Think that I do not love thee?

I will not look upon thee, hear thy voice
Nor touch thy hand, beloved, else my heart
Were one with thine for ever. Oh! forgive me,

That I, a woman, dreamt you loved me truly;
'Twas I, 'twas I that sinned—could you be false?

ALESSIO.

Never! my loved one. Weak and stained am I,
But never false to friendship or to love.
My heart is true to love, and true to thee.

LELLIA.

Love! love! I trust!—unknowing how to trust—

My brother and thy marriage?—Art thou married?

Oh, Virgin Mother, help me!—help thy child.

ALESSIO.

Could you then think it, Lellia? You who love?

LELLIA.

I dared not trust my heart;—I trusted thee.
And yet, dear love, I knew not.—Art thou true?

Then, then, Alessio hasten, save Severo!—
Save him, Alessio, save him—thou art true!

ALESSIO.

But late I left Verona, knowing nought
Of life in Venice. Here by chance I wandered.
What of Severo? Why wert thou alone,
To tempt foul men like yon?

LELLIA.

O God! he's slain!

ALESSIO.

'Twas but a righteous judgment, heed him not.
'Twere well such men were rooted from the earth

They darken with their lusts.—But, love, your brother?—

That torment that possessed his strong, wise soul,
Hath it gained mastery o'er him? Oh, I feared it!

LELLIA.

No! God be thanked, it was not that despair.
They thought him Lord Henrico; thou wert gone;

And none stepped forth to save him; he is bound.

But, oh! he called you traitor. Hasten, love,
Show him your faithful mind, he ever loves you;

I know it ; for such love may wound the heart
Even to the death in madness, yet not fail!

ALESSIO.

God grant he be not maddened; he hath
suffered!

And thou, thou wert alone, my own, my Lellia?

LELLIA.

Yes; for awhile my cousin kept the house.
But poverty closed round us. She said truly,
Friends in Verona would have given a share
To me with her, but I—I could not go
Leaving Severo here; she went unwilling;
So morn by morn I gathered from these
strands

Those delicate-tinted shells, that with the rain
Fall when the bow encircles the clear sea.
These from bright girls and lovers won my
bread,

A little matter, and my hope was strong.

ALESSIO.

See, love, the sun, uprisen from the East,
Flings jewels to the heart of the green wave.
Haste we to Venice, there before the Ten
I shall show cause to free my friend, your
brother.

Then wilt thou trust me, love? thou and
Severo?

LELLIA.

Oh, false false heart that ever doubted thine.
[Exit.]

SCENE II.—SEVERO *at the window of prison
looking out on the Bridge of Sighs. Fettered.*
Enter DOGE and WARDER.

WARDER.

There, look, my lord, 'tis he! E'en thus, each
day,

From those still hours that welcome in the
morn

To latest fallen eve, his straining hands
Grasp to the bars, like them immovable;
His eyes, still fixed, draw all that go beneath
Into their depths for question; his dry lips
Have lost the form of speech.

DOGE (*Aside.*)

It is Severo,—

I fear, I fear we have done grievous wrong;
What, then? Why this, the puzzle of the
world:—

The great eternal question of the world;—
We that have sinned, escape; he, innocent,
Must suffer; they that love him being con-
demned

To a pain most perfect. God! What justice,
then,

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Rules here? We hope, we strive, rebel, falter
and die

Before the un pitying law. We talk of justice—
A jewel?—or a trifle? Brought to man
Whence? Out of Nature? No. Her word
is "death."

Out of God, then?—He, innocent, is mad!

WARDER.

Yes, he is mad; and I, God knows, my lord,
Am like to one who, shuddering from a dream,
Watches entranced some dreadful speechless
thing,

Some dim eternal presence filling night,
And wakens to the darkness with a cry.
So is it, my lord, with me, for such a terror
Lies in his silent presence. Look! look! look!

[ALESSIO and LELLIA pass beyond, talking.
SEVERO flings himself against the bars,
then falls back.]

SEVERO.

Alessio!—Lellia! O my God! my God!
Oh, ruined! ruined! ruined! O my God!

(Scene falls.)

SCENE III.—*Judgment Hall in Doge's Palace.*

SENATORS, LELLIA, ALESSIO, NUNS, &c.

OFFICER.

Let the petitioners stand forth in order.
Who to the lords elect of noble Venice
Would show their suits, speak now.

ALESSIO.

Most noble sirs,
I bend before you on the suit of one
Imprisoned even now within the palace,
Charged as the Lord Henrico, and a traitor
To the fair State of Florence, friend to Venice.

LORD.

We know of him; but, sir, hope thou not for
him;

In that we find no proof of his word's truth
We hold him Lord Henrico. He must die,
Or lie within the prison cells condemned,
Till such a time our messengers deliver
More certain tidings of the form and person
Of him we seek—Henrico of Verona.

ALESSIO.

Yea, let Henrico die!—This man from guilt
I here stand forth to free. Most Reverend
Mother,

Thou knowest this maid, Severo's gentle sister?

ABBESS.

Through the long morning of this lovely May,
We watched the sun arise, the flowers bloom
forth,

The delicate shoots spring up, each hour more
fair;

We nourished them and guarded, wrought
their leaves

To such a grace as this, you see, my lords,
Leaving all forms of speech in this dear maid.
This is Severo's sister, true and pure.

BENEDICKO.

Ay, and she told it, none could doubt her
truth
Who did but look, let him be deaf as wood.

LORD.

Did you, then, know Severo, Reverend Mother?

ABBESS.

I did, my lord; his love for this one sister,
Surpassing aught we knew, amazed us oft.
A passion purer than a mother's love
Encircled them with joy, and as a cloud
Lit from the rosy heavens lay close around
them.

[*Enter DOGE—all rise.*]

DOGE.

Sirs, and you nobles of this glorious State,
Who by the strength of justice bear her head
Above the storms of war-wrought Italy;
Coming but now from forth the bitter cells,
I ask your justice for one innocent man,
That man we deemed Henrico. Even now
His sad, wan face, grown to its ancient bearing,
Spoke all too true Severo's darkened mind.
I bade the warders lead him to your presence.
Stay—listen! He is here.

[*Enter SEVERO and WARDERS. SEVERO in
silence gazes around. LELLIA stretches forth
her arms to him.*]

SEVERO (*holding fetters.*)

My little sister,
Look, little one, the flowers, the sweet white
flowers
We gathered on the marge of the clear lake,
Sweet woodruff, sweet as thou, love—white
and pure!
They cling about my hand—close round my
hands!
Love, touch them not. Oh! they are cold,
like death—
Cold, false and cold! Serpents are cold, and
vices!
Lellia! My God! My heart!

LELLIA.

Oh, brother! brother!

ALESSIO (*holding her back.*)

Lellia, beware;—look on his dreadful eye.

LELLIA.

Oh, loved Severo!

ALESSIO.

Free him, you just lords.

DOGE.

Unbind his hands. Severo, thou art free.

SEVERO.

Ay, ay! The mad are free; for you, my
 lord,
 Are free to sin. Look on this friend who loves
 me,
 Whom I have loved—I love! Is he not clear?—
 He has but slain my sister, slain my love,
 This child, this lamb! Oh, Lellia, thou wert
 pure!

LELLIA.

Oh, brother! my own brother, he is faithful!

SEVERO.

Pure! Are you pure? Oh, answer—some
 are stained!

LELLIA.

Yes. Before God and man I answer, yes.

ALESSIO.

Severo, but thy love is wrung through suf-
 fering;

This were a searing question to our trust.

SEVERO.

Alessio!—thou! Oh, I am torn, Alessio!

* * * * *

Traitor!—what love is yours?—what soil?—
 what stain?

Oh, sister, love!—death, death is purity!

Take it from me, this gift, this only gift,—

From one that is mad and knows it, knows
 this only—

The gift!—the love of heaven!—the unstained
 soul!

(Snatches sword of state; stabs LELLIA.)

Oh! sweet, sweet sainted sister, take thy
 death!

Die, loved one, from my love! Art thou now
 safe?

Let it not be forgotten that I freed her—

Yes, and myself from this mad, cruel world!

(Stabs himself.)

ALESSIO *(supporting LELLIA from SEVERO'S
 arms.)*

Here! here, Severo!—see, my heart lies bare!

If you have ever loved me, love me now—

Leave me not here alone!

(DOGE and SENATORS press forward.)

DOGE.

Stay, stay, Alessio;

Have we not wealth of sorrow without thee?

*(SEVERO falls forward, sword drops from his
 hand, ALESSIO snatches it.)*

ALESSIO.

Let thy pure blood, dear saint, plead for this
 sin!

(Stabs himself.)

Still! still! keep still, oh, bounding heart!
 Keep still, oh, restless feet!
 For her voice comes trilling up through the
 dale,
 And over the green-gold wheat.

ANSWER.

OH! my loved one, art thou waiting?—
 Waiting for me!
 There, beneath the elm-tree shadow,
 Cushla machree!

Yester night, as I lay dreaming,
 Dreaming of thee,
 Then methought I heard thee calling
 Cushla machree!

To thine arms, oh, love, I'm hastening!
 Hastening to thee!
 Take me, I am thine for ever,
 Cushla machree!

SONG.

OH, love! oh, love! with youth and joy elated,
 How bright, how decked with flowers
 Art thou, when 'mid the hours
 We erst draw near thee.

Oh, love! oh, love! how slow, how sorrow-
 weighted,
 How pressed by death's return,
 Bewildered, wearied, yearn
 The hearts that bear thee.

Oh, love! oh, love! with thee, through anguish
 mated,
 No pain, no wound can sever—
 Leave me not now, nor ever;
 I do not fear thee.

SONG.—DONEGAL.

SWEET maiden, the ripples are flowing,
 Just touched on the edges with light,
 Come, see where the globe flowers are blowing,
 Come, gather the water-queens white.

The willows and alders are hiding
 The nests where the water-fowl sleep,
 The brown trout and salmon are gliding
 In the hollows o'er-shadowed and deep.

Come, see where Lough Swilly is lying,
 Enfolded in purple and gray ;
 Come, meet me when daylight is dying,
 O'er Lenan at close of the day.

KEEN OF THE SHANNON.

Oh ! do you remember that night—
 That night full of wailing and woe,
 When the Baal-fires glaring, aglow,
 Filled the face of the heavens with light?—
 Oh ! do you remember that night ?

Oh ! do you remember that night—
 That night when the tempest was born,
 And the shriekings and weepings ere morn
 Chilled the heart of the bride with affright?—
 Oh ! do you remember that night ?

Oh ! do you remember that night—
 That night when the feet of the dead
 Were borne in to the bridal bed
 By the young men silent and white?—
 Oh, do you remember that night ?

Oh ! do you remember that night—
 That night the waves beat on the shore ;
 Rippling and laughing, they bore
 His poor broken body to sight?—
 Oh ! do you remember that night ?

Oh ! do you remember that night—
 That night full of wailing and woe,
 When the Baal-fires glaring, aglow,
 Filled the face of the heaven with light,
 Oh ! do you remember that night ?

MERMAIDENS.

DOWN, far down from the depths of the sea,
 Maids are singing and sighing to me :
 " In our sea-weed bowers we long for thee,
 To tell us tales of earth's joy and woe,
 Which we left such a long, long time ago.

" Fairy maidens they called us of old,
 Banshees keening the death of the bold ;
 Elves or brownies with tresses of gold,
 But now in caverns the seas below,
 We talk of the times long, long ago.

"We tell of delights in the starry nights,
When haunting rivers and streams along;
We hid 'neath the eaves of the coltsfoot leaves,
Awaiting the dawn and the skylark's song.

"We danced on the spray, when the moon-
light lay,
Turning to silver the hastening brook;
The boat that we made, was the flag-rush
blade,
Its golden petals for sails we took.

"But we loved the best, an Isle in the West,
Where the mosses green are feathered with
ferns;
Where the rivers brown run eddying down,
And the thrushes are heard 'mid brakes and
burns;
But from that land where the soft winds blow,
Alas! we parted long, long ago!"

THE SEASONS.

SPRING.

How sweet the scent of Spring when buds are
swelling,
And from each sheathèd dwelling

The flowers send forth their ranks of shining
spears
To know if Summer nears.
If they may come again with virgin loves,
And where the long grass moves,
May bend and kiss, and bend and kiss again,
Borne down by April rain;
When softly on the sunlit meads 'tis drifting,
From where the clouds are lifting
Their purple heads in rolling masses bright,
Edgèd with silver light,
To meet their king, who gives them life, and
death,
And who, with kindling breath,
Sends forth the glory of his Iris bow,
To thank them for their loves and bid them go:
So dream the tender flowers when buds are
swelling,
Each in his sheathèd dwelling.

SUMMER.

How sweet it is in long, warm summer hours,
To lie among the flowers,
Or 'midst the grasses of the waving plain,
Fearing nor wind nor rain.
Or when the morning's work is past and done,
To watch the weary sun,
Veiling its splendour in a blood-red shroud,
Of deep embankèd cloud.

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Then, when the last sweet notes of birds are
 failing,
 And all the sky is paling,
 I raise my head, and feel the cool, soft air,
 Lifting my loosened hair,
 And bidding me depart nor linger here.
 When damps and dews are near,
 And when upon their soft and golden beds
 The daisy petals lay their drowsy heads,
 So sweet it is, through long, warm, summer
 hours,
 To dream amidst the flowers.

AUTUMN.

Sweet are the voices of the children playing,
 Their merry footsteps straying,
 Where purple bunches of the brambles lean
 From out the thicket green ;
 From where beneath their tents of bracken
 fern
 They make believe to learn
 All the strange mysteries of their future life :
 Its sickness, joy, and strife.
 Then when the Autumn days are nigh their
 ending,
 And Winter's breath is lending
 Its frost-bright sparkles to the dewy morn,
 To flowers and leaves are borne
 The happy tidings that their work is o'er,
 That they may rest once more,

Lying entranced in a magic sleep,
 The while stern Winter hours their watches
 keep,
 So sweet it is amid the harvest lying,
 To dream of rest and dying.

WINTER.

Softly the snow-drifts through the gray air
 flying,
 In whispers low were sighing :
 " Ah ! why must we our home in heaven leave,
 And through the gray air cleave,
 To die on earth, where all the flowers are dead ?
 Or should one lift its head,
 And dare to greet us with its trustful eyes,
 At our embrace it dies !
 Ah ! we were happy in our home abiding,
 From cloud to cloudlet gliding.
 There oft we gathered in the silent night,
 Around our mistress bright,
 And glorious in her glory we have lain,
 Above the darksome main,
 When earth-born winds swept o'er its troubled
 waves,
 And lashed them, moaning, to their prison
 caves."
 So the white snow-drifts through the gray air
 flying
 In whispers low were sighing.

SONNET.

THE water as I passed was reddened o'er
 With tiny sheaths shed from the bright-
 green beach,
 Which gathered into fleets in every reach,
 Or hid themselves 'mid young leaves by the
 shore,
 Their weary days remembered now no more,
 When, clinging each to each and fold on
 fold,
 They wrapped their tender nurslings from
 the cold,
 And brought them to their joys 'mid trials
 sore.
 Poor things! Forgotten now 'mid flowers and
 Spring,
 You fill me with a shadow of dark fears,
 That love may lessen with the growing
 years,
 And that the changing hours that hour may
 bring,
 When death shall seem the only good thing
 left,
 To me, in loneliness, of love bereft.

DAFFODILS.

WELCOME, darling, golden lilies!
 Welcome, sunbright daffodilies!
 Here in clusters green you grow,
 There in masses bright you blow,
 Gladd'ning Winter-wearied eyes
 With an ever new surprise;
 Bending low as if to meet
 Spring's sweet breath and hastening feet;
 Bending low as if to hear
 Voices from the Summer near:
 First of all our golden lilies,
 Well-beloved daffodilies.

Children love your scented beds,
 Children fling your golden heads,
 Toss them back and run for more,
 Shouting round your endless store.
 Spring, her hands so full, had found
 That she dropped you all around,
 Flung you down, amidst the cold,
 On the hard and parchèd mould;
 But we love you all the same,
 Love your strange child-given name;
 Welcome, darling, golden lilies,
 Summer-scented daffodilies!

THE WORKERS FOR IRELAND.

Now, or in future hope, is it not ours,
That freedom which they sought?
Or has their life been wasted? All their powers
Spent, and for nought?

In tears, and blood, and death, their seed was
sown,
They died and deemed it lost;
But God has raised it, nurturing it unknown,
Through dark and frost.

We who receive fruition of their griefs,
How can we judge or scoff?
Can we despise their names, scorn their beliefs,
Or cast them off?

No; though they failed yet from their failures
shone
A higher, nobler light.
No; though they died, their voices echo on
From might to might.

Then by the love of her we all have loved,
Our birthplace, home, and grave,
Cherish their names who in their deaths have
proved
In weakness brave.

"GATHERED RICHES FROM THE
OLDER POETS."

THESE words and thoughts of olden time,
So freshly dim, so quaintly bright,
To me are dear, as is the prime
And glory of the dawn of light,
When flowers, new opened from the night,
Are wet with dew, or rain bedight.

Then dripping boughs bend low, and leaves
Between me and the liquid skies
Sparkle and fade, and the low wind heaves
Its scented, murmuring sighs,
And tufted heads awake and rise
From grass that all rain-burdened lies.

So, from the mists of far-off days,
Fresh, sweet, and new mysteriously,
Old loves, old hopes in these old lays
Are born again from death to me,
And merle and cushat pleasantly
Sing o'er again their songs to me.

TO M. O'B.

IF in the hopeless night or weary day
I long for rest of sympathising eyes,
That rest of love wherein all comfort lies;
Then, Mary, then I see the flowery way

By which you came—there shadowed sun-
 beams sway,
 And toss or float 'mid olive leaves above.
 Silent you came, stretching forth hands of
 love,
 Tearless, but flushed, and in your brown eyes
 lay
 Deep, boundless pity to assuage my grief.
 Silent you drew me, as a child, to rest,
 Close to your circling arms and sobbing
 breast,
 Even through your sorrow giving mine
 relief.
 Oh! sister, dearest love, I mourn thee still,
 Though long, long since we kissed our last
 farewell.

HYÈRES.

BENEATH the shadow of grey branchéd planes
 Our Mary sat and rested ; near her feet,
 With small, clasped hands, o'erbrimmed
 with bunches sweet
 Of daisy buds, her child, her Nell remains,
 Or with quick bound some bright, strange
 flower attains ;
 Then, weary with her joy and southern heat,
 She flings herself awhile down by our seat,
 But for a moment. Now each nerve she
 strains

To catch those sun-stained leaves which on
 the bough
 Waver around her head, now high, now low ;
 Her rose-bound hat, fallen back from off her
 brow,
 Shows all her face, flushed bright as flowers
 that blow
 In summer's fulness ; and her mother's eyes
 Are soft and still, as one love satisfies.

TO THE BUST OF M. O'B.

PURE, bright, and calm art thou as spirits blest ;
 Semblance of her I loved, of her most dear ;
 Thee neither sin, nor sorrow, nor any fear
 Of death hath stained ; rather triumphant rest
 And joy unknown, unspeakable, exprest
 Silently by each line tender and pure,
 Of shaded eyes or curved chin rounded clear,
 Or folded lips—ah ! sweet lips often prest
 To mine ; but never more, oh ! never shall I
 touch
 Thy fair head, with its dusky, gold-streaked
 cloud,
 Whereon light lingered, till it seemed that
 such
 Should be its own first home, its last abode.
 Oh ! never wilt thou lie where thou hast lain
 Within these arms. Alas ! never again.

BOY'S SONG.

I AM but a boy, and how know I
 All that lies hid in a maiden's eye,
 Why cheeks grow pale, and white lips sigh?
 Ah! but I know too well!

Have I not heard a low rippling voice,
 That bade mine eyes look up and rejoice,
 When clasped hands told me of her choice?
 Ah! but I know too well!

Have I not felt what it was to stray,
 Thinking in sorrow that she was away,
 When, sudden, her spirit around me lay?
 Ah! but I know too well!

Young though I am, still, Annie machree,
 The pulse of my heart is beating for thee;
 Therefore I know what lovers can see!
 Ah! but I know too well!

GIRL'S SONG.

MANY a day my darling's away
 Up on the heathy braes,
 Where the bonny mountain air
 Rustles through his flaxen hair;
 There, where snipe and moor-hens sleep,
 Oft he wades through mosses deep.
 So many a day my darling's away
 Up on the heathy braes.

Many a day my darling's away
 Out on the breezy loughs;
 Out in darkness, out in rain,
 Nought cares he, but laughs again!
 Young is he, and knows no care,
 Weather and cold he well can bear.
 So many a day my darling's away
 Out on the breezy loughs.

Many a day my darling's away,
 Ever he thinks of me!
 Thinks of the day when I shall ride
 Merrily, merrily on at his side,
 Sharing his happiness, sharing his strife,
 His true, his loving, his own dear wife.
 So many a day, though he's far away,
 Ever he thinks of me.

NOVEMBER.

DECEMBER time is drawing nigh,
 We hope no more from thee, old year;
 All thoughts of joy now quickly fly
 To pay their court to thee, new year.
 The shower falls, the brown leaf dies,
 Mourning thy coming death, old year;
 But soon all pretty things shall rise
 To greet thy sweet young breath, new year.

We thank thee for thy sunny past,
 For all we learned from thee, old year,
 But, borne upon December's blast,
 Our hopes shall fly to thee, new year.

WISDOM AND CHARITY.

ETERNAL Twins! when the Almighty breathed
 Life 'mid the silent spaces of the earth,
 Were ye not present then, when Death had
 birth,
 When dim-eyed sorrow first her sword un-
 sheathed?
 Were ye not witness to the gifts bequeathed,
 From death, new life, and from heart anguish
 mirth?
 Saw ye not fulness bloom o'er lands of
 dearth,
 And with sweet flowers the wan, gray world
 enwreathed?
 Twin children, joined of God, divorced of man,
 Alike in birth and to one vow united,
 The rescue of a world, sin quelled and
 blighted,
 The perfecting of God's eternal plan.
 Death is a worker with you and ye win
 From pain, new rest, new strength of love
 from sin.

SONG.

Written in imitation of the manner of the Irish-Gaelic writers
 of the 17th century. Though not a translation, it is a close
 copy of the fancies and mannerisms of the time.

ONE morning by the streamlets I walked, and
 gazing round,
 I saw the low sun sending its beams along the
 ground,
 I saw the birch-tree bending, its gray stem
 lightly crowned,

As I was wandering slowly, in still and
 thoughtful mood,
 I heard the water falling anear me as I stood,
 And shouts of cuckoos calling within the far-
 off wood.

I lifted up mine eyelids, and there along the
 way
 I saw a fair young woman, all clad in bright
 array,
 And I wondered were she human—in the early
 dawning day.

Her breath was as the honey wrought by the
 wandering bee;
 Her lips as two red berries, plucked from the
 rowan-tree;
 And rose red as young cherries her round
 cheek, fresh and free.

Her forehead as the lime-dust was clear, and
smooth, and fair
Her brows were as two swallows, seen far
through summer air,
Oh! vain the word that follows, for the won-
der of her hair.

Free curling were her tresses, wide-spreading,
odorous, sweet,
And the golden lights, though hiding, in
shadowed depths would meet,
Or down her green robe gliding would haste
to kiss her feet.

As combs of the wild honey, her teeth were
ranged and white,
Her eyes as dewdrops sparkling in the early
morning light,
Or as river waters darkling on a frosty moon-
light night.

"Oh, tell me now, oh, tell me, what name to
call thee by,
Oh, silent, modest maiden, of the chaste and
downcast eye.
Bright love, with beauty laden, oh, tell me
else I die.

"Art thou the sad-eyed Deirdré, who mourns
the Red Branch Knights?
With Love's prophetic weeping, she left the
Albyn heights."
"No; Deirdré still lies sleeping, beneath the
northern lights."

"Oh, tell me now, oh, tell me, art thou the
magic Maove,
Who 'mid the dead and dying threw down the
warlike glaive?"
"No; the cruel queen is lying beside Comna-
cia's wave."

"Art thou the fairy Ailné, who bound the
Chief of Spears
With her magic waving motion in the Valley
of the Fears?"
"No; but the heaving ocean her druid laugh-
ter hears!"

All silent she stood by me, but 'mid her
radiant hair,
Enwreathed in depths of brightness, I saw the
shamrock rare,
And my heart was filled with lightness, for
my mother-queen was there.

SONG.

DANCING, tripping o'er the lea,
Oh, come!

Kissing fairy hands at me,
Oh, come!

Like glistening light,
Of sunbeams bright,
Dispersing night,
Oh, come!

Bounding down the heathery slopes,
Thou comest!

Bursting through the gossamer ropes,
Thou comest!

Not heeding spray
Of dew that lay
In morning's gray,
Thou comest!

Furze and bramble branches cry,
Oh, stay!

Sweet birds sing from rose-tufts high,
Oh, stay.

They call for thee,
Their nests to see:
But stay with me,
Oh, stay,

GIBRALTAR.

Early morning, after the Bay of Biscay in November.

THE hills around in rangéd silence stood,
'Neath the bare splendour of a southern
sky;

Athwart the couchant "Lion" poured a flood
Of light, in beams unbroken, and a brood
Of silver-wingéd fowl slept on the waters
nigh.

Of such fair fowl so still, so snowy white,
Brooding in peace on such a charmed wave,
Might Milton well have dreamed, or he whose
sight

Was gifted with clear visions of delight,
Upon those meads the which the Silver
Thames did lave.

Sea-weary wanderers from the sunless North,
Well might we press towards land, well
might we set

Our feet rejoicing on the joyous earth,
Deeming all meanest things of mickle worth,
For love of that strange folk that there
about were met.

For all around were men of various lands,
 Full of strange beauty, clad in divers
 wise;
 Moors were there, from sun-wasted Afric
 sands,
 Stately, clothed on with robes of state, and
 bands
 Of gorgeous colour glowing, even as their
 lustrous eyes.

Oh, wondrous human form! oh, crowning
 praise
 Of this world's beauty! Nature-moulded
 men!
 Ye walk the earth as gods through changeless
 ways—
 God-like in mind, *we* measure glorious days,
 But look as born for slaves—poor creatures
 of the pen!

Strange Spanish England, wherein two lives
 meet,
 The new life and the old—around us throng
 Sun-swarthy faces, burning eyes that greet
 Our eyes like glowing lava, depths of heat,
 Where thunderous passion lies, fierce, vivid,
 cruel, strong!

Not soon shall I forget ye, headlands bare
 Yet beautiful, with antique story fraught,
 Or truth more strange; perchance ye watchers
 were
 When 'neath the brine sank lost Atlantis
 fair—
 Watchers, ye saw new worlds from out the
 darkness wrought.

TRIT-TROT.—A MARCH DRIVE

OH, breezy month of Mars,
 Set with daisies as with stars,
 With primroses and daffodillies gay;
 Thy heaving, teaming ploughs,
 And thy budding, shivering boughs,
 Speak of joy and of promise e'en as they.

The hazy, dreamy sun,
 When the starry night is done,
 Wakes bewildered to a world all in gray;
 The wide spaces of thy sky,
 They beguile the weary eye,
 So long bound beneath dim winter's cloudy
 sway.

The magpies flutter down
 By the furrows rich and brown,
 Their glancing plumage glittering o'er the
 clay ;
 The rook, with steadfast will,
 He amasses in his bill
 Sticks and straws for his nest far away.

The turf-boats on the tide
 Swing and tack from side to side,
 Their red sails all bedewed with dancing
 spray ;
 Oh ! they fly before the wind,
 Leaving long white streaks behind,
 Which the river tosses backwards in its
 play !

Wild month of light and air,
 Thou art strong, thou art not fair,
 Though the brightest gems enamel thine
 array ;
 Though the eyes of April dream,
 From beneath thy vizor's gleam,
 Ah ! too often they beguile us and betray.

Blow on, then, breezy March,
 Blow the green tufts o'er the larch,
 And bury with sweet buds April and May ;
 Blow the fresh air through the clods !
 Blow the green grass o'er the sods !
 Oh, be quick ! blow us in a hot summer's day !

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

OH ! pure pale flower, beneath thy crown of
 leaves,
 When we despair of beauty thou art born ;
 Thou dawnest for the cold, gray winter's
 morn,
 And for the sun that o'er yon blue hill weaves
 Clear amber and dim gold—faint, faint, re-
 prieve
 Of loveliness at point to die outworn,
 'Neath hopeless skies and cloudland racked
 and torn,
 And the white death that kills as it deceives.
 But is it so belovèd ? Nay, not so.
 Thou speak'st to us of life and not of death,
 Not of the winter blast, nor of the snow,
 But of the sun, the spring, the purple heath,
 The wealth of the new year, the hope of flowers,
 And the eternal sequence of the hours.

SCHILLER.

WHAT was thy work, O Schiller ? what thy
 praise ?
 This—that a nation, rude, unformed, untaught,
 But rich with seed of genius, germs of thought,

And the long sequence of its patient days,
Spoke out to life by thee; for through thy lays
A single heart of nationhood was brought
To Germany, then scorned and counted nought,
Now crowned with bleeding laurel 'mid her
bays.

This was thy task, but not alone, nor first,
Shall thy name stand, for one thy friend, thy
mate.

We join with thee; now, Time, do thou thy
worst;

Press up against those bars, sweep all thy
weight

On that strong circle wrought round those
who stand

With Schiller and with Goëthe hand-in-hand.

SONG.

SWEET little birds were singing
Upon the white tipped sloes,
The snowdrop chimes were ringing
Above the melting snows;

The tulips still lay dreaming
About their bright array,
But fresh wee buds were gleaming
Amidst the wood's decay.

Around the raths and hedges
Peeped out the primrose small;
Across the furrowed ridges
Was heard the ploughman's call.

Oh! those were happy days, love!
When first thou camest to me;
Though parted on our ways, love!
I still shall think of thee.

DEAFNESS—THE PAST AND THE
PRESENT.

THE woods are silenced for me, and the streams
Ripple no more for me along the leas;
No more for me the birds sing melodies
To greet the morn, or give the sun good
dreams:

No more the circling rooks in heavy crowds
Beat homeward cawing, 'neath the wind-
swept clouds.

Where are the sweet sounds gone? Are they
all gone?

Gone from the meadows deep with swathes of
hay,

There the blithe corncrake woke the summer
day,

Or startled the still air the whole night long.

Now silent in their beauty they bend low
While the rich-scented breezes o'er them
blow.

Oh! merry voices of the world of life,
From the warm farm, the byre, the hen-roost
shed;
There nesting swallows flashed above my
head,
And all about the air with sound was rife;
With din of sparrow hordes, incessant, shrill,
Debating, scolding, loving—then so still.

So still, for I had called them! Breathlessly
I stood awaiting the uncoming burst,
And rush of rival voices, all athirst
To fill the air with carols mad with glee;—
Set with dark globes and crowns the burnished
leaves
Now sway in silence 'neath the silent eaves.

O earth! what murmurs sweet beguile thy
rest,
Ere yet the thrush his glorious matin rings;
Ere yet the goldfinch on his glittering wings
Brushes the jasmine stars from round his
nest;
Ere yet the daisy leaves turned toward the sun,
Bid night "Good night," and speak his day
begun.

Oh bitter loss! all Nature's voices dumb.
Oh loss beyond all loss! About my neck
The children cast their arms; no voices break
Upon my ear; no sounds of laughter come—
Child's laughter, wrought of love, and life, and
bliss;
Heedless I leave the rest, had I but this!

BIRD SONGS.

BLACKBIRD.

SPRING! spring! spring!
Oh! wherefore art thou tarrying?
Why comest thou not carrying
Young lambs in thine arms?
Why comest thou not bearing
Young buds in hands unsparing,
Young life for the farms?

Spring! spring! spring!
Oh! lightly tread on our borders,
Hid flowers await thine orders,
Where'er thou art!
Come to us quickly, O fair one.
Welcomes await thee, O dear one.
Come, sweet heart.

THRUSH.

Come out! come out! come out!
 For the day is dewy and clear,
 And the blossoming time of the year
 Is near, is here.

Yesterday! was it only yesterday?
 The earth was cold, and sodden, and grey
 Where the snow lay.

Come out! come out! come out!
 The daffodils on lawn and lea,
 Their golden heads are swinging free,
 Oh, come and see

The buttercups* all glistening gay,
 Beneath the budding elms are they,
 Where the snow lay.

Come out! come out! come out!
 The blades of grass they quiver and start,
 Thrusting the glittering drops apart
 From the earth's heart.

The catkin buds all silvery grey,
 Have pushed their red-brown sheaths away
 On which snow lay.

Come out! come out! come out!
 Oh, small green plant for ever dear,
 Shamrock avourneen! art thou here,
 Knowing no fear!

* King cups are buttercups in Ireland.

Along the bare down-trodden way,
 Thou daring one, thy young leaves stray
 Where the snow lay.

Chorus.

Come out! come out! come out!
 Oh, welcome the beautiful spring.
 Who hideth each frost-worn thing,
 Who wakeneth the woods to ring:
 "Welcome, thou beautiful spring!
 Welcome, thou spring!"

FRANCE.

(13th December, 1877.)

The French crisis—when the Marshal and the Republican party were standing face to face, their hands on their swords. The next day the Marshal surrendered—a noble surrender.

AGAIN thou comest to thine hour! Again,
 Oh fairest France! thou strugglest in thy pain,
 We stand, and watch, and ask if this, too, be
 in vain?

In vain the labour of these weary years?
 In vain the blood, the treasure, and the tears?
 In vain thy travail sore—thy sacrifice—thy
 fears?

Fair country, though within thy bounds apart
I stand a stranger, yet with thee this heart
Pulses in love and grief, knowing thee as thou
art.

Thy sunny, scented hills, thy vineyards dight
With crimson webs and gold, springs of
delight,
Thine olives stretching far, in clouded silvery
light.

I see them all—the toilers of thy leas,
Beating with reedy staves the burdened trees,
Young maids and children bending in groups
about their knees.

Brave, kindly people! Bright of ready cheer,
The sun looks down on you in love, yet here
Ye stand with lifted brows, the shadows sweep-
ing near.

War! Is it war? Nay; can it be that those
Whose banners bear her name, can be her
foes?

Oh crime! oh grief! oh shame! what worse
could death disclose?

Peace! Is it peace? Nay; we surrender not,
The birth of time, by agony begot,
Unshaped till extreme woe the great deliver-
ance wrought.

“Oh, countrymen! oh, patriots! oh, friends!”
Ye cry to one another. Echo lends
Her voice—but answering time as yet no
answer sends.

GLADSTONE.

(*Written, November, '69.*)

OH, noble face marked deep by inward strife.
Oh steadfast eyes, through which thy soul
looks out.
Gladstone, we rest on thee, nor think of
doubt,
Knowing that sooner wouldst thou lay down
life
Than fail us now, or break the bonds of trust.
Behold! we look to thee with hopeful eyes,
Grasping thine outstretched hand which
bids us rise
From that abyss where, stricken in the dust,
We mourned our ruined homes and crime-
stained soil.
God grant thee wisdom in this trying hour;
Thou hast our prayers, may they increase thy
power
That, conquering now for us, thy name may
live
When death hath freed thee from reproach
and toil,
In that undying fame that love can give.

GLADSTONE.

(October, 1877.)

THOU comest to us now when leaves are sere,
 Now, when pale fields look upward to a sun
 Dim, as if weary with the year's work done;
 Now, when dread ghosts of winter hover near,
 Yet Ireland welcomes thee; thou art by her
 Even now beloved; even now thy name is
 one
 She honours; in the ages yet to run,
 That honour will be dearer and more dear.
 Yea, Ireland loves thee; thou hast been a
 friend,
 Faithful, though failing it may be, to sound
 The full chord of her being, and the round
 That lies before her as the days ascend.
 Thou noble speaker of a noble part,
 My country greets thee, holds thee in her
 heart.

SHAKSPEARE.

OH! thou who in the silent grave so long
 Art laid, unmindful of the vocal day,
 Unrecking of thy glory, though men say:
 "Behold the unexampled king of song."

Thou, ruler of man's thought; thou rich and
 strong,
 Thy stamp is on the nations, and thy sway,
 Were not the dead the kings of earth alway,
 The gods of ancient time, meters of right and
 wrong?
 But thou, as Orpheus, from the grave didst
 bring
 The dead, forgotten past, and bad'st it sing
 Melodious to all time, while each fair thing
 Took fairer form before thee, and new birth.
 Thine were the storms of grief, and thine
 the mirth
 Of laughter, love, and joy, of heaven and
 earth.

TREE FRIENDS.

THE trees which, far apart, 'mid moss and
 fern,
 Strike their long, winding roots, then silent,
 lone,
 Spring upwards through green brakes where
 sunbeams thrown
 On holly boughs in sudden splendours burn.
 Into ethereal space they lean, and yearn
 Toward kindred forms unseen before, but
 known,
 Which, answering, bend to weave a spark-
 ling crown

Of buds half opened to the spring's return.
 In chorus low of lisplings musical,
 They whisper to soft winds and sun-bright
 showers,
 Burn in blue-purple skies through cloudless
 hours
 Or veiled in crimson, wait the autumnal fall.
 So we, though reared apart, henceforth shall
 move
 In unison of trust, and never-dying love.

TO A. DE VERE.

(Irish Odes.)

WELL hast thou touched the chords our hearts
 to thrill,
 Well knowest thou the children of the West,
 For thou art one of us, and in thy breast
 Pure love abides for that dear land which still
 Her destiny of sorrow must fulfil.
 Sorrow, but glorified by hearts that move,
 In prayerful waiting on God's present love,
 Bowing their wills unto His holy will.
 Truly thine heart is one with ours, and we,
 To whom this mystery of grief belongs,
 Alone can know the beauty of thy songs ;
 Alone can hear that inward melody
 Which haunts our lives, and lies enshrined
 here,
 As tender flowers sweet hidden odours bear.

KEEN OF THE SHANNON.

DEAD! He is dead! and no more
 Shall he hear the curlew whistle along the
 windy shore,
 When the yellow, swirling tides their weight
 of waters pour
 On the sea-weed and the stones by the shore.
 Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead! he is dead! and no more
 Shall he see the river gleaming along the
 moonpath white,
 Where the silver, swirling tides rush from
 darkness into light,
 While they ripple and they roll on to night.
 Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead! he is dead! and no more
 Shall he watch the sunset glowing flush the
 vault of heaven around,
 When the crimson, swirling tides give a low,
 rejoicing sound,
 By the stillness and the light they are bound.
 Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead! he is dead! and no more
 Shall the star of morning flame above him
 o'er the wave,
 While the cruel, swirling tides flash again the
 light it gave,
 And the river is all black as the grave.
 Ululu! O my son! ululu!

Dead ! he is dead ! and no more
 The dead, white light of winter gleams for him
 upon the shore,
 The dead, grey, swirling tides beating, beat-
 ing o'er and o'er,
 On the sea-weed and the stones by the shore.
 Ululu ! O my son ! ululu !

S O N G .

BIRDIE singing merrily amid the glossy furze,
 Rejoicing in thy secret, hidden nest,
 In thy callow, fuzzy young, and the small,
 brown wife who bears
 Them firm against her own soft breast !
 Rejoice ! birdie, joy and sing while you may !
 For soon, ah ! too soon, will the young ones
 fly away.

Soon though the summer sun be gleaming
 o'er the corn,
 And the river shines blue to the sky,
 Though the scent of sweet meadows on the
 air be borne,
 And the heather be purple close by,
 Yet the young ones are gone that made life so
 gay,
 Gone from their mother's breast, far, far away.

Ah ! pity me, birdie, my children have flown,
 My nest is left empty and bare,
 Though the furze yet be green, and the gold
 be yet unblown,
 No bright eyes its beauty will share ;
 Bloom heather and furze, blossom every spray,
 But my little ones have left me, and are
 gone far away.

I.
 SPRING.

THOSE subtle stirrings of the unconscious soul,
 That with green leaves and quivering buds
 awake ;
 Those memories of childhood's days that make
 Of the on-coming spring a perfect whole—
 Delights that live within and yield no toll
 To death or passion, or the hours that break
 Their little wavelets o'er the unstable lake,
 That life still pictures on time's restless shoal ;
 These, oh ! my brother, dedicate to thee,
 And to thy love I hold within my heart,
 Thou in their beauty, in their life hast part,
 And amidst them thy steps pass on by me ;
 Thou art within the sunshine, and I move
 Now, as in years gone by, girt round with love.

II.

SPRING.

YE primrose banks that were of old so sweet,
Your fragrance and your beauty live once
more;

For those that now are children let your store,
Spread its world old profusion round our feet;
For me, these few torn buds the first to meet,
My eyes long watchful are as those of yore
(Those, brother, we together knelt before),
Fresh from the heart of spring-tide, pure,
complete.

These hold the ripple of water, golden light,
And shadows on the green new-springing
grass,

These bloom beneath a sky, more clear, more
bright,

These laugh beside the streamlets as we pass,
With arms entwined we go, slow wandering on,
Where the light fancy leads us, free, alone.

TO SUMMER.

IN thee a rest of beauty stills the air;
In thee fulfilment of the spring is won;
The lazy meadows basking in the sun,
Grow to a browner silvery softness there;
In thee an hour to mere delight we spare,
We lie with leisure in her wide leaved zone,
O'ershadowed with tranquillity, and shun
The fervour of the spring and autumn's
care.

In thee the sounds are musical and low;
In thee the murmur of the bees is heard;
In thee the sleepy kine deep panting go
To where the sedges by the brook are
stirred;
Or linger knee-deep where the shallow lies,
Till the clear golden clouds of evening rise.

THE SEA PINK, A VISION OF
KILKEE.

WHENCE art thou, bright one, fresh blown
from the sea,

Through the dark, silent night?

Thou bringest the scent of wild salt winds
with thee;

They pass across my spirit, and the light
Of waves that break the sunbeams in their
glee,

Dawns on my inmost sight.

Steep, rugged cliffs black as dim hell's despair,
 Waves rolling on and on,
 A wonder of great waters, fierce and fair,
 Caverns where yet the sun hath never shone,
 Where echo shouts across the compassed air
 From jewelled roof and coign.

Thou, too, that crownest all the steeps with
 fire,
 Child of the air and spray,
 Lover of freedom, urged by strong desire
 For the bare rock and for the stern array
 Of waters that pulse on nor ever tire
 From their remorseless play.

Voiceless before the earth-embracing wave,
 Through all the changing hours,
 Have I drunk in the fresh, soft winds that
 drave
 The rosy circlets of thy countless flowers,
 Thou laughing merry laughter, light and
 brave,
 — If sunshine reigned or showers?

No home of placid waters, bending ferns,
 And gentle stir of leaves
 Is thine, thou strong sea lover; rather yearns
 Thine heart for where the lone horizon
 heaves—
 For where the red sun all unshielded burns
 O'er ocean's blood-red sheaves.

For ye, O fonts! that by the rock pools play,
 And to their depths look down;
 See ye not wonders there hid from the day,
 Strange creatures gemmed with turquoise
 as a crown,
 Yea, and all tints that the pure heavens display
 'Mid seaweeds quaint and brown.

For ye dread waters that tumultuous fall,
 Grinding the bare black rocks;
 The far deep echoing thunders your recall,
 Down gloomy gulfs ye drag the horrid locks
 Of sea wrack 'gainst the red-encrusted wall,
 Or mussel haunted blocks.

Up rolled your billows heave their strength
 on high,
 Their shining weight of green;
 Clear, perfect, dazzling, as an emerald's eye,
 Boundless, eterne, unresting as the sheen
 Of God's great glories spread across the sky
 When stars from heaven lean.

Stern headlands dim beyond the briny haze,
 With spray clouds at their feet;
 There the sea aster blooms, the sea fern sways,
 And in deep caves waves thunder and re-
 treat;
 There brown seals wander through the watery
 ways,
 And there the rock doves meet.

Such is thine home, sea pink, and there each
year

Those I have loved and I
Have nestled in its nooks and watched the
clear,

Beautiful ocean ever drawing nigh,
Yet aye afar, a wonder and a fear,
Unknown perpetually.

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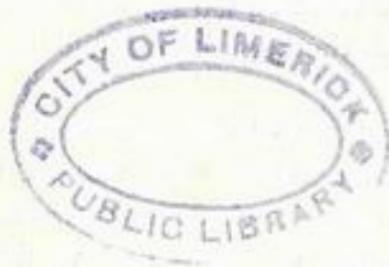
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Soon wilt thou know me friend; and thou,
 dear love,
 We may not live together, but can die.

(Dies.)

SEVERO.

Alessio! friend, forgiveness! Lellia!—Lellia!—
 My hand but not my heart hath drawn thy
 life!

Oh, sirs! oh, lords, she was my only sister!

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

SONG.

ERE night had bidden the day depart,
 Or ever the sun was born,
 I hastened to meet my true, true love,
 Amid the ripening corn.

She bade me arise, and watch for her here,
 In the light of the opening day,
 Ere the crimson poppy unfolded its buds,
 Or smoothed out its wrinkled array.

Then hasten, sweetheart, for the golden light
 Lies low on the bending ears,
 And the trembling corn-flowers have lifted
 their heads,
 Their blue eyes filled with tears.

She comes! she comes! where the apples hang
 low,
 Low o'er the whispering stream;
 She comes bare-footed along through the grass,
 In the dew and the rose-red gleam.