

The Roman Actor.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ACTORS' NAMES.

Domitianus Cæsar	J. Lowin.	
Paris, the ROMAN ACTOR	J. Taylor.	
Ælius Lamia,	} T. Pollard.	
Junius Rusticus,		} Rob. Benfield,
Palphurius Sura,		
Fulcinus,		
Parthenius, Cæsar's freedman	R. Sharpe.	
Aretinus, Cæsar's spy	E. Swanstone.	
Stephanos, Domitilla's freedman.		
Æsopus,	} R. Robinson.	
Latinus,		} C. Greville.
Philargus, a rich miser; father to Parthenius	A. Smith.	
Ascletario, an astrologer.		
Sejeius,	} G. Vernon.	
Entellus,		} J. Horne.
Domitia, wife of Ælius Lamia	J. Tompson.	
Domitilla, cousin-german to Cæsar	I. Hunnieman.	
Julia, daughter of Titus	W. Trigge.	
Cænis, Vespasian's concubine	A. Gough.	
A Lady.		
Tribunes, Lictors, Centurions, Soldiers, Hangmen, Servants, Captives.		

SCENE,—Rome.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Theatre. Enter Paris, Latinus, and Æsopus.*

Æsop. What do we act to-day?

Lat. Agave's frenzy,
With Pentheus' bloody end.

Par. It skills not what;
The times are dull, and all that we receive
Will hardly satisfy the day's expense.

The Greeks, ~~to whom we owe the first invention~~

~~Both of the buskin'd scene, and humble seek,~~

That reign in every noble family,
Declain against us; and our theatre,
Great Pompey's work, that hath given full
delight

Both to the eye and ear of fifty thousand
Spectators in one day, ~~as if it were~~

~~Some unknown desert, or great Rome un-~~
~~peopled,~~

Is quite forsaken.

Lat. Pleasures of worse natures
Are gladly entertain'd; and they that shun us,
Practise, in private, sports the stews would
blush at.

A litter borne by eight Liburnian slaves,

To buy diseases from a glorious strumpet,
The most censorious of our Roman gentry,
Nay, of the garded robe, the senators,
Esteem an easy purchase.

Par. Yet grudge us,
That with delight join profit, and endeavour
To build their minds up fair, and on the stage
Decipher to the life what honours wait
On good and glorious actions, and the shame
That treads upon the heels of vice, the salary
Of six sestertii.

Æsop. For the profit, Paris,
And mercenary gain, they are things be-
neath us;
Since, while you hold your grace and power
with Cæsar,
We, from your bounty, find a large supply,
Nor can one thought of want ever approach
us.

Par. Our aim is glory, and to leave our
names
To aftertime.

Lat. And, would they give us leave,
There ends all our ambition.

Æsop. We have enemies,
And great ones too, I fear. 'Tis given out
lately,

The consul Aretinus, Cæsar's spy,
Said at his table, ere a month expired,
For being gall'd in our last comedy,
He'd silence us for ever.

Par. I expect

No favour from him ; my strong Aventine is,
That great Domitian, whom we oft have
cheer'd

In his most sullen moods, will once return,
Who can repair, with ease, the consul's ruins.

Lat. 'Tis frequent in the city, he hath
subdued

The Catti and the Daci, and, ere long,
The second time will enter Rome in triumph.

Enter two Lictors.

~~*Par.* Jove hasten it? With us?—I now
believe~~

~~The consul's threats, Æsopus,~~

1 Lict. You are summon'd
To appear to-day in senate.

2 Lict. And there to answer
What shall be urged against you.

Par. We obey you.

Nay, droop not, fellows ; innocence should
be bold.

We, that have personated in the scene
The ancient heroes, and the falls of princes,
With loud applause ; being to act ourselves,
Must do it with undoubted confidence.

Whate'er our sentence be, think 'tis in sport :
And, though condemn'd, let's hear it without
sorrow,

As if we were to live again to-morrow.

1 Lict. 'Tis spoken like yourself.

*Enter Ælius Lamia, Junius Rusticus, and
Palphurius Sura.*

Lam. Whither goes Paris?

1 Lict. He's cited to the senate.

Lat. I am glad the state is

~~So free from matters of more weight and
trouble,~~

~~That it has vacant time to look on us.~~

~~*Par.* That reverend place, in which the
affairs of kings~~

~~And provinces were determined, to descend
To the censure of a bitter word, or jest,
Dropp'd from a poet's pen ! Peace to your
lordships !~~

~~We are glad that you are safe.~~

[*Exeunt* Lictors, Paris, Latinus, and
Æsopus.

Lam. What times are these !

To what 's Rome fallen ! may 'we, being
alone,

Speak our thoughts freely of the prince and
state,

And not fear the informer ?

Rust. Noble Lamia,
So dangerous the age is, and such bad acts
Are practis'd every where, we hardly sleep,
Nay, cannot dream with safety. All our
actions

Are call'd in question ; to be nobly born
Is now a crime ; and to deserve too well,
Held capital treason. Sons accuse their
fathers,

Fathers their sons ; and, but to win a smile
From one in grace at court, our chastest
matrons

Make shipwreck of their honours. To be
virtuous

Is to be guilty. They are only safe
That know to sooth the prince's appetite,
And serve his lusts.

Sura. 'Tis true ; and 'tis my wonder,
That two sons of so different a nature
Should spring from good Vespasian. We
had a Titus,

Styl'd, justly, "the Delight of all Man-
kind,"

Who did esteem that day lost in his life
In which some one or other tasted not
Of his magnificent bounties. ~~One that had~~

~~A ready tear, when he was forced to sign
The death of an offender : and so far
From pride, that he disdain'd not the con-
verse~~

~~Even of the poorest Roman.~~

Lam. Yet his brother,
Domitian, that now sways the power of things,
Is so inclined to blood, that no day passes
In which some are not fasten'd to the hook,
~~Or thrown down from the Gemonies.~~ His
freed men

Scorn the nobility, and he himself,
As if he were not made of flesh and blood,
Forgets he is a man.

Rust. ~~In his young years,
He shew'd what he would be when grown
to ripeness :~~

~~His greatest pleasure was, being a child,
With a sharp-pointed bodkin to kill flies,
Whose rooms now men supply. For his
escape~~

In the Vitellian war, he raised a temple
To Jupiter, and proudly placed his figure
In the bosom of the god : and, in his edicts,
He does not blush, or start, to style himself
(As if the name of emperor were base)
Great Lord and God Domitian.

Sura. I have letters
He's on his way to Rome, and purposes
To enter with all glory. ~~The flattering senate
Decreases him divine honours ; and to cross it,
Were death with studied torments :— for
my part,~~

~~I will obey the time ; it is in vain
To strive against the torrent.~~

Rust. Let's to the curia,
And, though unwillingly, give our suffrages,
Before we are compell'd.

Lam. And since we cannot
With safety use the active, let's make use of
The passive fortitude, with this assurance,
That the state, sickin him, the gods to friend,
Though at the worst, will now begin to mend.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in Lamia's House.*

Enter Domitia and Parthenius.

Dom. To me this reverence !

Parth. I pay it, lady,

As a debt due to her that's Cæsar's mistress:
For understand with joy, he that commands
All that the sun gives warmth to, is your
servant ;

Be not amazed, but fit you to your fortunes.
Think upon state and greatness, and the
honours

That wait upon Augusta, for that name
Ere long, comes to you :—still you doubt
your vassal—

[*Presents a letter.*

But, when you've read this letter, writ and
sign'd

With his imperial hand, you will be freed
From fear and jealousy; and, I beseech you,
When all the beauties of the earth bow to
you,

And senators shall take it for an honour,
As I do now, to kiss these happy feet ;

[*Kneels.*

When every smile you give is a preferment,
And you dispose of provinces to your crea-
tures,

Think on Parthenius.

Dom. Rise. I am transported,
And hardly dare believe what is assured here.
The means, my good Parthenius, that
wrought Cæsar,

Our god on earth, to cast an eye of favour
Upon his humble handmaid ?

Parth. What, but your beauty ?

When nature framed you for her masterpiece,
As the pure abstract of all rare in woman,
She had no other ends but to design you
To the most eminent place. I will not say
(For it would smell of arrogance, to insinuate
The service I have done you) with what zeal
I oft have made relation of your virtues,
Or how I've sung your goodness, or how
Cæsar

Was fired with the relation of your story :
I am rewarded in the act, and happy
In that my project prosper'd.

Dom. You are modest :

And were it in my power, I would be thankful.
If that, when I was mistress of myself,
And in my way of youth, pure and untainted,
The emperor had vouchsafed to seek my
favours,

I had with joy given up my virgin fort,
At the first summons, to his soft embraces ;
But I am now another's, not mine own.
You know I have a husband :—for my
honour,

I would not be his strumpet ; and how law
Can be dispensed with to become his wife,
To me's a riddle.

Parth. I can soon resolve it :
When power puts in his plea the laws are
silenced.

The world confesses one Rome, and one
Cæsar,

And as his rule is infinite, his pleasures
Are unconfined ; this syllable, his *will*,
Stands for a thousand reasons.

Dom. But with safety,
Suppose I should consent, how can I do it ?
My husband is a senator, and of a temper
Not to be jested with.

Enter Lamia.

Parth. As if he durst
Be Cæsar's rival !—here he comes ; with ease
I will remove this scruple.

Lam. How ! so private !
My own house made a brothel ! [*Aside.*—

~~Sir, how durst you,
Though guarded with your power in court,
and greatness,
Hold conference with my wife ? As for you,
minion,~~

~~I shall hereafter treat—~~

Parth. You are rude and saucy,
Nor know to whom you speak.

Lam. This is fine, i'faith !

Is she not my wife ?

Parth. Your wife ! But touch her, that
respect forgotten

That's due to her whom mightiest Cæsar
favours,
And think what 'tis to die. Not to lose time,
She's Cæsar's choice : it is sufficient honour
You were his taster in this heavenly nectar ;
But now must quit the office.

Lam. This is rare !
Cannot a man be master of his wife
Because she's young and fair, without a
patent ?

I in my own house am an emperor,
And will defend what's mine. Where are
my knaves ?

If such an insolence escape unpunish'd—

Parth. In yourself, ~~Lamia—Cæsar hath forgot
To use his power, and I, his instrument,
In whom, though absent, his authority speaks,
Have lost my faculties!~~

[Stamps.

Enter a Centurion with Soldiers.

Lam. The guard! why, am I
Design'd for death?

Dom. As you desire my favour
Take not so rough a course.

Parth. All your desires
Are absolute commands: Yet give me leave
To put the will of Cæsar into act.

Here's a bill of divorce between your lordship
And this great lady: if you refuse to sign it,
And so as if you did it uncompell'd,
Won to 't by reasons that concern yourself,
Her honour too untainted, here are clerks,
Shall in your best blood write it new, till
torture

Compel you to perform it.

Lam. Is this legal?

Parth. ~~Monarchs that dare not do unlaw-
ful things,
Yet bear them out, are constables, not kings.
Will you dispute?~~

Lam. ~~I know not what to urge
Against myself, but too much dotage on her,
Love, and observance.~~

Parth. Set it under your hand,
That you are impotent, and cannot pay
The duties of a husband; or, that you are
mad;
Rather than want just cause, we'll make
you so.

Dispatch, you know the danger else;—del-
iver it,
Nay, on your knee.—Madam, you now are
free,
And mistress of yourself.

Lam. Can you, Domitia,
Consent to this?

Dom. 'T would argue a base mind
To live a servant, when I may command.
I now am Cæsar's: and yet, in respect
I once was yours, when you come to the
palace,

Provided you deserve it in your service,
You shall find me your good mistress. Wait
me, Parthenius;
And now farewell, poor Lamia!

[*Exeunt all but Lamia.*

Lam. To the gods
I bend my knees, (for tyranny hath banish'd
Justice from men,) and as they would deserve
Their altars, and our vows, humbly invoke
them,

That this my ravish'd wife may prove as fatal
To proud Domitian, and her embraces
Afford him, in the end, as little joy
As wanton Helen brought to him of Troy!
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Curia or Senate-house.*

Enter Lictors, Aretinus, ~~Fulcinus~~, Rusticus,
~~Sura~~, Paris, ~~Latinus~~, and Æsopus.

Aret. Fathers conscript, may this our
meeting be

Happy to Cæsar and the commonwealth!

Lict. Silence!

Aret. The purpose of this frequent senate
Is, first, to give thanks to the gods of Rome,
That, for the propagation of the empire,
Vouchsafe us one to govern it, like themselves.
In height of courage, depth of understanding,
And all those virtues, and remarkable graces,
Which make a prince most eminent, our
Domitian

Transcends the ancient Romans: I can never
Bring his praise to a period. ~~What good man,
That is a friend to truth, dares make it
doubtful,~~

~~That he hath Fabius' staidness, and the
courage~~

~~Of bold Marcellus, to whom Hannibal gave
The style of Target, and the Sword of Rome?
But he has more, and every touch more
Roman;~~

~~As Pompey's dignity, Augustus' state,
Antony's bounty, and great Julius' fortune,
With Cato's resolution. I am lost~~

~~In the ocean of his virtues: in a word,
All excellencies of good men meet in him,
But no part of their vices.~~

Rust. This is no flattery!

Sura. Take heed, you'll be observed.

Aret. 'Tis then most fit

That we, ~~(as to the father of our country,
Like thankful sons, stand bound to pay true
service~~

~~For all those blessings that he showers upon
us,)~~

Should not connive, and see his government
Depraved and scandalized by meaner men,
That to his favour and indulgence owe
Themselves and being.

Par. Now he points at us.

Aret. Cite Paris, the tragedian.

Par. Here.

Aret. Stand forth.

In thee, as being the chief of thy profession,
I do accuse the quality of treason,
As libellers against the state and Cæsar.

Par. Mere accusations are not proofs, my
lord;

In what are we delinquents?

Aret. You are they

That search into the secrets of the time,
And, under feign'd names, on the stage;
present

Actions not to be touch'd at ; and traduce
Persons of rank and quality of both sexes,
And, with satirical, and bitter jests,
Make even the senators ridiculous
To the plebeians.

Par. If I free not myself,
And, in myself, the rest of my profession,
From these false imputations, and prove
That they make that a libel which the poet
Writ for a comedy, so acted too ;
It is but justice that we undergo
The heaviest censure.

Aret. Are you on the stage,
You talk so boldly ?

Par. The whole world being one,
This place is not exempted ; and I am
So confident in the justice of our cause,
That I could wish Cæsar, in whose great
name

All kings are comprehended, sat as judge,
To hear our plea, and then determine of us.—
~~If, to express a man sold to his lusts,
Wasting the treasure of his time and fortunes
In wanton dalliance, and to what sad end
A wretch that's so given over does arrive at ;
Deterring careless youth, by his example,
From such licentious courses ; laying open
The snares of bawds, and the consuming arts
Of prodigal strumpets, can deserve reproof ;~~
Why are not all your golden principles,
Writ down by grave philosophers to instruct
us

To choose fair virtue for our guide, not
pleasure,

~~Condemn'd unto the fire ?~~

Sura. There's spirit in this.

Par. ~~Or if desire of honour was the base
On which the building of the Roman empire
Was raised up to this height ; if, to inflame
The noble youth with an ambitious heat
T' endure the frosts of danger, nay, of death,
To be thought worthy the triumphal wreath
By glorious undertakings, may deserve
Reward, or favour from the commonwealth ;~~

Actors may put in for as large a share
As all the sects of the philosophers :
They with cold precepts (perhaps seldom
read)

Deliver, what an honourable thing
The active virtue is : but does that fire
The blood, or swell the veins with emulation,
To be both good and great, equal to that
Which is presented on our theatres ?
Let a good actor, in a lofty scene,
Show great Alcides honour'd in the sweat

~~Of his twelve labours ; or a bold Camillus,
Forbidding Rome to be redeem'd with gold
From the insulting Gauls ; or Scipio,
After his victories, imposing tribute
On conquer'd Carthage ; if done to the life,
As if they saw their dangers, and their glories,
And did partake with them in their rewards,
All that have any spark of Roman in them,
The slothful arts laid by, contend to be
Like those they see presented.~~

Rust. He has put
The consuls to their whisper.

Par. But, 'tis urged
That we corrupt youth, and traduce superiors,
When do we bring a vice upon the stage,
That does go off unpunish'd ? Do we teach,
By the success of wicked undertakings,
Others to tread in their forbidden steps ?
~~We shew no arts of Lydian panderism,
Corinthian poisons, Persian flatteries,
But muted so in the conclusion, that~~
Even those spectators that were so inclined,
Go home changed men. And, for traducing
such

That are above us, publishing to the world
Their secret crimes, we are as innocent
As such as are born dumb. When we present
An heir, that does conspire against the life
Of his dear parent, numbering every hour
He lives, as tedious to him ; if there be,
Among the auditors, one whose conscience
tells him

He is of the same mould,—WE CANNOT
HELP IT.

Or, bringing on the stage a loose adulteress,
That does maintain the riotous expense
Of him that feeds her greedy lust, ~~yet suffers
The lawful pledges of a former bed
To starve the while for hunger ;~~ if a matron,
However great in fortune, birth, or titles,
Guilty of such a foul unnatural sin,

Cry out, 'Tis writ for me,—WE CANNOT
HELP IT.

Or, when a covetous man's express'd, whose
wealth

Arithmetic cannot number, and whose lord-
ships

A falcon in one day cannot fly over ;
Yet he so sordid in his mind, so griping,

As not to afford himself the necessaries
To maintain life ; if a patrician,
(Though honour'd with a consulship,) find
himself

Touch'd to the quick in this,—WE CANNOT
HELP IT.

~~Or, when we shew a judge that is corrupt ;
And will give up his sentence, as he favours
The person, not the cause ; saving the guilty,
If of his faction, and as oft condemning~~

~~The innocent, out of particular spleen ;~~
 If any in this reverend assembly,
 Nay, even yourself, my lord, that are the
 image
 Of absent Cæsar, feel something in your
 bosom
 That puts you in remembrance of things
 past,
 Or things intended,—'TIS NOT IN US TO
 HELP IT.
 I have said, my lord : and now, as you find
 cause,
 Or censure us, or free us with applause.

Lat. Well pleaded, on my life ! I never
 saw him
 Act an orator's part before.

~~*Æsop.* We might have given
 Ten double fees to Regulus, and yet
 Our cause deliver'd worse. [A shout within.~~

Enter Parthenius.

Aret. What shout is that ?
Parth. Cæsar, our lord, married to con-
 quest, is
 Return'd in triumph.

~~*Ful.* Let's all haste to meet him.~~
Aret. Break up the court ; we will reserve
 to him
 The censure of this cause.
All. Long life to Cæsar ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The Approach to the Capitol.*

Enter Julia, Cænis, Domitilla, and Domitia.

Cænis. Stand back—the place is mine.
Jul. Yours ! Am I not
 Great Titus' daughter, and Domitian's niece ?
 Dares any claim precedence ?

Cænis. I was more :
 The mistress of your father, and, in his
 right,
 Claim duty from you.

Jul. I confess, you were useful
 To please his appetite.
Dom. To end the controversy,
 For I'll have no contending, I'll be bold
 To lead the way myself.

Domitil. You, minion !
Dom. Yes ;
 And all, ere long, shall kneel to catch my
 favours.

Jul. Whence springs this flood of great-
 ness ?

Dom. You shall know
 Too soon, for your vexation, and perhaps
 Repent too late, and pine with envy, when
 You see whom Cæsar favours.

Jul. Observe the sequel.

*Enter Captains with laurels, Domitian in
 his triumphant chariot, Parthenius, Paris,
 Latinus, and Æsopus, met by Aretinus,
 Sura, Lamia, Rusticus, Fulcinus, Soldiers,
 and Captives.*

~~*Cæs.* As we now touch the height of human
 glory,
 Riding in triumph to the capitol,
 Let these, whom this victorious arm hath
 made~~

~~The scorn of fortune, and the slaves of Rome,
 Taste the extremes of misery, Bear them off
 To the common prisons, and there let them
 prove~~

~~How sharp our axes are:~~

[*Exeunt Soldiers with Captives.*

~~*Rust.* A bloody entrance ! [*Aside.*~~

Cæs. To tell you you are happy in your
 prince,

Were to distrust your love, or my desert ;
 And either were distasteful : or to boast
 How much, not by my deputies, but myself,
 I have enlarged the empire ; or what horrors
 The soldier, in our conduct, hath broke
 through,

Would better suit the mouth of Plautus'
 braggart,

Than the adored monarch of the world.

Sura. This is no boast ! [*Aside.*

Cæs. When I but name the Daci,
 And gray-eyed Germans, whom I have sub-
 dued,

The ghost of Julius will look pale with envy,
 And great Vespasian's and Titus' triumph,
 (Truth must take place of father and of
 brother,)

Will be no more remember'd. I am above
 All honours you can give me : and the style
 Of Lord and God, which thankful subjects
 give me,

Not my ambition, is deserved.

Aret. At all parts
 Celestial sacrifice is fit for Cæsar,
 In our acknowledgment.

Cæs. Thanks, Aretinus ;
 Still hold our favour. ~~Now, the god of war,
 And famine, blood, and death, Bellona's
 pages,~~

~~Banish'd from Rome to Thrace, in our good
 fortune,~~

~~With justice he may taste the fruits of peace,
 Whose sword hath plough'd the ground, and
 reap'd the harvest~~

~~Of your prosperity.~~ Nor can I think
 That there is one among you so ungrateful,
 Or such an enemy to thriving virtue,
 That can esteem the jewel he holds dearest,
 Too good for Cæsar's use.

Sura. All we possess—
Lam. Our liberties—
~~*Ful.* Our children—~~
Par. Wealth—
Aret. And throats,
 Fall willingly beneath his feet.
Rust. Base flattery!
 What Roman can endure this? [*Aside.*]
Cæs. This calls on
 My love to all, which spreads itself among
 you.
 The beauties of the time! [*seeing the ladies.*]
 Receive the honour
 To kiss the hand which, rear'd up thus,
 holds thunder;
 To you 'tis an assurance of a calm.
Julia, my niece, and *Cænis*, the delight
 Of old *Vespasian*; *Domitilla*, too,
 A princess of our blood.
Rust. 'Tis strange his pride
 Affords no greater courtesy to ladies
 Of such high birth and rank.
Sura. Your wife's forgotten.
Lam. No, she will be remember'd, fear it
 not;
 She will be graced and greased.
Cæs. But, when I look on
 Divine *Domitia*, methinks we should meet
 (The lesser gods applauding the encounter)
 As *Jupiter*, the *Giants* lying dead
 On the *Phlegræan* plain, embraced his *Juno*.
Lamia, it is your honour that she's mine.
Lam. You are too great to be gainsaid.
Cæs. Let all
 That fear our frown, or do affect our favour,
 Without examining the reason why,
 Salute her (by this kiss I make it good)
 With the title of *Augusta*.
Dom. Still your servant.
All. Long live *Augusta*, great *Domitian's*
 empress!
Cæs. *Paris*, my hand.
Par. [*kissing it.*] The gods still honour
Cæsar!
Cæs. The wars are ended, and, our arms
 laid by,
 We are for soft delights. Command the poets
 To use their choicest and most rare invention,
 To entertain the time; nor be you careful
 To give it action: we'll provide the people
 Pleasures of all kinds.—My *Domitia*, think
 not
 I flatter, though thus fond.—On to the capitol:
 'Tis death to him that wears a sullen brow.
 This 'tis to be a monarch, when alone
 He can command all, but is awed by none.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A State Room in the Palace.*

Enter Philargus in rags, and Parthenius.

Phil. My son to tutor me! ~~Know your
 obedience,~~

~~And question not my will.~~

~~*Parth.* Sir, were I one,
 Whom want compell'd to wish a full pos-
 session~~

~~Of what is yours; or had I ever number'd
 Your years, or thought you lived too long,
 with reason~~

~~You then might nourish ill opinions of me:
 Or did the suit that I prefer to you
 Concern myself, and aim'd not at your good,
 You might deny, and I sit down with patience,
 And after never press you.~~

Phil. In the name of *Pluto*,
 What wouldst thou have me do?

Parth. Right to yourself;
 Or suffer me to do it. Can you imagine
 This nasty hat, this tatter'd cloak, rent shoe
 This sordid linen, can become the master
 Of your fair fortunes? whose superfluous
 means,

Though I were burthensome, could clothe
 you in

The costliest *Persian* silks, studded with
 jewels,

The spoils of provinces, and every day
 Fresh change of *Tyrian* purple.

Phil. Out upon thee!
 My monies in thy coffers melt to hear thee.
 Purple! hence, prodigal! Shall I make my
 mercer,

Or tailor heir, or see my jeweller purchase?
 No, I hate pride.

Parth. Yet decency would do well.
 Though, for your outside, you will not be
 alter'd,

Let me prevail so far yet, as to win you
 Not to deny your belly nourishment;
 Neither to think you've feasted, when 'tis
 cramm'd

With mouldy barley-bread, onions, and leeks,
 And the drink of bondmen, water.

Phil. ~~Wouldst thou have me
 Be an *Apicius*, or a *Lucullus*,
 And riot out my state in curious sauces?~~

Wise nature with a little is contented;
 And, following her, my guide, I cannot err.

Parth. But you destroy her in your want
 of care

~~(I blush to see, and speak it) to maintain her
 In perfect health and vigour; when you suffer,
 Frighted with the charge of phisic, rheums,
 catarrhs,~~

~~The scurf, ach in your bones, to grow upon you,~~
And hasten on your fate with too much sparing :

When a cheap purge, a vomit, and good diet, May lengthen it. Give me but leave to send The emperor's doctor to you.

Phil. I'll be borne first,
Halfrotten, to the fire that must consume me !
~~His pills, his cordials, his electuaries,~~
~~His syrups, julaps, bezoar stone, nor his~~
~~Imagined unicorn's horn, comes in my belly ;~~
~~My mouth shall be a draught first, 'tis re-~~
~~solved.~~

No ; I'll not lessen my dear golden heap,
Which, every hour increasing, does renew
My youth and vigor ; ~~but, if lessen'd, then,~~
~~Then my poor heart-strings crack.~~ Let me enjoy it,

And brood o'er't, while I live, it being my life,
My soul, my all : but when I turn to dust,
~~And part from what is more esteem'd, by me,~~
~~Than all the gods Rome's thousand altars~~
~~smoke to,~~

Inherit thou my adoration of it,
And, like me, serve my idol. [*Exit.*]

Parth. What a strange torture
Is avarice to itself ! ~~what man, that looks on~~
~~Such a penurious spectacle, but must~~
~~know what the fable meant of Tantalus,~~
~~Or the ass whose back is crack'd with curious~~
~~vizards,~~

~~yet feeds on thistles.~~ Some course I must take,
To make my father know what cruelty
He uses on himself.

Enter Paris.

Par. Sir, with your pardon,
I make bold to enquire the emperor's pleasure ;
For, being by him commanded to attend,
Your favour may instruct us what's his will
Shall be this night presented.

Parth. My loved Paris,
Without my intercession, you well know,
You may make your own approaches, since
his ear

To you is ever open.

Par. I acknowledge
His clemency to my weakness, and, if ever
I do abuse it, lightning strike me dead !
~~The grace he pleases to confer upon me,~~
~~(Without boast I may say so much,) was never~~
~~employ'd to wrong the innocent, or to incense~~
~~His fury.~~

Parth. 'Tis confess'd : many men owe you
For provinces they ne'er hoped for ; and
their lives,

Forfeited to his anger :—~~you being absent,~~
~~I could say more.~~

Par. You still are my good patron ;
And, lay it in my fortune to deserve it,
You should perceive the poorest of your clients
To his best abilities thankful.

Parth. I believe so.

Met you my father ?

Par. Yes, sir, with much grief,
To see him as he is. Can nothing work him
To be himself ?

Parth. O, Paris, 'tis a weight
Sits heavy here ; and could this right hand's
loss

Remove it, it should off : but he is deaf
To all persuasion.

Par. Sir, with your pardon,
I'll offer my advice : I once observed,
In a tragedy of ours, in which a murder
Was acted to the life, a guilty hearer,
Forced by the terror of a wounded conscience,
To make discovery of that which torture
Could not wring from him. ~~Nor can it appear~~
~~Like an impossibility, but that~~

~~Your father, looking on a covetous man~~
~~Presented on the stage, as in a mirror,~~
~~May see his own deformity, and loath it.~~
Now, could you but persuade the emperor
To see a comedy we have, that's styled
The Cure of Avarice, and to command
Your father to be a spectator of it,
He shall be so anatomized in the scene,
And see himself so personated, the baseness
Of a self-torturing miserable wretch
Truly described, that I much hope the object
Will work compunction in him.

Parth. There's your fee ;
I ne'er bought better counsel. Be you in
readiness,
I will effect the rest.

Par. Sir, when you please ;
We'll be prepar'd to enter.—Sir, the emperor.
[*Exit.*]

Enter Cæsar, Aretinus, and Guard.

Cæs. Repine at us !

Aret. 'Tis more, or my informers,
That keep strict watch upon him, are deceived
In their intelligence : there is a list
Of malcontents, as Junius Rusticus,
Palphurius Sura, and this Ælius Lamia,
That murmur at your triumphs, as mere
pageants ;

And, at their midnight meetings, tax your
justice,

(For so I style what they call tyranny,)
For Pætus Thræsea's death, as if in him
Virtue herself were murdered : ~~nor forget~~
~~they~~

~~Agricola, who, for his service done~~
~~In the reducing Britain to obedience,~~

~~They dare affirm to be removed with poison
And he compell'd to write you a coheir
With his daughter, that his testament might
stand,~~

~~Which, else, you had made void. Then
your much love~~

~~To Julia your niece, censured as incest,
And done in scorn of Titus, your dead
brother;~~

But the divorce Lamia was forced to sign
To her you honour with Augusta's title,
Being only named, they do concludethere was
A Lucrece once, a Collatine, and a Brutus ;
But nothing Roman left now but, in you,
The lust of Tarquin.

Cæs. Yes, his fire, and scorn
Of such as think that our unlimited power
Can be confined. Dares Lamia pretend
An interest to that which I call mine ;
Or but remember she was ever his,
That's now in our possession? Fetch him
hither. [*Exit* Guard.]

I'll give him cause to wish he rather had
Forgot his own name, than e'er mention'd
hers.

Shall we be circumscribed? ~~Let such as
cannot~~

~~By force make good their actions, though
wicked,~~

~~Conceal, excuse, or qualify their crimes!
What our desires grant leave and privilege to,
Though contradicting all divine decrees,
Or laws confirm'd by Romulus and Numa,
Shall be held sacred.~~

~~*Aret.* You should, else, take from
The dignity of Cæsar.~~

Cæs. Am I master
Of two and thirty legions, that awe
All nations of the triumphed world,
Yet tremble at our frown, to yield account
Of what's our pleasure, to a private man !
Roine perish first, and Atlas's shoulders
shrink,

Heaven's fabric fall, (the sun, the moon,
the stars

Losing their light and comfortable heat,)
Ere I confess that any fault of mine
May be disputed !

Aret. So you preserve your power,
As you should, equal and omnipotent here,
With Jupiter's above.

[*Parthenius kneeling, whispers Cæsar.*

Cæs. Thy suit is granted,
Whate'er it be, Parthenius, for thy service
Done to Augusta.—Only so? a trifle :
Command him hither. If the comedy fall
To cure him, I will ministersomething tohim
That shall instruct him to forget his gold,
And think upon himself.

Parth. May it succeed well,
Since my intents are pious ! [*Exit.*

Cæs. We are resolved
What course to take; and, therefore,
Aretinus,
Enquire no further. Go you to my empress,
And say I do entreat (for she rules him
Whom all men else obey) she would
vouchsafe

The music of her voice at yonder window,
When I advance my hand, thus. I will
blend [*Exit* Aretinus.]

My cruelty with some scorn, or else 'tis lost.
Revenge, when it is unexpected, falling
With greater violence ; and hate clothed in
smiles,

Strikes, and with horror, dead the wretch
that comes not
Prepared to meet it.—

Re-enter Guard with Lamia.

Our good Lamia, welcome.
So much we owe you for a benefit,
With willingness on your part conferr'd
upon us,

That 'tis our study, we that would not live
Engaged to any for a courtesy,
How to return it.

Lam. 'Tis beneath your fate
To be obliged, that in your own hand grasp
The means to be magnificent.

Cæs. Well put off ;
But yet it must not do : the empire, Lamia,
Divided equally, can hold no weight,
If balanced with your gift in fair Domitia—
You, that could part with all delights at
once,

The magazine of rich pleasures being con-
tain'd

In her perfections,—uncompell'd, deliver'd
As a present fit for Cæsar. In your eyes,
With tears of joy, not sorrow, 'tis confirm'd
You glory in your act.

Lam. Derided too !
Sir, this is more—

Cæs. More than I can requite ;
It is acknowledged, Lamia. There's no drop
Of melting nectar I taste from her lip,
But yields a touch of immortality
To the blest receiver ; every grace and
feature,

Prized to the worth, bought at an easy rate,
If purchased for a consulship. Her dis-
course

So ravishing, and her action so attractive,
That I would part with all my other senses,
Provided I might ever see and hear her.

The pleasures of her bed I dare not trust

The winds or air with ; for that would draw
down,

In envy of my happiness, a war
From all the gods upon me.

Lam. Your compassion
To me, in your forbearing to insult
On my calamity, which you make your sport,
Would more appease those gods you have
provoked,
Than all the blasphemous comparisons
You sing unto her praise.

Domitia appears at the window.

Cæs. I sing her praise !
'Tis far from my ambition to hope it ;
It being a debt she only can lay down,
And no tongue else discharge.

[*He raises his hand. Music above.*

Hark ! I think, prompted
With my consent that you once more should
hear her,
She does begin. An universal silence
Dwell on this place ! 'Tis death, with linger-
ing torments,
To all that dare disturb her.—

A SONG *by* Domitia.

—Who can hear this,
And fall not down and worship ? In my fancy,
Apollo being judge, on Latmos' hill
Fair-hair'd Calliope, on her ivory lute,
(But something short of this,) sung Ceres'
praises,
And grisly Pluto's rape on Proserpine.
The motions of the spheres are out of time,
Her musical notes but heard. Say, Lamia,
say,

Is not her voice angelical ?

Lam. To your ear :
But I, alas ! am silent.

Cæs. Be so ever,
~~That without admiration canst hear her !~~
~~Malice to my felicity strikes thee dumb,~~
And, in thy hope, or wish, to repossess
What I love more than empire, I pronounce
thee

Guilty of treason.—Off with his head ! do
you stare ?

By her that is my patroness, Minerva,
Whose statue I adore of all the gods,
If he but live to make reply, thy life
Shall answer it !

[*The Guard leads off Lamia,
stopping his mouth.*

My fears of him are freed now ;
And he that lived to upbraid me with my
wrong,
For an offence he never could imagine,

In wantonness removed.—Descend, my
dearest ;

Plurality of husbands shall no more
Breed doubts or jealousies in you : [*Exit*
Dom. above.] 'tis dispatch'd,
And with as little trouble here, as if
I had kill'd a fly.

*Enter Domitia, ushered in by Aretinus, her
train borne up by Julia, Cænis, and Domi-
tilla.*

Now you appear, and in
That glory you deserve ! and these, that stoop
To do you service, in the act much honour'd !
Julia, forget that Titus was thy father ;
Cænis, and Domitilla, ne'er remember
Sabinus or Vespasian. To be slaves
To her is more true liberty, than to live
Parthian or Asian queens. As lesser stars,
That wait on Phœbe in her full of brightness,
Compared to her, you are. Thus, thus I
seat you
By Cæsar's side, commanding these, that
once

Were the adored glories of the time,
To witness to the world they are your vassals,
At your feet to attend you.

Dom. 'Tis your pleasure,
And not my pride. And yet, when I consider
That I am yours, all duties they can pay
I do receive as circumstances due
To her you please to honour.

Re-enter Parthenius with Philargus.

Parth. Cæsar's will
Commands you hither, nor must you gain-
say it.

Phil. Lose time to see an interlude ! must
I pay too,
For my vexation ?

Parth. Not in the court :
It is the emperor's charge.

Phil. I shall endure
My torment then the better

Cæs. Can it be
This sordid thing, Parthenius, is thy father ?
No actor can express him : I had held
The fiction for impossible in the scene,
Had I not seen the substance.—Sirrah, sit
still,

And give attention ; if you but nod,
You sleep for ever.—Let them spare the
prologue,

And all the ceremonies proper to ourself,
And come to the last act—there, where the
cure

By the doctor is made perfect. The swift
minutes

Seem years to me, Domitia, that divorce thee

From my embraces : my desires increasing
As they are satisfied, all pleasures else
Are tedious as dull sorrows. Kiss me again :
If I now wanted heat of youth, these fires,
In Priam's veins, would thaw his frozen blood,
Enabling him to get a second Hector
For the defence of Troy.

Dom. You are wanton !

Pray you, forbear. Let me see the play.

Cæs. Begin there.

Enter Paris, like a doctor of physic, and
Æsopus : Latinus is brought forth asleep
in a chair, a key in his mouth.

Æsop. O master doctor, he is past recovery ;
A lethargy hath seized him ; and, however
His sleep resemble death, his watchful care
To guard that treasure he dares make no
use of,

Works strongly in his soul.

Par. What's that he holds
So fast between his teeth ?

Æsop. The key that opens
His iron chests, cramm'd with accursed gold,
Rusty with long imprisonment. There's no
duty

In me, his son, nor confidence in friends,
That can persuade him to deliver up
That to the trust of any.

Phil. He is the wiser :

'We were fashion'd in one mould.

Æsop. ~~He eats with it ;
And when devotion calls him to the temple
Of Mammon, whom, of all the gods, he
kneels to,~~

~~That held thus still, his orisons are paid ;
Nor will he, though the wealth of Rome
were pawn'd~~

~~For the restoring of 't, for one short hour
Be won to part with it.~~

Phil. Still, still myself !

~~And if like me he love his gold, no pawn
Is good security.~~

Par. I'll try if I can force it——

It will not be. His avaricious mind,
Like men in rivers drown'd, make him
gripe fast,

To his last gasp, what he in life held dearest ;
And, if that it were possible in nature,
Would carry it with him to the other world.

Phil. As I would do to hell, rather than
leave it.

Æsop. ~~Is he not dead ?~~

Par. ~~Long since to all good actions,
Or to himself, or others, for which wise men
Desire to live. You may with safety pinch
him,
Or under his nails stick needles, yet he stirs
not ;~~

~~Anxious fear to lose what his soul doats on,
Renders his flesh insensible. We must use
Some means to rouse the sleeping faculties
Of his mind ; there lies the lethargy. Take
a trumpet,~~

~~And blow it into his ears ; 'tis to no purpose ;
The roaring noise of thunder cannot wake
him :—~~

~~And yet despair not ; I have one trick left yet.~~

Æsop. What is it ?

Par. I will cause a fearful dream
To steal into his fancy, and disturb it
With the horror it brings with it, and so free
His body's organs.

Dom. 'Tis a cunning fellow ;

If he were indeed a doctor, as the play says,
He should be sworn my servant ; govern
my slumbers,
And minister to me waking.

Par. If this fail, [A chest brought in.
I'll give him o'er. So ; with all violence
Rend ope this iron chest, for here his life lies
Bound up in fetters, and in the defence
Of what he values higher, 'twill return,
And fill each vein and artery.—Louder yet !
—'Tis open, and already he begins
To stir ; mark with what trouble.

[Latinus stretches himself.

Phil. As you are Cæsar,
Defend this honest, thrifty man ! they are
thieves,
And come to rob him.

Parth. Peace ! the emperor frowns.

Par. So ; now pour out the bags upon the
table ;

Remove his jewels, and his bonds.—Again,
Ring a second golden peal. His eyes are open ;
He stares as he had seen Medusa's head,
And were turn'd marble.—Once more.

Lat. Murder ! murder !

They come to murder me. My son in the
plot ?

~~Thou worse than parricide ! if it be death
To strike thy father's body, can all tortures
The Furies in hell practise, be sufficient
For thee, that dost assassinate my soul ?—~~

My gold ! my bonds ! my jewels ! dost thou
envy

My glad possession of them for a day ;
Extinguishing the taper of my life
Consumed unto the snuff ;

Par. ~~Seem not to mind him.~~

Lat. ~~Have I, to leave thee rich, denied
myself~~

~~The joys of human being ; scraped and
hoarded~~

~~A mass of treasure, which had Solon seen,
The Lydian Cræsus had appeared to him
Poor as the beggar Irus ? And yet I,~~

~~Solicitous to increase it, when my entrails
Were clemm'd with keeping a perpetual fast,
Was deaf to their loud windy cries, as fearing,
Should I disburse one penny to their use,
My heir might curse me. And, to save
expense~~

~~In outward ornaments, I did expose
My naked body to the winter's cold,
And summer's scorching heat: nay, when
diseases~~

~~Grew thick upon me, and a little cost
Had purchased my recovery, I chose rather
To have my ashes closed up in my urn,
By hasting on my fate, than to diminish
The gold my prodigal son, while I am living,
Carelessly scatters.~~

~~Æsop. Would you'd dispatch and die
once!~~

~~Your ghost should feel in hell, THAT is my
slave~~

~~Which was your master.~~

Phil. Out upon thee, varlet!

Par. And what then follows all your carke
and caring,
And self-affliction? When your starved
trunk is

Turn'd for forgotten dust, this hopeful youth
Urin's upon your monument, ne'er remem-
bering

How much for him you suffer'd; and then
tells,

To the companions of his lusts and riots,
The hell you did endure on earth, to leave
him

Large means to be an epicure, and to feast
His senses all at once, a happiness

You never granted to yourself. Your gold,
then,

Got with vexation, and preserved with
trouble,

Maintains the public stews, panders, and
ruffians,

That quaff damnations to your memory,
For living so long here.

Lat. It will be so; I see it—
O, that I could redeem the time that's past!
I would live and die like myself; and make
true use

Of what my industry purchased.

Par. Covetous men,
Having one foot in the grave, lament so ever:
But grant that I by art could yet recover
Your desperate sickness, lengthen out your
life

A dozen of years; as I restore your body
To perfect health, will you with care en-
deavour

To rectify your mind?

Lat. I should so live then,

As neither my heir should have just cause to
think

I lived too long, for being close-handed to him,
Or cruel to myself.

Par. Have your desires.

Phœbus assisting me, I will repair
The ruin'd building of your health; and
think not

You have a son that hates you; the truth is,
This means, with his consent, I practis'd on
you

To this good end: it being a device,
In you to shew the Cure of Avarice.

[Exeunt Paris, Latinus, and Æsopus.

Phil. An old fool, to be gull'd thus! had
he died

As I resolve to do, not to be alter'd,
It had gone off twanging.

Cæs. How approve you, sweetest,
Of the matter and the actors?

Dom. For the subject,

I like it not; it was filch'd out of Horace.

—Nay, I have read the poets:—but the fellow
That play'd the doctor, did it well, by Venus:—
He had a tuneable tongue, and neat de-
livery:

And yet, in my opinion, he would perform
A lover's part much better. Prithee, Cæsar,
For I grow weary, let us see, to-morrow,
Iphis and Anaxarete.

Cæs. Any thing

For thy delight, Domitia; to your rest,
Till I come to disquiet you: wait upon her.
There is a business that I must dispatch,
And I will straight be with you. [Exeunt.

Aret. Dom. Julia, Cænis, and Domitil.

Parth. Now, my dread sir,
Endeavour to prevail.

Cæs. One way or other

We'll cure him, never doubt it. Now,
Philargus,

Thou wretched thing, hast thou seen thy
sordid baseness,

And but observed what a contemptible
creature

A covetous miser is? Dost thou in thyself
Feel true compunction, with a resolution
To be a new man?

Phil. This crazed body's Cæsar's;
But for my mind—

Cæs. Trifle not with my anger.

Canst thou make good use of what was now
presented;

And imitate, in thy sudden chan-  life,
The miserable rich man, that ex-  p
What thou art to the life?

Phil. Pray you, give me leave
To die as I have lived. I must not part with
My gold; it is my life: I am past cure.

Caesar No! By Minerva, thou shalt never more
Feel the least touch of avarice. Take him hence
And hang him instantly. If there be gold in hell,
Enjoy it; thine here and thy life together
Is forfeited.

Philargus Was I sent for to this purpose?

Parthenius Mercy for all my service, Caesar, mercy!

Caesar Should Jove plead for him, 'tis resolv'd he dies,
And he that speaks one syllable to dissuade me;
And therefore tempt me not. It is but justice.

Exeunt

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

Enter Julia, Domitilla, Stephanos

No, Domitilla; if you but compare
What I have suffer'd with your injuries
(Though great ones, I confess), they will appear
Like molehills to Olympus.

You are tender
Of your own wounds, which makes you lose the feeling
And sense of mine. The incest he committed
With you, he won by his perjuries that he would
Salute you with the title of Augusta.
Your faint denial show'd a full consent
And grant to his temptations. But poor I,
That would not yield, but was with violence forc'd
To serve his lusts, and in a kind Tiberius
At Caprae never practis'd, have not here
One conscious touch to rise up my accuser,
I in my will being innocent.

Pardon me,
Great princesses, though I presume to tell you,
There is something more in Rome expected
From Titus' daughter and his uncle's heir
Than womanish complaints after such wrongs,
Which mercy cannot pardon. But you'll say
Your hands are weak, and should you but attempt
A just revenge on this inhuman monster,
This prodigy of mankind, bloody Domitian,
Hath ready swords at his command, as well

As islands to confine you, to remove
His doubts and fears, did he but entertain
The least suspicion.

Julia 'Tis true, Stephanos.
The legions that sack'd Jerusalem
Under my father Titus are sworn his,
And I no more remember'd.

Domitilla And to lose
Ourselves by building on impossible hopes
Were desperate madness.

Stephanos You conclude too fast.
One single arm, whose master does contemn
His own life, holds a full command o'er his,
Spite of his guards. I was your bondman, lady,
And you my gracious patroness; my wealth
And liberty your gift; and though no soldier,
To whom or custom or example makes
Grim death appear less terrible, I dare die
To do you service. Say but you, 'Go on!'
And I will reach his heart, or perish in
The noble undertaking.

Domitilla I must not
Upon uncertain grounds hazard so grateful
And good a servant. The immortal powers
Protect a prince, though sold to impious acts,
And seem to slumber till his roaring crimes
Awake their justice; but then looking down,
They in their secret judgements do determine
To leave him to his wickedness, which sinks him
When he is most secure.

Julia His cruelty
Increasing daily, of necessity
Must render him as odious to his soldiers,

Familiar friends, and freemen, as it hath done
 Already to the Senate; then, forsaken
 Of his supporters, and grown terrible
 E'en to himself, and her he now so dotes on,
 We may put into act what now with safety
 We cannot whisper.

Stephanos

I am still prepar'd
 To execute when you please to command me.

Enter Caenis

Julia

Oh, here's Caenis.

Domitilla

Whence come you?

Caenis

From the empress, who seems mov'd
 In that you wait no better. Her pride's grown
 To such a height that she disdains the service
 Of her own women, and esteems herself
 Neglected when the princesses of the blood
 On every coarse employment are not ready
 To stoop to her commands.

Domitilla

Where is her greatness?

Caenis

Where you would little think she could descend
 To grace the room or persons.

Julia

Speak; where is she?

Caenis

Among the players; where all state laid by,
 She does inquire who acts this part, who that,
 And in what habits; blames the tire-women
 For want of curious dressings; and so taken
 She is with Paris the tragedian's shape,
 That is to act a lover, I thought once
 She would have courted him.

Domitilla

In the meantime
 How spends the emperor his hours?

Caenis

As ever.

And but this morning (if't be possible)
 He hath outgone himself, having condemn'd
 At Aretinus his informer's suit,
 Palphurius Sura and good Junius Rusticus,
 Men of the best repute in Rome for their
 Integrity of life; no fault objected,
 But that they did lament his cruel sentence
 On Paetus Thrasea the philosopher,
 Their patron and instructor.

Stephanos

Can Jove see this,

And hold his thunder!

Domitilla

Nero and Caligula

Commanded only mischiefs; but our Caesar
 Delights to see 'em.

Julia

What we cannot help,

We may deplore with silence.

Caenis

We are call'd for

By our proud mistress.

Domitilla

We a while must suffer.

Stephanos

It is true fortitude to stand firm against
 All shocks of fate, when cowards faint and die
 In fear to suffer more calamity.

Exeunt

ACT THREE, SCENE TWO

SCENE TWO

Enter Caesar, Parthenius

Caesar They are then in fetters?

Parthenius Yes, sir, but –

Caesar I'll have thy thoughts. Deliver them.

Parthenius I shall, sir.
But still submitting to your god-like pleasure
Which cannot be instructed –

Caesar To the point.

Parthenius Nor let your sacred majesty believe
Your vassal, that with dry eyes look'd upon
His father dragg'd to death by your command,
Can pity these, that durst presume to censure
What you decreed.

Caesar Well? Forward.

Parthenius Alas, I know, sir,
These bookmen, Rusticus and Palphurius Sura,
Deserve all tortures. Yet, in my opinion,
They being popular senators, and cried up
With loud applauses of the multitude
For foolish honesty and beggarly virtue,
'Twould relish more of policy to have them
Made away in private, with what exquisite torments
You please – it skills not – than to have them drawn
To the degrees in public; for 'tis doubted
That the sad object may beget compassion
In the giddy rout, and cause some sudden uproar
That may disturb you.

Caesar Hence, pale-spirited coward!

Can we descend so far beneath ourself
 As or to court the people's love, or fear
 Their worst of hate? Can they, that are as dust
 Before the whirlwind of our will and power,
 Add any moment to us? Or thou think,
 If there are gods above, or goddesses
 (But wise Minerva that's mine own and sure),
 That they have vacant hours to take into
 Their serious protection or care
 This many-headed monster, the people!
 Bring forth those condemn'd wretches. Let me see
 One man so lost as but to pity 'em,
 And though there lay a million of souls
 Imprison'd in his flesh, my hangmen's hooks
 Should rend it off and give 'em liberty.
 Caesar hath said it.

Exit Parthenius

*Enter Parthenius, Aretinus, and the Guard; Hangmen
 dragging in Junius Rusticus and Palphurius Sura, bound back to back.*

Aretinus [To the Guard] 'Tis great Caesar's pleasure
 That with fix'd eyes you carefully observe
 The people's looks. Charge upon any man
 That with sigh, or murmur, does express
 A seeming sorrow for these traitors' deaths.
 You know his will, perform it.

Caesar A good bloodhound,
 And fit for my employments.

Sura Give us leave
 To die, fell tyrant.

Rusticus For beyond our bodies
 Thou hast no power.

Caesar Yes; I'll afflict your souls,
 And force them groaning to the Stygian lake,

~~And all those glorious constellations
That do adorn the firmament, appointed,
Like grooms, with their bright influence to
attend~~

~~The actions of kings and emperors,
They being the greater wheels that move
the less,~~

~~Bring forth~~ those condemn'd wretches ;—
[*Exit* Parthenius.]—let me see
One man so lost, as but to pity them,
And though there lay a million of souls
Imprison'd in his flesh, my hangmen's hooks
Should rend it off, and give them liberty.
Cæsar hath said it.

Re-enter Parthenius, with Aretinus, and
Guard ; Executioners *dragging in* Junius
Rusticus and Palphurius Sura, *bound back
to back.*

Aret. 'Tis great Cæsar's pleasure,
That with fix'd eyes you carefully observe
The people's looks. Charge upon any man
That with a sigh or murmur does express
A seeming sorrow for these traitors' deaths.
You know his will, perform it.

Cæs. A good bloodhound,
And fit for my employments.

Sura. Give us leave

To die, fell tyrant.

Rust. For, beyond our bodies,
Thou hast no power.

Cæs. Yes ; I'll afflict your souls,
And force them groaning to the Stygian lake,
Prepared for such to howl in, that blaspheme
The power of princes, that are gods on earth.
Tremble to think how terrible the dream is
After this sleep of death.

Rust. To guilty men

It may bring terror : not to us, that know
What 'tis to die, well taught by his example
For whom we suffer. In my thought I see
The substance of that pure untainted soul
Of Threasa, our master, made a star,
That with melodious harmony invites us
(Leaving this dunghill Rome, made hell by
thee)

To trace his heavenly steps, and fill a sphere
Above yon crystal canopy.

Cæs. Do invoke him

With all the aids his sanctity of life
Have won on the rewarders of his virtue ;
They shall not save you.—Dogs, do you grin?
torment them.

[*The Executioners torment them, they
still smiling.*]

So, take a leaf of Seneca now, and prove
If it can render you insensible
Of that which but begins here. Now an oil,
Drawn from the Stoic's frozen principles,

Predominant over fire, were useful for you.
Again, again. You trifle. Not a groan !—
Is my rage lost ? What cursed charms defend
them !

Search deeper, villains. Who looks pale, or
thinks

That I am cruel ?

Aret. Over-merciful :
'Tis all your weakness, sir.

Parth. I dare not shew
A sign of sorrow ; yet my sinews shrink,
The spectacle is so horrid. [*Aside.*]

Cæs. I was never
O'ercome till now. ~~For my sake roar a little,
And shew you are corporeal, and not turn'd
Aerial spirits. Will it not do ?~~ By Pallas,
It is unkindly done to mock his fury
Whom the world styles Omnipotent ! I am
tortured

In their want of feeling torments. *Marius'*
story,

~~That does report him to have sat unmoved,
When cunning surgeons ripp'd his arteries
And veins, to cure his gout, compared to this,
Deserves not to be named.~~ Are they not
dead ?

If so, we wash an Æthiop.

Sura. No ; we live.

Rust. Live to deride thee, our calm pa-
tience treading

Upon the neck of tyranny. ~~That securely,
As 'twere a gentle slumber, we endure
Thy hangman's studied tortures, is a debt
We owe to grave philosophy, that instructs us
The flesh is but the clothing of the soul,
Which growing out of fashion, though it be
Cast off, or rent, or torn, like ours, 'tis then,
Being itself divine, in her best lustre.
But unto such as thou, that have no hopes
Beyond the present, every little scar,
The want of rest, excess of heat or cold,
That does inform them only they are mortal,
Pierce through and through them.~~

Cæs. We will hear no more.

Rust. This only, and I give thee warning
of it :

Though it is in thy will to grind this earth
As small as atoms, they thrown in the sea
too,

They shall seem re-collected to thy sense :—
And, when the sandy building of thy greatness
Shall with its own weight totter, look to see
me

As I was yesterday, in my perfect shape ;
For I'll appear in horror.

Cæs. By my shaking
I am the guilty man, and not the judge,
Drag from my sight these cursed ominous
wizards,

That, as they are now, like to double-faced
Janus,
Which way so'er I look, are Furies to me.
Away with them! first shew them death,
then leave

No memory of their ashes. I'll mock Fate.

[*Exeunt Executioners with
Rusticus and Sura.*]

Shall words fright him victorious armies
circle?

No, no; the fever does begin to leave me;

*Enter Domitia, Julia, and Cænis; Stephanos
following.*

Or, were it deadly, from this living fountain
I could renew the vigour of my youth,
And be a second Virbius. O my glory!
My life! command! my all!

Dom. As you to me are.

[*Embracing and kissing.*]

I heard you were sad: I have prepared you
sport

Will banish melancholy. Sirrah, Cæsar,
(I hug myself for't,) I have been instructing
The players how to act; and to cut off
All tedious impertinence, have contracted
The tragedy into one continued scene.

I have the art of't, and am taken more
With my ability that way, than all knowledge
I have but of thy love.

Cæs. Thou art still thyself,

The sweetest, wittiest,—

Dom. When we are abed

I'll thank your good opinion. Thou shalt see
Such an Iphis of thy Paris!—and, to humble
The pride of Domitilla, that neglects me,
(How'er she is your cousin,) I have forced
her

To play the part of Anaxarete—

You are not offended with it?

Cæs. Any thing

That does content thee yields delight to me:
My faculties and powers are thine.

Dom. I thank you:

Prithee let's take our places. Bid them enter
Without more circumstance.

After a short flourish, enter Paris as Iphis.

How do you like

That shape? methinks it is most suitable
To the aspect of a despairing lover
The seeming late-fallen, counterfeited tears
That hang upon his cheeks, was my device.

Cæs. And all was excellent.

Dom. Now hear him speak.

Iphis. That she is fair, (and that an
epithet

Too foul to express her,) or descended nobly,
Or rich, or fortunate, are certain truths

*In which poor Iphis glories. But that these
Perfections, in no other virgin found,
Abused, should nourish cruelty and pride
In the divinest Anaxarete,*

*Is, to my love-sick, languishing soul, a riddle;
And with more difficulty to be dissolv'd,
Than that the monster Sphinx, from the
steep rock,*

*Offer'd to Ædipus. Imperious Love,
As at thy ever-flaming altars Iphis,
Thy never-tired votary, hath presented,
With scalding tears, whole hecatombs of
sighs,*

*Preferring thy power, and thy Paphian
mother's,
Before the Thunderer's, Neptune's, or Pluto's
(That, after Saturn, did divide the world,
And had the sway of things, yet were com-
pell'd*

*By thy inevitable shafts to yield,
And fight under thy ensigns) be auspicious
To this last trial of my sacrifice
Of love and service!*

Dom. Does he not act it rarely?
Observe with what a feeling he delivers
His orisons to Cupid; I am rapt with't.

Iphis. And from thy never-emptied quiver
take

*A golden arrow, to transfix her heart,
And force her love like me; or cure my wound
With a leaden one, that may beget in me
Hate and forgetfulness of what's now my
idol—*

*But I call back my prayer; I have blas-
phemed*

*In my rash wish: 'tis I that am unworthy;
But she all merit, and may in justice chal-
lenge,*

*From the assurance of her excellencies,
Not love but adoration. Yet, bear witness,
All-knowing Powers! I bring along with me,
As faithful advocates to make intercession,
A loyal heart with pure and holy flames,
With the foul fires of lust never polluted.
And, as I touch her threshold, which with
tears,*

*My limbs benumb'd with cold, I oft have
wash'd,*

*With my glad lips I kiss this earth, grown
proud*

With frequent favours from her delicate feet.

Dom. By Cæsar's life he weeps! and I
forbear

Hardly to keep him company.

Iphis. Blest ground, thy pardon,

If I profane it with forbidden steps.

I must presume to knock—and yet attempt it
With such a trembling reverence, as if
My hands [were now] held up for expiation

To the incensed gods to spare a kingdom.
Within there, ho! something divine come
forth
To a distressed mortal.

~~Enter Latinus as a Porter.~~

~~Port. Ha! Who knocks there?~~

~~Dom. What a churlish look this knave has!~~

~~Port. Is't you, sirrah?~~

~~Are you come to pule and whine? Avaunt,
and quickly;~~

~~Dog-whips shall drive you hence, else.~~

~~Dom. Churlish devil!~~

~~But that I should disturb the scene, as I live
I would tear his eyes out.~~

~~Cæs. 'Tis in jest, Domitia.~~

~~Dom. I do not like such jesting; if he
were not~~

~~A flinty-hearted slave, he could not use
One of his form so harshly. How the toad
swells~~

~~At the other's sweet humility!~~

~~Cæs. 'Tis his part:~~

~~Let them proceed.~~

~~Dom. A rogue's part will ne'er leave him.~~

~~Iphis. As you have, gentle sir, the happi-
ness~~

~~(When you please) to behold the figure of
The masterpiece of nature, limn'd to the life,
In more than human Anaxarete,
Scorn not your servant, that with suppliant
hands~~

~~Takes hold upon your knees, conjuring
you,~~

~~As you are a man, and did not suck the milk
Of wolves, and tigers, or a mother of
A tougher temper, use some means these eyes,
Before they are wept out, may see your lady.
Will you be gracious, sir?~~

~~Port. Though I lose my place for't,
I can hold out no longer.~~

~~Dom. Now he melts,~~

~~There is some little hope he may die honest.
Port. Madam!~~

Enter Domitilla as Anaxarete.

*Anax. Who calls? What object have we
here?*

*Dom. Your cousin keeps her proud state
still; I think*

I have fitted her for a part.

Anax. Did I not charge thee

I ne'er might see this thing more?

Iphis. I am, indeed,

*What thing you please; a worm that you
may tread on:*

*Lower I cannot fall to show my duty,
Till your disdain hath digg'd a grave to
cover*

~~This body with forgotten dust; and, when
I know your sentence, cruellest of women!
'Tis, by a willing death, remove the object
That is an eyesore to you.~~

~~Anax. Wretch, thou dar'st not:
That were the last and greatest service to me
Thy dotting love could boast of. What dull
fool~~

~~But thou couldst nourish any flattering hope,
One of my height in youth, in birth and for-
tune,~~

~~Could e'er descend to look upon thy lowness,
Much less consent to make my lord of one
I'd not accept, though offer'd for my slave?
My thoughts stoop not so low.~~

~~Dom. There's her true nature:
No personated scorn.~~

~~Anax. I wrong my worth,
Or to exchange a syllable or look
With one so far beneath me.~~

~~Iphis. Yet take heed,
Take heed of pride, and curiously consider,
How brittle the foundation is, on which
You labour to advance it. Niobe,
Proud of her numerous issue, durst contemn
Latona's double burthen; but what follow'd?
She was left a childless mother, and mourn'd
to marble.~~

~~The beauty you o'ertrize so, time or sickness
Can change to loath'd deformity; your wealth
The prey of thieves; queen Hecuba, Troy
fired,~~

~~Ulysses' bondwoman; but the love I bring
you~~

~~Nor time, nor sickness, violent thieves, nor
fate,~~

~~Can ravish from you.~~

~~Dom. Could the oracle
Give better counsel!~~

~~Iphis. Say, will you relent yet,
Revoking your decree that I should die?
Or, shall I do what you command? resolve;
I am impatient of delay.~~

~~Anax. Dispatch then:
I shall look on your tragedy unmoved,
Peradventure laugh at it; for it will prove
A comedy to me.~~

~~Dom. O devil! devil!~~

~~Iphis. Then thus I take my last leave.~~

~~All the curses~~

~~Of lovers fall upon you; and, hereafter,
When any man, like me contemn'd, shall
study,~~

~~In the anguish of his soul, to give a name
To a scornful, cruel mistress, let him only
Say, This most bloody woman is to me,
As Anaxarete was to wretched Iphis!—
Now feast your tyrannous mind, and glory
in~~

*The ruins you have made: for Hymen's bands,
That should have made us one, this fatal halter*

*For ever shall divorce us: at your gate,
As a trophy of your pride and my affliction,
I'll presently hang myself.*

Dom. Not for the world —

[*Starts from her seat.*

Restrain him, as you love your lives!

Cæs. Why are you Transported thus, Domitia? 'tis a play; Or, grant it serious, it at no part merits This passion in you.

Par. I ne'er purposed, madam, To do the deed in earnest; though I bow To your care and tenderness of me.

Dom. Let me, sir, Entreat your pardon; what I saw presented, Carried me beyond myself.

Cæs. To your place again, And see what follows.

Dom. No, I am familiar With the conclusion; besides, upon the sudden

I feel myself much indisposed.

Cæs. To bed then; I'll be thy doctor.

Arel. There is something more In this than passion,—which I must find out, Or my intelligence freezes.

Dom. Come to me, Paris, To-morrow, for your reward.

[*Exeunt all but Domitilla and Stephanos.*

Steph. Patroness, hear me; Will you not call for your share? Sit down with this, And, the next action, like a Gaditane strumpet,

I shall look to see you tumble!

Domitil. Prithee be patient.

I, that have suffer'd greater wrongs, bear this; And that, till my revenge, my comfort is.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace.*

Enter Parthenius, Julia, Domitilla, and Cænis.

Parth. Why, 'tis impossible.—Paris!

Jul. You observed not,

As it appears, the violence of her passion, When personating Iphis, he pretended, For your contempt, fair Anaxarete, To hang himself.

Parth. Yes, yes, I noted that;

But never could imagine it could work her To such a strange intemperance of affection, As to doat on him.

Domitil. By my hopes, I think not That she respects, though all here saw, and mark'd it;

Presuming she can mould the emperor's will Into what form she likes, though we, and all The informers of the world, conspired to cross it.

Cæn. Then with what eagerness, this morning, urging The want of health and rest, she did entreat Cæsar to leave her!

Domitil. Who no sooner absent, But she calls, *Dwarf!* (so in her scorn she styles me,)

*Put on my pantofles; fetch pen and paper, I am to write:—*and with distracted looks, In her smock, impatient of so short delay As but to have a mantle thrown upon her, She seal'd—*I know not what, but 'twas indorsed,*

To my loved Paris.

Jul. Add to this, I heard her Say, when a page received it, *Let him wait me, And carefully, in the walk call'd our Retreat, Where Cæsar, in his fear to give offence, Unsent for, never enters.*

Parth. This being certain, (For these are more than jealous suppositions,)

Why do not you, that are so near in blood, Discover it?

Domitil. Alas! you know we dare not. 'Twill be received for a malicious practice, To free us from that slavery which her pride Imposes on us. But, if you would please To break the ice, on pain to be sunk ever, We would aver it.

Parth. I would second you, But that I am commanded with all speed To fetch in Ascletario the Chaldæan; Who, in his absence, is condemn'd of treason, For calculating the nativity Of Cæsar, with all confidence foretelling, In every circumstance, when he shall die A violent death. Yet, if you could approve Of my directions, I would have you speak As much to Aretinus, as you have To me deliver'd: he in his own nature Being a spy, on weaker grounds, no doubt, Will undertake it; not for goodness' sake, (With which he never yet held correspondence,)

But to endear his vigilant observings Of what concerns the emperor, and a little To triumph in the ruins of this Paris, That cross'd him in the senate-house.—

Enter Aretinus.

Here he comes,

His nose held up ; he hath something in the wind,

Or I much err, already. My designs Command me hence, great ladies ; but I leave My wishes with you. [*Exit.*]

Aret. Have I caught your Greatness In the trap, my proud Augusta !

Domitil. What is't raps him ?

Aret. And my fine Roman Actor ! Is't even so ?

No coarser dish to take your wanton palate, Save that which, but the emperor, none durst taste of !

'Tis very well. I needs must glory in This rare discovery : ~~but the rewards Of my intelligence bid me think, even now, By an edict from Cæsar, I have power To tread upon the neck of slavish Rome, Disposing offices and provinces To my kinsmen, friends, and clients.~~

Domitil. This is more Than usual with him.

Jul. Aretinus !

Aret. How !

No more respect and reverence tender'd to me,

But *Aretinus* ! 'Tis confess'd that title, When you were princesses, and commanded all,

Had been a favour ; but being, as you are, Vassals to a proud woman, the worst bondage, You stand obliged with as much adoration To entertain him, that comes arm'd with strength

To break your fetters, as tann'd galley-slaves Pay such as do redeem them from the oar.

I come not to entrap you ; but aloud Pronounce that you are manumized : and to make

Your liberty sweeter, you shall see her fall, This empress,—this Domitia,—what you will,—

That triumph'd in your miseries.

Domitil. Were you serious, To prove your accusation I could lend Some help.

Cæn. And I.

Jul. And I.

Aret. No atom to me.—

My eyes and ears are every where ; I know all, To the line and action in the play that took her :

Her quick dissimulation to excuse Her being transported, with her morning passion.

I bribed the boy that did convey the letter,

And, having perused it, made it up again : Your griefs and angers are to me familiar. —That Paris is brought to her, and how far He shall be tempted.

Domitil. This is above wonder.

Aret. My gold can work much stranger miracles,

Than to corrupt poor waiters. Here, join with me— [*Takes out a petition.*]

'Tis a complaint to Cæsar. This is that Shall ruin her, and raise you. Have you set your hands

To the accusation ?

Jul. And will justify

What we've subscribed to.

Cæn. And with vehemence.

Domitil. I will deliver it.

Aret. Leave the rest to me then.

Enter Cæsar, with his Guard.

~~*Cæs.* Let our lieutenants bring us victory, While we enjoy the fruits of peace at home : And being secured from our intestine foes, (Far worse than foreign enemies,) doubts and fears,~~

~~Though all the sky were hung with blazing meteors,~~

~~Which fond astrologers give out to be Assured presages of the change of empires, And deaths of monarchs, we, undaunted yet, Guarded with our own thunder, bid defiance To them and fate ; we being too strongly arm'd~~

~~For them to wound us.~~

Aret. Cæsar !

Jul. As thou art

More than a man—

Cæn. Let not thy passions be Rebellious to thy reason—

Domitil. But receive

[*Delivers the petition.*]

This trial of your constancy, as unmoved As you go to or from the capitol, Thanks given to Jove for triumphs.

Cæs. Ha !

Domitil. Vouchsafe

A while to stay the lightning of your eyes, Poor mortals dare not look on.

Aret. There's no vein

Of yours that rises with high rage, but is An earthquake to us.

Domitil. And, if not kept closed With more than human patience, in a moment

Will swallow us to the centre.

Cæn. Not that we

Repine to serve her, are we her accusers.

Jul. But that she's fallen so low . .

Aret. Which on sure proofs
We can make good.

Domitil. And shew she is unworthy
Of the least spark of that diviner fire
You have conferr'd upon her.

Cæs. I stand doubtful,
And unresolved what to determine of you.
In this malicious violence you have offer'd
To the altar of her truth and pureness to me,
You have but fruitlessly labour'd to sully
A white robe of perfection, black-mouth'd
envy

Could belch no spot on.—But I will put off
The deity you labour to take from me,
And argue out of probabilities with you,
As if I were a man. Can I believe
That she, that borrows all her light from me,
And knows to use it, would betray her
darkness

To your intelligence; ~~and make that ap-
parent,~~

~~Which, by her perturbations in a play,
Was yesterday but doubted, and find none
But you, that are her slaves, and therefore
hate her,~~

Whose aids she might employ to make way
for her?

Or Aretinus, whom long since she knew
To be the cabinet counsellor, nay, the key
Of Cæsar's secrets? Could her beauty raise
her

To this unequal'd height, to make her fall
The more remarkable? ~~or must my desires
To her, and wrongs to Lamia, be revenged
By her, and on herself, that drew on both?~~
Or she leave our imperial bed to court
A public actor?

Aret. Who dares contradict
These more than human reasons, that have
power
To clothe base guilt in the most glorious
shape
Of innocence?

Domitil. Too well she knew the strength
And eloquence of her patron to defend her,
And thereupon presuming, fell securely ;
Not fearing an accuser, nor the truth
~~Produced against her, which your love and
favour~~

~~Will ne'er discern from falsehood.~~

Cæs. I'll not hear
A syllable more that may invite a change
In my opinion of her. You have raised
A fiercer war within me by this fable,
Though with your lives you vow to make it
story,

Than if, and at one instant, all my legions
Revolted from me, and came arm'd against
me.

Here in this paper are the swords pre-
destined

For my destruction ; here the fatal stars
That threaten more than ruin ; this the
Death's head

That does assure me, if she can prove false,
That I am mortal, which a sudden fever
Would prompt me to believe, and faintly
yield to.

But now in my full confidence what she
suffers,

In that, from any witness but myself,
I nourish a suspicion she's untrue,
My toughness returns to me. Lead on,
monsters,

And, by the forfeit of your lives, confirm
She is all excellence, as you all baseness ;
Or let mankind, for her fall, boldly swear
There are no chaste wives now, nor ever
were. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A private Walk in the
Gardens of the Palace.*

Enter Domitia, Paris, and Servants.

Dom. Say we command, that none pre-
sume to dare,

On forfeit of our favour, that is life,
Out of a saucy curiousness, to stand
Within the distance of their eyes or ears,
Till we please to be waited on.

[Exeunt Servants.

And, Sirrah,

Howe'er you are excepted, let it not
Beget in you an arrogant opinion
'Tis done to grace you.

Par. With my humblest service
I but obey your summons, and should blush
else,

To be so near you.

Dom. 'Twould become you rather
To fear the greatness of the grace vouch-
safed you

May overwhelm you ; and 'twill do no less,
If, when you are rewarded, in your cups
You boast this privacy.

Par. That were, mightiest empress,
To play with lightning.

Dom. You conceive it right.
The means to kill or save is not alone
In Cæsar circumscribed ; for, if incensed,
We have our thunder too, that strikes as
deadly.

Par. 'Twould ill become the lowness of
my fortune,

To question what you can do, but with all
Humility to attend what is your will,
And then to serve it.

Dom. And would not a secret,

Suppose we should commit it to your trust,
Scald you to keep it ?

Par. Though it raged within me
Till I turn'd cinders, it should ne'er have vent.
To be an age a dying, and with torture,
Only to be thought worthy of your counsel,
Or actuate what you command to me,
A wretched obscure thing, not worth your
knowledge,
Were a perpetual happiness.

Dom. We could wish
That we could credit thee, and cannot find
In reason, but that thou, whom oft I have
seen

To personate a gentleman, noble, wise,
Faithful, and gainsome, and what virtues else
The poet pleases to adorn you with ;
But that (as vessels still partake the odour
Of the sweet precious liquors they contain'd)
Thou must be really, in some degree,
The thing thou dost present.—Nay, do not
tremble ;

We seriously believe it, and presume
Our Paris is the volume in which all
Those excellent gifts the stage hath seen
him graced with,
Are curiously bound up.

Par. The argument
Is the same, great Augusta, that I, acting
A fool, a coward, a traitor, or cold cynic,
Or any other weak and vicious person,
Of force I must be such. O, gracious madam,
How glorious soever, or deform'd,
I do appear in the scene, my part being
ended,

And all my borrow'd ornaments put off,
I am no more, nor less, than what I was
Before I enter'd.

Dom. Come, you would put on
A wilful ignorance, and not understand
What 'tis we point at. Must we in plain
language,

Against the decent modesty of our sex,
Say that we love thee, love thee to enjoy thee ;
Or that in our desires thou art preferr'd,
And Cæsar but thy second ? ~~Thou in justice,
If from the height of majesty we can
Look down upon thy lowness, and embrace it,
Art bound with fervor to look up to me.~~

Par. O, madam ! hear me with a patient
ear,
And be but pleased to understand the reasons
That do deter me from a happiness
Kings would be rivals for. Can I, that owe
My life, and all that's mine, to Cæsar's
bounties,
Beyond my hopes or merits, shower'd upon
me,
Make payment for them with ingratitude,

Falsehood, and treason ! Though you have
a shape

Might tempt Hippolitus, and larger power
To help or hurt than wanton Phædra had,
Let loyalty and duty plead my pardon,
Though I refuse to satisfy.

Dom. You are coy,
Expecting I should court you. Let mean
ladies

Use prayers and entreaties to their creatures
To rise up instruments to serve their
pleasures ;

But for Augusta so to lose herself,
That holds command o'er Cæsar and the
world,

Were poverty of spirit. Thou must—thou
shalt :

The violence of my passion knows no mean,
And in my punishments, and my rewards,
I'll use no moderation. Take this only,
As a caution from me ; threadbare chastity
Is poor in the advancement of her servants,
But wantonness magnificent ; and 'tis fre-
quent

To have the salary of vice weigh down
The pay of virtue. So, without more trifling,
Thy sudden answer.

Par. In what a strait am I brought in !
Alas ! I know that the denial's death ;
Nor can my grant, discover'd, threaten
more.

Yet, to die innocent, and have the glory
For all posterity to report, that I
Refused an empress, to preserve my faith
To my great master ; in true judgment, must
Show fairer, than to buy a guilty life
With wealth and honour. 'Tis the base I
build on :

I dare not, must not, will not.

Dom. How ! contemn'd ?
Since hopes, nor fears, in the extremes, pre-
vail not,

I must use a mean. [*Aside.*—Think who
'tis sues to thee.

Deny not that yet, which a brother may
Grant to a sister : as a testimony

*Enter Cæsar, Aretinus, Julia, Domitilla,
Cænis, and a Guard behind.*

I am not scorn'd, kiss me ;—kiss me again :
Kiss closer. Thou art now my Trojan Paris,
And I thy Helen.

Par. Since it is your will.

Cæs. And I am Menelaus : but I shall be
Something I know not yet.

Dom. Why lose we time
And opportunity? These are but salads
To sharpen appetite : let us to the feast,

[*Courting Paris wantonly.*]

Where I shall wish that thou wert Jupiter,
And I Alcmena; and that I had power
To lengthen out one short night into three,
And so beget a Hercules.

Cæs. [*Comes forward.*] While Amphitritio
Stands by, and draws the curtains.

Par. Oh!— [*Falls on his face.*]

Dom. Betray'd!

Cæs. No; taken in a net of Vulcan's
filing,

Where, in myself, the theatre of the gods
Are sad spectators, not one of them daring
To witness, with a smile, he does desire
To be so shamed for all the pleasure that
You've sold your being for! What shall I
name thee?

Ingrateful, treacherous, insatiate, all
Invectives which, in bitterness of spirit,
Wrong'd men have breathed out against
wicked women,

Cannot express thee! Have I raised thee
from

Thy low condition to the height of greatness,
Command, and majesty, in one base act
To render me, that was, before I hugg'd
thee,

An adder, in my bosom, more than man,
A thing beneath a beast! Did I force these
Of mine own blood, as handmaids to kneel to
Thy pomp and pride, having myself no
thought

But how with benefits to bind thee mine;
And am I thus rewarded! Not a knee,
Nor tear, nor sign of sorrow for thy fault?
Break, stubborn silence: what canst thou
allege

To stay my vengeance?

Dom. This. Thy lust compell'd me
'To be a strumpet, and mine hath return'd it
In my intent and will, though not in act,
To cuckold thee.

Cæs. O, impudence! take her hence,
And let her make her entrance into hell,
By leaving life with all the tortures that
Flesh can be sensible of. Yet stay. What
power

Her beauty still holds o'er my soul, that
wrongs
Of this unpardonable nature cannot teach me
To right myself, and hate her!—Kill her.—
Hold!

O that my dotage should increase from that
Which should breed detestation. By
Minerva,

If I look on her longer, I shall melt,
And sue to her, my injuries forgot,
Again to be received into her favour;
Could honour yield to it! Carry her to her
chamber;

Be that her prison, till in cooler blood
I shall determine of her.

[*Exit Guard with Domitia.*]

Aret. Now step I in,

While he's in this calm mood, for my re-
ward.—

Sir, if my service hath deserved—

Cæs. Yes, yes:

And I'll reward thee. Thou hast robb'd
me of

All rest and peace, and been the principal
means

To make me know that, of which if again
I could be ignorant of, I would purchase it

Re-enter Guard.

With the loss of empire: Strangle him;
take these hence too,

And lodge them in the dungeon. Could
your reason,

Dull wretches, flatter you with hope to think
That this discovery, that hath shower'd
upon me

Perpetual vexation, should not fall
Heavy on you? Away with them!—stop
their mouths;

I will hear no reply.

[*Exit Guard with Aretinus, Julia,
Cænis, and Domitilla.*]

—O, Paris, Paris!

How shall I argue with thee? how begin
To make thee understand, before I kill thee,
With what grief and unwillingness 'tis forced
from me?

Yet, in respect I have favour'd thee, I'll hear
What thou canst speak to qualify or excuse
Thy readiness to serve this woman's lust;
And wish thou couldst give me such satisfac-
tion,

As I might bury the remembrance of it.
Look up: we stand attentive.

Par. O, dread Cæsar!

To hope for life, or plead in the defence
Of my ingratitude, were again to wrong you.
I know I have deserved death; and my
suit is,

That you would hasten it: yet, that your
highness,

When I am dead, (as sure I will not live,)
May pardon me, I'll only urge my frailty,
Her will, and the temptation of that beauty
Which you could not resist. How could
poor I, then,

Fly that which follow'd me, and Cæsar sued
for?

This is all. And now your sentence.

Cæs. Which I know not

How to pronounce. O that thy fault had been
But such as I might pardon! if thou hadst

In wantonness, like Nero, fired proud Rome,
Betray'd an army, butcher'd the whole senate,
Committed sacrilege, or any crime
The justice of our Roman laws calls death,
I had prevented any intercession,
And freely sign'd thy pardon.

Par. But for this,
Alas! you cannot, nay, you must not, sir;
Nor let it to posterity be recorded,
That Cæsar, unrevenged, suffer'd a wrong,
Which, if a private man should sit down
with it,
Cowards would baffle him.

Cæs. With such true feeling
Thou arguest against thyself, that it
Works more upon me, than if my Minerva,
The grand protectress of my life and empire,
On forfeit of her favour, cried aloud,
Cæsar, show mercy! and, I know not how,
I am inclined to it. Rise. I'll promise
nothing;

Yet clear thy cloudy fears, and cherish hopes.
What we must do, we shall do: we remember
A tragedy we oft have seen with pleasure,
Call'd *the False Servant*.

Par. Such a one we have, sir.
Cæs. In which a great lord takes to his
protection
A man forlorn, giving him ample power
To order and dispose of his estate
In's absence, he pretending then a journey:
But yet with this restraint that, on no terms,
(This lord suspecting his wife's constancy,
She having play'd false to a former husband,)
The servant, though solicited, should con-
sent,
Though she commanded him to quench her
flames.

Par. That was, indeed, the argument.
Cæs. And what
Didst thou play in it!

Par. The *False Servant*, sir.
Cæs. Thou didst, indeed. Do the players
wait without?

Par. They do, sir, and prepared to act
the story
Your majesty mention'd.

Cæs. Call them in. Who presents
The injured lord!

Enter Æsopus, Latinus, and a Lady.
Æsop. 'Tis my part, sir.
Cæs. Thou didst not
Do it to the life; we can perform it better.
Off with my robe and wreath: since Nero
scorn'd not
The public theatre, we in private may
Disport ourselves. This cloak and hat,
without

Wearing a beard, or other property,
Will fit the person.

Æsop. Only, sir, a foil,
The point and edge rebated, when you act,
To do the murder. If you please to use this,
And lay aside your own sword.

Cæs. By no means.
In jest nor earnest this parts never from me,
We'll have but one shortscene—That, where
the lady

In an imperious way commands the servant
To be unthankful to his patron: when
My cue's to enter, prompt me:—Nay, begin,
And do it sprightly: though but a new actor,
When I come to execution, you shall find
No cause to laugh at me.

Lat. In the name of wonder,
What's Cæsar's purpose!

~~*Æsop.* There is no contending.~~

Cæs. Why, when?
Par. I am arm'd:
And, stood grim Death now in my view,
and his

Inevitable dart aim'd at my breast,
His cold embraces should not bring an ague
To any of my faculties, till his pleasures
Were served and satisfied; which done,
Nestor's years

To me would be unwelcome. [*Aside.*
Lady. *Must we entreat,*
That were born to command? or court a
servant,
That owes his food and clothing to our bounty,
For that, which thou ambitiously shouldst
kneel for?

Urge not in thy excuse, the favours of
Thy absent lord, or that thou stand'st engaged
For thy life to his charity; nor thy fears
Of what may follow, it being in my power
To mould him any way.

Par. *As you may me,*
In what his reputation is not wounded,
Nor I, his creature, in my thankfulness suffer.
I know you're young and fair; be virtuous too,
And loyal to his bed, that hath advanced you
~~*To the height of happiness.*~~

Lady. *Can my love-sick heart*
Be cured with counsel? or durst reason ever
Offer to put in an exploded plea
In the court of Venus? My desires admit not
The least delay; and therefore instantly
Give me to understand what I must trust to:
For, if I am refused, and not enjoy
Those ravishing pleasures from thee, I run
mad for,
I'll swear unto my lord, at his return,
(Making what I deliver good with tears,)
That brutishly thou wouldst have forced
from me

*What I make suit for. And then but imagine
What 'tis to die, with these words, slave and
traitor,*

*With burning corsives writ upon thy fore-
head,*

And live prepared for't.

Par. This he will believe

Upon her information, 'tis apparent;

And then I'm nothing: and of two extremes,

Wisdom says, choose the less. [Aside.]—

Rather than fall

Under your indignation, I will yield:

This kiss, and this, confirms it.

~~*Esop. Now, sir, now.*~~

~~*Cæs. I must take them at it?*~~

~~*Esop. Yes, sir; be but perfect.*~~

*Cæs. O villain! thankless villain!—I
should talk now;*

But I've forgot my part. But I can do:

Thus, thus, and thus! [Stabs Paris.

Par. Oh! I am slain in earnest.

*Cæs. 'Tis true; and 'twas my purpose,
my good Paris:*

*And yet, before life leave thee, let the honour
I've done thee in thy death bring comfort to
thee.*

*If it had been within the power of Cæsar,
His dignity preserved, he had pardon'd thee:
But cruelty of honour did deny it.*

*Yet, to confirm I loved thee, 'twas mystudy,
To make thy end more glorious, to dis-
tinguish*

*My Paris from all others; and in that
Have shewn my pity. Nor would I let
thee fall*

*By a centurion's sword, or have thy limbs
Rent piecemeal by the hangman's hook,
however*

*Thy crime deserved it: but, as thou didst
live*

*Rome's bravest actor, 'twas my plot that
thou*

*Shouldst die in action, and to crown it, die,
With an applause enduring to all times,
By our imperial hand.—His soul is freed
From the prison of his flesh; let it mount
upward!*

*And for this trunk, when that the funeral pile
Hath made it ashes, we'll see it enclosed
In a golden urn; poets adorn his hearse
With their most ravishing sorrows, and the
stage*

*For ever mourn him, and all such as were
His glad spectators, weep his sudden death,
The cause forgot in his epitaph.*

[*Sad music; the Players bear off Paris'
body, Cæsar and the rest following.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace, with
an image of Minerva.*

Enter Parthenius, Stephanos, and Guard.

Parth. Keep a strong guard upon him,
and admit not

Access to any, to exchange a word
Or syllable with him, till the emperor pleases

To call him to his presence.—[*Exit Guard.*]

—The relation

That you have made me, Stephanos, of
these late

Strange passions in Cæsar, much amaze me.

The informer Aretinus put to death

For yielding him a true discovery

Of the empress' wantonness; poor Paris
kill'd first,

And now lamented; and the princesses

Confined to several islands; yet Augusta,
The machine on which all this mischief

moved,

Received again to grace!

Steph. Nay, courted to it:

Such is the impotence of his affection!

Yet, to conceal his weakness, he gives out
The people made suit for her, whom they
hate more

Than civil war or famine. But take heed,

My lord, that, nor in your consent nor wishes,

You lend or furtherance or favour to

The plot contrived against her: should she
prove it,

Nay, doubt it only, you are a lost man,
Her power o'er doating Cæsar being now
Greater than ever.

Parth. 'Tis a truth I shake at;

And, when there's opportunity—

Steph. Say but, Do,

I am yours, and sure.

Parth. I'll stand one trial more,

And then you shall hear from me.

Steph. Now observe

The fondness of this tyrant, and her pride.

[*They stand aside.*

Enter Cæsar and Domitia.

Cæs. Nay, all's forgotten.

Dom. It may be, on your part.

Cæs. Forgiven too, Domitia:—'tis a
favour

That you should welcome with more cheer-
ful looks.

Can Cæsar pardon what you durst not hope-
for,

That did the injury, and yet must sue
To her, whose guilt is wash'd off by his
mercy,

~~Only to entertain it?~~

Dom. I ask'd none ;
And I should be more wretched to receive
Remission for what I hold no crime,
But by a bare acknowledgment, than if,
By slighting and contemning it, as now,
I dared thy utmost fury. Though thy
flatterers

Persuade thee, that thy murders, lusts, and
rapes,

Are virtues in thee ; and what pleases Cæsar,
Though never so unjust, is right and lawful ;
Or work in thee a false belief that thou
Art more than mortal ; yet I to thy teeth,
When circled with thy guards, thy rods, thy
axes,

And all the ensigns of thy boasted power,
Will say, Domitian, nay, add to it Cæsar,
Is a weak, feeble man, a bondman to
His violent passions, and in that my slave ;
Nay, more my slave than my affections
made me

To my loved Paris.

Cæs. Can I live and hear this ?
Or hear, and not revenge it? Come, you
know

The strength that you hold on me, do not
use it

With too much cruelty ; for though 'tis
granted

That Lydian Omphale had less command
O'er Hercules, than you usurp o'er me,
Reason may teach me to shake off the yoke
Of my fond dotage.

Dom. Never ; do not hope it :
It cannot be. Thou being my beauty's
captive,

And not to be redeem'd, my empire's larger
Than thine, Domitian, which I'll exercise
With rigour on thee, for my Paris' death.
And, when I've forced those eyes, now red
with fury,

To drop down tears, in vain spent to ap-
pease me,

I know thy fervour such to my embraces,
Which shall be, though still kneel'd for,
still deried thee,

That thou with languishment shalt wish my
actor

Did live again, so thou mightst be his
second

To feed upon those delicates, when he's
sated.

Cæs. O my Minerva.

Dom. There she is, [*Points to the statue.*]
invoke her :

She cannot arm thee with ability
To draw thy sword on me, my power being
greater :

Or only say to thy centurions,

Dare none of you do what I shake to think on,
And, in this woman's death, remove the
Furies

That every hour afflict me?—Lamia's
wrongs,

When thy lust forced me from him, are, in
me,

At the height revenged ; nor would I out-
live Paris,

But that thy love, increasing with my hate,
May add unto thy torments ; so, with all
Contempt I can, I leave thee. [*Exit.*]

Cæs. I am lost ;

Nor am I Cæsar. When I first betray'd
The freedom of my faculties and will
To this imperious siren, I laid down
The empire of the world, and of myself,
At her proud feet. Sleep all my ireful
powers?

~~Or is the magic of my dotage such,
That I must still make suit to hear those
charms~~

~~That do increase my thralldom!~~ Wake, my
anger!

For shame, break through this lethargy, and
appear

With usual terror, and enable me,
Since I wear not a sword to pierce her heart,
Nor have a tongue to say this, *Let her die*,
Though 'tis done with a fever-shaken hand,

[*Pulls out a table-book.*]

To sign her death. Assist me, great
Minerva,

And vindicate thy votary ! [*writes*] So ; she's
now

Among the list of those I have proscribed,
And are, to free me of my doubts and fears,
To die to-morrow.

Steph. That same fatal book
Was never drawn yet, but some men of rank
Were mark'd out for destruction. [*Exit.*]

Parth. I begin

To doubt myself.

Cæs. Who waits there ?

Parth. [*coming forward.*] Cæsar.

Cæs. So!

These, that command arm'd troops, quake
at my frowns,

And yet a woman slights them. Where's the
wizard

Who charged you to fetch in?

Parth. Ready to suffer

What death you please to appoint him.

Cæs. Bring him in.

We'll question him ourself.

Enter Tribunes, and Guard with
Ascltario.

Now, you, that hold

Intelligence with the stars, and dare prefix
The day and hour in which we are to part
With life and empire, punctually foretelling
The means and manner of our violent end ;
As you would purchase credit to your art,
Resolve me, since you are assured of us,
What fate attends yourself ?

Ascle. I have had long since
A certain knowledge, and as sure as thou
Shalt die to-morrow, being the fourteenth of
The kalends of October, the hour five ;
Spite of prevention, this carcass shall be
Torn and devoured by dogs ;—and let that
stand

For a firm prediction.

Cæs. ~~May our body, wretch,
Find never nobler sepulchre, if this
Fall ever on thee!~~ Are we the great disposer
Of life and death, yet cannot mock the stars
In such a trifle ? Hence with the impostor ;
And having cut his throat, erect a pile,
Guarded with soldiers, till his cursed trunk
Be turn'd to ashes : upon forfeit of
Your life, and theirs, perform it.

Ascle. 'Tis in vain ;
When what I have foretold is made apparent,
Tremble to think what follows.

Cæs. Drag him hence,
[*The Tribunes and Guard bear off Ascleterio.*
And do as I command you. I was never
Fuller of confidence ; for, having got
The victory of my passions, in my freedom
From proud Domitia, (whos shall cease to live,
Since she disdains to love,) I rest unmoved :
~~And, in defiance of prodigious meteors,
Chaldeans' vain predictions, jealous fears
Of my near friends and freedmen, certain hate
Of kindred and alliance, or all terrors
The soldiers' doubted faith, or people's rage
Can bring to shake my constancy, I am
arm'd.~~

That scrupulous thing styled conscience is
sear'd up,
~~And I insensible of all my actions,
For which, by moral and religious fools,
I stand condemn'd, as they had never been.~~
And, since I have subdued triumphant love,
I will not deify pale captive fear,
Nor in a thought receive it : for, till thou,
Wisest Minerva, that from my first youth
Has been my sole protectress, dost forsake
me,

Not Junius Rusticus' threaten'd apparition,
Nor what this soothsayer but even now fore-
told,

Being things impossible to human reason,
Shall in a dream disturb me. Bring my
couch, there :

A sudden but a secure drowsiness

Invites me to repose myself. [*A couch
brought in.*] ~~Let music,
With some choice ditty, second it :—~~ [*Exit
Parthenius.*]—The mean time,
Rest there, dear book, which open'd, when
I wake,

[*Lays the book under his pillow.*
Shall make some sleep for ever.

[*Music and a song. Cæsar sleeps.*

Re-enter Parthenius and Domitia.

Dom. Write my name
In his bloody scroll, Parthenius ! the fear's
idle :

He durst not, could not.

Parth. I can assure nothing ;
But ~~I observed, when you departed from him,
After some little passion, but much fury,
He drew it out : whose death he sign'd, I
know not ;~~

~~But in his looks appear'd a resolution
Of what before he stagger'd at. What he hath
Determined of is uncertain, but too soon
Will fall on you, or me, or both, or any,
His pleasure known to the tribunes and cen-
turies,~~

~~Who never use to enquire his will, but serve it,
Now, if, out of the confidence of your power,
The bloody catalogue being still about him,
As he sleeps you dare peruse it, or remove it,
You may instruct yourself, or what to suffer,
Or how to cross it.~~

Dom. I would not be caught
With too much confidence. By your leave,
sir. Ha !
No motion !—you lie uneasy, sir,
Let me mend your pillow.

[*Takes away the book.*

Parth. Have you it ?

Dom. 'Tis here.

Cæs. Oh !

Parth. You have waked him : softly,
gracious madam,
While we are unknown ; and then consult
at leisure. [*Exeunt.*

*Dreadful music. The Apparitions of Junius
Rusticus and Palphurius Sura rise, with
bloody swords in their hands ; they wave
them over the head of Cæsar, who seems
troubled in his sleep, and as if praying to
the image of Minerva, which they scorn-
fully seize, and then disappear with it.*

Cæs. [*starting.*] Defend me, goddess, or
this horrid dream

Will force me to distraction ! whither have
These furies borne thee ? Let me rise and
follow.

I am bathed o'er with the cold sweat of death,

And am deprived of organs to pursue
These sacrilegious spirits. Am I at once
Robb'd of my hopes and being? No, I live—

[Rises distractedly.]

Yes, live, and have discourse, to know myself
Of gods and men forsaken. What accuser
Within me cries aloud, I have deserved it,
In being just to neither? Who dares speak
this?

Am I not Cæsar?—How! again repeat it?
Presumptuous traitor, thou shalt die!—
What traitor?

He that hath been a traitor to himself,
And stands convicted here. Yet who can sit
A competent judge o'er Cæsar? Cæsar. Yes,
Cæsar by Cæsar's sentenced, and must suffer;
Minerva cannot save him. Ha! where is she?
Where is my goddess? vanish'd! I am lost
then.

No; 'twas no dream, but a most real truth,
That Junius Rusticus and Palphurius Sura,
Although their ashes were cast in the sea,
Were by their innocence made up again,
And in corporeal forms but now appear'd,
Waving their bloodyswords above my head,
As at their deaths they threaten'd. And
methought,

Minerva, ravish'd hence, whisper'd that she
Was, for my blasphemies, disarm'd by Jove,
And could no more protect me. Yes, 'twas so,
[Thunder and lightning.]

His thunder does confirm it, against which,
Howe'er it spare the laurel, this proud wreath

Enter three Tribunes.

Is no assurance. Ha! come you resolved
To be my executioners?

1 Trib. Allegiance

And faith forbid that we should lift an arm
Against your sacred head.

2 Trib. We rather sue

For mercy.

3 Trib. And acknowledge that in justice
Our lives are forfeited for not performing
What Cæsar charged us.

1 Trib. Nor did we transgress it

In our want of will or care; for, being but
men,

It could not be in us to make resistance,

The gods fighting against us.

Cæs. Speak, in what

Did they express their anger? we will hear it,
But dare not say, undaunted.

1 Trib. In brief thus, sir:

The sentence given by your imperial tongue,
For the astrologer Ascleterio's death,

With speed was put in execution.

Cæs. Well.

1 Trib. For, his throat cut, his legs bound,
and his arms

Pinion'd behind his back, the breathless trunk
Was with all scorn dragg'd to the field of
Mars,

And there, a pile being raised of old drywood,
Smear'd o'er with oil and brimstone, or what
else

Could help to feed or to increase the fire,
The carcass was thrown on it; but no sooner
The stuff, that was most apt, began to flame,
But suddenly, to the amazement of
The fearless soldier, a sudden flash
Of lightning, breaking through the scatter'd
clouds,

With such a horrid violence forced its passage,
And, as disdaining all heat but itself,
In a moment quench'd the artificial fire:
And before we could kindle it again,
A clap of thunder follow'd with such noise,
As if then Jove, incensed against mankind,
Had in his secret purposes determined
An universal ruin to the world.

~~This horror past, not at Deucalion's flood
Such a stormy shower of rain (and yet that
word is~~

~~Too narrow to express it) was e'er seen:~~

~~Imagine rather, sir, that with less fury~~

~~The waves rush down the cataracts of Nile;~~

~~Or that the sea, spouted into the air~~

~~By the angry Ore, endangering tall ships~~

~~But sailing near it, so falls down again.~~

Yet here the wonder ends not, but begins:

For, as in vain we labour'd to consume
The wizard's body, all the dogs of Rome,
Howling and yelling like to famish'd wolves,
Brake in upon us; and though thousands were
Kill'd in th' attempt, some did ascend the pile,
And with their eager fangs seized on the
carcass.

Cæs. But have they torn it?

1 Trib. Torn it, and devour'd it.

Cæs. I then am a dead man, since all
predictions

Assure me I am lost. O, my loved soldiers,
Your emperor must leave you! yet, however
I cannot grant myself a short reprieve,
I freely pardon you. The fatal hour
Steals fast upon me: I must die this morning
By five, my soldiers; that's the latest hour
You e'er must see me living.

1 Trib. Jove avert it!

In our swords lies your fate, and we will
guard it.

Cæs. O no, it cannot be; it is decreed
Above, and by no strength here to be alter'd.
Let proud mortality but look on Cæsar,
Compass'd of late with armies, in his eyes
Carrying both life and death, and in his arms

Fathoming the earth ; that would be styled
a God,

~~And is, for that presumption, cast beneath
The low condition of a common man,~~

Sinking with mine own weight.

1 *Trib.* Do not forsake
Yourself, we'll never leave you.

2 *Trib.* We'll draw up
More cohorts of your guard, if you doubt
treason.

Cæs. They cannot save me. The offended
gods,

That now sit judges on me, from their envy
Of my power and greatness here, conspire
against me.

1 *Trib.* Endeavour to appease them.

Cæs. 'Twill be fruitless ;
I am past hope of remission. Yet, could I
Decline this dreadful hour of five, these
terrors,

That drive me to despair, would soon fly
from me :

And could you but till then assure me——

1 *Trib.* Yes, sir ;
Or we'll fall with you, and make Rome the urn
In which we'll mix our ashes.

Cæs. 'Tis said nobly :
I am something comforted : howe'er, to die
Is the full period of calamity. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Another Room in the Palace.*

Enter Parthenius, Domitia, Julia, Cænis,
Domitilla, Stephanos, Sejeius, and En-
tellus.

Parth. You see we are all condemn'd ;
there's no evasion ;

We must do, or suffer.

Steph. But it must be sudden ;

The least delay is mortal.

Dom. Would I were

A man, to give it action !

Domitil. Could I make my approaches,
though my stature

Does promise little, I have a spirit as daring
As hers that can reach higher.

Steph. I will take

That burthen from you, madam. All the
art is,

To draw him from the tribunes that attend
him ;

For, could you bring him but within my
sword's reach,

The world should owe her freedom from a
tyrant

To Stephanos.

Sej. You shall not share alone
The glory of a deed that will endure
To all posterity.

Ent. I will put in
For a part, myself.

Parth. Be resolv'd, and stand close.
I have conceived a way, and with the hazard
Of my life I'll practise it, to fetch him hither.
But then no trifling.

Steph. We'll dispatch him, fear not :
A dead dog never bites.

Parth. Thus then at all.

[*Exit; the rest conceal themselves.*]

Enter Cæsar and the Tribunes.

Cæs. How slow-paced are these minutes !
in extremes,

How miserable is the least delay !
Could I imp feathers to the wings of time,
Or with as little ease command the sun
To scourge his coursers up heaven's eastern
hill,

Making the hour to tremble at, past re-
calling,

As I can move this dial's tongue to six ;
My veins and arteries, emptied with fear,
Would fill and swell again. How do I look ?
Do you yet see Death about me ?

1 *Trib.* Think not of him ;
There is no danger : ~~all these prodigies
That do affright you, rise from natural causes ;
And though you do ascribe them to yourself,
Had you ne'er been, had happened.~~

Cæs. 'Tis well said,
Exceeding well, brave soldier. Can it be,
That I, that feel myself in health and
strength,

Should still believe I am so near my end,
And have my guards about me ? perish all
Predictions ! I grow constant they are false,
And built upon uncertainties.

1 *Trib.* This is right ;
Now Cæsar's heard like Cæsar.

Cæs. We will to
The camp, and having there confirm'd the
soldier

With a large donative, and increase of pay,
Some shall——I say no more.

Re-enter Parthenius.

Parth. All happiness,
Security, long life, attend upon
The monarch of the world !

Cæs. Thy looks are cheerful.

Parth. And my relation full of joy and
wonder.

Why is the care of your imperial body,
My lord, neglected, the fear'd hour being
past,

In which your life was threaten'd ?

Cæs. Is't past five ?

Parth. Past six, upon my knowledge ;
and, in justice,
Your clock-master should die, that hath de-
ferr'd

Your peace so long. There is a post new
lighted,

That brings assured intelligence, that your
legions

In Syria have won a glorious day,
And much enlarged your empire. I have
kept him

Conceal'd, that you might first partake the
pleasure

In private, and the senate from yourself
Be taught to understand how much they owe
To you and to your fortune.

Cæs. Hence, pale fear, then !

Lead me, Parthenius.

1 *Trib.* Shall we wait you ?

Cæs. No.

After losses guards are useful. Know your
distance.

[*Exeunt Cæsar and Parthenius.*]

2 *Trib.* How strangely hopes delude men !
as I live,

The hour is not yet come.

1 *Trib.* Howe'er, we are

To pay our duties, and observe the sequel.

[*Exeunt Tribunes. Domitia and the
rest come forward.*]

Dom. I hear him coming. Be constant.

Re-enter Cæsar and Parthenius.

Cæs. Where, Parthenius,

Is this glad messenger ?

Steph. Make the door fast.—Here ;

A messenger of horror.

Cæs. How ! betray'd ?

Dom. No ; taken, tyrant.

Cæs. My Domitia

In the conspiracy !

Parth. Behold this book.

Cæs. Nay, then I am lost. Yet, though
I am unarm'd,

I'll not fall poorly. [*Overthrows Stephanos.*]

Steph. Help me.

Ent. ~~Thus, and thus !~~ } *They stab*

Sej. ~~Are you so long a falling ?~~ } *him.*

Cæs. 'Tis done basely. [*Falls, and dies.*]

Parth. This for my father's death.

Dom. This for my Paris.

Jul. This for thy incest.

Domitil. This for thy abuse

Of Domitilla. [*They severally stab him.*]

Tribunes. [*within.*] Force the doors !

Enter Tribunes.

O Mars !

What have you done ?

Parth. What Romeshall giveus thanksfor.

Steph. Dispatch'd a monster.

1 *Trib.* Yet he was our prince,

However wicked ; and, in you, this mur-
der,—

Which whosoe'er succeeds him will revenge :
Nor will we, that serv'd under his command,
Consent that such a monster as thyself,

~~(For in thy wickedness Augusta's title
Hath quite forsook thee,)~~ thou, that wert
the ground

Of all these mischiefs, shall go hence un-
punish'd.

Lay hands on her, and drag her to her sen-
tence.—

~~We will refer the hearing to the senate,
Who may at their best leisure censure you.~~

Take up his body : he in death hath paid
For all his cruelties. Here's the difference ;
Good kings are mourn'd for after life ; but ill,
And such as govern'd only by their will,
And not their reason, unlamented fall ;
No good man's tear shed at their funeral.

[*Exeunt ; the Tribunes bearing the body of
Cæsar.*]

