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THE

INFLEXIBLE CAPTIVE:

A TRAGEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS IT WAS ACTED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, AT BATH.

The man resolv'd, and steady to his trust,
Inflexible to ill, and obstinately just.

Drawn from:

THE

WORKS

OF

HANNAH MORE.

VOL. II.

LONDON

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1830.

TO

THE HONOURABLE

MRS. BOSCAWEN.

MY DEAR MADAM,

It seems somewhat extraordinary that although with persons of great merit and delicacy no virtue stands in higher estimation than truth, yet, in such an address as the present, there would be some danger of offending them by a strict adherence to it; I mean by uttering truths so generally acknowledged, that every one, except the person addressed, would acquit the writer of flattery. And it will be a singular circumstance to see a Dedication without praise, to a lady possessed of every quality and accomplishment which can justly entitle her to it.

I am,

MY DEAR MADAM,

With great respect,

your most obedient,

and very obliged humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

THE ARGUMENT.

Among the great names which have done honour to antiquity in general, and to the Roman Republic in particular, that of Marcus Attilius Regulus has, by the general consent of all ages, been considered as one of the most splendid, since he not only sacrificed his labours, his liberty, and his life for the good of his country, but by a greatness of soul, almost peculiar to himself, contrived to make his very misfortunes contribute to that glorious end.

After the Romans had met with various successes in the first Punic war, under the command of Regulus, victory at length declared for the opposite party, the Roman army was totally overthrown, and Regulus himself taken prisoner, by

Xantippus, a Lacedæmonian General in the service of the Carthaginians: the victorious enemy exulting in so important a conquest, kept him many years in close imprisonment, and loaded him with the most cruel indignities. They thought it was now in their power to make their own terms with Rome, and determined to send Regulus thither with their ambassador, to negotiate a peace, or at least an exchange of captives, thinking he would gladly persuade his countrymen to discontinue a war, which necessarily prolonged his captivity. They previously exacted from him an oath to return should his embassy prove unsuccessful; at the same time giving him to understand, that he must expect to suffer a cruel death if he failed in it; this they artfully intimated as the strongest motive for him to leave no means unattempted to accomplish their purpose.

At the unexpected arrival of this venerable hero, the Romans expressed the wildest transports of joy, and would have submitted to almost any conditions to procure his enlargement; but Regulus, so far from availing himself of his influence with the Senate to obtain any personal advantages, employed it to induce them to reject proposals so evidently tending to dishonour their country, declaring his fixed resolution to return to bondage and death, rather than violate his oath.

He at last extorted from them their consent; and departed amidst the tears of his family, the importunities of his friends, the applauses of the Senate, and the tumultuous opposition of the people; and, as a great poet of his own nation beautifully observes, "he embarked for Carthage as calm and unconcerned as if, on finishing the tedious law-suits of his clients, he was retiring to Venafrican fields, or the sweet country of Tarentum."

→ This piece is, in many parts, a pretty close imitation of the *Attilio Regolo* of Metastasio, but enlarged and extended into a tragedy of five acts. Historical truth has in general been followed, except in some less essential instances, particularly that of placing the return of Regulus to Rome posterior to the death of his wife. The writer herself never considered the plot as sufficiently bustling and dramatic for representation.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE REV. DR. LANGHORNE.

Deep in the bosom of departed days,
Where the first gems of human glory blaze;
Where, crown'd with flowers, in wreaths immortal drest,
The sacred shades of ancient virtue rest;
With joy they search, who joy can feel, to find
Some honest reason still to love mankind.
There the fair foundress of the scene to-night
Explores the paths that dignify delight;
The regions of the mighty dead pervades;
The Sibyl she that leads us to the shades.
O may each blast of ruder breath forbear
To waft her light leaves on the ruthless air,
Since she, as heedless, strives not to maintain
This tender offspring of her teeming brain!
For this poor birth was no provision made,

A flower that sprung and languish'd in the shade.
On Avon's banks, forsaken and forlorn,
This careless mother left her elder born;
And though unlike what Avon hail'd of yore,
Those giant sons that Shakspeare's banners bore,
Yet may we yield this little offspring grace,
And love the last and least of such a race.
Shall the strong scenes, where senatorial Rome,
Mourn'd o'er the rigour of her patriot's doom;
Where melting Nature aw'd by Virtue's eye,
Hid the big drop, and held the bursting sigh;
Where all that majesty of soul can give,
Truth, Honour, Pity, fair Affection live;
Shall scenes like these, the glory of an age,
Gleam from the press, nor triumph on the stage?
Forbid it, Britons! and, as Romans brave,
Like Romans boast one citizen to save.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

REGULUS,	<i>Mr. Henderson.</i>
PUBLIUS, his Son,	<i>Mr. Dimond.</i>
MANLIUS, the Consul,	<i>Mr. Blisset.</i>
LICINIUS, a Tribune,	<i>Mr. Brown.</i>
HAMILCAR, the Carthaginian Ambassador,	<i>Mr. Rowbotham.</i>
ATTILIA, daughter of Regulus,	<i>Miss Mansell.</i>
BARCE, a Carthaginian captive,	<i>Miss Wheeler.</i>

Guards, Lictors, People, &.

SCENE—*Near the Gates of Rome.*

THE INFLEXIBLE CAPTIVE.

ACT I.

SCENE—*A Hall in the Consul's Palace.*

Enter LICINIUS, ATTILIA, Lictors and People.

Lic. Attilia waiting here? Is't possible?
Is this a place for Regulus's daughter?
Just gods! must that incomparable maid
Associate here with Lictors and Plebeians?

At. Yes, on this threshold patiently I wait
The Consul's coming; I would make him blush
To see me here his suitor. O Licinius,
This is no time for form and cold decorum;
Five lagging years have crept their tedious round,
And Regulus, alas! is still a slave,
A wretched slave, unpitied, and forgotten;
No other tribute paid his memory,
Than the sad tears of his unhappy child;
If *she* be silent, who will speak for Regulus?

Lic. Let not her sorrows make my fair unjust.
Is there in Rome a heart so dead to virtue
That does not beat in Regulus's cause?
That wearies not the gods for his return?
That does not think all subjugated Afric
A slender, unimportant acquisition,
If, in return for this extended empire,
The freedom of thy father be the purchase?
These are the feelings of Imperial Rome;
My own, it were superfluous to declare.
For if *Licinius* were to weigh his merit,
That he's *thy father* were sufficient glory.
He was my leader, train'd me up to arms;
And if I boast a spark of Roman honour,
I owe it to *his* precepts and *his* virtues.

At. And yet I have not seen Licinius stir.

Lic. Ah! spare me thy reproaches—what, when late
A private citizen, could I attempt?

'Twas not the lust of power, or pride of rank,
Which made me seek the dignity of tribune;
No, my Attilia, but I fondly hop'd
'Twould strengthen and enforce the just request
Which as a *private* man I vainly urg'd;
But now, the people's representative,
I shall *demand*, Attilia, to be heard.

At. Ah! let us not too hastily apply
This dang'rous remedy; I would not rouse
Fresh tumults 'twixt the people and the senate:
Each views with jealousy the idol, Power,
Which, each possessing, would alike abuse.
What one demands the other still denies.
Might *I* advise you, try a gentler method;
I know that every moment Rome expects
Th' ambassador of Carthage, nay, 'tis said
The Conscript Fathers are already met
To give him audience in Bellona's temple.
There might the Consul at my suit, Licinius,
Propose the ransom of my captive father.

Lic. Ah! think, Attilia, who that Consul is,
Manlius, thy father's rival, and his foe:
His ancient rival, and his foe profess'd:
To hope in him, my fair, were fond delusion.

At. Yet though his rival, Manlius is a *Roman*:
Nor will he think of private enmities,
Weigh'd in the balance with the good of Rome:
Let me at least make trial of his honour.

Lic. Be it so, my fair! but elsewhere make thy suit;
Let not the Consul meet Attilia *here*,
Confounded with the refuse of the people.

At. Yes, I will see him *here*, e'en *here*, Licinius.
Let *Manlius* blush, not *me*: *here* will I speak,
Here shall he answer me.

Lic. Behold he comes.

At. Do thou retire.

Lic. O bless me with a look,

One parting look at least.

At. Know, my Licinius,
That at this moment I am all the *daughter*,
The filial feelings now possess my soul,
And other passions find no entrance there.

Lic. O sweet, yet powerful influence of virtue,
That charms though cruel, though unkind subdues,
And what was love exalts to admiration!
Yes, 'tis the privilege of souls like thine
To conquer most when least they aim at conquest.
Yet, ah! vouchsafe to think upon Licinius,
Nor fear to rob thy father of his due;
For surely virtue and the gods approve
Unwearied constancy and spotless love.

[*Exit* LICINIUS.]

Enter MANLIUS.

At. Ah! Manlius, stay, a moment stay, and hear me.

Man. I did not think to meet thee here, Attilia;
The place so little worthy of the guest.

At. It would, indeed, have ill become Attilia,
While still her father was a Roman citizen;
But for the daughter of a slave to Carthage,
It surely is most fitting.

Man. Say, Attilia,
What is the purpose of thy coming hither!

At. What is the purpose, patience, pitying heaven!
Tell me, how long, to Rome's eternal shame,
To fill with horror all the wond'ring world,
My father still must groan in Punic chains,
And waste the tedious hours in cruel bondage?
Days follow days, and years to years succeed,
And Rome forgets her hero, is content
That Regulus be a forgotten slave.
What is his crime? is it that he preferr'd
His country's profit to his children's good?
Is it th' unshaken firmness of his soul,
Just, uncorrupt, and, boasting, let me speak it,
Poor in the highest dignities of Rome?

O glorious poverty! illustrious crime!

Man. But know, Attilia——

At. O have patience with me.
And can ungrateful *Rome* so soon forget?
Can those who breathe the air *he* breath'd forget
The great, the godlike virtues of my father?
There's not a part of *Rome* but speaks his praise.
The *streets*—through them the *hero* pass'd triumphant:
The *Forum*—there the *Legislator* plann'd
The wisest, purest laws:—*the Senate House*—
There spoke the *patriot Roman*—there his voice
Secur'd the public safety: *Manlius*, yes;
The wisdom of his councils match'd his valour.
Enter the *Temples*—mount the *Capitol*—
And tell me, *Manlius*, to what hand but *his*
They owe their trophies, and their ornaments.
Their foreign banners, and their boasted ensigns,
Tarentine, Punic, and Sicilian spoils?
Nay, e'en those lictors who precede thy steps,
This Consul's purple which invests thy limbs,
All, all were *Regulus's*, were my father's.
And yet this hero, this exalted patriot,
This man of virtue, this immortal Roman,
In base requital for his services,
Is left to linger out a life in chains,
No honours paid him but a daughter's tears.
O *Rome!* O *Regulus!* O thankless citizens!

Man. Just are thy tears:—thy father well deserves them;
But know thy censure is unjust, Attilia.
The fate of *Regulus* is felt by all:
We know and mourn the cruel woes he suffers
From barbarous *Carthage*.

At. Manlius, you mistake;
Alas! it is not *Carthage* which is barbarous;
'Tis *Rome*, ungrateful *Rome*, is the barbarian;
Carthage but punishes a foe profess'd,
But *Rome* betrays her hero and her father:
Carthage remembers how he slew her sons,
But *Rome* forgets the blood he shed for *her*:
Carthage revenges an acknowledged foe,
But *Rome*, with basest perfidy, rewards
The glorious hand that bound her brow with laurels.
Which now is the barbarian, *Rome* or *Carthage*?

Man. What can be done?

At. A woman shall inform you.
Convene the senate; let them strait propose
A ransom, or exchange for Regulus,
To Africa's ambassador. Do this,
And heaven's best blessings crown your days with peace.

Man. Thou speakest like a *daughter*, I, Attilia,
Must as a *Consul* act; I must consult
The good of Rome, and with her good, her glory.
Would it not tarnish her unspotted fame,
To sue to Carthage on the terms thou wishest?

At. Ah! rather own thou'rt still my father's foe.

Man. Ungen'rous maid! no fault of mine concurr'd
To his destruction. 'Twas the chance of war.
Farewell! ere this the senate is assembled——
My presence is requir'd.——Speak to the fathers,
And try to soften *their* austerity;
My rigour they may render vain, for know,
I am Rome's *Consul*, not her *King*, Attilia.

[*Exit MANLIUS with the lictors, &c.*]

At. (alone.) This flattering hope, alas! has prov'd abortive.
One Consul is our foe, the other absent.
What shall the sad Attilia next attempt?
Suppose I crave assistance from the people!
Ah! my unhappy father, on what hazards,
What strange vicissitudes, what various turns,
Thy life, thy liberty, thy all depends!

Enter BARCE (in haste).

Barce. Ah, my Attilia!

At. Whence this eager haste?

Barce. Th' ambassador of Carthage is arriv'd.

At. And why does *that* excite such wondrous transport?

Barce. I bring another cause of greater still.

At. Name it, my Barce.

Barce. *Regulus* comes with him.

At. My father! can it be?

Barce. Thy father——*Regulus*.

At. Thou art deceiv'd, or thou deceiv'st thy friend.

Barce. Indeed I saw him not, but every tongue
Speaks the glad tidings.

Enter PUBLIUS.

At. See where Publius comes.

Pub. My sister, I'm transported! Oh, Attilia,
He's here, our father——*Regulus* is come!

At. I thank you, gods: O my full heart! where is he?
Hasten, my brother, lead, O lead me to him.

Pub. It is too soon: restrain thy fond impatience.
With Africa's ambassador he waits,
Until th' assembled senate give him audience.

At. Where was he Publius when thou saw'st him first?

Pub. You know, in quality of Roman quæstor,
My duty 'tis to find a fit abode
For all ambassadors of foreign states.
Hearing the Carthaginian was arriv'd,
I hasten'd to the port, when, O just gods!
No foreigner, no foe, no African
Salutes my eye, but *Regulus*——my father!

At. Oh mighty joy! too exquisite delight!

What said the hero? tell me, tell me all,
And ease my anxious breast.

Pub. Ere I arriv'd,
My father stood already on the shore,
Fixing his eyes with anxious eagerness,
As straining to descry the Capitol.
I saw, and flew with transport to embrace him,
Pronounc'd with wildest joy the name of father—
With reverence seiz'd his venerable hand,
And would have kiss'd it; when the awful hero,
With that stern grandeur which made Carthage tremble,
Drew back—stood all collected in himself,
And said austere, Know, thou rash young man,
That *slaves* in *Rome* have not the rights of *fathers*.
Then ask'd, if yet the senate was assembled,
And where? which having heard, without indulging
The fond effusions of his soul, or mine,
He suddenly retir'd. I flew with speed
To find the Consul, but as yet success
Attends not my pursuit. Direct me to him.

Barce. Publius, you'll find him in Bellona's temple.

At. Then Regulus returns to Rome a slave!

Pub. Yes, but be comforted; I know he brings
Proposals for a peace; his will's his fate.

At. Rome may, perhaps, refuse to treat of peace.

Pub. Didst thou behold the universal joy
At his return, thou wouldst not doubt success.
There's not a tongue in Rome but, wild with transport,
Proclaims aloud that Regulus is come;
The streets are filled with thronging multitudes,
Pressing with eager gaze to catch a look.
The happy man who can descry him first,
Points him to his next neighbour, he to his;
Then what a thunder of applause goes round;
What music to the ear of filial love!
Attilia! not a Roman eye was seen,
But shed pure tears of exquisite delight.
Judge of my feelings by thy own, my sister.
By the large measure of thy fond affection,
Judge mine.

At. Where is Licinius? find him out;
My joy is incomplete till he partakes it.
When doubts and fears have rent my anxious heart,
In all my woes he kindly bore a part:
Felt all my sorrows with a soul sincere,
Sigh'd as I sigh'd, and number'd tear for tear:
Now favouring heav'n my ardent vows has blest,
He shall divide the transports of my breast.

[*Exit* ATTILIA.]

Pub. Barce, adieu!

Barce. Publius, a moment hear me.
Know'st thou the name of Africa's ambassador?

Pub. Hamilcar.

Barce. Son of Hanno?

Pub. Yes! the same.

Barce. Ah me! Hamilcar!—How shall I support it!

[*Aside.*

Pub. Ah, charming maid! the blood forsakes thy cheek:
Is he the rival of thy Publius? speak,
And tell me all the rigour of my fate.

Barce. Hear me, my Lord. Since I have been thy slave,
Thy goodness, and the friendship of Attilia,
Have soften'd all the horrors of my fate.
Till now I have not felt the weight of bondage.
Till now—ah, Publius!—think me not ungrateful,
I would not wrong thee—I will be sincere—
I will expose the weakness of my soul.
Know then, my Lord—how shall I tell thee all?

Pub. Stop, cruel maid, nor wound thy Publius more;
I dread the fatal frankness of thy words:
Spare me the pain of knowing I am scorn'd;
And if thy heart's devoted to another,
Yet do not tell it me; in tender pity
Do not, my fair, dissolve the fond illusion,

The dear delightful visions I have form'd
Of future joy, and fond exhaustless love.

[*Exit* PUBLIUS.]

Barce. (*alone.*) And shall I see him then, see my
Hamilcar,
Pride of my soul, and lord of all my wishes?
The only man in all our burning Afric
Who ever taught my bosom how to love!
Down, foolish heart! be calm, my busy thoughts!
If at his name I feel these strange emotions,
How shall I see, how meet my conqueror?
O let not those presume to judge of joy
Who ne'er have felt the pangs which absence gives.

Such tender transport those alone can prove,
Who long, like me, have known disastrous love;
The tears that fell, the sighs that once were paid,
Like grateful incense on his altar laid;
The lambent flame rekindle, not destroy,
And woes remember'd heighten present joy.

[*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE—*The inside of the Temple of Bellona—Seats for the Senators and Ambassadors—Lictors guarding the entrance.*

MANLIUS, PUBLIUS, *and Senators.*

Man. Let Regulus be sent for to our presence;
And with him the ambassador of Carthage.
Is it then true the foe would treat of peace?

Pub. They wish, at least, our captives were exchange'd,
And send my father to declare their wish:
If he obtain it, well: if not, then Regulus
Returns to meet the vengeance of the foe,
And pay for your refusal with his blood:
He ratified this treaty with his oath,
And ere he quitted Carthage, heard, unmov'd,
The dreadful preparations for his death,
Should he return. O, Romans! O, my countrymen!
Can you resign your hero to your foe?
Say, can you give up Regulus to Carthage?

Man. Peace, Publius, peace, for see thy father comes.

Enter HAMILCAR *and* REGULUS.

Ham. Why dost thou stop? dost thou forget this temple?
I thought these walls had been well known to Regulus?

Reg. Hamilcar! I was thinking what I was
When last I saw them, and what now I am.

Ham. (to the Consul.)
Carthage by me to Rome this greeting sends,
That wearied out at length with bloody war,
If Rome inclines to peace she offers it.

Man. We will at leisure answer thee. Be seated.
Come, Regulus, resume thine ancient place.

Reg. (pointing to the Senators.) Who then are these?

Man. The Senators of Rome.

Reg. And who art thou?

Man. What meanst thou? I'm her Consul;
Hast thou so soon forgotten Manlius?

Reg. And shall a *slave* then have a place in Rome
Among her Consuls and her Senators?

Man. Yes!—For her *heroes* Rome forgets her *laws*;
Softens their harsh austerity for thee,
To whom she owes her conquests and her triumphs.

Reg. Rome may forget, but Regulus remembers.

Man. Was ever man so obstinately good?

[*Aside.*

Pub. (rising.) Fathers! your pardon. I can sit no longer.

[*To the Senators.*]

Reg. Publius, what dost thou mean?

Pub. To do my duty:
Where Regulus must stand, shall Publius sit?

Reg. Alas! O Rome, how are thy manners chang'd!
When last I left thee, ere I sail'd for Afric,
It was a crime to think of private duties
When public cares requir'd attention.—Sit,
(*To PUBLIUS.*) And learn to occupy thy place with honour.

Pub. Forgive me, sir, if I refuse obedience:
My heart o'erflows with duty to my father.

Reg. Know, Publius, that duty's at an end;
Thy father died when he became a slave.

Man. Now urge thy suit, Hamilcar, we attend.

Ham. Afric hath chosen Regulus her messenger.
In him, both Carthage and Hamilcar speak.

Man. (*to REGULUS.*) We are prepar'd to hear thee.

Ham. (*to REGULUS.*) Ere thou speak'st,
Maturely weigh what thou hast sworn to do,
Should Rome refuse to treat with us of peace.

Reg. What I have sworn I will fulfil, Hamilcar.
Be satisfied.

Pub. Ye guardian gods of Rome,
With your own eloquence inspire him now!

Reg. Carthage by me this embassy has sent:
If Rome will leave her undisturb'd possession
Of all she now enjoys, she offers *peace*;
But if you rather wish protracted war,
Her next proposal is, *exchange of captives*;—
If you demand advice of *Regulus*,

Reject them both!

Ham. What dost thou mean?

Pub. My father!

Man. Exalted fortitude! I'm lost in wonder.

[*Aside.*

Reg. Romans! I will not idly spend my breath,
To show the dire effects of such a peace;
The foes who beg it, show their dread of war.

Man. But the exchange of prisoners thou proposest?

Reg. That artful scheme conceals some Punic fraud.

Ham. Roman, beware! hast thou so soon forgotten;

Reg. I will fulfil the treaty I have sworn to.

Pub. All will be ruin'd.

Reg. Conscript Fathers! hear me.—
Though this exchange teems with a thousand ills,
Yet 'tis th' example I would deprecate.
This treaty fix'd, Rome's honour is no more.
Should her degenerate sons be promis'd life,
Dishonest life, and worthless liberty,
Her glory, valour, military pride,
Her fame, her fortitude, her all were lost.
What honest captive of them all would wish
With shame to enter her imperial gates,
The flagrant scourge of slavery on his back?
None, none, my friends, would wish a fate so vile,
But those base cowards who resign'd their arms
Unstain'd with hostile blood, and poorly sued,
Through ignominious fear of death, for bondage;
The scorn, the laughter, of th' insulting foe.
O shame! shame! shame! eternal infamy!

Man. However hurtful this *exchange* may be,
The liberty, the life of Regulus,

More than compensates for it.

Reg. Thou art mistaken.—
This Regulus is a mere mortal man,
Yielding apace to all th' infirmities
Of weak, decaying nature.—I am old,
Nor can my future, feeble services
Assist my country much; but mark me well:
The young fierce heroes you'd restore to Carthage,
In lieu of this old man, are her chief bulwarks.
Fathers! in vig'rous youth this well-strung arm
Fought for my country, fought and conquer'd for her:
That was the time to prize its service high.
Now, weak and nerveless, let the foe possess it,
For it can harm them in the field no more.
Let Carthage have the poor degrading triumph
To close these failing eyes;—but, O my countrymen!
Check their vain hopes, and show aspiring Afric
That heroes are the common growth of Rome.

Man. Unequall'd fortitude.

Pub. O fatal virtue!

Ham. What do I hear? this constancy confounds me.

Man. (to the Senators.)

Let honour be the spring of all our actions,
Not interest, Fathers. Let no selfish views
Preach safety at the price of truth and justice.

Reg. If Rome would thank me, I will teach her how.
—Know, Fathers, that these savage Africans
Thought me so base, so very low of soul,
That the poor wretched privilege of breathing,
Would force me to betray my country to them.
Have these barbarians any tortures left
To match the cruelty of such a thought?
Revenge me, Fathers! and I'm still a Roman.
Arm, arm yourselves, prepare your citizens,
Snatch your imprison'd eagles from their fanes,
Fly to the shores of Carthage, force her gates,
Dye every Roman sword in Punic blood—
And do such deeds—that when I shall return,
(As I have *sworn*, and am resolv'd to do,)
I may behold with joy, reflected back,
The terrors of your rage in the dire visages

Of my astonish'd executioners.

Ham. Surprise has chill'd my blood! I'm lost in wonder!

Pub. Does no one answer? must my father perish?

Man. Romans, we must defer th' important question;
Maturest councils must determine on it.
Rest we awhile:—Nature requires some pause
From high-rais'd admiration. Thou, Hamilcar,
Shalt shortly know our final resolution.
Meantime, we go to supplicate the gods.

Reg. Have you a doubt remaining? Manlius, speak.

Man. Yes, Regulus, I think the danger less
To lose th' advantage thy advice suggests,
Than would accrue to Rome in losing thee,
Whose wisdom might direct, whose valour guard her.
Athirst for glory, thou wouldst rush on death,
And for thy country's sake wouldst greatly perish.
Too vast a sacrifice thy zeal requires,
For Rome must bleed when Regulus expires.

[*Exeunt Consul and Senators.*]

Manent REGULUS, PUBLIUS, HAMILCAR; *to them enter*
ATTILIA *and* LICINIUS.

Ham. Does Regulus fulfil his promise thus?

Reg. I've promis'd to return, and I will do it.

At. My father! think a moment.

Lic. Ah! my friend!

Lic. and At. O by this hand we beg——

Reg. Away! no more.
Thanks to Rome's guardian gods I'm yet a slave!
And will be still a slave to make Rome free!

At. Was the exchange refus'd? Oh ease my fears.

Reg. Publius! conduct Hamilcar and myself
To that abode thou hast for each provided.

At. A foreign residence? a strange abode?
And will my father spurn his household gods?

Pub. My sire a stranger?—Will he taste no more
The smiling blessings of his cheerful home?

Reg. Dost thou not know the laws of Rome forbid
A foe's ambassador within her gates?

Pub. This rigid law does not extend to thee.

Reg. Yes; did it not alike extend to all,
'Twere tyranny.—The law rights every man,
But favours none.

At. Then, O my father,
Allow thy daughter to partake thy fate!

Reg. Attilia! no. The present exigence
Demands far other thoughts, than the soft cares,
The fond effusions, the delightful weakness,
The dear affections 'twixt the child and parent.

At. How is my father chang'd, from what I've known him!

Reg. The fate of Regulus is chang'd, not Regulus.
I am the same; in laurels or in chains
'Tis the same principle; the same fix'd soul,
Unmov'd itself, though circumstances change.
The native vigour of the free-born mind
Still struggles with, still conquers adverse fortune;
Soars above chains, invincible though vanquish'd.

[*Exeunt* REGULUS *and* PUBLIUS.]

ATTILIA, HAMILCAR *going*; *enter* BARCE.

Barce. Ah! my Hamilcar.

Ham. Ah! my long-lost Barce:
Again I lose thee; Regulus rejects
Th' exchange of prisoners Africa proposes.
My heart's too full.—Oh, I have much to say!

Barce. Yet you unkindly leave me, and say nothing.

Ham. Ah! didst thou love as thy Hamilcar loves,
Words were superfluous; in my eyes, my Barce,
Thou'dst read the tender eloquence of love,
Th' uncounterfeited language of my heart.
A single look betrays the soul's soft feelings,
And shows imperfect speech of little worth.

[*Exit* HAMILCAR.]

At. My father then conspires his own destruction,
Is it not so?

Barce. Indeed I fear it much;
But as the senate has not yet resolv'd,
There is some room for hope: lose not a moment;
And, ere the Conscript Fathers are assembled,
Try all the powers of winning eloquence,
Each gentle art of feminine persuasion,
The love of kindred, and the faith of friends,
To bend the rigid Romans to thy purpose.

At. Yes, Barce, I will go; I will exert
My little pow'r, though hopeless of success.
Undone Attilia! fall'n from hope's gay heights
Down the dread precipice of deep despair.
So some tir'd mariner the coast espies,
And his lov'd home explores with straining eyes;
Prepares with joy to quit the treacherous deep,
Hush'd every wave, and every wind asleep;
But ere he lands upon the well-known shore,
Wild storms arise, and furious billows roar,
Tear the fond wretch from all his hopes away,
And drive his shatter'd bark again to sea.

ACT III.

SCENE—*A Portico of a Palace without the gates of Rome—The abode of the Carthaginian Ambassador.*

Enter REGULUS and PUBLIUS meeting.

Reg. Ah! Publius here at such a time as this?
Know'st thou th' important question that the Senate
This very hour debate?—Thy country's glory,
Thy father's honour, and the public good?
Dost thou know this and fondly linger here?

Pub. They're not yet met, my father.

Reg. Haste—away—
Support my counsel in th' assembled Senate,
Confirm their wav'ring virtue by thy courage,
And Regulus shall glory in his boy.

Pub. Ah! spare thy son the most ungrateful task.
What!—supplicate the ruin of my father?

Reg. The good of Rome can never hurt her sons.

Pub. In pity to thy children, spare thyself.

Reg. Dost thou then think that mine's a frantic bravery?
That Regulus would rashly seek his fate?
Publius! how little dost thou know thy sire!
Misjudging youth! learn, that like *other* men,
I shun the *evil*, and I seek the *good*;
But *that* I find in *guilt*, and *this* in *virtue*.
Were it not guilt, guilt of the blackest die,
Even to *think* of freedom at th' expense
Of my dear bleeding country? To me, therefore,
Freedom and life would be the heaviest evils;
But to preserve that country, to restore her,
To heal her wounds though at the price of *life*,
Or what is dearer far, the price of liberty,
Is *virtue*—therefore slavery and death
Are Regulus's good—his wish—his choice.

Pub. Yet sure our country—

Reg. Is a *whole*, my Publius,
Of which we all are *parts*; nor should a citizen
Regard his interests as distinct from hers;

No hopes or fears should touch his patriot soul,
But what affect her honour or her shame.
E'en when in hostile fields he bleeds to save her,
'Tis not *his* blood he loses, 'tis his *country's*;
He only pays her back a debt he owes.
To her he's bound for birth and education:
Her laws secure him from domestic feuds,
And from the foreign foe her arms protect him.
She lends him honours, dignity, and rank,
His wrongs revenges, and his merit pays;
And like a tender and indulgent mother,
Loads him with comforts, and would make his state
As blest as nature and the gods design'd it.
Such gifts, my son, have their alloy of *pain*;
And let th' unworthy wretch who will not bear
His portion of the public burden lose
Th' advantages it yields;—let him retire
From the dear blessings of a social life,
And from the sacred laws which guard those blessings;
Renounce the civilis'd abodes of man,
With kindred brutes one common shelter seek
In horrid wilds, and dens, and dreary caves,
And with their shaggy tenants share the spoil;
Or if the savage hunters miss their prey,
From scatter'd acorns pick a scanty meal;—
Far from the sweet civilities of life;
There let him live and vaunt his wretched freedom:
While we, obedient to the laws that guard us,
Guard *them*, and live or die as they decree.

Pub. With reverence and astonishment I hear thee!
Thy words, my father, have convinc'd my reason,
But cannot touch my heart:—nature denies
Obedience so repugnant. I'm a son.

Reg. A poor excuse, unworthy of a Roman!
Brutus, Virginius, Manlius—they were fathers.

Pub. 'Tis true, they were; but this heroic greatness,
This glorious elevation of the soul,
Has been confin'd to fathers.—Rome, till now,
Boasts not a son of such unnatural virtue,
Who, spurning all the powerful ties of blood,
Has labour'd to procure his father's death.

Reg. Then be the first to give the great example—
Go, hasten; be thyself that son, my Publius.

Pub. My father! ah!—

Reg. Publius, no more; begone—
Attend the Senate—let me know my fate;
'Twill be more glorious if announc'd by thee.

Pub. Too much, too much thy rigid virtue claims
From thy unhappy son. Oh, nature, nature!

Reg. Publius! am I a stranger, or thy father?
In either case an obvious duty waits thee:
If thou regard'st me as an alien here,
Learn to prefer to mine the good of Rome;
If as a father—reverence my commands.

Pub. Ah! couldst thou look into my inmost soul,
And see how warm it burns with love and duty,
Thou would'st abate the rigour of thy words.

Reg. Could I explore the secrets of thy breast,
The virtue I would wish should flourish there
Were fortitude, not weak, complaining love.

Pub. If thou requir'st my *blood*, I'll shed it all;
But when thou dost enjoin the harsher task
That I should labour to procure thy death,
Forgive thy son—he has not so much virtue.

[*Exit* PUBLIUS.]

Reg. Th' important hour draws on, and now my soul
Loses her wonted calmness, lest the Senate
Should doubt what answer to return to Carthage.

O ye protecting deities of Rome!
Ye guardian gods! look down propitious on her,
Inspire her Senate with your sacred wisdom,
And call up all that's Roman in their souls!

Enter MANLIUS (*speaking*).

See that the lictors wait, and guard the entrance—
Take care that none intrude.

Reg. Ah! Manlius here?
What can this mean?

Man. Where, where is Regulus?
The great, the godlike, the invincible?
Oh, let me strain the hero to my breast.—

Reg. (avoiding him.)
Manlius, stand off, remember I'm a slave!
And thou Rome's Consul.

Man. I am something more:
I am a man enamour'd of thy virtues;
Thy fortitude and courage have subdued me.
I was thy rival—I am *now thy friend*;
Allow me that distinction, dearer far
Than all the honours Rome can give without it.

Reg. This is the temper still of noble minds,
And these the blessings of an humble fortune.
Had I not been a *slave*, I ne'er had gain'd
The treasure of thy friendship.

Man. I confess,
Thy grandeur cast a veil before my eyes,
Which thy reverse of fortune has remov'd.
Oft have I seen thee on the day of triumph,
A conqueror of nations, enter Rome;
Now, thou hast conquer'd fortune, and thyself.
Thy laurels oft have mov'd my soul to envy,
Thy chains awaken my respect, my reverence;
Then Regulus appear'd a hero to me,
He rises now a god.

Reg. Manlius, enough.
Cease thy applause; 'tis dang'rous; praise like thine
Might tempt the most severe and cautious virtue.
Bless'd be the gods, who gild my latter days
With the bright glory of the Consul's friendship!

Man. Forbid it, Jove! said'st thou thy *latter* days?
May gracious heav'n to a far distant hour
Protract thy valued life! Be it *my* care
To crown the hopes of thy admiring country,
By giving back her long-lost hero to her.
I will exert my power to bring about
Th' exchange of captives Africa proposes.

Reg. Manlius, and is it thus, is this the way

Thou dost begin to give me proofs of friendship?
Ah! if thy love be so destructive to me,
What would thy hatred be? Mistaken Consul!
Shall I then lose the profit of my wrongs?
Be thus defrauded of the benefit
I vainly hop'd from all my years of bondage?
I did not come to show my chains to Rome,
To move my country to a weak compassion;
I came to save her *honour*, to preserve her
From tarnishing her glory; came to snatch her
From offers so destructive to her fame.
O Manlius! either give me proofs more worthy
A Roman's friendship, or renew thy hate.

Man. Dost thou not know, that this exchange refus'd,
Inevitable death must be thy fate?

Reg. And has the name of *death* such terror in it,
To strike with dread the mighty soul of Manlius?
'Tis not *to-day* I learn that I am mortal.
The foe can only take from Regulus
What wearied nature would have shortly yielded;
It will be now a voluntary gift,
'Twould then become a tribute seiz'd, not offer'd.
Yes, Manlius, tell the world that as I liv'd
For Rome alone, when I could live no longer,
'Twas my last care how, dying, to assist,
To save that country I had liv'd to serve.

Man. O unexampled worth! O godlike Regulus!
Thrice happy Rome! unparalleled in heroes!
Hast thou then sworn, thou awfully good man,
Never to bless the Consul with thy friendship?

Reg. If thou wilt love me, love me like a *Roman*.
These are the terms on which I take thy friendship.
We both must make a sacrifice to Rome,
I of my life, and thou of *Regulus*:
One must resign his being, one his friend.
It is but just, that what procures our country
Such real blessings, such substantial good,
Should cost thee something—I shall lose but little.
Go then, my friend! but promise, ere thou goest,
With all the Consular authority,
Thou wilt support my counsel in the Senate.
If thou art willing to accept these terms,
With transport I embrace thy proffer'd friendship.

Man. (after a pause.) Yes, I do promise.

Reg. Bounteous gods, I thank you!
Ye never gave, in all your round of blessing,
A gift so greatly welcome to my soul,
As Manlius' friendship on the terms of honour!

Man. Immortal Powers! why am not I a slave?
By heav'n! I almost envy thee thy bonds.

Reg. My friend, there's not a moment to be lost;
Ere this, perhaps, the Senate is assembled.
To thee, and to thy virtues, I commit
The dignity of Rome—my peace and honour.

Man. Illustrious man, farewell!

Reg. Farewell, my friend!

Man. The sacred flame thou hast kindled in my soul
Glowes in each vein, trembles in every nerve,
And raises me to something more than man.
My blood is fir'd with virtue, and with Rome,
And every pulse beats an alarm to glory.
Who would not spurn a sceptre when compar'd
With chains like thine? Thou man of every virtue,
O, farewell! may all the gods protect and bless thee.

[Exit MANLIUS.]

Enter LICINIUS.

Reg. Now I begin to live; propitious heaven
Inclines to favour me.—Licinius here?

Lic. With joy, my honour'd friend, I seek thy presence.

Reg. And why with joy?

Lic. Because my heart once more
Beats high with flattering hope. In thy great cause
I have been labouring.

Reg. Say'st thou in *my* cause?

Lic. In thine and Rome's. Does it excite thy wonder?
Couldst thou, then, think so poorly of Licinius,
That base ingratitude could find a place
Within his bosom?—Can I, then, forget
Thy thousand acts of friendship to my youth?
Forget them, too, at that important moment
When most I might assist thee?—Regulus,
Thou wast my leader, general, father—all.
Didst thou not teach me early how to tread
The path of glory; point the way thyself,
And bid me follow thee?

Reg. But say, Licinius,
What hast thou done to serve me?

Lic. I have defended
Thy liberty and life!

Reg. Ah! speak—explain.—

Lic. Just as the Fathers were about to meet,
I hasten'd to the temple—at the entrance
Their passage I retarded by the force
Of strong entreaty: then address'd myself
So well to each, that I from each obtain'd
A declaration, that his utmost power
Should be exerted for thy life and freedom.

Reg. Great gods! what do I hear? Licinius, too?

Lic. Not he alone; no, 'twere indeed unjust
To rob the fair Attilia of her claim
To filial merit.—What I could, I did.
But *she*—thy charming daughter—heav'n and earth,
What did she not to save her father?

Reg. Who?

Lic. Attilia, thy belov'd—thy age's darling!
Was ever father bless'd with such a child?
Gods! how her looks took captive all who saw her!
How did her soothing eloquence subdue
The stoutest hearts of Rome! How did she rouse

Contending passions in the breasts of all!
How sweetly temper dignity with grief!
With what a soft, inimitable grace
She prais'd, reproach'd, entreated, flatter'd, sooth'd.

Reg. What said the Senators?

Lic. What could they say?
Who could resist the lovely conqueror?
See where she comes—Hope dances in her eyes,
And lights up all her beauties into smiles.

Enter ATTILIA.

At. Once more, my dearest father——

Reg. Ah, presume not
To call me by that name. For know, Attilia,
I number *thee* among the foes of Regulus.

At. What do I hear? thy foe? my father's foe?

Reg. His worst of foes—the murd'rer of his glory.

At. Ah! is it then a proof of enmity
To wish thee all the good the gods can give thee,
To yield my life, if needful, for thy service?

Reg. Thou rash, imprudent girl! thou little know'st
The dignity and weight of public cares.
Who made a weak and inexperience'd *woman*
The arbiter of Regulus's fate?

Lic. For pity's sake, my Lord!

Reg. Peace, peace, young man!
Her silence better than thy language pleads.
That bears at least the semblance of repentance.
Immortal Powers!——a daughter and a Roman!

At. Because I *am* a daughter, I presum'd——

Lic. Because I *am* a Roman, I aspired

T' oppose th' inhuman rigour of thy fate.

Reg. No more, Licinius. How can he be call'd
A Roman who would live in infamy?
Or how can she be Regulus's daughter
Whose coward mind wants fortitude and honour?
Unhappy children! now you make me *feel*
The burden of my chains: your feeble souls
Have made me know I am indeed a slave.

[*Exit* REGULUS.]

At. Tell me, Licinius, and, oh! tell me truly,
If thou believ'st, in all the round of time,
There ever breath'd a maid so truly wretched?
To weep, to mourn a father's cruel fate—
To love him with soul-rending tenderness—
To know no peace by day or rest by night—
To bear a bleeding heart in this poor bosom,
Which aches, and trembles but to think he suffers:
This is my crime—in any other child
'Twould be a merit.

Lic. Oh! my best Attilia,
Do not repent thee of the pious deed:
It was a virtuous error. *That* in us
Is a just duty, which the god-like soul
Of Regulus would think a shameful weakness.
If the contempt of life in him be virtue,
It were in us a crime to let him perish.
Perhaps at last he may consent to live:
He then will thank us for our cares to save him:
Let not his anger fright thee. Though our love
Offend him now, yet, when his mighty soul
Is reconcil'd to life, he will not chide us.
The sick man loathes, and with reluctance takes
The remedy by which his health's restor'd.

At. Licinius! his reproaches wound my soul.
I cannot live and bear his indignation.

Lic. Would my Attilia rather lose her father
Than, by offending him, preserve his life?

At. Ah! no. If he but live, I am contented.

Lic. Yes, he shall live, and we again be bless'd;

Then dry thy tears, and let those lovely orbs
Beam with their wonted lustre on Licinius,
Who lives but in the sunshine of thy smiles.

[*Exit* LICINIUS.]

At. (alone.)

O Fortune, Fortune, thou capricious goddess!
Thy frowns and favours have alike no bounds:
Unjust, or prodigal in each extreme.
When thou wouldst humble human vanity,
By singling out a wretch to bear thy wrath,
Thou crushest him with anguish to excess:
If thou wouldst bless, thou mak'st the happiness
Too poignant for his giddy sense to bear.—
Immortal gods, who rule the fates of men,
Preserve my father! bless him, bless him, heav'n!
If your avenging thunderbolts *must* fall,
Strike *here*—this bosom will invite the blow,
And *thank* you for it: but in mercy spare,
Oh! spare *his* sacred, venerable head:
Respect in *him* an image of yourselves;
And leave a world, who wants it, an example
Of courage, wisdom, constancy and truth.

Yet if, Eternal Powers who rule this ball!
You have decreed that Regulus must fall;
Teach me to yield to your divine command,
And meekly bow to your correcting hand;
Contented to resign, or pleas'd receive,
What wisdom may withhold, or mercy give.

[*Exit* ATTILIA.]

ACT IV.

SCENE—*A Gallery in the Ambassador's Palace.*

Reg. (alone.)

Be calm, my soul! what strange emotions shake thee?
Emotions thou hast never felt till now.
Thou hast defied the dangers of the deep,
Th' impetuous hurricane, the thunder's roar,
And all the terrors of the various war;
Yet, now thou tremblest, now thou stand'st dismay'd,
With fearful expectation of thy fate.—
Yes—thou hast amplest reason for thy fears;

For till this hour, so pregnant with events,
Thy fame and glory never were at stake.
Soft—let me think—what is this thing call'd *glory*?
'Tis the soul's tyrant, that should be dethron'd,
And learn subjection like her other passions!
Ah! no! 'tis false: this is the coward's plea;
The lazy language of refining vice.
That man was born in vain, whose wish to serve
Is circumscrib'd within the wretched bounds
Of *self*—a narrow, miserable sphere!
Glory exalts, enlarges, dignifies,
Absorbs the selfish in the social claims,
And renders man a blessing to mankind.—
It is this principle, this spark of deity,
Rescues debas'd humanity from guilt,
And elevates it by her strong excitements:—
It takes off sensibility from pain,
From peril fear, plucks out the sting from death,
Changes ferocious into gentle manners,
And teaches men to imitate the gods.
It shows—but see, alas! where Publius comes.
Ah! he advances with a down-cast eye,
And step irresolute——

Enter PUBLIUS.

Reg. My Publius, welcome!
What tidings dost thou bring? what says the Senate?
Is yet my fate determin'd? quickly tell me.—

Pub. I cannot speak, and yet, alas! I must.

Reg. Tell me the whole.—

Pub. Would I were rather dumb!

Reg. Publius, no more delay:—I charge thee speak.

Pub. The Senate has decreed thou shalt depart.

Reg. Genius of Rome! thou hast at last prevail'd—
I thank the gods, I have not liv'd in vain!
Where is Hamilcar?—find him—let us go,
For Regulus has nought to do in Rome;
I have accomplished her important work,
And must depart.

Pub. Ah, my unhappy father!

Reg. Unhappy, Publius! didst thou say unhappy?
Does he, does that bless'd man deserve this name,
Who to his latest breath can serve his country?

Pub. Like thee, my father, I adore my country,
Yet weep with anguish o'er thy cruel chains.

Reg. Dost thou not know that *life's* a slavery?
The body is the chain that binds the soul;
A yoke that every mortal must endure.
Wouldst thou lament—lament the general fate,
The chain that nature gives, entail'd on all,
Not these *I* wear?

Pub. Forgive, forgive my sorrows:
I know, alas! too well, those fell barbarians
Intend thee instant death.

Reg. So shall my life
And servitude together have an end.—
Publius, farewell; nay, do not follow me.—

Pub. Alas! my father, if thou ever lov'dst me,
Refuse me not the mournful consolation
To pay the last sad offices of duty
I e'er can show thee.—

Reg. No!—thou canst fulfil
Thy duty to thy father in a way
More grateful to him: I must strait embark.
Be it meanwhile thy pious care to keep
My lov'd Attilia from a sight, I fear,
Would rend her gentle heart.—Her tears, my son,
Would dim the glories of thy father's triumph.
Her sinking spirits are subdu'd by grief.
And should her sorrows pass the bounds of reason,
Publius, have pity on her tender age,
Compassionate the weakness of her sex;
We must not hope to find in *her* soft soul
The strong exertion of a manly courage.—
Support her fainting spirit, and instruct her,
By thy example, how a Roman ought
To bear misfortune. Oh, indulge her weakness!

And be to her the father she will lose.
I leave my daughter to thee—I do more——
I leave to thee the conduct of—thyself.
—Ah, Publius! I perceive thy courage fails—
I see the quivering lip, the starting tear:—
That lip, that tear calls down my mounting soul.
Resume thyself—Oh, do not blast my hope!
Yes—I'm compos'd—thou wilt not mock my age—
Thou *art*—thou art a *Roman*—and my son.

[*Exit.*

Pub. And is he gone?—now be thyself, my soul—
Hard is the conflict, but the triumph glorious.
Yes.—I must conquer these too tender feelings;
The blood that fills these veins demands it of me;
My father's great example too requires it.
Forgive me *Rome*, and *glory*, if I yielded
To nature's strong attack:—I must subdue it.
Now, Regulus, I *feel* I am thy *son*.

Enter ATTILIA *and* BARCE.

At. My brother, I'm distracted, wild with fear—
Tell me, O tell me, what I dread to know—
Is it then true?—I cannot speak—my father?

Barce. May we believe the fatal news?

Pub. Yes, Barce,
It is determin'd. Regulus must go.

At. Immortal Powers!—What say'st thou?

Barce. Can it be?
Thou canst not mean it.

At. Then you've all betray'd me.

Pub. Thy grief avails not.

Enter HAMILCAR *and* LICINIUS.

Barce. Pity us, Hamilcar!

At. Oh, help, Licinius, help the lost Attilia!

Ham. My Barce! there's no hope.

Lic. Ah! my fair mourner,
All's lost.

At. What all, Licinius? said'st thou all?
Not one poor glimpse of comfort left behind?
Tell me, at least, where Regulus is gone:
The daughter shall partake the father's chains,
And share the woes she knew not to prevent.

[*Going.*

Pub. What would thy wild despair? Attilia, stay,
Thou must not follow; this excess of grief
Would much offend him.

At. Dost thou hope to stop me?

Pub. I hope thou wilt resume thy better self,
And recollect thy father will not bear——

At. I only recollect I am a *daughter*,
A poor, defenceless, helpless, wretched daughter!
Away——and let me follow.

Pub. No, my sister.

At. Detain me not—Ah! while thou hold'st me here,
He goes, and I shall never see him more.

Barce. My friend, be comforted, he cannot go
Whilst here Hamilcar stays.

At. O Barce, Barce!
Who will advise, who comfort, who assist me?
Hamilcar, pity me.—Thou wilt not answer?

Ham. Rage and astonishment divide my soul.

At. Licinius, wilt thou not relieve my sorrows?

Lic. Yes, at my life's expense, my heart's best treasure,
Wouldst thou instruct me how.

At. My brother, too——
Ah! look with mercy on thy sister's woes!

Pub. I will at least instruct thee how to *bear* them.
My sister—yield thee to thy adverse fate;
Think of thy father, think of Regulus;
Has he not taught thee how to brave misfortune?
'Tis but by following his illustrious steps
Thou e'er canst merit to be call'd his daughter.

At. And is it thus thou dost advise thy sister?
Are these, ye gods, the feelings of a son?
Indifference here becomes impiety—
Thy savage heart ne'er felt the dear delights
Of filial tenderness—the thousand joys
That flow from blessing and from being bless'd!
No—didst thou love thy father as *I* love him,
Our kindred souls would be in unison;
And all my sighs be echoed back by thine.
Thou wouldst—alas!—I know not what I say.—
Forgive me, Publius,—but indeed, my brother,
I do not understand this cruel coldness.

Ham. Thou may'st not—but I understand it well.
His mighty soul, full as to thee it seems
Of Rome, and glory—is enamour'd—caught—
Enraptur'd with the beauties of fair Barce.—
She stays behind if Regulus *departs*.
Behold the cause of all the well-feign'd virtue
Of this mock patriot—curst dissimulation!

Pub. And canst thou entertain such vile suspicions?
Gods! what an outrage to a son like me!

Ham. Yes, Roman! now I see thee as thou art,
Thy naked soul divested of its veil,
Its specious colouring, its dissembled virtues:
Thou hast plotted with the Senate to prevent
Th' exchange of captives. All thy subtle arts,
Thy smooth inventions, have been set to work—
The base refinements of your *polish'd* land.

Pub. In truth the doubt is worthy of an African.

[*Contemptuously.*

Ham. I know.—

Pub. Peace, Carthaginian, peace, and hear me,
Dost thou not know, that on the very man
Thou hast insulted, Barce's fate depends?

Ham. Too well I know, the cruel chance of war
Gave her, a blooming captive, to thy mother;
Who, dying, left the beauteous prize to thee.

Pub. Now, see the use a *Roman* makes of power.
Heav'n is my witness how I lov'd the maid!
Oh, she was dearer to my soul than light!
Dear as the vital stream that feeds my heart!
But know my *honour's* dearer than my love.
I do not even hope *thou* wilt believe me;
Thy brutal soul, as savage as thy clime,
Can never taste those elegant delights,
Those pure refinements, love and glory yield.
'Tis not to thee I stoop for vindication,
Alike to me thy friendship or thy hate;
But to remove from others a pretence
For branding Publius with the name of villain;
That *they* may see no sentiment but honour
Informs this bosom—Barce, thou art *free*.
Thou hast my leave with him to quit this shore.
Now learn, barbarian, how a *Roman* loves!

[*Exit.*

Barce. He cannot mean it!

Ham. Oh, exalted virtue!
Which challenges esteem though from a foe.

[*Looking after* PUBLIUS.

At. Ah! cruel Publius, wilt thou leave me thus?
Thus leave thy sister?

Barce. Didst thou hear, Hamilcar?
Oh, didst thou hear the god-like youth resign me?

[HAMILCAR *and* LICINIUS *seem lost in thought.*

Ham. Farewell, I will return.

Lic. Farewell, my love! [To ATTILIA.

Barce. Hamilcar, where——

At. Alas! where art thou going?

[To LICINIUS.

Lic. If possible, to save the life of Regulus.

At. But by what means?—Ah! how canst thou effect it?

Lic. Since the disease so desperate is become,
We must apply a desperate remedy.

Ham. (after a long pause.)
Yes—I will mortify this generous foe;
I'll be reveng'd upon this stubborn Roman;
Not by defiance bold, or feats of arms,
But by a means more sure to work its end;
By emulating his exalted worth,
And showing him a virtue like his own;
Such a refin'd revenge as noble minds
Alone can practise, and alone can feel.

At. If thou wilt go, Licinius, let Attilia At least go with thee.

Lic. No, my gentle love,
Too much I prize thy safety and thy peace.
Let me entreat thee, stay with Barce here
Till our return.

At. Then, ere ye go, in pity
Explain the latent purpose of your souls.

Lic. Soon shalt thou know it all—Farewell! farewell!
Let us keep Regulus in *Rome*, or *die*.

[To HAMILCAR as he goes out.

Ham. Yes.—These smooth, polish'd Romans shall confess
The soil of *Afric*, too, produces heroes.
What, though our pride, perhaps, be less than theirs,
Our virtue may be equal: they shall own
The path of honour's not unknown to Carthage,
Nor, as they arrogantly think, confin'd
To their proud Capitol:—Yes—they shall learn
The gods look down on other climes than theirs.

[*Exit.*

At. What gone, *both* gone? What can I think or do?
Licinius leaves me, led by love and virtue,
To rouse the citizens to war and tumult,
Which may be fatal to himself and Rome,
And yet, alas! not serve my dearest father.
Protecting deities! preserve them both!

Barce. Nor is thy Barce more at ease, my friend;
I dread the fierceness of Hamilcar's courage:
Rous'd by the grandeur of thy brother's deed,
And stung by his reproaches, his great soul
Will scorn to be outdone by him in glory.
Yet, let us rise to courage and to life,
Forget the weakness of our helpless sex,
And mount above these coward woman's fears.
Hope dawns upon my mind—my prospect clears,
And every cloud now brightens into day.

At. How different are our souls! Thy sanguine temper,
Flush'd with the native vigour of thy soil,
Supports thy spirits; while the sad Attilia,
Sinking with more than all her sex's fears,
Sees not a beam of hope; or, if she sees it,
'Tis not the bright, warm splendour of the sun;
It is a sickly and uncertain glimmer
Of instantaneous lightning passing by.
It shows, but not diminishes, the danger,
And leaves my poor benighted soul as dark
As it had never shone.

Barce. Come, let us go.
Yes, joys unlook'd-for now shall gild thy days,
And brighter suns reflect propitious rays.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE—*A Hall looking towards the Garden.*

Enter REGULUS, *speaking to one of* HAMILCAR'S *Attendants.*

Where's your Ambassador? where is Hamilcar?
Ere this he doubtless knows the Senate's will.
Go, seek him out—Tell him we must depart——
Rome has no hope for him, or wish for me.
Longer delay were criminal in *both*.

Enter MANLIUS.

Reg. He comes. The Consul comes! my noble friend!
O let me strain thee to this grateful heart,
And thank thee for the vast, vast debt I owe thee!
But for *thy* friendship I had been a wretch——
Had been compell'd to shameful *liberty*.
To thee I owe the glory of these chains,
My faith inviolate, my fame preserv'd,
My honour, virtue, glory, bondage,—all!

Man. But we shall lose thee, so it is decreed——
Thou must depart?

Reg. Because I must depart
You will not lose me; I were lost, indeed,
Did I remain in Rome.

Man. Ah! Regulus,
Why, why so late do I begin to love thee?
Alas! why have the adverse fates decreed
I ne'er must give thee other proofs of friendship,
Than those so fatal and so full of woe?

Reg. Thou hast perform'd the duties of a friend;
Of a just, faithful, Roman, noble friend:
Yet, generous as thou art, if thou constrain me
To sink beneath a weight of obligation,
I could—yes, Manlius—I could ask still more.

Man. Explain thyself.

Reg. I think I have fulfill'd
The various duties of a citizen;
Nor have I aught beside to do for Rome.
Now, nothing for the public good remains!
Manlius, I recollect I am a father!

I blush to think it!

Pub. Ah! not so, my father.
Rome cares not for the peace, nor for th' exchange;
She only wills that Regulus shall stay.

Reg. How, stay? my oath—my faith—my honour! ah!
Do they forget?

Pub. No: every man exclaims
That neither faith nor honour should be kept
With Carthaginian perfidy and fraud.

Reg. Gods! gods! on what vile principles they reason!
Can guilt in Carthage palliate guilt in Rome,
Or vice in one absolve it in another?
Ah! who hereafter shall be criminal,
If precedents are us'd to justify
The blackest crimes.

Pub. Th' infatuated people
Have called the augurs to the sacred fane,
There to determine this momentous point.

Reg. I have no need of *oracles*, my son;
Honour's the oracle of honest men.
I gave my promise, which I will observe
With most religious strictness. Rome, 'tis true,
Had power to choose the peace, or change of slaves;
But whether Regulus return, or not,
Is *his* concern, not the concern of *Rome*.
That was a public, *this* a private care.
Publius! thy father is not what he was;
I am the slave of *Carthage*, nor has Rome
Power to dispose of captives not her own.
Guards! let us to the port.—Farewell, my friend.

Man. Let me entreat thee stay; for shouldst thou go
To stem this tumult of the populace,
They will by force detain thee: then, alas!
Both Regulus and Rome must break their faith.

Reg. What! must I then remain?

Man. No, Regulus,

I will not check thy great career of glory:
Thou shalt depart; meanwhile, I'll try to calm
This wild tumultuous uproar of the people.
The consular authority shall still them.

Reg. Thy virtue is my safeguard——but——

Man. Enough——
I know *thy* honour, and trust thou to *mine*.
I am a *Roman*, and I feel some sparks
Of Regulus's virtue in my breast.
Though fate denies me thy illustrious chains,
I will at least endeavour to *deserve* them.

[*Exit.*

Reg. How is my country alter'd! how, alas,
Is the great spirit of old Rome extinct!
Restraint and *force* must now be put to use
To *make* her virtuous. She must be *compell'd*
To faith and honour.—Ah! what, Publius here?
And dost thou leave so tamely to my friend
The honour to assist me? Go, my boy,
'Twill make me *more* in love with chains and death,
To owe them to a *son*.

Pub. I go, my father—
I will, I will obey thee.

Reg. Do not sigh——
One sigh will check the progress of thy glory.

Pub. Yes, I will own the pangs of death itself
Would be less cruel than these agonies:
Yet do not frown austerely on thy son:
His anguish is his virtue: if to conquer
The feelings of my soul were easy to me,
'Twould be no merit. Do not then defraud
The sacrifice I make thee of its worth.

[*Exeunt severally.*

MANLIUS, ATTILIA.

At. (*speaking as she enters.*) Where is the Consul?—
Where, oh, where is Manlius?
I come to breathe the voice of mourning to him,
I come to crave his mercy, to conjure him

To whisper peace to my afflicted bosom,
And heal the anguish of a wounded spirit.

Man. What would the daughter of my noble friend?

At. (kneeling.)

If ever pity's sweet emotions touch'd thee,—
If ever gentle love assail'd thy breast,—
If ever virtuous friendship fir'd thy soul—
By the dear names of husband and of parent—
By all the soft, yet powerful ties of nature—
If e'er thy lisping infants charm'd thine ear,
And waken'd all the father in thy soul,—
If e'er thou hop'st to have thy latter days
Blest by their love, and sweeten'd by their duty—
Oh, hear a kneeling, weeping, wretched daughter,
Who begs a father's life!—nor hers alone,
But Rome's—his country's father.

Man. Gentle maid!

Oh, spare this soft, subduing eloquence!—
Nay, rise. I shall forget I am a Roman—
Forget the mighty debt I owe my country—
Forget the fame and glory of thy father.
I must conceal this weakness.

[*Turns from her.*

At. (rises eagerly.) Ah! you weep!
Indulge, indulge, my Lord, the virtuous softness:
Was ever sight so graceful, so becoming,
As pity's tear upon the hero's cheek?

Man. No more—I must not hear thee. [Going.

At. How! not, not hear me!
You must—you shall—nay, nay return, my Lord—
Oh, fly not from me!—look upon my woes,
And imitate the mercy of the gods:
'Tis not their thunder that excites our reverence,
'Tis their mild mercy, and forgiving love.
'Twill add a brighter lustre to thy laurels,
When men shall say, and proudly point thee out,
"Behold the Consul!—He who sav'd his friend."
Oh, what a tide of joy will overwhelm thee!
Who will not envy thee thy glorious feelings?

Man. Thy father scorns his liberty and life,
Nor will accept of either at the expense
Of honour, virtue, glory, faith, and Rome.

At. Think you behold the god-like Regulus
The prey of unrelenting savage foes,
Ingenious only in contriving ill:—
Eager to glut their hunger of revenge,
They'll plot such new, such dire, unheard-of tortures—
Such dreadful, and such complicated vengeance,
As e'en the Punic annals have not known;
And, as they heap fresh torments on his head,
They'll glory in their genius for destruction.
—Ah! Manlius—now methinks I see my father—
My faithful fancy, full of his idea,
Presents him to me—mangled, gash'd, and torn—
Stretch'd on the rack in writhing agony—
The torturing pincers tear his quivering flesh,
While the dire murderers smile upon his wounds,
His groans their music, and his pangs their sport.
And if they lend some interval of ease,
Some dear-bought intermission, meant to make
The following pang more exquisitely felt,
Th' insulting executioners exclaim,
—"Now, Roman! feel the vengeance thou hast scorn'd."

Man. Repress thy sorrows—

At. Can the friend of Regulus
Advise his daughter not to mourn his fate?
How cold, alas! is friendship when compar'd
To ties of blood—to nature's powerful impulse!
Yes—she asserts her empire in my soul,
'Tis Nature pleads—she will—she must be heard;
With warm, resistless eloquence she pleads.—
Ah, thou art soften'd!—see—the Consul yields—
The feelings triumph—tenderness prevails—
The Roman is subdued—the daughter conquers!

[*Catching hold of his robe.*]

Man. Ah, hold me not!—I must not, cannot stay,
The softness of thy sorrow is contagious;
I, too, may feel when I should only reason.
I dare not hear thee—Regulus and Rome,
The patriot and the friend—all, all forbid it.

[*Breaks from her, and exit.*]

At. O feeble grasp!—and is he gone, quite gone?

Hold, hold thy empire, Reason, firmly hold it,
Or rather quit at once thy feeble throne,
Since thou but serv'st to show me what I've lost,
To heighten all the horrors that await me;
To summon up a wild distracted crowd
Of fatal images, to shake my soul,
To scare sweet peace, and banish hope itself.
Farewell! delusive dreams of joy, farewell!
Come, fell Despair! thou pale-ey'd spectre, come,
For thou shalt be Attilia's inmate now,
And thou shalt grow, and twine about her heart,
And she shall be so much enamour'd of thee,
The pageant Pleasure ne'er shall interpose
Her gaudy presence to divide you more.

[Stands in an attitude of silent grief.]

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. At length I've found thee—ah, my charming maid!
How have I sought thee out with anxious fondness!
Alas! she hears me not.—My best Attilia!
Ah! grief oppresses every gentle sense.
Still, still she hears not——'tis Licinius speaks,
He comes to soothe the anguish of thy spirit,
And hush thy tender sorrows into peace.

At. Who's he that dares assume the voice of love,
And comes unbidden to these dreary haunts?
Steals on the sacred treasury of woe,
And breaks the league Despair and I have made?

Lic. 'Tis one who comes the messenger of heav'n,
To talk of peace, of comfort, and of joy.

At. Didst thou not mock me with the sound of joy?
Thou little know'st the anguish of my soul,
If thou believ'st I ever can again,
So long the wretched sport of angry Fortune,
Admit delusive hope to my sad bosom.
No——I abjure the flatterer and her train.
Let those, who ne'er have been like me deceiv'd,
Embrace the fair fantastic sycophant—
For I, alas! am wedded to despair,
And will not hear the sound of comfort more.

Lic. Cease, cease, my love, this tender voice of woe,

Though softer than the dying cygnet's plaint:
She ever chants her most melodious strain
When death and sorrow harmonise her note.

At. Yes—I will listen now with fond delight;
For death and sorrow are my darling themes.
Well!—what hast thou to say of death and sorrow?
Believe me, thou wilt find me apt to listen,
And, if my tongue be slow to answer thee,
Instead of words I'll give thee sighs and tears.

Lic. I come to dry thy tears, not make them flow;
The gods once more propitious smile upon us,
Joy shall again await each happy morn,
And ever-new delight shall crown the day!
Yes, Regulus shall live.——

At. Ah me! what say'st thou?
Alas! I'm but a poor, weak, trembling woman—
I cannot bear these wild extremes of fate—
Then mock me not.—I think thou art Licinius,
The generous lover, and the faithful friend!
I think thou wouldst not sport with my afflictions.

Lic. Mock thy afflictions?—May eternal Jove,
And every power at whose dread shrine we worship,
Blast all the hopes my fond ideas form,
If I deceive thee! Regulus shall live,
Shall live to give thee to Licinius' arms.
Oh! we will smooth his downward path of life,
And after a long length of virtuous years,
At the last verge of honourable age,
When nature's glimmering lamp goes gently out,
We'll close, together close his eyes in peace—
Together drop the sweetly-painful tear—
Then copy out his virtues in our lives.

At. And shall we be so blest? is't possible?
Forgive me, my Licinius, if I doubt thee.
Fate never gave such exquisite delight
As flattering hope hath imag'd to thy soul.
But how?——Explain this bounty of the gods.

Lic. Thou know'st what influence the name of Tribune
Gives its possessor o'er the people's minds:
That power I have exerted, nor in vain;
All are prepar'd to second my designs:
The plot is ripe,—there's not a man but swears

To keep thy god-like father here in Rome——
To save his life at hazard of his own.

At. By what gradation does my joy ascend!
I thought that if my father had been sav'd
By any means, I had been rich in bliss:
But that he lives, and lives preserv'd by thee,
Is such a prodigality of fate,
I cannot bear my joy with moderation:
Heav'n should have dealt it with a scantier hand,
And not have shower'd such plenteous blessings on me;
They are too great, too flattering to be real;
'Tis some delightful vision, which enchants,
And cheats my senses, weaken'd by misfortune.

Lic. We'll seek thy father, and meanwhile, my fair,
Compose thy sweet emotions ere thou see'st him,
Pleasure itself is painful in excess;
For joys, like sorrows, in extreme, oppress:
The gods themselves our pious cares approve,
And to reward our virtue crown our love.

ACT V.

*An Apartment in the Ambassador's Palace—Guards
and other Attendants seen at a distance.*

Ham. Where is this wondrous man, this matchless hero,
This arbiter of kingdoms and of kings,
This delegate of heav'n, this Roman god?
I long to show his soaring mind an equal,
And bring it to the standard of humanity.
What pride, what glory will it be to fix
An obligation on his stubborn soul!
Oh! to constrain a foe to be obliged!
The very thought exalts me e'en to rapture.

Enter REGULUS and Guards.

Ham. Well, Regulus!—At last—

Reg. I know it all;
I know the motive of thy just complaint—
Be not alarm'd at this licentious uproar
Of the mad populace. I will depart—
Fear not—I will not stay in Rome alive.

Ham. What dost thou mean by uproar and alarms?
Hamilcar does not come to vent complaints;
He rather comes to prove that Afric, too,
Produces heroes, and that Tiber's banks
May find a rival on the Punic coast.

Reg. Be it so.—'Tis not a time for vain debate:
Collect thy people.—Let us strait depart.

Ham. Lend me thy hearing, first.

Reg. O patience, patience!

Ham. Is it esteem'd a glory to be grateful?

Reg. The time has been when 'twas a duty only,
But 'tis a duty now so little practis'd,
That to perform it is become a glory.

Ham. If to fulfil it should expose to danger?—

Reg. It rises then to an illustrious virtue.

Ham. Then grant this merit to an African.
Give me a patient hearing—Thy great son,
As delicate in honour as in love,
Hath nobly given my Barce to my arms;
And yet I know he doats upon the maid.
I come to emulate the generous deed;
He gave me back my love, and in return
I will restore his father.

Reg. Ah! what say'st thou?
Wilt thou preserve me then?

Ham. I will.

Reg. But how?

Ham. By leaving thee at liberty to *fly*.

Reg. Ah!

Ham. I will dismiss my guards on some pretence,
Meanwhile do thou escape, and lie conceal'd:
I will affect a rage I shall not feel,
Unmoor my ships, and sail for Africa.

Reg. Abhorr'd barbarian!

Ham. Well, what dost thou say?
Art thou not much surpris'd?

Reg. I am, indeed.

Ham. Thou could'st not then have hop'd it?

Reg. No! I could not.

Ham. And yet I'm not a Roman.

Reg. (*smiling contemptuously.*) I perceive it.

Ham. You may retire (*aloud to the guards*).

Reg. No!—Stay, I charge you stay.

Ham. And wherefore stay?

Reg. I thank thee for thy offer,
But I shall go with thee.

Ham. 'Tis well, proud man!
Thou dost despise me, then?

Reg. No—but I pity thee.

Ham. Why pity me?

Reg. Because thy poor dark soul
Hath never felt the piercing ray of virtue.
Know, African! the scheme thou dost propose
Would injure me, thy country, and thyself.

Ham. Thou dost mistake.

Reg. Who was it gave thee power
To rule the destiny of Regulus?
Am I a slave to Carthage, or to thee?

Ham. What does it signify from whom, proud Roman!
Thou dost receive this benefit?

Reg. A benefit?
O savage ignorance! is it a benefit
To lie, elope, deceive, and be a villain?

Ham. What! not when life itself, when all's at stake?
Know'st thou my countrymen prepare thee tortures
That shock imagination but to think of?
Thou wilt be mangled, butcher'd, rack'd, impal'd.
Does not thy nature shrink?

Reg. (smiling at his threats.) Hamilcar! no.
Dost thou not know the Roman genius better?
We live on honour—'tis our food, our life.
The motive, and the measure of our deeds!
We look on death as on a common object;
The tongue nor falters, nor the cheek turns pale,
Nor the calm eye is mov'd at sight of him:
We court, and we embrace him undismay'd;
We smile at tortures if they lead to glory,
And only cowardice and guilt appal us.

Ham. Fine sophistry! the valour of the tongue,
The heart disclaims it; leave this pomp of words,
And cease dissembling with a friend like me.
I know that life is dear to all who live,
That death is dreadful,—yes, and must be fear'd,
E'en by the frozen apathists of Rome.

Reg. Did I fear death when on Bagrada's banks
I fac'd and slew the formidable serpent
That made your boldest Africans recoil,
And shrink with horror, though the monster liv'd

A native inmate of their own parch'd deserts?
Did I fear death before the gates of Adis?—
Ask Bostar, or let Asdrubal confess.

Ham. Or shall I rather of Xantippus ask,
Who dar'd to undeceive deluded Rome,
And prove this vaunter not invincible?
'Tis even said, in Africa I mean,
He made a prisoner of this demigod.—
Did we not triumph then?

Reg. Vain boaster! no.
No Carthaginian conquer'd Regulus;
Xantippus was a Greek—a brave one too:
Yet what distinction did your Afric make
Between the man who serv'd her, and her foe:
I was the object of her open hate;
He, of her secret, dark malignity.
He durst not trust the nation he had sav'd;
He knew, and therefore fear'd you.—Yes, he knew
Where once you were oblig'd you ne'er forgave.
Could you forgive at all, you'd rather pardon
The man who hated, than the man who serv'd you.
Xantippus found his ruin ere it reach'd him,
Lurking behind your honours and rewards;
Found it in your feign'd courtesies and fawnings.
When vice intends to strike a master stroke,
Its veil is smiles, its language protestations.
The Spartan's merit threaten'd, but his service
Compell'd his ruin.—Both you could not pardon.

Ham. Come, come, I know full well——

Reg. Barbarian! peace.
I've heard too much.—Go, call thy followers:
Prepare thy ships, and learn to do thy duty.

Ham. Yes!—show thyself intrepid, and insult me;
Call mine the blindness of barbarian friendship.
On Tiber's banks I hear thee, and am calm:
But know, thou scornful Roman! that too soon
In Carthage thou may'st fear and feel my vengeance:
Thy cold, obdurate pride shall there confess,
Though Rome may talk—'tis Africa can punish.

[*Exit.*

Reg. Farewell! I've not a thought to waste on thee.
Where is the Consul? why does Publius stay?
Alas! I fear—but see Attilia comes!—

Enter ATTILIA.

Reg. What brings thee here, my child? what eager joy
Transports thee thus?

At. I cannot speak—my father!
Joy chokes my utterance—Rome, dear grateful Rome,
(Oh, may her cup with blessings overflow!)
Gives up our common destiny to thee;
Faithful and constant to th' advice thou gav'st her,
She will not hear of peace, or change of slaves,
But she insists—reward and bless her, gods!—
That thou shalt here remain.

Reg. What! with the shame——

At. Oh! no—the sacred senate hath consider'd
That when to Carthage thou did'st pledge thy faith,
Thou wast a captive, and that being such,
Thou could'st not bind thyself in covenant.

Reg. He who can die, is always free, my child!
Learn farther, he who owns another's strength
Confesses his own weakness.—Let them know,
I swore I would return because I chose it,
And will return, because I swore to do it.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. Vain is that hope, my father.

Reg. Who shall stop me?

Pub. All Rome.—The citizens are up in arms:
In vain would reason stop the growing torrent;
In vain wouldst thou attempt to reach the port,
The way is barr'd by thronging multitudes:
The other streets of Rome are all deserted.

Reg. Where, where is Manlius?

Pub. He is still thy friend:
His single voice opposes a whole people;
He threats this moment and the next entreats,
But all in vain; none hear him, none obey.
The general fury rises e'en to madness.
The axes tremble in the lictors' hands,
Who, pale and spiritless, want power to use them—
And one wild scene of anarchy prevails.

Reg. Farewell! my daughter. Publius, follow me.

[*Exit* PUBLIUS.]

At. Ah! where? I tremble——

[*Detaining* REGULUS.]

Reg. To assist my friend—
T' upbraid my hapless country with her crime—
To keep unstain'd the glory of these chains—
To go, or perish.

At. Oh! have mercy!

Reg. Hold;
I have been patient with thee; have indulg'd
Too much the fond affections of thy soul;
It is enough; thy grief would now offend
Thy father's honour; do not let thy tears
Conspire with Rome to rob me of my triumph.

At. Alas! it wounds my soul.

Reg. I know it does.
I know 'twill grieve thy gentle heart to lose me;
But think, thou mak'st the sacrifice to Rome,
And all is well again.

At. Alas! my father,
In aught beside——

Reg. What wouldst thou do, my child?
Canst thou direct the destiny of Rome,
And boldly plead amid the assembled senate?
Canst thou, forgetting all thy sex's softness,
Fiercely engage in hardy deeds of arms?

Canst thou encounter labour, toil and famine,
Fatigue and hardships, watchings, cold and heat?
Canst thou attempt to serve thy country thus?
Thou canst not:—but thou may'st sustain my loss
Without these agonising pains of grief,
And set a bright example of submission,
Worthy a Roman's daughter.

At. Yet such fortitude—

Reg. Is a most painful virtue;—but Attilia
Is Regulus's daughter, and must have it.

At. I will entreat the gods to give it me.
Ah! thou art offended! I have lost thy love.

Reg. Is this concern a mark that thou hast lost it?
I cannot, cannot spurn my weeping child.
Receive this proof of my paternal fondness;—
Thou lov'st Licinius—he too loves my daughter.
I give thee to his wishes; I do more—
I give thee to his virtues.—Yes, Attilia,
The noble youth deserves this dearest pledge
Thy father's friendship ever can bestow.

At. My lord! my father! wilt thou, canst thou leave me?
The tender father will not quit his child!

Reg. I am, I am thy father! as a proof,
I leave thee my example how to suffer.
My child! I have a heart within this bosom;
That heart has passions—see in what we differ;
Passion—which is thy tyrant—is my slave.

At. Ah! stay my father. Ah!—

Reg. Farewell! farewell!

[*Exit.*

At. Yes, Regulus! I feel thy spirit here,
Thy mighty spirit struggling in this breast,
And it shall conquer all these coward feelings,
It shall subdue the woman in my soul;
A Roman virgin should be something more—

Should dare above her sex's narrow limits—
And I will dare—and mis'ry shall assist me—
My father! I will be indeed thy daughter!
The hero shall no more disdain his child;
Attilia shall not be the only branch
That yields dishonour to the parent tree.

Enter BARCE.

Barce. Attilia! is it true that Regulus,
In spite of senate, people, augurs, friends,
And children, will depart?

At. Yes, it is true.

Barce. Oh! what romantic madness!

At. You forget—
Barce! the deeds of heroes claim respect.

Barce. Dost thou approve a virtue which must lead
To chains, to tortures, and to certain death?

At. *Barce!* those chains, those tortures, and that death,
Will be his triumph.

Barce. Thou art pleas'd, Attilia:
By heav'n thou dost exult in his destruction!

At. Ah! pitying powers. [Weeps.

Barce. I do not comprehend thee.

At. No, *Barce,* I believe it.—Why, how shouldst thou?
If I mistake not, thou wast born in Carthage,
In a barbarian land, where never child
Was taught to triumph in a father's chains.

Barce. Yet thou dost weep—thy tears at least are honest,
For they refuse to share thy tongue's deceit;
They speak the genuine language of affliction,
And tell the sorrows that oppress thy soul.

At. Grief, that dissolves in tears, relieves the heart.
When congregated vapours melt in rain,
The sky is calm'd, and all's serene again.

[*Exit.*

Barce. Why, what a strange, fantastic land is this!
This love of glory's the disease of Rome;
It makes her mad, it is a wild delirium,
An universal and contagious frenzy;
It preys on all, it spares nor sex nor age:
The Consul envies Regulus his chains—
He, not less mad, contemns his life and freedom—
The daughter glories in the father's ruin—
And Publius, more distracted than the rest,
Resigns the object that his soul adores,
For this vain phantom, for this empty glory.
This may be virtue; but I thank the gods,
The soul of Barce's not a Roman soul.

[*Exit.*

*Scene within sight of the Tiber—Ships ready for the
embarkation of Regulus and the Ambassador—
Tribune and People stopping up the passage
—Consul and Lictors endeavouring to clear it.*

MANLIUS *and* LICINIUS *advance.*

Lic. Rome will not suffer Regulus to go.

Man. I thought the Consul and the Senators
Had been a part of Rome.

Lic. I grant they are—
But still the people are the greater part.

Man. The greater, not the wiser.

Lic. The less cruel.—
Full of esteem and gratitude to Regulus,
We would preserve his life.

Man. And we his honour.

Lic. His honour!—

Man. Yes. Time presses. Words are vain.
Make way there—clear the passage.

Lic. On your lives,
Stir not a man.

Man. I do command you, go.

Lic. And I forbid it.

Man. Clear the way, my friends.
How dares Licinius thus oppose the Consul?

Lic. How dar'st thou, Manlius, thus oppose the Tribune?

Man. I'll show thee what I dare, imprudent boy!—
Lictors, force through the passage.

Lic. Romans, guard it.

Man. Gods! is my power resisted then with arms?
Thou dost affront the Majesty of Rome.

Lic. The Majesty of Rome is in the people;
Thou dost insult it by opposing them.

People. Let noble Regulus remain in Rome.

Man. My friends, let me explain this treacherous scheme.

People. We will not hear thee—Regulus shall stay.

Man. What! none obey me?

People. Regulus shall stay.

Man. Romans, attend.—

People. Let Regulus remain.

Enter REGULUS, *followed by* PUBLIUS, ATTILIA, &c.

Reg. Let Regulus remain! What do I hear?
Is't possible the wish should come from you?
Can Romans give, or Regulus accept,
A life of infamy? Is't possible?
Where is the ancient virtue of my country?
Rise, rise, ye mighty spirits of old Rome!
I do invoke you from your silent tombs;
Fabricius, Cocles, and Camillus, rise,
And show your sons what their great fathers were.
My countrymen, what crime have I committed?
Alas! how has the wretched Regulus
Deserv'd your hatred?

Lic. Hatred? ah! my friend,
It is our love would break these cruel chains.

Reg. If you deprive me of my chains, I'm nothing;
They are my honours, riches, titles,—all!
They'll shame my enemies, and grace my country;
They'll waft her glory to remotest climes,
Beyond her provinces and conquer'd realms,
Where yet her conq'ring eagles never flew;
Nor shall she blush hereafter if she find
Recorded with her faithful citizens
The name of Regulus, the captive Regulus.
My countrymen! what, think you, kept in awe
The Volsci, Sabines, Æqui, and Hernici?
The arms of Rome alone? no, 'twas her virtue;
That sole surviving good, which brave men keep
Though fate and warring worlds combine against them:
This still is mine—and I'll preserve it, Romans!
The wealth of Plutus shall not bribe it from me!
If you, alas! require this sacrifice,
Carthage herself was less my foe than Rome;
She took my freedom—she could take no more;
But Rome, to crown her work, would take my honour.
My friends! if you deprive me of my chains,
I am no more than any other slave:
Yes, Regulus becomes a common captive,
A wretched, lying, perjur'd fugitive!
But if, to grace my bonds, you leave my honour,
I shall be still a Roman, though a slave.

Lic. What faith should be observ'd with savages?
What promise should be kept which bonds extort?

Reg. Unworthy subterfuge! ah! let us leave
To the wild Arab and the faithless Moor
These wretched maxims of deceit and fraud:
Examples ne'er can justify the coward:
The brave man never seeks a vindication,
Save from his own just bosom and the gods;
From principle, not precedent, he acts:
As that arraigns him, or as that acquits,
He stands or falls; condemn'd or justified.

Lic. Rome is no more if Regulus departs.

Reg. Let Rome remember Regulus must die!
Nor would the moment of my death be distant,
If nature's work had been reserv'd for nature:
What Carthage means to do, *she* would have done
As speedily, perhaps, at least as surely.
My wearied life has almost reach'd its goal;
The once-warm current stagnates in these veins,
Or through its icy channels slowly creeps——
View the weak arm; mark the pale furrow'd cheek,
The slacken'd sinew, and the dim sunk eye,
And tell me then I must not think of dying!
How can I serve you else? My feeble limbs
Would totter now beneath the armour's weight,
The burden of that body it once shielded.
You see, my friends, you see, my countrymen,
I can no longer show myself a Roman,
Except by dying like one.——Gracious Heaven
Points out a way to crown my days with glory;
Oh, do not frustrate, then, the will of Jove,
And close a life of virtue with disgrace!
Come, come, I know my noble Romans better;
I see your souls, I read repentance in them;
You all applaud me—nay, you wish my chains:
'Twas nothing but excess of love misled you,
And as you're Romans you will conquer that.
Yes!—I perceive your weakness is subdu'd—
Seize, seize the moment of returning virtue;
Throw to the ground, my sons, those hostile arms;
Retard no longer Regulus's triumph;
I do request it of you, as a friend,
I call you to your duty, as a patriot,
And—were I still your gen'ral, I'd command you.

Lic. Lay down your arms—let Regulus depart.

[*To the People, who clear the way, and quit their arms.*]

Reg. Gods! gods! I thank you—you indeed are righteous.

Pub. See every man disarm'd. Oh, Rome! oh, father!

At. Hold, hold my heart. Alas! they all obey.

Reg. The way is clear. Hamilcar, I attend thee.

Ham. Why, I begin to envy this old man! [*Aside.*

Man. Not the proud victor on the day of triumph,
Warm from the slaughter of dispeopled realms,
Though conquer'd princes grace his chariot wheels,
Though tributary monarchs wait his nod,
And vanquish'd nations bend the knee before him,
E'er shone with half the lustre that surrounds
This voluntary sacrifice for Rome!
Who loves his country will obey her laws;
Who most obeys them is the truest patriot.

Reg. Be our last parting worthy of ourselves.
Farewell! my friends.—I bless the gods who rule us,
Since I must leave you, that I leave you Romans.
Preserve the glorious name untainted still,
And you shall be the rulers of the globe,
The arbiters of earth. The farthest east,
Beyond where Ganges rolls his rapid flood,
Shall proudly emulate the Roman name.
(*Kneels.*) Ye gods, the guardians of this glorious people,
Who watch with jealous eye Æneas' race,
This land of heroes I commit to you!
This ground, these walls, this people be your care!
Oh! bless them, bless them with a liberal hand!
Let fortitude and valour, truth and justice,
For ever flourish and increase among them!
And if some baneful planet threat the Capitol
With its malignant influence, oh, avert it!—
Be Regulus the victim of your wrath.—
On this white head be all your vengeance pour'd,
But spare, oh, spare, and bless immortal Rome!
Ah! tears? my Romans weep? Farewell! farewell!

ATTILIA struggles to get to REGULUS—is prevented—she faints—he fixes his eye steadily on her for some time, and then departs to the ships.

Man. (looking after him.)
Farewell! farewell! thou glory of mankind!
Protector, father, saviour of thy country!
Through Regulus the Roman name shall live,
Shall triumph over time, and mock oblivion.
Farewell! thou pride of this immortal coast!
'Tis Rome alone a Regulus can boast.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MISS MANSELL.

What son of physic, but his art extends,
As well as hand, when call'd on by his friends?
What landlord is so weak to make you fast,
When guests like you bespeak a good repast?
But weaker still were he whom fate has plac'd
To soothe your cares, and gratify your taste,
Should he neglect to bring before your eyes
Those dainty dramas which from genius rise;
Whether your luxury be to smile or weep,
His and your profits just proportion keep.
To-night he brought, nor fears a due reward,
A Roman Patriot by a Female Bard.
Britons who feel his flame, his worth will rate,
No common spirit his, no common fate.
INFLEXIBLE and CAPTIVE must be great.
"How!" cries a sucking fop, thus lounging, straddling
(Whose head shows want of ballast by its nodding),
"A woman write? Learn, Madam, of your betters,
And read a noble Lord's Post-hù-mous Letters.
There you will learn the sex may merit praise
By making puddings—not by making plays:
They can make tea and mischief, dance and sing;
Their heads, though full of feathers, can't take wing."
I thought they could, Sir; now and then by chance,
Maids fly to Scotland, and some wives to France.
He still went nodding on—"Do all she can,
Woman's a trifle—play-thing—like her fan."
Right, Sir, and when a wife the *rattle* of a man.
And shall such *things* as these become the test
Of female worth? the fairest and the best

Of all heaven's creatures? for so Milton sung us,
And, with such champions, who shall dare to wrong us?
Come forth, proud man, in all your pow'rs array'd;
Shine out in all your splendour—Who's afraid?
Who on French wit has made a glorious war,
Defended Shakspeare, and subdu'd Voltaire?—
Woman!^[A]—Who, rich in knowledge, knows no pride,
Can boast ten tongues, and yet not satisfied?
Woman!^[B]—Who lately sung the sweetest lay?
A woman! woman! woman!^[C] still I say.
Well, then, who dares deny our power and might?
Will any married man dispute our right?
Speak boldly, Sirs,—your wives are not in sight.
What! are you silent? then you are content;
Silence, the proverb tells us, gives consent.
Critics, will you allow our honest claim?
Are you dumb, too? This night has fix'd our fame.

FOOTNOTES

- A: Mrs. Montague, Author of an Essay on the Writings of Shakspeare.
B: Mrs. Carter, well known for her skill in ancient and modern languages.
C: Miss Aikin, whose Poems were just published.

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Hyphenation is inconsistent.

In view of the Roman context, the word "virtus" was left in place in a speech by Manlius in Act III, although it may be a misprint for "virtue".

[The end of *The Inflexible Captive* by Hannah More]