



OTHELLO



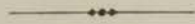
THE
MOOR OF VENICE



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K.K. Venugopal

The International Shakspeare.



OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.



"How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?"

"Faith, half asleep."

OTHELLO,

THE MOOR OF VENICE.

With Twelve Illustrations

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CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:

LONDON, PARIS & MELBOURNE.

1890.

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SEVERAL critics of the last century, and some of those who wrote in the earlier years of the present century, placed "Othello" among Shakspeare's latest tragedies, assigning dates for its composition which varied from 1611 to 1614. It was supposed that the lines in Act iii., scene 4,

"The hearts of old gave hands;
But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts,"

alluded to the arms of the order of Baronets instituted by King James in 1611. "Amongst their other prerogatives of honour," writes Warburton, "they had an addition to their paternal arms of a hand *gules*, in an escutcheon *argent*. And we are not to doubt but that this was the new heraldry alluded to by our author; by which he insinuates that some then created had *hands* indeed, but not *hearts*; that is, *money* to pay for the *creation*, but no *virtue* to purchase the honour." In fact, however, the armorial bearing of the bloody hand was not granted until the year 1612, by a second patent. Malone's final decision as to the date of the play was in favour of the year 1604, and we cannot doubt that the evidence on which he based his decision was an extract from the "Book of the Revels" found not long since among his papers in the Bodleian Library. The leaf containing this entry, which fixes the date 1604 as that of a performance of "Othello" in the banquet-chamber, Whitehall, has, indeed, disappeared from the "Book of the Revels," and a forgery was produced to supply its place. This forgery curiously agrees with the passage found among Malone's papers. It seems certain that neither of these was derived from the other, and accordingly we are forced to believe that a genuine original record of the performance of Shakspeare's plays once existed in the "Revels' Book," of which the modern forgery is a transcript. We may, with a good deal of confidence, accept the date 1604 as that of the composition of Shakspeare's tragedy. The internal evidence derived from characteristics of style and of versification agrees well with this conclusion. It is obvious that "Othello" belongs to the group of plays which includes "Macbeth" and "King Lear"—tragedies in which the bonds of nature and of society are violently sundered, in which great crimes are the offspring of great passions, and in which the dramatist in his inquisition of evil goes sounding on a dim and perilous way.

The story on which the tragedy is founded may have been read by Shakspeare, if he knew other tongues than his native English, in the Italian of Giraldi Cinthio's "Hecatommithi," or in the French translation of Cinthio by Gabriel Chappuys (Paris, 1584). The names of the characters, with the exception of Desdemona, are of the dramatist's invention. In the main he follows the original tale, but varies here an incident, and there transforms a motive, to suit his own conception of the play. The Iago of Cinthio, who is known to him only as "the Ensign," is provoked to crime by a foiled passion of the basest kind for Desdemona, which she in her integrity of heart had not even perceived. His own innocent little girl is made an unconscious accomplice in the theft of Desdemona's kerchief. The murder of Desdemona is the joint work of the Ensign and the Moor, and is savage in its circumstances; she is beaten to death with sand-bags, and the conspirators pull down a portion of the ceiling upon her, in order to have it supposed that she has perished by an accident.

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The scene of the tragedy, as it opens, is Venice, the city of the sea, which served as a meeting-point for the East and the West, having something of Oriental splendour in its manners and its art, mingling with the intellectual subtlety of Western Christendom. Shakspeare's imagination was no stranger to its palaces and gardens and sea-paven streets, its grave merchants and learned doctors and proud magnificoes. Hither had come in an earlier play his Prince of Morocco, wearing in his complexion

"The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,"

to try his fortune as one of Portia's suitors. Spaniard and African and Jew appear in Shakspeare's delightful comedy among the inhabitants of Venice, on the public places or in the halls of the neighbouring Belmont. When Shakspeare in his earlier play thought of Venice, he imagined the refinement and culture of Europe allied with something strange, something alien or exotic. And here, in his tragedy, the East and the West are brought into contact, and the grounds of the catastrophe lie, in part at least, deep-based in hereditary differences of race.

Before introducing us to the hero of his play, Shakspeare presents two characters, who in the list of the *dramatis personæ* in the First Folio are described as "Iago, a Villaine," and "Roderigo, a gull'd Gentleman." In his King Richard III., in Don John of "Much Ado about Nothing," in Edmund of "King Lear," Shakspeare has exhibited crime and baseness of various kinds and degrees; absolute evil he has represented in Iago alone. Richard III. is moved to something like remorse when, in his tent by night, the ghosts of his murdered victims pass before him; the bitter cry, "There is no creature loves me," is heard upon his lips, and it testifies to his humanity. Edmund, in his last moments, would undo the irrevocable evil wrought in the past, if that were possible:—

"I pant for life: some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature."

But from the opening of the play to the close no concession to the spirit of good is made by Iago, no tribute is paid by him to human piety or pity. He interests us as Goethe's Mephistopheles interests us. Here, in this world, evil exists by the side of good, and we would observe it and study all its workings. Dull villainy, indeed, could hardly be endured throughout the five acts of a play by the most long-suffering of readers or spectators. But Iago, as we perceive in the first moment, is the reverse of dull. Force of intellect and energy of will are interesting, whether employed in the service of heaven or the work of hell; it is these which must stand, as it were, for virtues in the character of Iago. He has all the keenness and spring of a blade seven times tempered, and though it be turned to murderous uses we can derive some pleasure from the gleam of its edge and the proof of its efficiency.

In the last scene of the tragedy, when Iago is led as a prisoner into the bedchamber where the body of Desdemona lies, Othello can hardly believe that he is not in the presence of a fiend:—

"I look down towards his feet;—but that's a fable."

Shakspeare's triumph is that while he makes Iago's acts those of a fiend, he yet makes it credible that he is a man. The Duc de Broglie, in a criticism of Alfred de Vigny's translation of "Othello," acted in Paris in the year 1830, maintains, with considerable ingenuity, that there is an incoherence in Shakspeare's conception of Iago, resulting from an attempt to combine two ideas which are essentially inconsistent with each other. Is Iago, he asks, the Spirit of Evil or his representative on earth? "Is he a being who does evil for love of evil, and who breathes poison upon the union of Othello and Desdemona with no other motive than that Desdemona is an angelic creature and Othello a man loyal, generous, and brave?" If so, proceeds the critic, why give Iago human and self-interested motives? Why exhibit his mean cupidity, his resentment for the promotion of Cassio to the lieutenantancy which he had himself expected? why exhibit him in the act of gulling the "snipe" Roderigo for the sake of his gold? "These passions of base alloy deprive the rôle of all that is fantastic in it. A demon has neither resentment, nor covetousness, nor a sense of injured honour." Evil is his good, and he needs no other motive than that it is so.

On the other hand, shall we say that Iago is the perfect egoist, such as with pride he declares himself to be, a man who inordinately loves himself, and knows how to subordinate his desires one to another in a hierarchy according to their exact degrees of importance, how to arrange all his actions so that they may tend invariably to his highest gratification, at whatever cost to others, without scruple, without remorse, and also without permitting himself to be turned aside by minor desires which may tempt him away from his supreme satisfaction? If so, why does he lavish

a hundredfold more villainy than his occasions require? Why does he not better economise his force as a criminal, and obtain some adequate compensation for his expenditure of malignity and hypocrisy?

Such is the dilemma as stated by the French critic. Coleridge anticipated the objection when, in a note on that soliloquy in which Iago whets his malice against the Moor with a base suspicion that Othello has wronged his wife, the critic speaks of "the motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity." An American writer, indeed, Mr. D. J. Snider, goes so far astray as to accept Iago's characteristically cynical suspicion as well founded, and would explain Othello's distrust of Desdemona as natural in a man who had himself been the paramour of his officer's wife; but such a notion is wholly at variance with Shakspeare's conception of Othello's character, and with the confidence which the Moor reposes in his Ancient. Neither in his vile suspicion, nor in the resentment which Iago feels at Cassio's promotion, do we discover an adequate motive for his zeal in the pursuit of crime. The motive supplied in Cinthio's tale—a foiled sensual passion for Desdemona, and the revenge thereby engendered—is withdrawn by Shakspeare; or if a trace of it remain, the impulse of sensuality is absorbed by the stronger vice of malignity. Iago's character has been defined by Coleridge as "all will in intellect;" and with him will and intellect are alike divorced from the moral sense. Iago has come to look on life as a game of immoral skill; he has come to look on men and women as mere pawns in the game—pieces of no value except as they help him to deploy his talent; he has constructed for himself a cynical philosophy of life, with egoism for its centre and moving power; and human joy and human anguish are for him but feeders of his pride of power. The history of the past unhappily proves that such a demi-devil may actually play his part on the stage of human life. In the chronicles of Italy in the Renaissance a model or two for Iago could readily be found. He is no melodramatic villain, but a faithful study in criminal humanity. Nay, when any one of us forgets the reverence due from man to man, and thinks of his fellow as no more than an instrument or tool to be used for the practice of his power, when any one of us plays a stroke in the game of life as if skill were everything, and right and wrong were matters of indifference, there lurks a possible Iago, alert already, and watching for an ampler opportunity.

It is not Shakspeare's way to label his *dramatis personæ* with significant adjectives. But Carlyle's Robespierre claims his title of "sea-green incorruptible" hardly more regularly than Iago the epithet of "honest." He himself takes a malicious pleasure in the contrast between what he seems to be and what he really is, and refers with a cynical gratification to the honesty with which he is credited:—

"O! you are well tun'd now;
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am."

The elder Kean was censured for the levity which he assumed in the part of Iago; he was described by Hazlitt as making Iago appear throughout "an excellent good fellow and lively bottle-companion." It is true that Iago can assume convivial airs, as in the scene of Cassio's drunkenness, and can sing his canakin song as though he were most potent in potting. It is true that he should not be represented on the stage as if he were a spy or detective in bad training. He must show at times something of the frank and hearty soldier. But Iago's epithet of "honest" was in the main won by a subtler art than this. He is called honest because, being a critic and somewhat of a cynic, he does not disguise the fact, but—as it is supposed—frankly speaks his mind. To the "gull'd gentleman," Roderigo, he openly professes his egoism and his godless creed of life:—

"Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:
In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end."

It gratifies Iago's pride of intellectual mastery to use Roderigo as his tool precisely at the moment when Roderigo supposes that he has found a tool in Iago. To Desdemona he announces himself as "nothing if not critical." And he confirms Othello's delusion by cautioning him against trusting such a counsellor as himself, who sees too much of the darker side of things:—

"I do beseech you—
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,
(As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not,)—that your wisdom yet,
From one that so imperfectly conceits,
Would take no notice."

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He is "honest," not because he has assumed an aspect of simplicity and innocence, but because, being recognised as a man of rare insight, he confesses it as his fault or misfortune that he cannot take the easy, optimistic views of others. He would do so if he could, but, alas! he is critical, and sees things from which we had better avert our eyes. Thus he uses part of his real nature to disguise the rest. This assuredly is a subtler form of hypocrisy than that which affects a saintly unconsciousness of evil.

"This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings"—

so comments Othello on the Ancient's warning against himself as "too busy in his fears." The honesty of Iago is no mere soldierly bluntness and bluntness, but the bitter frankness of one who is a critic of life, grieved by its baser aspects, which he cannot avoid observing more closely than is wise.

In truth he can perceive nobility of nature in others, but he perceives it as a devil might, in mere intellectual recognition, without feeling it, and without a touch of faith or hope or charity:—

"The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not—
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature;
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband."

Iago can perceive this; but his only pleasure in perceiving the Moor's magnanimity arises from the knowledge that he can more certainly abuse such generous confidence:—

"Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me
For making him egregiously an ass,
And practising upon his peace and quiet,
Even to madness."

It is thus under protest, and with an apology to the spirit of evil, that Iago admits the existence of human goodness. He finds it easier and more natural to discover the baseness of man and woman. Love for him is "a lust of the blood and a permission of the will." Desdemona's pure and romantic passion is in his eyes a gross ardour, engendered by the Moor's "bragging and telling her fantastical lies." His imagination is impure with a cold sensuality; it is licentious, but not voluptuous, for there is no sense of pleasure in the libertinism of his thoughts. And this base critic of life is still young: "I have looked upon the world," he says, "for four times seven years, and since I could distinguish a benefit from an injury, I never found a man that knew how to love himself." Shakspeare does not preach morality, but he creates his tragedy in accordance with the moral laws of the world, and therefore we cannot fail to recognise the fact that this self-lover, from whose withered trunk all the branches and blossoms of generous desire have fallen away, is least of all men a true lover even of himself. He who has deceived all the rest is the most deeply deceived. He is himself, as Hazlitt has put it, "the dupe and victim of his ruling passion—an incorrigible love of mischief—an insatiable craving after action of the difficult and dangerous kind." What joy in life has this self-lover had? As he stands pinioned and awaiting the torture, he is still cool and resolute, a stoical martyr of the religion of hell:—

"Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:
From this time forth I never will speak word."

But is this courage of despair a vindication of egoism, or not rather the evidence of a miserable failure, the crowning of a life which was failure from first to last? The cry of the royal criminal, Richard III., "There is no creature loves me," is not heard on Iago's lips, but we feel that such a victory of will as that of Iago is more appalling than a defeat.

Such is the arch-deceiver in Shakspeare's drama; and what shall we say of his victims? "Othello" has been named the tragedy of jealousy; a German critic justly observes that it ought rather to be named the tragedy of credulous trust. In "The Winter's Tale" Shakspeare has exhibited in his Leontes the miserable jealousy which is self-born and needs no external promptings, the base suspicion which pries and peers to discover grounds for its justification. Were no Iago by his side, Othello would have loved Desdemona for ever with the chivalric, protecting, trustful love which best accords with his character as a heroic warrior. Schlegel has insisted, with an excess of force, on the fact that Othello is but a half-tamed barbarian, in whom the animal nature is ever ready to break forth with savage violence. "We recognise in Othello," he writes, "the wild nature of that glowing

zone which generates the most ravenous beasts of prey and the most deadly poisons, tamed only in appearance by the desire of fame, by foreign laws of honour, and by nobler and milder manners. His jealousy is not the jealousy of the heart, which is compatible with the tenderest feeling and adoration of the beloved object; it is of that sensual kind which, in burning climes, has given birth to the disgraceful confinement of women, and many other unnatural usages. A drop of this poison flows in his veins and sets his whole blood in the wildest ferment." It is true that Shakspeare, in accepting the story from Giraldi Cinthio, recognises the Moorish origin of his hero as an important element in the evolution of the tragedy; but he is far from making his Othello, as Schlegel asserts, "in every respect a negro." Othello is a baptised Saracen of the north-western coast of Africa, of royal race and of noble person; an honoured servant of the Venetian State, grave and dignified in his bearing, noted for his majestic self-possession, trained in a school of hardship; not insensible, indeed, to womanly grace and beauty, but delighting in these with a manly purity of passion. When he is insultingly nicknamed "Thick-lips," we must remember that the speaker is Roderigo, his rejected rival. When he speaks of himself as black—

"Haply, for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have"—

we must remember that, according to Elizabethan usage, a dark or tawny complexion was termed black. The lady of Shakspeare's Sonnets is black; the Rosaline of "Love's Labour's Lost" is black:—

"And therefore red, that would avoid dispraise,
Paints itself black, to imitate her brow."

Doubtless Othello was, in appearance, like Portia's wooer, the Prince of Morocco, who is described in a stage direction of the Quarto as "a tawny Moor:"—

"Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred."

The stage tradition, indeed, was in favour of an Othello with blackened face, as he was represented by Betterton, Quin, Mossop, Barry, Garrick, and John Kemble. In Retzsch's illustration he is a curly-headed negro. The innovation of the elder Kean, who appeared with face embrowned, but not blackened, was before long accepted as true to Shakspeare's intention, and this rendering has since held the stage. The difference of physical type between one of Moorish race and a Venetian was enough to render such a marriage as that of Othello and Desdemona strange and exceptional. We may question whether, if the noble Moor had been a veritable Ethiopian, Desdemona, with all her romantic sympathy, could so readily have seen his visage in his mind.

If the older tradition of the stage were to determine the appearance of Othello, not only would his complexion be black, but his costume would be such as could not fail to cause laughter among the spectators of the present day. Barry, in the character of Othello, wore a full suit of gold-laced scarlet, a small cocked hat, knee-breeches, and silk stockings; Garrick, an officer's scarlet coat of the British army, Orientalised with a turban and a plume. On his benefit night, when this costume was first worn, the tragedy was lightened by a comic incident. "Hogarth's series of pictures, with which we are all familiar, 'The Harlot's Progress,' were at that time in the height of their popularity; ladies' fans were decorated with copies of them, and the series had even been put on the stage, I believe, as tableaux. One of the series represents the heroine upsetting the breakfast-table, just as a little negro page is bringing in the tea-kettle. The boy is jet-black, with rolling white eyes, and dressed in laced coat and knee-breeches, and with a disproportionately large turban on his head, surmounted by an aigrette. When Garrick, then, appeared on the stage in his novel costume as Othello, it is said that Quin exclaimed to his neighbour, 'Here's Pompey, but where's the tea-kettle?'"* Doubtless the general of the Venetian forces should be arrayed in the costume of Venice, with perhaps some Moorish addition to express the difference of race and of taste.

Although a loyal servant of the Signiory, welcome in the palaces of Venice, and surrounded by companions who are natives of Italy, his adopted country, Othello has nothing in him of the super-subtle Venetian; he retains a certain barbaric simplicity and grandeur of soul, with something

* H. H. Furness, "Othello," p. 405. Mr. Furness prefers to believe that Garrick made the speech himself when dressing: "I suppose Quin, when he sees me, will say, 'Here's Pompey, but where's the tea-kettle?'"

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also of the barbaric imagination which delights in the marvellous. When he tells the tale of his adventures amid

“Antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,”

it is with an imaginative rapture in what is wonderful and strange. And so, again, his imagination is inflamed by the thought of the potent charms that have entered into the warp and woof of the handkerchief, given formerly to his mother by an Egyptian charmer, and now unhappily passed out of Desdemona's possession:—

“There's magic in the web of it.
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk,
And it was dy'd in mummy, which the skilful
Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.”

Such a nature as that of Othello is fascinated by the grave order and discipline of the Venetian State, and by the ruling intelligence in the mind of cultivated Europe. He yields himself to the subtle spell of a higher civilisation, and becomes the most faithful subject of Venice, proud of the fact that he, a stranger, should be honoured as her chief soldier. He does not, indeed, feel himself able to cope with these men of Venice in matters which require the keenness of a curious intellect. He knows his own province—that of a soldier—and there is conscious of his mastery. He is no longer young, though as yet but little “declined into the vale of years;” in his life of warlike experience and varied trials and dangers he has gained a power of noble self-possession, and having endured hardness, he is the reverse of pleasure-loving and voluptuous:—

“The tyrant Custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnise
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness.”

Shakspeare, in the earlier scenes of the play, has strongly brought out the fact of Othello's noble equanimity, arising from his experience of danger and his conscious sense of power. He would make the contrast felt between this calm heroic Othello and the distracted sufferer of the later scenes, in whose veins the poison rages. It is only through his love that he is vulnerable. The overthrow of self-government and order in his nature then is complete—“chaos has come again.” Lodovico, who bears to Cyprus the instrument of the Venetian Government, is amazed at the transformation which has been wrought:—

“Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
Call all-in-all sufficient?—Is this the nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze nor pierce?”

“The noble nature whom passion could not shake”—Lodovico's description of Othello is warranted by all that we see of him in the opening scenes at Venice. When Brabantio and the officers of the night meet him, as he is on his way to the Council Chamber, and blades flash in the torch-light, Othello quells the tumult with one authoritative word, and then turns with courtesy to the old senator, whose wrath must have its outbreak in speech:—

“Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them:”

no blood shall be shed; the worst danger is from the dew—

“Good signior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.”

And in the Council Chamber he hears calmly, without interruption and without a look of resentment, the furious accusations of Brabantio; he is strong in the consciousness of his own honour and of Desdemona's love; and when his turn comes to speak, he relates with frankness and unruffled

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dignity the whole course of his love. Iago, in his malice, had hoped, if he could not rob Othello of his joy in Desdemona, at least to spoil the bloom of joy:—

“Make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets: incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such chances of vexation on 't,
As it may lose some colour.”

But, in fact, the colour is heightened; Othello's joy is enhanced by the test to which it is exposed, by the public evidence of Desdemona's love and courage, by the testimony which she bears before the Duke and the assembled senators to his truth.

Once again, after the wild chaos of his mind and heart, calm returns to Othello, but it is the fatal calm of the man for whom all joy is ended, and for whom nothing remains but one stern act of justice; it is a calm in agony, attained by a victory over much suppressed excitement. Perhaps no words in Shakspeare's plays are more fully charged with dramatic meaning than those of Emilia, who has seen Othello leave his wife after he has ordered her to undress and await him, so, unconscious victim, preparing herself for the sacrifice:—

“How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did.”

Shakspeare, as Hazlitt has said, here puts into a line what some playwrights would have spun out into ten set speeches. Othello looks gentler than he did because Desdemona is now doomed, and he can feel no rage against one who, already in the shadow of death, lies awaiting the execution of the sentence. He would hurt neither her body nor her soul, if that were possible; but the judgment stands recorded, and must be carried into effect:—

“It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—
It is the cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.”

He would not slay her while unreconciled to Heaven and grace; he would pardon her while he punishes; and it is her protestations of innocence, seeming to him perjuries in the very presence of death, which again wake the madness within him. Suffer she must; but even in his wrath he would not have her linger in her pain:—

“I, that am cruel, am yet merciful.”

Othello in destroying Desdemona feels that he himself has also bade farewell to life. He does not look forward to any future of energy and action, new battle and adventure, and augmented glory. All is over for him as well as for her. Fresh afflictions, disgraces, captivity he could have borne, as he had borne those gone by, but to be compelled to loathe that which most he loves—this is indeed the bitterness of death:—

“But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
Where either I must live, or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence,
Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
To knot and gender in!”

This is something more than jealousy, it is the despair of love.

Some critics of Shakspeare, who have an unfortunate turn for edification, and cannot forbear the pleasure of improving an occasion, point out with some satisfaction that Desdemona after all is not innocent; she suffers not precisely for the offence with which she stands charged in Othello's mind, but she has in a certain sense brought upon herself this doom, for has she not been an undutiful daughter? Did she not in the first instance draw Othello on to a confession of his love, and then, instead of coyly requesting him to speak to her father, did she not secretly leave the house of Brabantio and rashly surrender herself to an alliance with one of another race than her own, one whose suit, she knew well, would have been scornfully rejected by the old Venetian senator?

Brabantio is dead, and who, if not his disobedient daughter, has been the cause of Brabantio's death? She perishes for her offence. And thus the laws of social morality are vindicated, and fair maidens are duly warned against making runaway matches with swarthy adventurers.

Shakspeare's ethics strike deeper towards the heart of things than this morality of his critics. It is not good or evil fortune, according to his creed, that pronounces judgment on a life. If we desire to see a docile, obedient daughter, according to the estimate of such critics as these, we can find her in Ophelia. She repels Hamlet's letters, and denies his access to her, as Polonius has commanded; she comes straight from her pale and melancholy lover to describe his distraction to her father; she holds the prayer-book with pious aspect as directed, and permits herself to act as a decoy while the King and his faithful councillor play the spy on her lover's weakness. And yet this dutiful daughter is not rewarded by Shakspeare; she dies with no heroic act of will, like that implied by Desdemona's dying falsehood, but in helpless lightheadedness; decked with her fantastic garlands, and chanting snatches of old lauds, she is piteously pulled by her drenched garments to muddy death. Is this the return Shakspeare makes for filial piety? It may be that Shakspeare distributes rewards and punishments among the creatures of his imagination upon some principle more like that of the actual world than his critics have supposed. It may be that his estimate of character is other than that of these grave moralists. Perhaps he does not always regard death as a punishment for ill-doing. Perhaps he even views with admiration his runaway Venetian bride, as she stands in presence of her husband, her father, and the Duke, changed for the time from "a maiden never bold" to something like a dreadless angel:—

"My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life and education;
My life and education, both do learn me
How to respect you: you are the lord of duty;
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,
And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord."

"Gentleness," writes Mrs. Jameson, "gives the prevailing tone to Desdemona's character; gentleness in its excess; gentleness verging on passiveness; gentleness which not only cannot resent, but cannot resist." Lady Martin (herself, when Helen Faucit, a Desdemona of distinction) will not have it so; as she conceives the character, Desdemona has no lack of strength and energy of will. Macready, who played Othello to her Desdemona, especially commended Helen Faucit for the intensity which she added to the last act by "being so difficult to kill." She felt—so she tells us—as if it were a struggle for her own life: "I would not die with my honour tarnished, without the chance of disabusing my husband's mind of the vile thoughts that clouded it. I felt for *him* as well as for myself—for I knew what remorse and misery would overwhelm him when he came to know how cruelly he had wronged me; and, therefore, I threw into my remonstrances all the power of passionate appeal I could command."

The truth seems to be that love can render Desdemona courageous, but that, apart from this incentive to boldness, she is not, like Portia of "Julius Cæsar," or Helena of "All's Well that Ends Well," one of Shakspeare's strong-willed heroines. Her father has known her as

"A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself."

She has lived in her household duties and in the life of the imagination, which can create its romances in the midst of calm surroundings and under the quietest maidenly demeanour. In the Moor, though a stranger by race, and though he has no longer any youthful charms, she finds her hero of romance. Her love is a passion of self-surrender in order that she may add a grace and a joy to this life, which has been so strange, so noble, so full of trials, and so unloved. The more she has to give—her beauty, her refinement, her culture, her household skill, her fine accomplishments, her art in song and in needlework, her store of pity and of love—the more eager is she to give it all to one who needs just this to fill up what is lacking in his life of hardship. And so, although naturally retiring and full of gentleness, she becomes heroic through her sympathy, her love, and her imagination, which kindles at romance:—

DESDEMONA.

"My heart's subdued
Even to the very quality of my lord:
I saw Othello's visage in his mind;
And to his honours, and his valiant parts,
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate."

Nurtured delicately in a Venetian palace, she cannot but choose the dangers of the sea and the hazards of war, provided only that she make his life less hard.

"Many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,"

have left her heart untouched. The curled darlings of Venice, who had never known the want of love, could not greatly need what was hers to give. But this heroic stranger, so great in masculine energy and daring, still lacked one thing which it was in her power to bestow—the sweetness of a woman's love. Brabantio, who has no reasonable accusation to bring against the Moor, beyond the fact that he has secretly wedded Desdemona, in very helplessness of anger brings the charge that she has been abused and corrupted by philtres and witchcraft:—

"By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks."

In fact, she has been subdued by a subtler magic than that of drugs or woven words; she has been betrayed, if there was any betrayal, by the generosity of her heart and the romance of her imagination.

The culminating moment of happiness for the wedded lovers is not when they quit the Council Chamber, vindicated in presence of the Signiory; then a parting is before them, and there is but an hour for business and for love. Their joy touches its highest point in their meeting, after storm and severance, at Cyprus. The background of the picture is a splendid one of tumbling sea and aerial blue. The town of Famagusta is emptied of its inhabitants, who are on the brow of the sea watching for the Venetian ships; happy tidings have arrived that the hostile Turkish fleet has been broken and scattered by the gale; sails are seen rounding into view; and salutation is given by the guns of the fort. Before Desdemona appears we hear her praises on the lips of Cassio; she advances as if she were "a sea-goddess making her entry into an island dedicated to her worship:"*—

"The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus let her have your knees."

And as a mortal woman such a blessing is invoked upon her as we would implore for our dearest treasure, yet a blessing which, interpreted by the events that follow, haunts our memory as having something in it of cruel, unconscious irony:—

"Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of Heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!"

Alas! the malice of hell also encircles Desdemona; for while Cassio takes her by the hand, Iago looks on with evil eye and plans how he shall spin his spider's web of fraud: "He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said, whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio." These inward comments of Iago serve the purpose of a chorus to the tragedy, but it is like a chorus of fiends. Presently Othello's trumpet sounds; he has hastened from the sea, and enters escorted by his attendants. It is the supreme moment of felicity in the play. "In touching the soil of the East," says a French critic, "the Moor resumes the lyrical emphasis of men of his race; he addresses Desdemona in the glowing speech of the Arabian *ghazels*:"—

"O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd Death!

* * * * *

If it were now to die,
'T were now to be most happy; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate."

* The words are those of Paul de Saint-Victor in "Les Deux Masques," iii., 27.

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

There is something almost ominous in the excess of joy, which must find relief in a thought of death; and, presently, the infernal chorus is heard commenting on the situation after its kind:—

“O! you are well tun'd now;
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.”

It has been remarked that Milton's Satan relents at the prospect of ruining the happiness of Adam and Eve in the blissful garden, and “prefaces the deed with a gush of pity for his victims:”—

“Ah, gentle pair! ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe.”

But the same thought fills Iago with a cynical delight in the sense of his power to destroy what is so bright and fair.

How comes it to pass that two human creatures so united should in a little while be so cruelly torn apart from each other? First, we must remember that in a certain sense, and that a very real one, they are never disunited. The Desdemona against whom Othello is enraged is not the true Desdemona. He has imagined a monster in her place, and expends his fury upon the creation of an evil dream; in striking at this hideous phantom he slays the being who is dearest to him in the world. It is all a miserable delusion. From that delusion he is dreadfully yet blessedly awakened. The discovery of his error is indeed appalling; but far more fatal would it have been if he had continued to believe that Desdemona was a shameless wanton. He recovers his dignity of character, and once again his mind is clear-sighted and firm-set; he recovers his faith and love; he deeply desires to atone for the wrong he has done; he pursues his wife through the portals of the grave; he “dies upon a kiss.” And as for her, she has never ceased to love him, from the moment when she stands before the Duke declaring that she has consecrated her soul to Othello, until the moment when she utters that dying falsehood, which in its inner sense means perfect fidelity to what was highest in her life. The question, then, is not how two human beings who had loved have been alienated from each other, for that in fact never happens, but how Othello can err so lamentably as to take a horrible fantasy for the truth.

Othello has undergone many strange trials, he has accumulated a wealth of experience in broil and battle, he is familiar with moving accidents by flood and field, but he has acquired little knowledge of enmity masking itself as friendship, little experience of the subtle wiles of the betrayer. He is of a free and open nature

“That thinks men honest that but seem to be so.”

He has fought side by side with Iago, and believes in the loyalty of his old companion in arms. He has had no long and intimate knowledge of a woman's heart. Desdemona is a wonder of beauty and love; but as yet she is something of a sweet stranger to his daily life. Her devotion to him seems to Othello something almost incredible; he is of another race than hers, her senior by many years, and hardened in the rude ways of war. This new joy has still for him something dreamlike in its freshness and glory; it has as yet hardly become a sober certainty of waking bliss. What if it should be indeed a dream and a delusion? Iago's snare could have less easily deceived Othello had his life and the life of Desdemona grown into each other with all the sweet observances of daily use and wont. But now he can imagine himself as blinded by the glamour of his own passion. Doubtless in his soldier's life Othello has heard much of female fickleness and infidelity. In his own East strict measures were taken to secure a husband's honour. Did higher virtue always accompany the larger freedom of the women of Italy? Who could fathom the mysteries of Italian guile and Italian passion? Certainly not Othello, who has no faculty for unravelling the tangled perplexities of life, who sees all things with a direct and simple gaze. But here, by his side, is that old companion of whose love and honesty he is assured, one who “knows all qualities, with a learned spirit, of human dealings.” And this faithful counsellor would evidently spare him pain, if that were possible. Iago hides his terrible suspicion; the truth is wrung from him unwillingly; he even warns Othello against trusting one like himself, who, though honest, has too keen and critical a spirit. No wonder that Othello is “perplexed in the extreme;” and with him to doubt is to be resolved; suspense is agony. Who can demonstrate to him so surely the truth of what he hopes or the truth of what he fears as this loyal friend, a clear-sighted Italian, swayed by no personal passion, and devoted to his service, his old fellow-soldier, honest Iago?

THE QUESTION OF TIME.

It is often forgotten that Iago has so prepared his plot as almost at the first moment of suggestion to overwhelm Othello's reason with what appears to be evidence. He knows how fiercely the poison will work in Othello's veins; he knows that his victim will be quickly thrown off his balance, and will be in no condition to enter on a judicial testing of the proof. In the same scene in which the first faint hint is uttered—the muttered words, "I like not that," as Cassio steals away from Desdemona's presence on the Moor's approach—in this same scene Iago produces his concocted story of Cassio's dream of adultery, and, emboldened by a favouring accident, he goes on to declare that he has seen the handkerchief—Othello's earliest gift—in Cassio's keeping. The tempter is determined to leave Othello no time to recover his better mind; the persecution is without pause; each draught of the poison is stronger than the last; it literally attacks Othello's brain, and when he falls with incoherent utterance in an epileptic trance, Iago stands over him with a smile of triumph at this evidence of the potency of his infernal drug:—

"Work on,
My medicine, work!"

The Moor has but just recovered from the fit when he is placed in ambush to spy on Cassio, during that interview with Iago in which Bianca's fatuous affection becomes a theme for mockery. Is it a matter of surprise that at this moment Othello should fail to detect the snare?

Shakspeare's treatment of the dramatic time in this tragedy has caused some perplexity to his readers, and engaged the attention of several careful critics. The theory was advanced by Professor Wilson that the dramatist, not in this play alone, but generally, and in accordance with a method—perhaps an unconscious method—peculiarly his own, reckons the days and hours "as it were by two clocks, on one of which the true historic time is recorded, and on the other the dramatic time, or a false show of time, whereby days, weeks, and months may be to the utmost contracted. It is as though the hour hand pointed to historic time, while the minute hand, recording fresh sensations with every swing of the pendulum, tells dramatic time. While the former has travelled from one figure to another, the latter has traversed the whole twelve, and is true to the hour when the hammer falls. We know that but an hour has passed, and yet, following the minute hand, we have lived through the whole twelve. . . . In the theatre no trace is noted of this art, or even trick (be it respectfully termed); while on the printed page it may be detected in almost every scene."* Examining the notes of time in the tragedy of "Othello," it is not easy to escape from the conviction that Desdemona's death took place within thirty-six hours after her landing in Cyprus. If the first act of the play—that of which the scene is at Venice—be considered as a kind of Induction, the tragedy may be said to depart but little from the arbitrary rule of the unity of time, which requires that the action of a drama shall fall within a single imagined day. But while, according to this theory of the "two clocks," such is the strict historic time, Shakspeare produces the illusion of the lapse of days and weeks by his protractive series of notes of time. It is hardly conceivable that Othello's passion should have passed through all its varying stages and reached its terrible culmination in the course of a few hours. Yet Shakspeare needs the rapidity and the intensity which come with the concentration of much action and much emotion in a brief space of time. He solves the dramatic problem by actually dating the events by hours, while at the same time he produces the illusion of days and weeks.

Had days and weeks in fact elapsed, Iago's plot must certainly have failed. It is essential to the success of his machinations that no opportunity should be given for mutual explanations between Othello and Desdemona. He feels that he is ringed round with dangers, from Roderigo, from Cassio, from his own wife, who has been the unconscious abettor of his villainy in the matter of the handkerchief. Hence he presses on with eager haste, and unites the utmost impetuosity with the utmost ingenuity in crime. No time is given to Desdemona to recover from the shock and stupor which follow upon her husband's dreadful words. When he strikes her in presence of her kinsman, Lodovico, she will not become a party against Othello; with one word of gentle protestation, "I have not deserved this," she withdraws, lest her presence should further offend her husband. When he addresses her with a foul name, she calls Heaven to witness to her innocence, but she cannot enter on her own vindication. "How do you, madam?" enquires Emilia; and Desdemona's answer tells us how this word, far more than the blow, has stunned her:—

* I have given Mr. Furness's brief statement of the theory of the "two clocks," or, as Halpin terms them, the accelerating series and the protractive series of dates. Halpin ingeniously applies the theory to "The Merchant of Venice;" Professor Wilson to "Othello" and "Macbeth." Mr. Furness, in his preface to "Hamlet," shows how it may be applied to that play. He believes that Shakspeare was fully conscious of this method, and that it forms an element in his consummate art as dramatist.

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

"*Emil.* How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?

Des. 'Faith, half asleep."

Yet even in the darkest moment, when all her senses are numbed by the shock, her love shines like a lamp in the night:—

"Unkindness may do much;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love."

A prophecy which in truth is too quickly fulfilled.

The scene in which Desdemona prepares herself for sleep is laden with a sense of doom. Her wedding sheets have been placed upon the bed, and at the sight of them a gain-giving troubles her spirit:—

"Good faith, how foolish are our minds!
If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets."

And with the thought of death comes back to her memory the song of "Willow" that has haunted her all the night, bringing with it recollections of her childhood and the sad romance of the maid Barbara who died for love:—

"She was in love; and he she loved proved mad,
And did forsake her."

And is it not so with Desdemona herself and her distracted lord, who in his wild error has deserted her? If the plaintive old song suited Barbara's case, does it not also agree with her own?—

"Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve."

And that last line, was it not also meant for her—that line where the lover brings his false charge of unfaithfulness? And thereupon mistress and maid begin that strange discussion in the casuistry of married life, designed by the dramatist to make us feel the spotless purity of this lamb now prepared for the sacrifice.

I will not follow the distinguished physicians who have made a medical and surgical inquiry into the cause of Desdemona's death.* I am not anxious to ascertain whether the cessation of life came as the result of "cardiac exhaustion," or of "internal hemorrhage," or of a "fracture of the larynx;" I am content to look elsewhere than to the fifth act of "Othello" for my lessons in physiology. Whether, having been smothered, Desdemona could murmur some faint words before her death, or could not, I am convinced that the words were spoken. In the lives and deaths of the saints the laws of physiology are sometimes curiously suspended, and we believe *quia impossibile est*. The miracle of love in Desdemona's dying falsehood makes all lesser miracles credible. This, indeed, is not so much a death as a victory of the spirit. We hardly feel the pity of it now, so pure is the heroism of the martyr. Her life has been defeated, but no taint has come to her love; and, therefore, in the highest meaning of the word "life," even her life—the vital energy of the spirit—remains intact.

As to Othello, his case is far more desperate than hers. He has with his own hands put out the light which he can never relume. All of misery and despair are concentrated in the simplest words,

"My wife! my wife! What wife!—I have no wife."

And then, as the darkness gathers about him, his imagination takes wing amid this horror of great gloom:—

"O insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration."

But these words are uttered while Othello still believes that his wife was faithless and impure. It is not Shakspeare's manner to close his tragedies with unrelieved misery; he does not set himself to harrow the feelings of the spectators; at the end there is ordinarily some assuagement, some

* See the opinions of Dr. D. Hayes Agnew, Dr. D. G. Brinton, Dr. J. M. Da Costa, Dr. W. A. Hammond, and Dr. W. Hunt in the Notes in Mr. Furness's edition of the play.

reconciliation. In "Romeo and Juliet" the strife of the rival houses is atoned over the corpses of the young lovers:—

"A glooming peace this morning with it brings."

In "Hamlet" the reign of the murderer and usurper comes to an end, and the Prince, before his lips are silent, has given his voice for Fortinbras; a new and better era dawns for Denmark. In "King Lear," though Cordelia lies dead, the victor Edgar stands by the side of the gentle Albany, and we know that the announcement of justice replacing violence will be carried into effect:—

"All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings."

In "Macbeth" we hear the voices hailing Malcolm as King of Scotland, and see him "compassed with his kingdom's pearl" of loyalty. What assuagement, what reconciliation, is offered to our hearts in the tragedy of "Othello"?

It is of a twofold nature. First, Desdemona is vindicated in Othello's mind; Love is justified in her child, and Othello is once again, though by a dreadful experience, restored to his true self. From the moment that he is assured of Desdemona's innocence, he regains self-possession, something like a calm comes upon him, he relieves his heart no longer with wild and whirling words, he knows the one thing which he has yet to do. I cannot understand the view of the eminent actor, Edwin Booth, who speaks of Othello in these last moments as if he were "on the very verge of pure insanity." It seems to me that he now fully recovers his reason, perceives that longer life were impossible for him, surveys his past—not in passion, but with something of a judicial spirit, and free from frenzy and fever, yet shedding tears for his fatal error—resolves to die. His public life, that of a servant to the Venetian State, he can recall with a certain satisfaction; for his private crime he decrees death against himself, and his own right hand shall be the executioner. Yet even a criminal on the scaffold is allowed the offices and the hopes of religion. He, too, will not die without some comfort, some hope; and whence shall it flow except from her presence, slain though she lie, and her love, which had been the sole perfect thing revealed to him by life?

"I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this—
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss."

This is in truth an assuagement of the tragic pain, a harmonising of the tragic dissonance. But we require a second satisfaction. The real criminal is not Othello, but Iago, who ensnared him soul and body. It is ordinarily a pain to think that a malefactor suffers; we submit to a dreadful necessity; but in this instance we breathe the freer because we know that Iago is about to undergo the bitter pains of torture. We think with satisfaction of judicial punishment, not in its secondary aspect as a deterrent from crime, but in its primary and essential character as a just vengeance for an outrage against humanity. We give a deep and grateful assent to the words of Lodovico:—

"To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain;
The time, the place, the torture: O enforce it!"

We are assured that torture will wring no confession from Iago's lips; nevertheless it shall be enforced to the utmost.

Of the secondary characters of the tragedy there is little need to speak. Roderigo may be dismissed with Iago's contemptuous word—"a snipe." That excellent critic, Mr. Hudson, is surely carried beyond the truth when he says of Cassio, "His nature is, I am apt to think, the finest grained and most delicately organised of all Shakspeare's men." But whatever vices Cassio may have are of the nature of infirmities; and Shakspeare contrasts his weakness, which still leaves him generous, chivalric, and lovable, with the wickedness of Iago, which is firm, close knit, strong as steel. If Cassio's own life is not blameless—and the episode of Bianca was accepted by Shakspeare from the Italian novel—he can at least delight in all that is beautiful, pure, heroic; he has a reverence for what is above him; a fine enthusiasm for what is lordly in Othello's character, and for what is lovely in the nature of Desdemona. And this again is contrasted with the cold sensuality of Iago's imagination, which degrades and defiles whatever enters within its ken:—

"If Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly."

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

The torture will hardly cause suffering to Iago as exquisite as the thought that it is Michael Cassio who has been appointed Lord Governor of Cyprus.

Emilia has no harm in her, and much good—a warm heart and a frank fidelity to her mistress; but it is true, as Cowden Clarke puts it, that she retains her virtue only by a slipknot. “As the husband is, the wife is,” does not in this instance hold good; but Emilia’s ideal of masculine and marital chivalry has not been heightened by her experiences as Iago’s wife:—

“Tis not a year or two shows us a man;
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full
They belch us.”

I do not suppose that Emilia means evil in her parting talk with Desdemona, but she thinks in her plebeian way that since Othello has been unkind, a little interest in the handsome Lodovico will serve as a wholesome diversion for Desdemona. On the wrongs of woman, and in particular of wives, Emilia can wax eloquent: let men treat us well, let them remember that we have senses, affections, appetites like themselves, or let them take the consequences. Emilia is needed to throw out the radiant figure of Desdemona from a background of common womanhood. She is no saint, but not much of a sinner; and we must give her a place in our regard, because she so stoutly defends her mistress’s honour against Othello, and has courage to make known the murder, denouncing her master, though she is alone with him, and crying aloud at the risk—as she supposes—of her life. She does indeed die, but by her husband’s hand, because, in vindication of Desdemona, she has borne evidence against him. All the character of poor Emilia is expressed in her last outbreak of the wife against the husband:—

“O murd’rous coxcomb; what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?”

—in this, and in her dying request, “O lay me by my mistress’ side.”

The tragedy of “Othello” has had a great history on the stage, from the days of Burbage to those of Salvini, Booth, and Irving. The genius of the elder Kean discovered, if that were possible, new depths and heights in the passion of the play, and it was in the part of Othello that he took his pathetic farewell to the stage. He had been helped from his carriage into the dressing-room. “I am very ill,” he murmured to his son Charles; “I am afraid I shall not be able to go on.” But the Othello of that night had for a time all the force and fire, all the truth and beauty of his earlier days. Suddenly, in the midst of the third scene of the great third act, he “trembled, stopped, tottered, reeled; Charles (the Iago of the night), fearing the worst, went forward and extended his arms; the father made another effort, and advanced towards his son with ‘Villain, be sure thou prove,’ &c.; but it was of no use, and with a whispered moan, ‘I am dying; speak to them for me,’ he sank insensible into Charles’s arms.” It was a tragedy within the tragedy. Three weeks later Edmund Kean lay dead.

EDWARD DOWDEN.



OTHELLO
THE MOOR OF VENICE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DUKE OF VENICE.
BRABANTIÓ, *a Senator.*
Other Senators.
GRATIANO, *Brother to Brabantio.*
LODOVICO, *Kinsman to Brabantio.*
OTHELLO, *a noble Moor in the service of
the Venetian State.*
CASSIO, *his Lieutenant.*
IAGO, *his Ancient.*
RODERIGO, *a Venetian Gentleman.*
MONTANO, *Governor of Cyprus.*
Clown, Servant to Othello.
DESDEMONA, *Daughter to Brabantio, and
Wife to Othello.*
EMILIA, *Wife to Iago.*
BIANCA, *Mistress to Cassio.*
*Sailor, Messengers, Herald, Officers, Gentle-
men, Musicians, and Attendants.*

L. F. DAY.

SCENE

For the First Act, in VENICE; during the rest of
the Play, at a Sea-port in CYPRUS.



SCENE I.—Venice. A Street.

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

Roderigo.

TUSH! never tell me; I take it much unkindly,
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse,
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

Iago. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me:
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod. Thou toldst me, thou didst hold him in
thy hate.

Iago. Despise me, if I do not. Three great
ones of the city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Off-capp'd to him; and, by the faith of man,
I know my price: I am worth no worse a place;
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;
And, in conclusion,
Nonsuits my mediators; for, "Certes," says he,
"I have already chose my officer."

And what was he?

Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoretic,
Wherein the tongued consuls can propose
As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the elec-
tion:

And I,—of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
Christen'd and heathen,—must be be-lee'd and
calm'd

By debtor-and-creditor; this counter-caster,
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,

And I (God bless the mark!) his Moorship's
ancient.

Rod. By Heaven, I rather would have been his
hangman.

Iago. But there's no remedy: 't is the curse of
service,

Preferment goes by letter, and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge your-
self,

Whether I in any just term am affin'd
To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him then.

Iago. O, sir, content you:

I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender: and when he's old,
cashier'd:

Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are,
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,
And, throwing but shows of service on their
lords,

Do well thrive by them, and, when they have
lin'd their coats,

Do themselves homage: these fellows have some
soul;

For such a one do I profess myself.

For, sir,

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:

In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:

For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart

In complement extern, 't is not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

Rod. What a full fortune does the thick-lips
owe,

Rod. Here is her father's house: I'll call
aloud.

Iago. Do; with like timorous accent, and dire
yell,
As when, by night and negligence, the fire



"What is the matter there?"

If he can carry 't thus!

Iago. Call up her father:
Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets: incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such chances of vexation on 't,
As it may lose some colour.

Is spied in populous cities.

Rod. What, ho! Brabantio! Signior Brabantio,
ho!

Iago. Awake! what, ho! Brabantio! thieves!
thieves! thieves!

Look to your house, your daughter, and your
bags!

Thieves! thieves!

Enter BRABANTIO, above, at a window.

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons?

What is the matter there?

Rod. Signior, is all your family within?

Iago. Are your doors lock'd?

Bra. Why? wherefore ask you this?

Iago. 'Zounds, sir! you are robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;

Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul:

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram

Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise!

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.

Arise, I say.

Bra. What! have you lost your wits?

Rod. Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

Bra. Not I: what are you?

Rod. My name is Roderigo.

Bra. The worser welcome:

I have charg'd thee not to haunt about my doors.

In honest plainness thou hast heard me say,

My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,

Being full of supper and distempering draughts,

Upon malicious knavery dost thou come

To start my quiet.

Rod. Sir, sir, sir,—

Bra. But thou must needs be sure,

My spirit, and my place, have in them power

To make this bitter to thee.

Rod. Patience, good sir.

Bra. What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice:

My house is not a grange.

Rod. Most grave Brabantio,

In simple and pure soul I come to you.

Iago. 'Zounds, sir! you are one of those that will not serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you service, and you think we are ruffians, you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for Germans.

Bra. What profane wretch art thou?

Iago. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

Bra. Thou art a villain.

Iago. You are—a senator.

Bra. This thou shalt answer: I know thee, Roderigo.

Rod. Sir, I will answer anything. But I beseech you,

If 't be your pleasure, and most wise consent,

(As partly, I find, it is,) that your fair daughter, At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night, Transported with no worse nor better guard, But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier, To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,— If this be known to you, and your allowance, We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs; But if you know not this, my manners tell me, We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe That, from the sense of all civility, I thus would play and trifle with your reverence: Your daughter, if you have not given her leave, I say again, hath made a gross revolt; Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes, In an extravagant and wheeling stranger, Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself:

If she be in her chamber, or your house, Let loose on me the justice of the state For thus deluding you.

Bra. Strike on the tinder, ho!

Give me a taper! call up all my people!—

This accident is not unlike my dream;

Belief of it oppresses me already.—

Light, I say! light! [*Exit from above.*]

Iago. Farewell; for I must leave you:

It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place, To be produc'd (as, if I stay, I shall)

Against the Moor: for, I do know, the state

(However this may gall him with some check)

Cannot with safety cast him; for he's embark'd

With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars

(Which even now stands in act), that, for their souls,

Another of his fathom they have none,

To lead their business: in which regard,

Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,

Yet, for necessity of present life,

I must show out a flag and sign of love,

Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,

Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;

And there will I be with him. So, farewell.

[*Exit.*]

Enter, below, BRABANTIO and Servants with torches.

Bra. It is too true an evil: gone she is;

And what's to come of my despised time,

Is nought but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo,

Where didst thou see her?—O unhappy girl!—

With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father?—

How didst thou know 't was she?—O! she deceives me

Past thought.—What said she to you?—Get more tapers!

Raise all my kindred!—Are they married, think you?

Rod. Truly, I think, they are.

Bra. O Heaven!—How got she out?—O, treason of the blood!—

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds

By what you see them act.—Is there not charms, By which the property of youth and maidhood May be abus'd? Have you not read, Roderigo, Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir; I have, indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother.—O, would you had had her!—

Some one way, some another.—Do you know Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think, I can discover him, if you please To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;

I may command at most.—Get weapons, ho! And raise some special officers of might.— On, good Roderigo;—I'll deserve your pains.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—The Same. Another Street.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants, with torches.

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,

Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience, To do no contriv'd murder: I lack iniquity Sometimes, to do me service. Nine or ten times I had thought to have yerk'd him here, under the ribs.

Oth. 'T is better as it is.

Iago. Nay, but he prated, And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms Against your honour, That, with the little godliness I have, I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir, Are you fast married? Be assur'd of this, That the magnifico is much beloved; And hath, in his effect, a voice potential As double as the duke's: he will divorce you; Or put upon you what restraint, or grievance, The law (with all his might to enforce it on) Will give him cable.

Oth. Let him do his spite: My services, which I have done the signiory, Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'T is yet to know

(Which, when I know that boasting is an honour, I shall promulgate,) I fetch my life and being From men of royal siege; and my demerits

May speak, unbonneted, to as proud a fortune As this that I have reached: for know, Iago, But that I love the gentle Desdemona, I would not my unhoused free condition Put into circumscription and confine For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come yond?

Iago. Those are the raised father, and his friends:

You were best go in.

Oth. Not I; I must be found: My parts, my title, and my perfect soul, Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago. By Janus, I think no.

Enter CASSIO and certain Officers with torches.

Oth. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.

The goodness of the night upon you, friends! What is the news?

Cas. The duke does greet you, general; And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance, Even on the instant.

Oth. What is the matter, think you?

Cas. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine. It is a business of some heat: the galleys Have sent a dozen sequent messengers This very night at one another's heels; And many of the consuls, rais'd and met, Are at the duke's already. You have been hotly call'd for;

When, being not at your lodging to be found, The senate hath sent about three several quests, To search you out.

Oth. 'T is well I am found by you. I will but spend a word here in the house, And go with you. [*Exit.*]

Cas. Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago. 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land-carack:

If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

Cas. I do not understand.

Iago. He's married.

Cas. To who?

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago. Marry, to—Come, captain, will you go?

Oth. Have with you.

Cas. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Iago. It is Brabantio.—General, be advis'd: He comes to bad intent.

Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers, with torches and weapons.

Oth. Holla! stand there!

Rod. Signior, it is the Moor.

Bra. Down with him, thief!
[*They draw on both sides.*]

Iago. You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.

Oth. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.—

Good signior, you shall more command with years,

Than with your weapons.

Bra. O thou foul thief! where hast thou stow'd my daughter?—

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her; For I'll refer me to all things of sense, If she in chains of magic were not bound, Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy, So opposite to marriage, that she shunn'd The wealthy curled darlings of our nation, Would ever have, to incur a general mock, Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom Of such a thing as thou; to fear, not to delight. Judge me the world, if 't is not gross in sense, That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms;

Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals, That weaken motion.—I'll have 't disputed on; 'T is probable, and palpable to thinking. I therefore apprehend and do attach thee, For an abuser of the world, a practiser Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.— Lay hold upon him! if he do resist, Subdue him at his peril.

Oth. Hold your hands, Both you of my inclining, and the rest: Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it Without a prompter.—Where will you that I go To answer this your charge?

Bra. To prison; till fit time Of law, and course of direct session, Call thee to answer.

Oth. What if I do obey? How may the duke be therewith satisfied, Whose messengers are here about my side, Upon some present business of the state, To bring me to him?

Off. 'Tis true, most worthy signior: The duke's in council, and your noble self, I am sure, is sent for.

Bra. How! the duke in council! In this time of the night!—Bring him away. Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself, Or any of my brothers of the state, Cannot but feel this wrong as 't were their own;

For if such actions may have passage free, Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—The Same. A Council Chamber.

The DUKE, and Senators, sitting at a table; Officers attending.

Duke. There is no composition in these news, That gives them credit.

1 Sen. Indeed, they are disproportion'd: My letters say, a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke. And mine, a hundred and forty.

2 Sen. And mine, two hundred: But though they jump not on a just account, (As in these cases, where the aim reports, 'T is oft with difference,) yet do they all confirm A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgment. I do not so secure me in the error, But the main article I do approve In fearful sense.

Sailor. [*Within.*] What, ho! what, ho! what, ho!

Off. A messenger from the galleys.

Enter a Sailor.

Duke. Now, what's the business?

Sail. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes:

So was I bid report here to the state, By Signior Angelo.

Duke. How say you by this change?

1 Sen. This cannot be, By no assay of reason: 't is a pageant, To keep us in false gaze. When we consider The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk; And let ourselves again but understand, That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes, So may he with more facile question bear it, For that it stands not in such warlike brace, But altogether lacks the abilities That Rhodes is dress'd in:—if we make thought of this,

We must not think the Turk is so unskilful, To leave that latest which concerns him first, Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain, To wake and wage a danger profitless.

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

1 Off. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious, Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,

Have there injointed them with an after fleet.

1 Sen. Ay, so I thought.—How many, as you guess?

Mess. Of thirty sail; and now do they re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty, recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.

Duke. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus.—
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

1 Sen. He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us to him: post-post-haste
despatch.

1 Sen. Here comes Brabantio, and the valiant
Moor.

*Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and
Officers.*

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ
you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.—
[*To BRABANTIO.*] I did not see you; welcome,
gentle signior;

We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon
me;

Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
Hath rais'd me from my bed; nor doth the general
care

Take hold on me, for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature,
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

Duke. Why, what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter! O, my daughter!

Sen. Dead?

Bra. Ay, to me;
She is abus'd, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.

Duke. Whoe'er he be, that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguil'd your daughter of herself,
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
After your own sense; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

Bra. Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
Hath hither brought.

Duke and Sen. We are very sorry for it.

Duke. [*To OTHELLO.*] What, in your own part,
can you say to this?

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approv'd good masters,
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my
speech,

And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now, some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
Their dearest action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And, therefore, little shall I grace my cause,
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious
patience,

I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what
charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magic,
(For such proceeding I am charg'd withal,)
I won his daughter.

Bra. A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself; and she—in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, everything—
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!
It is a judgment maim'd, and most imperfect,
That will confess, perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning hell,
Why this should be. I, therefore, vouch again,
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof:
Without more wider and more overt test,
Than these thin habits, and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming, do prefer against him.

1 Sen. But, Othello, speak:
Did you by indirect and forced courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections;
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?

Oth. I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,
And let her speak of me before her father:
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them; you best know
the place.— [*Exeunt IAGO and Attendants.*]
And, till she come, as truly as to Heaven

I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.

I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it:
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent-deadly
breach;

Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance in my traveller's history;
Wherein of antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
heaven,

It was my hint to speak,—such was the process;—
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear,
Would Desdemona seriously incline:

But still the house-affairs would draw her hence;
Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse. Which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,

Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intently: I did consent;

And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore,—in faith, 't was strange, 't was passing
strange;

'T was pitiful, 't was wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it; yet she wish'd
That Heaven had made her such a man: she
thank'd me;

And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I lov'd her, that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd:
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants.

Duke. I think, this tale would win my daughter
too.

Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best:
Men do their broken weapons rather use,
Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you, hear her speak:
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man!—Come hither, gentle mistress:
Do you perceive in all this noble company,
Where most you owe obedience?

Des. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life and education;
My life and education, both do learn me
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty;
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my
husband;

And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord.

Bra. God be with you!—I have done.—
Please it your grace, on to the state affairs:
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.—
Come hither, Moor:

I here do give thee that with all my heart,
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

Duke. Let me speak like yourself, and lay a
sentence,
Which, as a grise, or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes de-
pendent.

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd, that smiles, steals something from the
thief:

He robs himself, that spends a bootless grief.

Bra. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile:
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears;
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:
But words are words; I never yet did hear,
That the bruised heart was pierced through the
ear.

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ear.



*"My noble father:
I do perceive here a divided duty."*

I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus.—Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must, therefore, be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave senators, Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnise A natural and prompt alacrity, I find in hardness; and do undertake These present wars against the Ottomites. Most humbly, therefore, bending to your state, I crave fit disposition for my wife; Due reference of place, and exhibition; With such accommodation, and besort, As levels with her breeding.

Duke. Why; at her father's.

Bra. I'll not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I; I would not there reside, To put my father in impatient thoughts, By being in his eye. Most gracious duke, To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear; And let me find a charter in your voice, To assist my simpleness.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona?

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him, My downright violence and storm of fortunes May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued Even to the very quality of my lord: I saw Othello's visage in his mind; And to his honours, and his valiant parts, Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate. So that, dear lords, if I be left behind, A moth of peace, and he go to the war, The rites for why I love him are bereft me, And I a heavy interim shall support By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

Oth. Let her have your voice.

Vouch with me, Heaven, I therefore beg it not, To please the palate of my appetite; Nor to comply with heat, the young affects, In my defunct and proper satisfaction; But to be free and bounteous to her mind: And Heaven defend your good souls, that you think

I will your serious and great business scant, For she is with me. No, when light-wing'd toys Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dulness My speculative and offic'd instrument,

That my disports corrupt and taint my business, Let housewives make a skillet of my helm, And all indign and base adversities Make head against my estimation.

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine, Either for her stay, or going. The affair cries haste, And speed must answer it.

I Sen. You must away to-night.

Oth. With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.

Othello, leave some officer behind, And he shall our commission bring to you; With such things else of quality and respect, As doth import you.

Oth. So please your grace, my ancient; A man he is of honesty, and trust: To his conveyance I assign my wife, With what else needful your good grace shall think To be sent after me.

Duke. Let it be so.— Good night to every one.—[*To BRABANTIO.*] And, noble signior,

If virtue no delighted beauty lack, Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

I Sen. Adieu, brave Moor! use Desdemona well.

Bra. Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see: She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt DUKE, Senators, Officers, &c.*]

Oth. My life upon her faith!—Honest Iago, My Desdemona must I leave to thee: I pr'ythee, let thy wife attend on her; And bring them after in the best advantage. Come, Desdemona; I have but an hour Of love, of worldly matters and direction, To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.*]

Rod. Iago!

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart?

Rod. What will I do, think'st thou?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago. Well, if thou dost, I shall never love thee after it. Why, thou silly gentleman!

Rod. It is silliness to live, when to live is a torment; and then have we a prescription to die, when death is our physician.

Iago. O, villainous! I have look'd upon the world for four times seven years, and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found a man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a Guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do? I confess, it is my

shame to be so fond ; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue? a fig! 't is in ourselves that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it steril with idleness, or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love, to be a sect, or scion.

Rod. It cannot be.

Iago. It is merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: drown thyself? drown cats, and blind puppies. I have profess'd me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness: I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow these wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be, that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor, —put money in thy purse,—nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement in her, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration;—put but money in thy purse.—These Moors are changeable in their wills;—fill thy purse with money:—the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice. —She must have change, she must: therefore, put money in thy purse.—If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst. If sanctimony and a frail vow, betwixt an erring barbarian and a super-subtle Venetian, be not too hard for my wits, and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore, make money. A pox

of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy, than to be drowned and go without her.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

Iago. Thou art sure of me.—Go, make money.—I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse; go: provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i' the morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning, do you hear?

Rod. I am changed. I'll sell all my land.

Iago. Go to; farewell! put money enough in your purse. [Exit RODERIGO.]

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if 't be true;
Yet I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will,
In double knavery,—How, how?—Let's see:—
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear,
That he is too familiar with his wife:
He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,
To be suspected; fram'd to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by the nose,
As asses are.—

I have 't;—it is engender'd:—hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's
light. [Exit.]



*SCENE I.—A Sea-port Town in Cyprus.
A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO and Two Gentlemen.

Mon. What from the cape can you discern at sea?

1 Gent. Nothing at all: it is a high-wrought flood;

I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the main,
Descry a sail.

Mon. Methinks, the wind hath spoke aloud at land;

A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements;
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

2 Gent. A segregation of the Turkish fleet:
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds;
The wind-shak'd surge, with high and monstrous mane,

Seems to cast water on the burning bear,
And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:
I never did like molestation view
On the unchafed flood.

Mon. If that the Turkish fleet
Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;
It is impossible to bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3 Gent. News, lads! our wars are done.
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
That their designment halts: a noble ship of
Venice

Hath seen a grievous wrack and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

Mon. How! is this true?

3 Gent. The ship is here put in,
A Veronessa; Michael Cassio,
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,

Is come on shore: the Moor himself at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I am glad on 't; 't is a worthy governor.

3 Gent. But this same Cassio, though he speak
of comfort,

Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were
parted

With foul and violent tempest.

Mon. 'Pray heavens he be;
For I have serv'd him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier. Let's to the sea-side, ho!
As well to see the vessel that's come in,
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
Even till we make the main, and the aerial blue,
An indistinct regard.

3 Gent. Come, let's do so;
For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

Enter CASSIO.

Cas. Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike
isle,
That so approve the Moor.—O! let the heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

Mon. Is he well shipp'd?

Cas. His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approv'd allowance;
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail, a sail!

Enter a Messenger.

Cas. What noise?

Mess. The town is empty; on the brow o' the
sea

Stand ranks of people, and they cry, "A sail!"

Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governor.
[*Guns heard.*]

2 *Gent.* They do discharge their shot of courtesy;
Our friends, at least.

Cas. I pray you, sir, go forth.
And give us truth who 't is that is arriv'd.

2 *Gent.* I shall. [*Exit.*]

Mon. But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?

Cas. Most fortunately: he hath achiev'd a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And, in the essential vesture of creation,
Does tire the ingener.

Re-enter second Gentleman.

How now! who has put in?

2 *Gent.* 'T is one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cas. He has had most favourable and happy speed:

Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,

The gutter'd rocks, and congregated sands,
Traitors ensteep'd to enclog the guiltless keel,
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

Mon. What is she?

Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,

Left in the conduct of the bold Iago;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts
A se'nnight's speed.—Great Jove! Othello guard,
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort!—

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO,
and Attendants.*

O, behold,

The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus let her have your knees.—
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of Heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

Cas. He is not yet arriv'd: nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O! but I fear—How lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship. But, hark! a sail.

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail! [*Guns heard.*]

2 *Gent.* They give their greeting to the citadel:
This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news!—

[*Exit Gentleman.*]

Good ancient, you are welcome.—[*To EMILIA.*]

Welcome, mistress.—

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners: 't is my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

[*Kissing her.*]

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips,
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas! she has no speech.

Iago. In faith, too much;
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on; you are pictures
out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in
your beds.

Des. O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

Iago. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk:
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

Emil. You shall not write my praise.

Iago. No, let me not.

Des. What wouldst thou write of me, if thou
shouldst praise me?

Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to 't;
For I am nothing, if not critical.

Des. Come on; assay.—There's one gone to
the harbour?

Iago. Ay, madam.

Des. I am not merry; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.—
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

Iago. I am about it; but, indeed, my invention
Comes from my pate, as birdlime does from frize;
It plucks out brains and all: but my Muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd.

If she be fair and wise,—fairness, and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well prais'd! How, if she be black and
witty?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

Des. Worse and worse.

Emil. How, if fair and foolish?

Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair;
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

Des. These are old fond paradoxes, to make
fools laugh i' the ale-house. What miserable
praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish there-
unto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud;
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;



"O my fair warrior!"

"My dear Othello!"

Des. O heavy ignorance! thou praisest the worst best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed? one, that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

Fled from her wish, and yet said, "Now I may;"
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly;
She that in wisdom never was so frail,
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;

She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following, and not look behind :
She was a wight,—if ever such wights were,—

Des. To do what?

Iago. To suckle fools, and chronicle small
beer.

Des. O most lame and impotent conclusion!—
Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy
husband.—How say you, Cassio? is he not a
most profane and liberal counsellor?

Cas. He speaks home, madam: you may relish
him more in the soldier, than in the scholar.

Iago. [*Aside.*] He takes her by the palm: ay,
well said, whisper: with as little a web as this
will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile
upon her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own
courtship. You say true, 't is so, indeed. If such
tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry,
it had been better you had not kissed your three
fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt
to play the sir in. Very good: well kissed, an
excellent courtesy! 't is so, indeed. Yet again
your fingers to your lips? would, they were
clyster-pipes for your sake!—[*A trumpet heard.*]
The Moor! I know his trumpet.

Cas. 'T is truly so.

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Cas. Lo, where he comes!

Enter OTHELLO and Attendants.

Oth. O my fair warrior!

Des. My dear Othello!

Oth. It gives me wonder great as my content,
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd
death;

And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,
Olympus high, and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,
'T were now to be most happy; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The heavens forbid,
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow!

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers!
I cannot speak enough to this content!
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
And this, and this, the greatest discords be,

[*Kissing her.*]

That e'er our hearts shall make!

Iago. [*Aside.*] O! you are well tun'd now;
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

Oth. Come, let us to the castle.—

News, friends: our wars are done, the Turks are
drown'd.

How does my old acquaintance of this isle?

Honey, you shall be well-desir'd in Cyprus;

I have found great love amongst them. O my
sweet,

I prattle out of fashion, and I dote

In mine own comforts.—I pry'thee, good Iago,

Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers.

Bring thou the master to the citadel;

He is a good one, and his worthiness

Does challenge much respect.—Come, Desdemona,
Once more well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.*]

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the har-
bour.—Come hither. If thou be'st valiant,—as
they say, base men being in love have then a
nobility in their natures more than is native to
them,—list me. The lieutenant to-night watches
on the court of guard.—First, I must tell thee
this,—Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod. With him! why, 't is not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be
instructed. Mark me with what violence she
first loved the Moor, but for bragging, and telling
her fantastical lies; and will she love him still
for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it.
Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she
have to look on the devil? When the blood is
made dull with the act of sport, there should be,
again to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh
appetite, loveliness in favour, sympathy in years,
manners, and beauties; all which the Moor is de-
fective in. Now, for the want of these required
conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find
itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish
and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct
her in it, and compel her to some second choice.
Now, sir, this granted (as it is a most pregnant
and unforced position), who stands so eminent in
the degree of this fortune, as Cassio does? a knave
very voluble, no further conscionable than in
putting on the mere form of civil and humane
seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and
most hidden-loose affection? why, none; why,
none: a slipper and subtle knave; a finder-out
of occasions; that has an eye can stamp and
counterfeit advantages, though true advantage
never present itself: a devilish knave! Besides,
the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those
requisites in him, that folly and green minds look
after; a pestilent complete knave: and the woman
hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her: she is full
of most blessed condition.

Iago. Blessed fig's end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor: bless'd pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod. Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

Iago. Lechery, by this hand! an index, and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips, that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion. Pish!—But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay 't upon you: Cassio knows you not:—I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline; or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden in choler, and, haply, may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny, whose qualification shall come into no true taste again, but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer them; and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

Rod. I will do this, if you can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me by-and-by at the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

Rod. Adieu. [Exit.]

Iago. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it; That she loves him, 't is apt, and of great credit: The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not— Is of a constant, loving, noble nature; And, I dare think, he'll prove to Desdemona A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too; Not out of absolute lust, (though, peradventure, I stand accountant for as great a sin,) But partly led to diet my revenge, For that I do suspect the lusty Moor Hath leap'd into my seat; the thought whereof Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards; And nothing can, or shall, content my soul, Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife; Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor At least into a jealousy so strong That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,— If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash

For his quick hunting, stand the putting-on,— I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip; Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb;— For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too;— Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,

For making him egregiously an ass, And practising upon his peace and quiet, Even to madness. 'T is here, but yet confus'd: Knavery's plain face is never seen, till us'd.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.—A Street.

Enter a Herald, with a proclamation; people following.

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him; for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open; and there is full liberty of feasting, from this present hour of five, till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus, and our noble general, Othello!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—A Hall in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants.

Oth. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:

Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop, Not to out-sport discretion.

Cas. Iago hath direction what to do; But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye Will I look to 't.

Oth. Iago is most honest. Michael, good night: to-morrow, with your earliest, Let me have speech with you.—[To DESDEMONA.]

* Come, my dear love: The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue; That profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you.— Good night.

[Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Welcome, Iago: we must to the watch.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant; 't is not yet ten o'clock. Our general cast us thus early for

the love of his Desdemona, who let us not therefore blame: he hath not yet made wanton the night with her, and she is sport for Jove.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed, she is a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest.

Iago. And, when she speaks, is it not an alarm to love?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoop of wine, and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

Cas. Not to-night, good Iago. I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago. O! they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man, 'tis a night of revels: the gallants desire it.

Cas. Where are they?

Iago. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

Cas. I'll do 't; but it dislikes me. [Exit.]

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him, With that which he hath drunk to-night already, He'll be as full of quarrel and offence As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool, Roderigo,

Whom love has turn'd almost the wrong side out, To Desdemona hath to-night carous'd Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch.

Three lads of Cyprus—noble, swelling spirits, That hold their honours in a wary distance, The very elements of this warlike isle—

Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups, And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,

Am I to put our Cassio in some action That may offend the isle.—But here they come. If consequence do but approve my dream, My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter CASSIO, *with him* MONTANO, *and gentlemen.*

Cas. 'Fore Heaven, they have given me a rouse already.

Mon. Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

Iago. Some wine, ho!

[*Sings.*] *And let me the canakin clink, clink;*

And let me the canakin clink:

A soldier's a man;

O, man's life's but a span;

Why then let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys!

[*Wine brought in.*]

Cas. 'Fore Heaven, an excellent song.

Iago. I learned it in England, where, indeed, they are most potent in potting; your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander, —drink, ho!—are nothing to your English.

Cas. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

Iago. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

Cas. To the health of our general!

Mon. I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.

Iago. O sweet England!

King Stephen was a worthy peer,

His breeches cost him but a crown;

He held them sixpence all too dear,

With that he call'd the tailor—lown.

He was a wight of high renown,

And thou art but of low degree:

'Tis pride that pulls the country down,

Then take thine auld cloak about thee.

Some wine, ho!

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear 't again?

Cas. No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place, that does those things.—Well, Heaven's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago. It is true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part,—no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,—I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay; but, by your leave, not before me: the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this: let's to our affairs.—God forgive us our sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my ancient;—this is my right hand, and this is my left hand.—I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.



"Hold, for your lives!"

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well then; you must not think then, that I am drunk. *[Exit.]*

Mon. To the platform, masters: come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow, that is gone before: He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar And give direction; and do but see his vice. 'Tis to his virtue a just equinox, The one as long as the other: 'tis pity of him. I fear, the trust Othello puts him in, On some odd time of his infirmity, Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep: He'll watch the horologe a double set, If drink rock not his cradle.

Mon. It were well, The general were put in mind of it. Perhaps, he sees it not; or his good nature Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio, And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?

Enter RODERIGO.

Iago. *[Aside to him.]* How now, Roderigo? I pray you, after the lieutenant; go.

[Exit RODERIGO.]

Mon. And 'tis great pity, that the noble Moor Should hazard such a place, as his own second, With one of an ingraft infirmity: It were an honest action to say So to the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island: I do love Cassio well, and would do much To cure him of this evil. But hark! what noise? *[Cry within: "Help! help!"]*

Re-enter CASSIO, pursuing RODERIGO.

Cas. You rogue! you rascal!

Mon. What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cas. A knave teach me my duty!

I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.

Rod. Beat me!

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue?

[Striking RODERIGO.]

Mon. Nay, good lieutenant; *[Staying him.]*

I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cas. Let me go, sir,

Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

Mon. Come, come; you're drunk.

Cas. Drunk! *[They fight.]*

Iago. *[Aside to RODERIGO.]* Away, I say! go out, and cry—a mutiny. *[Exit RODERIGO.]*

Nay! good lieutenant,—God's will, gentlemen!—Help, ho!—Lieutenant,—sir,—Montano,—sir;—

Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch, indeed!

[Bell rings.]

Who's that which rings the bell?—*Diablo*, ho!

The town will rise: God's will! lieutenant, hold!

You will be sham'd for ever.

Enter OTHELLO and Attendants.

Oth. What is the matter here?

Mon. I bleed still: I am hurt to the death.—He dies!

Oth. Hold, for your lives!

Iago. Hold, ho! Lieutenant,—sir,—Montano,—gentlemen!—

Have you forgot all sense of place and duty?

Hold! the general speaks to you: hold, for shame!

Oth. Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?

Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that, Which Heaven hath forbid the Ottomites? For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl: He that stirs next to carve for his own rage, Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion. Silence that dreadful bell! it frights the isle From her propriety.—What is the matter, masters?

Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving, Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

Iago. I do not know: friends all but now, even now,

In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom Devesting them for bed; and then, but now, (As if some planet had unwitted men,) Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast, In opposition bloody. I cannot speak Any beginning to this peevish odds; And would in action glorious I had lost Those legs, that brought me to a part of it!

Oth. How came it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

Cas. I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil; The gravity and stillness of your youth The world hath noted, and your name is great In mouths of wisest censure: what's the matter, That you unlace your reputation thus, And spend your rich opinion, for the name Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

Mon. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger: Your officer, Iago, can inform you— While I spare speech, which something now offends me,—

Of all that I do know; nor know I aught By me that's said or done amiss this night, Unless self-charity be sometime a vice, And to defend ourselves it be a sin, When violence assails us.

Oth. Now, by Heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgment collied,
Assays to lead the way. If I once stir,
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
How this foul rout began, who set it on;
And he that is approv'd in this offence,
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
Shall lose me.—What! in a town of war,
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel,
In night, and on the court and guard of safety!
'Tis monstrous.—Iago, who began it?

Mon. If partially affin'd, or leagu'd in office,
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

Iago. Touch me not so near;
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him.—Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow, crying out for help,
And Cassio following him with determin'd sword
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause:
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest by his clamour (as it so fell out)
The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose; and I return'd, the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath, which till to-night
I ne'er might say before. When I came back
(For this was brief), I found them close together,
At blow and thrust, even as again they were
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter can I not report:—
But men are men; the best sometimes forget:
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,
Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received
From him that fled some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.

Oth. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio.—Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.—

Re-enter DESDEMONA, attended.

Look, if my gentle love be not rais'd up!—
I'll make thee an example.

Des. What's the matter?

Oth. All's well now, sweeting; come away to
bed.—

Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon.—

Lead him off.— [*MONTANO is led off.*
Iago, look with care about the town,
And silence those whom this vile brawl dis-
tracted.—

Come, Desdemona; 't is the soldiers' life,
To have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife.

[*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO.*

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas. Ay; past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid!

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O!
I have lost my reputation. I have lost the im-
mortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial.
—My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you
had received some bodily wound; there is more
sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is
an idle and most false imposition; oft got without
merit, and lost without deserving: you have lost
no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself
such a loser. What, man! there are ways to
recover the general again: you are but now cast
in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in
malice; even so as one would beat his offenceless
dog, to affright an imperious lion. Sue to him
again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised, than to
deceive so good a commander with so slight, so
drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk?
and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger?
swear? and discourse fustian with one's own
shadow?—O thou invisible spirit of wine! if
thou hast no name to be known by, let us call
thee devil.

Iago. What was he that you followed with
your sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is't possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing
distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore.—
O God! that men should put an enemy in their
mouths, to steal away their brains! that we should,
with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, trans-
form ourselves into beasts!

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough: how
came you thus recovered?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil drunkenness, to
give place to the devil wrath: one unperfectness
shows me another, to make me frankly despise
myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler. As
the time, the place, and the condition of this
country stands, I could heartily wish this had not
befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your
own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again: he

shall tell me, I am a drunkard. Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by-and-by a fool, and presently a beast! O, strange!—Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago. Come, come; good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approved it, sir.—I drunk!

Iago. You, or any man living, may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general:—I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces:—confess yourself freely to her; importune her; she'll help to put you in your place again. She is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, that she holds it a vice in her goodness, not to do more than she is requested. This broken joint, between you and her husband, entreat her to splinter; and my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love, and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely; and, betimes in the morning, I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes, if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [*Exit.*]

Iago. And what's he then, that says I play the villain?

When this advice is free, I give, and honest,
 Probal to thinking, and, indeed, the course
 To win the Moor again? For 't is most easy,
 The inclining Desdemona to subdue
 In any honest suit: she's fram'd as fruitful
 As the free elements. And then for her
 To win the Moor,—were't to renounce his
 baptism,

All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—
 His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
 Even as her appetite shall play the god

With his weak function. How am I then a
 villain,

To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
 Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
 When devils will their blackest sins put on,
 They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
 As I do now; for whiles this honest fool
 Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
 I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
 That she repeals him for her body's lust;
 And, by how much she strives to do him good,
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
 And out of her own goodness make the net
 That shall enmesh them all.

Re-enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo?

Rod. I do follow here in the chase, not like a
 hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry.
 My money is almost spent: I have been to-night
 exceedingly well cudgelled; and, I think, the
 issue will be, I shall have so much experience for
 my pains; and so, with no money at all, and a
 little more wit, return again to Venice.

Iago. How poor are they, that have not
 patience!

What wound did ever heal, but by degrees?
 Thou know'st, we work by wit, and not by
 witchcraft;

And wit depends on dilatory time.
 Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
 And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd
 Cassio.

Though other things grow fair against the sun,
 Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe:
 Content thyself awhile.—By the mass, 't is morn-
 ing;

Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.
 Retire thee; go where thou art billeted:
 Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter:
 Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit RODERIGO.*] Two
 things are to be done,—

My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;
 I'll set her on;

Myself, the while, to draw the Moor apart,
 And bring him jump when he may Cassio find
 Soliciting his wife:—ay, that's the way:
 Dull not device by coldness and delay. [*Exit.*]



SCENE I.—Before the Castle.

Enter CASSIO and some Musicians.

Cas. Masters, play here; I will content your pains:

Something that's brief; and bid, "Good morrow, general." *[Music.]*

Enter Clown.

Clo. Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?

1 Mus. How, sir, how?

Clo. Are these, I pray you, called wind-instruments?

1 Mus. Ay, marry, are they, sir.

Clo. O! thereby hangs a tail.

1 Mus. Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

Clo. Marry, sir, by many a wind-instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you; and the general so likes your music, that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

1 Mus. Well, sir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any music that may not be heard, to't again; but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

1 Mus. We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away. Go; vanish into air, away!

[Exeunt Musicians.]

Cas. Dost thou hear, mine honest friend?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quilllets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee. If the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: wilt thou do this?

Clo. She is stirring, sir: if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.

Cas. Do, good my friend. *[Exit Clown.]*

Enter IAGO.

In happy time, Iago.

Iago. You have not been a-bed, then?

Cas. Why, no; the day had broke Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago, To send in to your wife: my suit to her Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona Procure me some access.

Iago. I'll send her to you presently; And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor Out of the way, that your converse and business May be more free.

Cas. I humbly thank you for't. *[Exit IAGO.]* I never knew A Florentine more kind and honest.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry For your displeasure; but all will sure be well.

The general and his wife are talking of it, And she speaks for you stoutly: the Moor replies,

That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus, And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom

He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves you,

And needs no other suitor but his likings, To take the saf'st occasion by the front, To bring you in again.

Cas. Yet, I beseech you,— If you think fit, or that it may be done,— Give me advantage of some brief discourse With Desdemon alone.

Emil. Pray you, come in: I will bestow you where you shall have time To speak your bosom freely.

Cas. I am much bound to you. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.—A Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen.

Oth. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot,
And by him do my duties to the senate:
That done, I will be walking on the works;
Repair there to me.

Iago. Well, my good lord; I'll do't.

Oth. This fortification, gentlemen,—shall we see't?

Gent. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—The Garden of the Castle.

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA.

Des. Be thou assur'd, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do: I warrant it grieves
my husband,
As if the cause were his.

Des. O! that's an honest fellow.—Do not
doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never anything but your true servant.

Des. I know't: I thank you. You do love my
lord;
You have known him long: and be you well
assur'd,
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.

Cas. Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.

Des. Do not doubt that: before Emilia here,
I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
I'll watch him tame, and talk him out of
patience;

His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift:
I'll intermingle everything he does
With Cassio's suit. Therefore, be merry, Cassio;
For thy solicitor shall rather die,
Than give thy cause away.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO, at a distance.

Emil. Madam, here comes my lord.

Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.

Des. Why, stay, and hear me speak.

Cas. Madam, not now: I am very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des. Well, do your discretion. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Iago. Ha! I like not that.

Oth. What dost thou say?

Iago. Nothing, my lord: or if—I know not
what.

Oth. Was not that Cassio, parted from my wife?

Iago. Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot
think it,

That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

Oth. I do believe 't was he.

Des. How now, my lord?

I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Oth. Who is 't you mean?

Des. Why, your lieutenant Cassio. Good my
lord,

If I have any grace, or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take;
For, if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,
I have no judgment in an honest face.
I pr'ythee, call him back.

Oth. Went he hence now?

Des. Ay, sooth; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

Oth. Not now, sweet Desdemon; some other
time.

Des. But shall 't be shortly?

Oth. The sooner, sweet, for you.

Des. Shall 't be to-night at supper?

Oth. No, not to-night.

Des. To-morrow dinner then?

Oth. I shall not dine at home;
I meet the captains at the citadel.

Des. Why then, to-morrow night; or Tuesday
morn;
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday
morn:

I pr'ythee, name the time, but let it not
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason,
(Save that, they say, the wars must make ex-
amples

Out of her best,) is not almost a fault
To incur a private check. When shall he come?
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul,
What you could ask me that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering on. What! Michael
Cassio,

That came a-wooing with you, and so many a
time,

When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,

Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much,—

Oth. Pr'ythee, no more: let him come when he
will;

I will deny thee nothing.

Des. Why, this is not a boon;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,
And fearful to be granted.

Oth. I will deny thee nothing:
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you? no. Farewell, my lord.

Oth. Farewell, my Desdemona: I'll come to
thee straight.

Des. Emilia, come.—Be as your fancies teach
you;

Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

[*Exit, with EMILIA.*]

Oth. Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my
soul,

But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.

Iago. My noble lord,—

Oth. What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my
lady,

Know of your love?

Oth. He did, from first to last; why dost thou
ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago. I did not think, he had been acquainted
with her.

Oth. O, yes; and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed?

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed:—discern'st thou
aught in that?

Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord?

Oth. Honest! ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord?

Oth. Think, my lord!

By Heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.—Thou dost mean
something.

I heard thee say even now,—thou lik'dst not that,
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?

And, when I told thee, he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criest,
“Indeed?”

And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

Iago. My lord, you know I love you.

Oth. I think, thou dost;
And,—for I know thou art full of love and
honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them
breath,—

Therefore, these stops of thine fright me the
more:

For such things, in a false disloyal knave,
Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just,
They're close delations, working from the heart,
That passion cannot rule.

Iago. For Michael Cassio,—
I dare be sworn, I think that he is honest.

Oth. I think so too.

Iago. Men should be what they seem;
Or, those that be not, would they might seem
none!

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why then, I think Cassio's an honest
man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this.

I pray thee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate; and give thy worst of
thoughts

The worst of words.

Iago. Good my lord, pardon me:
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.

Utter my thoughts? Why, say, they are vile
and false,—

As where's that palace, whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets, and law-days, and in sessions sit
With meditations lawful?

Oth. Thou dost conspire against thy friend,
Iago,

If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and mak'st his
ear

A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you,—
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,

(As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not,)—that your wisdom yet,
From one that so imperfectly conceits,
Would take no notice; nor build yourself a
trouble



"Good love, call him back."

Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

Oth. What dost thou mean?

Iago. Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,

Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse, steals trash; 't is something,
nothing;
'T was mine, 't is his, and has been slave to thou-
sands;

But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By Heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;

Nor shall not, whilst 't is in my custody.

Oth. Ha!

Iago. O! beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on: that cuckold lives in bliss,
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O! what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet soundly
loves!

Oth. O misery!

Iago. Poor, and content, is rich, and rich
enough;

But riches, fineless, is as poor as winter,
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.—
Good Heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

Oth. Why? why is this?

Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No: to be once in doubt,
Is once to be resolv'd. Exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'T is not to make me
jealous,

To say—my wife is fair, feeds well, loves com-
pany,

Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
I'll see, before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy.

Iago. I am glad of it: for now I shall have
reason

To show the love and duty that I bear you

With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye thus, not jealous, nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abus'd; look to 't.
I know our country disposition well:
In Venice they do let Heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best
conscience

Is, not to leave 't undone, but keep 't unknown.

Oth. Dost thou say so?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And, when she seem'd to shake and fear your
looks,

She lov'd them most.

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Why, go to, then;

She that so young could give out such a seeming,
To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak,—
He thought, 't was witchcraft:—but I am much to
blame;

I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
For too much loving you.

Oth. I am bound to thee for ever.

Iago. I see, this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. Trust me, I fear it has.

I hope, you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love.—But, I do see you're mov'd:
I am to pray you, not to strain my speech
To grosser issues, nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,

My speech should fall into such vile success
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy
friend—

My lord, I see you're mov'd.

Oth. No, not much mov'd.—

I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago. Long live she so! and long live you to
think so!

Oth. And yet, how nature erring from itself,—

Iago. Ay, there's the point:—as,—to be bold
with you,—

Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
Whereto, we see, in all things nature tends:
Foh! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.—
But pardon me; I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear,
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And, happily, repent.

Oth. Farewell, farewell.
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife to observe. Leave me, Iago.
Iago. My lord, I take my leave. [*Going.*]
Oth. Why did I marry?—This honest creature,
doubtless,
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.
Iago. [*Returning.*] My lord, I would I might
entreat your honour
To scan this thing no further; leave it to time.
Although 't is fit that Cassio have his place,
(For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,)
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
You shall by that perceive him and his means:
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment
With any strong or vehement importunity;
Much will be seen in that. In the meantime,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears
(As worthy cause I have to fear I am),
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

Oth. Fear not my government.

Iago. I once more take my leave. [*Exit.*]

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings; if I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have; or, for I am declin'd
Into the vale of years;—yet that's not much:
She's gone, I am abus'd; and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage!
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites. I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet, 't is the plague of great
ones;

Prerogativ'd are they less than the base;
'T is destiny unshunnable, like death:
Even then this forked plague is fated to us,
When we do quicken. Look, where she comes.
If she be false, O! then Heaven mocks itself.
I'll not believe it.

Re-enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA.

Des. How now, my dear Othello?
Your dinner and the generous islanders,
By you invited, do attend your presence.

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why do you speak so faintly?
Are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des. 'Faith, that's with watching; 't will away
again:

Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.

Oth. Your napkin is too little;
Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I am very sorry that you are not well.

[*Excunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.*]

Emil. I am glad I have found this napkin.
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,
(For he conjur'd her she should ever keep it,)
That she reserves it evermore about her,
To kiss, and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en
out,
And give 't Iago:
What he will do with it, Heaven knows, not I;
I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

Re-enter IAGO.

Iago. How now! what do you here alone?

Emil. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

Iago. A thing for me?—it is a common thing—

Emil. Ha?

Iago. To have a foolish wife.

Emil. O! is that all? What will you give me
now,

For that same handkerchief?

Iago. What handkerchief?

Emil. What handkerchief!

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stol'n it from her?

Emil. No, 'faith: she let it drop by negligence;
And, to the advantage, I, being here, took 't up.
Look, here it is.

Iago. A good wench; give it me.

Emil. What will you do with 't, that you have
been so earnest

To have me filch it?

Iago. Why, what's that to you?

[*Snatching it.*]

Emil. If it be not for some purpose of import,
Give 't me again: poor lady! she'll run mad,
When she shall lack it.

Iago. Be not acknown on 't; I have use for it.
Go, leave me. [*Exit EMILIA.*]

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it: trifles, light as air,
Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison:
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste;
But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.—I did say so:—
Look, where he comes!

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday.

Oth. Ha! ha! false to me?

Iago. Why, how now, general? no more of that.

Oth. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on
the rack.—

I swear, 't is better to be much abus'd,
Than but to know 't a little.

Iago. How now, my lord?

Oth. What sense had I of her stol'n hours of
lust?

I saw it not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and
merry;

I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know 't, and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago. I am sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. O now, for ever,
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troops, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

Iago. Is it possible?—My lord,—

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a
whore;

Be sure of it: give me the ocular proof;
Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
Than answer my wak'd wrath.

Iago. Is it come to this?

Oth. Make me to see 't; or, at the least, so
prove it,

That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,
To hang a doubt on: or woe upon thy life!

Iago. My noble lord,—

Oth. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;
On horror's head horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amaz'd:
For nothing canst thou to damnation add,
Greater than that.

Iago. O grace! O heaven forgive me!
Are you a man? have you a soul, or sense?—

God be wi' you; take mine office.—O wretched
fool,

Thou liv'st to make thine honesty a vice!—
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O
world!

To be direct and honest is not safe.—

I thank you for this profit; and, from hence,
I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

Oth. Nay, stay.—Thou shouldst be honest.

Iago. I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.

Oth. By the world,

I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.
I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as
fresh

As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black
As mine own face.—If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it.—Would I were satisfied!

Iago. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion.
I do repent me that I put it to you.

You would be satisfied?

Oth. Would! nay, I will.

Iago. And may; but how? how satisfied, my
lord?

Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on,—
Behold her tupp'd?

Oth. Death and damnation! O!

Iago. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect. Damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster,
More than their own! What then? how then?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
As ignorance made drunk: but yet, I say,
If imputation, and strong circumstances,
Which lead directly to the door of truth,
Will give you satisfaction, you might have it.

Oth. Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

Iago. I do not like the office;

But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,
Prick'd to 't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:
One of this kind is Cassio.

In sleep I heard him say,—“Sweet Desdemona;
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves!”

And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry,—“O sweet creature!” and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,

That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then
Cried,—“Cursed fate, that gave thee to the Moor!”

Oth. O monstrous! monstrous!

Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion:
'T is a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs,
That do demonstrate thinly.

Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing
done;

She may be honest yet. Tell me but this:
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand?

Oth. I gave her such a one: 't was my first
gift.

Iago. I know not that: but such a handkerchief
(I am sure it was your wife's) did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

Oth. If it be that,

Iago. If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

Oth. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 't is true.—Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven:
'T is gone.—

Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy
fraught,

For 't is of aspics' tongues!

Iago. Yet be content.

Oth. O, blood, blood, blood!

Iago. Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may
change.

Oth. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont:
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.—[*Kneeling.*] Now, by yond
marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words.

Iago. Do not rise yet.—[*Kneeling.*
Witness, you ever-burning lights above!
You elements that clip us round about!
Witness, that here Iago doth give up
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody business ever.

Oth. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance
bounteous,

And will upon the instant put thee to't:
Within these three days let me hear thee say,
That Cassio's not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead; 't is done at your
request:
But let her live.

Oth. Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago. I am your own for ever. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—Before the Castle.

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Clown.

Des. Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant
Cassio lies?

Clow. I dare not say he lies anywhere.

Des. Why, man?

Clow. He is a soldier; and for one to say a soldier
lies, is stabbing.

Des. Go to. Where lodges he?

Clow. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you
where I lie.

Des. Can anything be made of this?

Clow. I know not where he lodges; and for me
to devise a lodging, and say, he lies here, or he
lies there, were to lie in mine own throat.

Des. Can you inquire him out, and be edified
by report?

Clow. I will catechise the world for him; that is,
make questions, and by them answer.

Des. Seek him; bid him come hither; tell him,
I have moved my lord in his behalf, and hope, all
will be well.

Clow. To do this is within the compass of man's
wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it.

[*Exit.*]

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief,
Emilia?

Emil. I know not, madam.

Des. Believe me, I had rather have lost my
purse

Full of cruzadoes; and but my noble Moor
Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.

Emil. Is he not jealous?

Des. Who? he! I think the sun, where he was
born,

Drew all such humours from him.

Emil. Look, where he comes.

Des. I will not leave him now, till Cassio
Be call'd to him.—

Enter OTHELLO.

How is't with you, my lord?

Des. It yet has felt no age, nor known no
sorrow.

Oth. This argues fruitfulness, and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,



"If thou dost slander her, and torture me,

Never pray more."

Oth. Well, my good lady.—[*Aside.*] O, hard-
ness to dissemble!—
How do you, Desdemona?

Des. Well, my good lord.

Oth. Give me your hand. This hand is moist,
my lady.

Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'T is a good hand,
A frank one.

Des. You may, indeed, say so;
For 't was that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.

Des. I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

Oth. What promise, chuck?

Des. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth. I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me.
Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here, my lord.

Oth. That which I gave you.

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not?

Des. No, indeed, my lord.

Oth. That's a fault. That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
'T would make her amiable, and subdue my father

Entirely to her love; but if she lost it,
Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathed, and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me;
And bid me, when my fate would have me wived,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on 't;
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose 't or give 't away, were such perdition,
As nothing else could match.

Des. Is 't possible?

Oth. 'T is true: there's magic in the web of it.
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk,
And it was dy'd in mummy, which the skilful
Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.

Des. Indeed! is 't true?

Oth. Most veritable; therefore look to 't well.

Des. Then would to Heaven that I had never seen 't.

Oth. Ha! wherefore?

Des. Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

Oth. Is 't lost? is 't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

Des. Heaven bless us!

Oth. Say you?

Des. It is not lost; but what an if it were?

Oth. How?

Des. I say, it is not lost.

Oth. Fetch 't, let me see 't.

Des. Why, so I can, sir; but I will not now.
This is a trick, to put me from my suit:
I pray, let Cassio be receiv'd again.

Oth. Fetch me that handkerchief: my mind misgives.

Des. Come, come;

You 'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Oth. The handkerchief!

Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.

Oth. The handkerchief!

Des. A man that, all his time,
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love;
Shar'd dangers with you;—

Oth. The handkerchief!

Des. In sooth, you are to blame.

Oth. Away! [Exit.

Emil. Is not this man jealous?

Des. I ne'er saw this before.

Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief;
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emil. 'T is not a year or two shows us a man:
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full,
They belch us.—Look you! Cassio, and my husband.

Enter IAGO and CASSIO.

Iago. There is no other way; 't is she must do 't;

And, lo, the happiness! go, and importune her.

Des. How now, good Cassio? what's the news with you?

Cas. Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you,
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love,
Whom I, with all the office of my heart,
Entirely honour: I would not be delay'd.
If my offence be of such mortal kind,
That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,
Nor purpos'd merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit;
So shall I clothe me in a fore'd content,
And shut myself up in some other course,
To fortune's alms.

Des. Alas! thrice-gentle Cassio,
My advocacy is not now in tune;
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know
him,

Were he in favour, as in humour, alter'd.
So help me every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best,
And stood within the blank of his displeasure,
For my free speech. You must awhile be patient:
What I can do, I will; and more I will,
Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

Iago. Is my lord angry?

Emil. He went hence but now,
And, certainly, in strange unquietness.

Iago. Can he be angry? I have seen the
cannon,
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,
And, like the devil, from his very arm
Puff'd his own brother;—and can he be angry?
Something of moment, then: I will go meet him.
There's matter in 't, indeed, if he be angry.

Des. I pr'ythee, do so. [*Exit IAGO.*]—Some-
thing, sure, of state—
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practice,
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him—
Hath puddled his clear spirit; and, in such cases,
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'T is even so;
For let our finger ache, and it indues
Our other healthful members ev'n to that sense
Of pain. Nay, we must think, men are not gods;
Nor of them look for such observancy
As fits the bridal.—Beshrew me much, Emilia,
I was (unhandsome warrior as I am)
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul:
But now I find, I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indited falsely.

Emil. Pray Heaven it be state-matters, as you
think,
And no conception, nor no jealous toy,
Concerning you.

Des. Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

Emil. But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they are jealous: 't is a monster
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

Des. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's
mind!

Emil. Lady, Amen.

Des. I will go seek him.—Cassio, walk here-
about:
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship.
[*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA.*]

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. Save you, friend Cassio!

Cas. What make you from home?

How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
I' faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

Bian. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What! keep a week away? seven days and
nights?

Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning!

Cas. Pardon me, Bianca;
I have this while with leaden thoughts been
press'd;

But I shall, in a more continue time,
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
[*Giving her DESDEMONA'S handkerchief.*]
Take me this work out.

Bian. O Cassio, whence came this?
This is some token from a newer friend.
To the felt absence now I feel a cause.
Is it come to this? Well, well.

Cas. Go to, woman!
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,
From whence you have them. You are jealous
now,
That this is from some mistress, some remem-
brance:

No, in good troth, Bianca.

Bian. Why, whose is it?

Cas. I know not neither: I found it in my
chamber.

I like the work well: ere it be demanded
(As like enough it will), I'd have it copied:
Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

Bian. Leave you! wherefore?

Cas. I do attend here on the general,
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me woman'd.

Bian. Why, I pray you?

Cas. Not that I love you not.

Bian. But that you do not love me.
I pray you, bring me on the way a little;
And say, if I shall see you soon at night.

Cas. 'T is but a little way, that I can bring you,
For I attend here; but I'll see you soon.

Bian. 'T is very good: I must be circumstanc'd.
[*Exeunt.*]



SCENE I.—Before the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.

Iago. Will you think so?

Oth. Think so, Iago?

Iago. What!

To kiss in private?

Oth. An unauthoris'd kiss.

Iago. Or to be naked with her friend a-bed,
An hour, or more, not meaning any harm?

Oth. Naked a-bed, Iago, and not mean harm?
It is hypocrisy against the devil:
They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt
Heaven.

Iago. If they do nothing, 't is a venial slip:
But if I give my wife a handkerchief,—

Oth. What then?

Iago. Why, then 't is hers, my lord; and, being
hers,
She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.

Oth. She is protectress of her honour too:
May she give that?

Iago. Her honour is an essence that's not seen;
They have it very oft, they have it not:
But, for the handkerchief,—

Oth. By Heaven, I would most gladly have
forgot it.
Thou saidst,—O! it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infectious house,
Boding to all,—he had my handkerchief.

Iago. Ay, what of that?

Oth. That's not so good, now.

Iago. What, if I had said, I had seen him do
you wrong?
Or heard him say,—as knaves be such abroad,
Who, having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convinced or supplied them, cannot choose
But they must blab.

Oth. Hath he said anything?

Iago. He hath, my lord; but, be you well
assur'd,

No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. What hath he said?

Iago. 'Faith, that he did—I know not what he
did.

Oth. What? what?

Iago. Lie—

Oth. With her?

Iago. With her, on her; what you will.

Oth. Lie with her! lie on her!—We say, lie on
her, when they belie her. Lie with her! that's
fulsome.—Handkerchief,—confessions,—hand-
kerchief.—To confess, and be hanged for his
labour.—First, to be hanged, and then to confess:
—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest her-
self in such shadowing passion, without some in-
struction. It is not words, that shakes me thus.—
Pish!—Noses, ears, and lips.—Is it possible?—
Confess!—Handkerchief!—O devil!—

[*Falls in a trance.*]

Iago. Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are
caught;

And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus,
All guiltless, meet reproach.—What, ho! my lord!
My lord, I say! Othello!—

Enter CASSIO.

How now, Cassio?

Cas. What's the matter?

Iago. My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy:
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

Cas. Rub him about the temples.

Iago. No, forbear.
The lethargy must have his quiet course;
If not, he foams at mouth; and, by-and-by,
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,

He will recover straight: when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you.—
[Exit CASSIO.]

How is it, general? have you hurt your head?

Oth. Dost thou mock me?

Iago. I mock you! no, by Heaven.

'Would you would bear your fortune like a man.

Oth. A horned man's a monster, and a beast.

Iago. There's many a beast then in a populous
city,

And many a civil monster.

Oth. Did he confess it?

Iago. Good sir, be a man;

Think, every bearded fellow, that's but yok'd,
May draw with you: there's millions now alive,
That nightly lie in those unproper beds,
Which they dare swear peculiar: your case is
better.

O! 't is the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,
And to suppose her chaste. No, let me know;
And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

Oth. O! thou art wise; 't is certain.

Iago. Stand you awhile apart;

Confine yourself but in a patient list.
Whilst you were here, o'erwhelmed with your grief
(A passion most unsuited such a man),
Cassio came hither: I shifted him away,
And laid good 'seuse upon your ecstasy;
Bade him anon return, and here speak with me;
The which he promis'd. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face;
For I will make him tell the tale anew,
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
He hath, and is again to cope your wife:
I say, but mark his gesture.—Marry, patience;
Or I shall say, you are all in all in spleen,
And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago?

I will be found most cunning in my patience;
But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

[OTHELLO withdraws.]

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
A housewife, that by selling her desires
Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature,
That dotes on Cassio, as 't is the strumpets' plague,
To beguile many, and be beguil'd by one.
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
From the excess of laughter.—Here he comes.—

Re-enter CASSIO.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
And his unbookish jealousy must construe

Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviour
Quite in the wrong.—How do you now, lieutenant?

Cas. The worsen, that you give me the addition,
Whose want even kills me.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure
on't.

[Speaking lower.] Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's
dower,

How quickly should you speed!

Cas. Alas, poor caitiff!

Oth. [Aside.] Look, how he laughs already!

Iago. I never knew woman love man so.

Cas. Alas, poor rogue! I think, i' faith, she
loves me.

Oth. [Aside.] Now he denies it faintly, and
laughs it out.

Iago. Do you hear, Cassio?

Oth. [Aside.] Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er. Go to; well said, well said.

Iago. She gives it out, that you shall marry
her:

Do you intend it?

Cas. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. [Aside.] Do you triumph, Roman! do you
triumph?

Cas. I marry her!—what! a customer? I pr'y-
thee, bear some charity to my wit; do not think
it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

Oth. [Aside.] So, so, so, so. They laugh that
win.

Iago. 'Faith, the cry goes, that you shall marry
her.—

Cas. Pr'ythee, say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Oth. [Aside.] Have you scored me? Well.

Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out: she
is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own
love and flattery, not out of my promise.

Oth. [Aside.] Iago beckons me: now he begins
the story.

Cas. She was here even now; she haunts me
in every place. I was, the other day, talking on
the sea-bank with certain Venetians, and thither
comes the bauble; and, by this hand, she falls
me thus about my neck;—

Oth. [Aside.] Crying, O dear Cassio! as it
were: his gesture imports it.

Cas. So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me;
so hales and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!—

Oth. [Aside.] Now he tells, how she plucked
him to my chamber. O! I see that nose of
yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me! look, where she comes.

Cas. 'T is such another fitchew! marry, a per-
fumed one.

Enter BIANCA.

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bian. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief, you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work!—A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and know not who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work! There, give it your hobby-horse: where-soever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

Cas. How now, my sweet Bianca! how now, how now!

Oth. [*Aside.*] By Heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

Bian. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [*Exit.*]

Iago. After her, after her.

Cas. 'Faith, I must; she'll rail in the street else.

Iago. Will you sup there?

Cas. 'Faith, I intend so.

Iago. Well, I may chance to see you, for I would very fain speak with you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, come; will you?

Iago. Go to; say no more. [*Exit* CASSIO.

Oth. [*Advancing.*] How shall I murder him, Iago?

Iago. Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

Oth. O, Iago!

Iago. And did you see the handkerchief?

Oth. Was that mine?

Iago. Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman, your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

Oth. I would have him nine years a-killing.—A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

Iago. Nay, you must forget that.

Oth. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night; for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O! the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago. Nay, that's not your way.

Oth. Hang her! I do but say what she is.—So delicate with her needle!—An admirable musician! O! she will sing the savageness out of a bear.—Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!—

Iago. She's the worse for all this.

Oth. O! a thousand, a thousand times. And then, of so gentle a condition!

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that's certain:—but yet the pity of it, Iago!—O, Iago! the pity of it, Iago!

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend: for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes.—Cuckold me!

Iago. O! 't is foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer!

Iago. That's fouler.

Oth. Get me some poison, Iago; this night:—I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again.—This night, Iago.

Iago. Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Oth. Good, good: the justice of it pleases; very good.

Iago. And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker: you shall hear more by midnight.

[*A trumpet within.*]

Oth. Excellent good.—What trumpet is that same?

Iago. Something from Venice, sure. 'T is Lodovico, Come from the duke; and, see, your wife is with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.

Lod. God save the worthy general!

Oth. With all my heart, sir.

Lod. The duke and senators of Venice greet you. [*Giving him a packet.*]

Oth. I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

[*Opens the packet, and reads.*]

Des. And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

Iago. I am very glad to see you, signior: Welcome to Cyprus.

Lod. I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

Iago. Lives, sir.

Des. Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord

An unkind breach, but you shall make all well.

Oth. Are you sure of that?

Des. My lord?

Oth. [*Reading.*] "This fail you not to do, as you will"—

Lod. He did not call; he's busy in the paper. Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

Des. A most unhappy one: I would do much To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

Oth. Fire and brimstone!

Des. My lord?

Oth. Are you wise?

Des. What! is he angry?

Lod. May be, the letter mov'd him;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

Though I should swear I saw it. 'Tis very much:
Make her amends, she weeps.

Oth. O devil, devil!
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,



'How now, my sweet Bianca! how now, how now!'

Des. Trust me I am glad on't.

Oth. Indeed?

Des. My lord?

Oth. I am glad to see you mad.

Des. How, sweet Othello?

Oth. Devil! [*Striking her.*]

Des. I have not deserv'd this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believ'd in
Venice,

Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.—
Out of my sight!

Des. I will not stay to offend you. [*Going.*]

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady.—

I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress!

Des. My lord?

Oth. What would you with her, sir?

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

Oth. Ay; you did wish, that I would make her turn:

Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,—
Very obedient.—Proceed you in your tears.—
Concerning this, sir,—O well-painted passion!—
I am commanded home.—Get you away;
I'll send for you anon.—Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice.—Hence! avaunt!—

[*Exit* DESDEMONA.]

Cassio shall have my place. And,—sir, to-night,
I do entreat that we may sup together:

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.—Goats and
monkeys! [*Exit.*]

Lod. Is this the noble Moor whom our full
senate

Call all-in-all sufficient?—Is this the nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze, nor pierce?

Iago. He is much chang'd.

Lod. Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

Iago. He's that he is: I may not breathe my
censure.

What he might be,—if, what he might, he is not,—
I would to Heaven, he were!

Lod. What! strike his wife!

Iago. 'Faith, that was not so well; yet 'would
I knew,

That stroke would prove the worst.

Lod. Is it his use?

Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault?

Iago. Alas, alas!

It is not honesty in me, to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe
him,

And his own courses will denote him so,
That I may save my speech. Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

Lod. I am sorry, that I am deceiv'd in him.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA.

Oth. You have seen nothing then?

Emil. Nor ever heard; nor ever did suspect.

Oth. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

Emil. But then I saw no harm; and then I
heard

Each syllable that breath made up between them.

Oth. What, did they never whisper?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. Nor send you out o' the way?

Emil. Never.

Oth. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor
nothing?

Emil. Never, my lord.

Oth. That's strange.

Emil. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let Heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.

Oth. Bid her come hither:—go.—

[*Exit* EMILIA.]

She says enough;—yet she's a simple bawd,
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets:
And yet she'll kneel, and pray; I have seen
her do't.

Re-enter EMILIA, with DESDEMONA.

Des. My lord, what is your will?

Oth. Pray, chuck, come hither.

Des. What is your pleasure?

Oth. Let me see your eyes:

Look in my face.

Des. What horrible fancy's this?

Oth. [*To* EMILIA.] Some of your function,
mistress;

Leave procreants alone, and shut the door;

Cough, or cry hem, if anybody come:

Your mystery, your mystery;—nay, despatch.

[*Exit* EMILIA.]

Des. Upon my knees, what doth your speech
import?

I understand a fury in your words,

But not the words.

Oth. Why, what art thou?

Des. Your wife, my lord; your true and loyal
wife.

Oth. Come, swear it, damn thyself;

Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils them-
selves

Should fear to seize thee: therefore, be double-
damn'd;

Swear thou art honest.

Des. Heaven doth truly know it.

Oth. Heaven truly knows, that thou art false
as hell.

Des. To whom, my lord? with whom? how am
I false?

Oth. Ah, Desdemon!—away, away, away!

Des. Alas, the heavy day!—Why do you weep?
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?

If, haply, you my father do suspect

An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me; if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

Oth. Had it pleas'd Heaven
To try me with affliction; had they rain'd
All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head;
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some place of my soul
A drop of patience: but, alas! to make me
The fixed figure, for the time of scorn
To point his slow and moving finger at,—
Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
Where either I must live, or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence,
Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
To knot and gender in!—turn thy complexion
there,
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin;
Ay, there, look grim as hell!

Des. I hope, my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth. O! ay; as summer flies are in the
shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed!
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
That the sense aches at thee,—'would thou hadst
ne'er been born!

Des. Alas! what ignorant sin have I com-
mitted?

Oth. Was this fair paper, this most goodly
book,
Made to write whore upon? What committed?
Committed!—O thou public commoner!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds.—What committed?
Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
And will not hear it. What committed?—
Impudent strumpet!

Des. By Heaven, you do me wrong.

Oth. Are not you a strumpet?

Des. No, as I am a Christian.
If to preserve this vessel for my lord,
From any other foul unlawful touch,
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Oth. What, not a whore?

Des. No, as I shall be saved.

Oth. Is it possible?

Des. O, Heaven forgive us!

Oth. I cry you mercy then:
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
That married with Othello.—You, mistress,

That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
And keep the gate of hell!

Re-enter EMILIA.

You, you, ay, you:
We have done our course; there's money for
your pains.
I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel.

[*Exit.*

Emil. Alas! what does this gentleman con-
ceive?—

How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?

Des. 'Faith, half asleep.

Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with
my lord?

Des. With who?

Emil. Why, with my lord, madam.

Des. Who is thy lord?

Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des. I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia:
I cannot weep; nor answer have I none,
But what should go by water. Pr'ythee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets,—remem-
ber;—

And call thy husband hither.

Emil. Here's a change, indeed!

[*Exit.*

Des. 'T is meet I should be us'd so, very meet.
How have I been behav'd, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

Re-enter EMILIA, with IAGO.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam? How
is 't with you?

Des. I cannot tell. Those, that do teach young
babes,

Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:

He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

Iago. What's the matter, lady?

Emil. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhor'd her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

Des. Am I that name, Iago?

Iago. What name, fair lady?

Des. Such as she says my lord did say I was.

Emil. He call'd her whore: a beggar in his
drink

Could not have laid such terms upon his callat.

Iago. Why did he so?

Des. I do not know; I am sure, I am none
such.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

Emil. Hath she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father, and her country, and her friends,
To be call'd whore? would it not make one weep?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.
Iago. Beshrew him for't!
 How comes this trick upon him?
Des. Nay, Heaven doth know.

Emil. A halter pardon him, and hell gnaw his bones!
 Why should he call her whore? who keeps her company?



*"Let me see your eyes:
 Look in my face."*

Emil. I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,
 Some busy and insinuating rogue,
 Some cogging cozening slave, to get some office,
 Hath not devis'd this slander; I'll be hang'd
 else.

Iago. Fie! there is no such man: it is impossible.

Des. If any such there be, Heaven pardon him!

What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?
 The Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave,
 Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.—
 O Heaven! that such companions thou'dst unfold,
 And put in every honest hand a whip,

To lash the rascals naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west!

Iago. Speak within door.

Emil. O, fie upon them! Some such squire he
was,

That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool; go to.

Des. O good Iago!

What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of
heaven,

I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:—
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought, or actual deed;
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will,—though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement,—love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do
much;

And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say where:
It does abhor me, now I speak the word;
To do the act that might the addition earn,
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

Iago. I pray you, be content; 't is but his
humour:

The business of the state does him offence,
And he does chide with you.

Des. If 't were no other,—

Iago. 'T is but so, I warrant.
[*Trumpets.*]

Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!
The messengers of Venice stay the meat.

Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo?

Rod. I do not find that thou deal'st justly with
me.

Iago. What in the contrary?

Rod. Every day thou daff'st me with some
device, Iago; and rather, as it seems to me now,
keep'st from me all conveniency, than suppliest
me with the least advantage of hope. I will,
indeed, no longer endure it; nor am I yet per-
suaded, to put up in peace what already I have
foolishly suffered.

Iago. Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Rod. 'Faith, I have heard too much; for your
words, and performances, are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted

myself out of my means. The jewels you have
had from me, to deliver to Desdemona, would
half have corrupted a votarist: you have told me,
she hath received them, and returned me expecta-
tions and comforts of sudden respect and acquaint-
ance; but I find none.

Iago. Well; go to; very well.

Rod. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man:
nor 't is not very well: by this hand, I say, it is
very scurvy; and begin to find myself fopped
in it.

Iago. Very well.

Rod. I tell you, 't is not very well. I will
make myself known to Desdemona: if she will
return me my jewels, I will give over my suit,
and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, as-
sure yourself, I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said now.

Rod. Ay, and I have said nothing, but what I
protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee;
and even, from this instant, do build on thee a
better opinion than ever before. Give me thy
hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a
most just exception; but yet, I protest I have
dealt most directly in thy affair.

Rod. It hath not appeared.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appeared, and
your suspicion is not without wit and judgment.
But, Roderigo, if thou hast that within thee in-
deed, which I have greater reason to believe now
than ever,—I mean, purpose, courage, and valour,
—this night show it: if thou the next night follow-
ing enjoyest not Desdemona, take me from this
world with treachery, and devise engines for my
life.

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason and
compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come
from Venice, to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why, then Othello and Des-
demona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no! he goes into Mauritania, and takes
away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his
abode be lingered here by some accident; where-
in none can be so determinate, as the removing of
Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean, removing him?

Iago. Why, by making him incapable of
Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me do?

Iago. Ay: if you dare do yourself a profit, and
a right. He sups to-night with a harlotry, and
thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of
his honourable fortune. If you will watch his
going thence (which I will fashion to fall out

between twelve and one), you may take him at your pleasure: I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste: about it.

Rod. I will hear further reason for this.

Iago. And you shall be satisfied. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—Another Room in the Castle.

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. O! pardon me; 't will do me good to walk.

Lod. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your honour is most welcome.

Oth. Will you walk, sir?—

O!—Desdemona,—

Des. My lord?

Oth. Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned forthwith: dismiss your attendant there: look it be done.

Des. I will, my lord.

[Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and Attendants.

Emil. How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

Des. He says, he will return incontinent; He hath commanded me to go to bed, And bade me to dismiss you.

Emil. Dismiss me!

Des. It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,

Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu: We must not now displease him.

Emil. I would you had never seen him.

Des. So would not I: my love doth so approve him,

That even his stubbornness, his checks, and frowns,—

Pr'ythee, unpin me,—have grace and favour in them.

Emil. I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

Des. All's one.—Good father! how foolish are our minds!—

If I do die before thee, pr'ythee, shroud me In one of those same sheets.

Emil. Come, come, you talk.

Des. My mother had a maid call'd Barbara: She was in love; and he she lov'd prov'd mad, And did forsake her: she had a song of—willow; An old thing 't was, but it express'd her fortune, And she died singing it: that song, to-night, Will not go from my mind; I have much to do, But to go hang my head all at one side, And sing it like poor Barbara. Pr'ythee, despatch.

Emil. Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

Des. No, unpin me here.— This Lodovico is a proper man.

Emil. A very handsome man.

Des. He speaks well.

Emil. I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to Palestine, for a touch of his nether lip.

Des. [Singing.] *The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree;*

Sing all a green willow;

Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee;

Sing willow, willow, willow:

The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;

Sing willow, willow, willow;

Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;

Lay by these.—

Sing willow, willow, willow.

Pr'ythee, hie thee: he'll come anon.—

*Sing all a green willow must be my garland,
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve,—*

Nay, that's not next.—Hark! who is it that knocks?

Emil. It is the wind.

Des. I call'd my love, false love; but what said he then?

Sing willow, willow, willow:

If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men.

So, get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;

Doth that bode weeping?

Emil. 'T is neither here nor there.

Des. I have heard it said so.—O, these men, these men!—

Dost thou in conscience think,—tell me, Emilia,— That there be women do abuse their husbands In such gross kind?

Emil. There be some such, no question.

Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emil. Why, would not you?

Des. No, by this heavenly light!

Emil. Nor I neither by this heavenly light: I might do 't as well i' the dark.

Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emil. The world is a huge thing: 't is a great price
For a small vice.

Des. In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

Emil. In troth, I think I should, and undo 't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but, for the whole world,—why, who would not make her husband a cuckold, to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for 't.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.

Emil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and, having the world for your labour, 't is a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

Des. I do not think there is any such woman.

Emil. Yes, a dozen; and as many to the vantage,

As would store the world they played for.

But, I do think, it is their husbands' faults,
If wives do fall. Say, that they slack their
duties,

And pour our treasures into foreign laps;

Or else break out in peevish jealousies,

Throwing restraint upon us; or, say, they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite:

Why, we have galls; and, though we have some
grace,

Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know,
Their wives have sense like them: they see, and
smell,

And have their palates, both for sweet and sour,

As husbands have. What is it that they do,

When they change us for others? Is it sport?

I think, it is. And doth affection breed it?

I think, it doth. Is 't frailty, that thus errs?

It is so too. And have not we affections,

Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?

Then, let them use us well; else let them know,

The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

Des. Good night, good night: Heaven me such
uses send,

Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!

[*Exeunt.*]





SCENE I.—A Street.

Enter IAGO and RODERIGO.

Iago. Here, stand behind this bulk; straight will he come:

Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home. Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow. It makes us, or it mars us; think on that, And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod. Be near at hand; I may miscarry in't.

Iago. Here, at thy hand: be bold, and take thy stand. [*Retires.*]

Rod. I have no great devotion to the deed; And yet he has given me satisfying reasons.—'Tis but a man gone:—forth, my sword; he dies.

Iago. I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense, And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,

Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other, Every way makes my gain: live Roderigo, He calls me to a restitution large Of gold, and jewels, that I bobb'd from him, As gifts to Desdemona; It must not be: if Cassio do remain, He hath a daily beauty in his life, That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor May unfold me to him: there stand I in much peril.

No, he must die:—but, so I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO.

Rod. I know his gait; 't is he.—Villain, thou diest.

[*Rushing out, and making a pass at CASSIO.*]

Cas. That thrust had been mine enemy indeed, But that my coat is better than thou know'st: I will make proof of thine.

[*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO.*]

Rod. O, I am slain!

[*IAGO rushes from his post, cuts CASSIO behind in the leg, and exits.*]

Cas. I am maim'd for ever.—Help, ho! murder! murder! [*Falls.*]

Enter OTHELLO, at a distance.

Oth. The voice of Cassio:—Iago keeps his word.

Rod. O, villain that I am!

Oth. It is even so.

Cas. O, help! ho! light! a surgeon!

Oth. 'T is he.—O brave Iago, honest, and just, That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong! Thou teachest me,—Minion, your dear lies dead, And your unblest fate lies:—strumpet, I come! Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;

Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be spotted. [*Exit.*]

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO, at a distance.

Cas. What, ho! no watch? no passage? murder! murder!

Gra. 'T is some mischance; the cry is very direful.

Cas. O, help!

Lod. Hark!

Rod. O wretched villain!

Lod. Two or three groan.—It is a heavy night! These may be counterfeits; let's think 't unsafe To come in to the cry without more help.

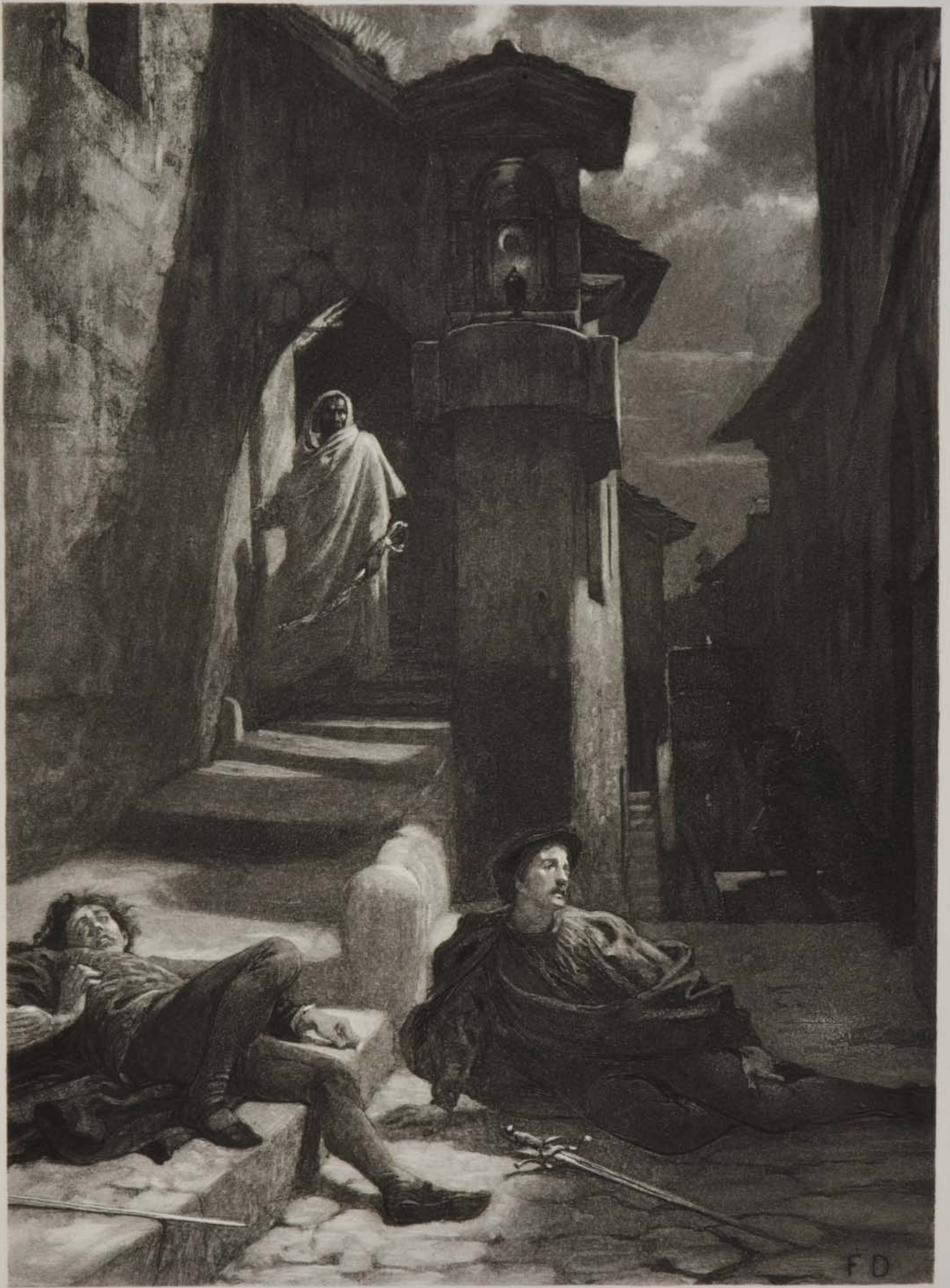
Rod. Nobody come? then shall I bleed to death.

Lod. Hark!

Re-enter IAGO, with a light.

Gra. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

Iago. Who's there? whose noise is this, that cries on murder?



"The voice of Cassio:- Iago keeps his word"

Lod. We do not know.

Iago. Did not you hear a cry?

Cas. Here, here! for Heaven's sake, help me!

Iago. What's the matter?

Gra. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lod. The same, indeed; a very valiant fellow.

Iago. What are you here, that cry so grievously?

Cas. Iago? O! I am spoil'd, undone by villains:
Give me some help.

Iago. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done
this?

Cas. I think that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.

Iago. O treacherous villains!—
[*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO.*] What are you there?
come in, and give some help.

Rod. O, help me here!

Cas. That's one of them.

Iago. O murderous slave! O villain!
[*Stabs RODERIGO.*]

Rod. O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!

Iago. Kill men i' the dark!—Where be these
bloody thieves?—

How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!
What may you be? are you of good, or evil?

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago. Signior Lodovico?

Lod. He, sir.

Iago. I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by
villains.

Gra. Cassio?

Iago. How is't, brother?

Cas. My leg is cut in two.

Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid!—
Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. What is the matter, ho? who is't that
cried?

Iago. Who is't that cried?

Bian. O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio!

O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

Iago. O notable strumpet!—Cassio, may you
suspect

Who they should be, that have thus mangled you?

Cas. No.

Gra. I am sorry to find you thus: I have been
to seek you.

Iago. Lend me a garter:—so.—O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!

Bian. Alas! he faints.—O Cassio, Cassio,
Cassio!

Iago. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.—
Patience awhile, good Cassio.—Come, come.
Lend me a light.—Know we this face, or no?

Alas! my friend, and my dear countryman,
Roderigo? no:—yes, sure. O Heaven! Roderigo.

Gra. What, of Venice?

Iago. Even he, sir; did you know him?

Gra. Know him? ay.

Iago. Signor Gratiano? I cry you gentle
pardon:

These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

Gra. I am glad to see you.

Iago. How do you, Cassio?—O, a chair, a
chair!

Gra. Roderigo!

Iago. He, he, 't is he.—[*A chair brought in.*] O!
that's well said;—the chair.—

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon.—[*To BIANCA.*]

For you, mistress,

Save you your labour.—He that lies slain here,
Cassio,

Was my dear friend. What malice was between
you?

Cas. None in the world; nor do I know the
man.

Iago. [*To BIANCA.*] What, look you pale?—O,
bear him out o' the air.—

[*CASSIO and RODERIGO are borne off.*]

Stay you, good gentlemen.—Look you pale,
mistress?—

Do you perceive the ghastness of her eye?—

Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.—

Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her:

Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will
speak,

Though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. 'Las! what's the matter? what's the
matter, husband?

Iago. Cassio hath here been set on in the dark
By Roderigo, and fellows that are 'scap'd.
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

Emil. Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

Iago. This is the fruits of whoring.—Pr'ythee,
Emilia,

Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night.—
What! do you shake at that?

Bian. He supp'd at my house; but I therefore
shake not.

Iago. O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

Emil. Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet!

Bian. I am no strumpet; but of life as honest,
As you that thus abuse me.

Emil. As I? foh! fie upon thee!

Iago. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio
dress'd.—

Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale.—
 Emilia, run you to the citadel,
 And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd.—
 Will you go on afore?—[*Aside.*] This is the night,
 That either makes me, or fordoes me quite.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A Bedchamber.

DESDEMONA *in bed asleep.* A light burning.

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—
 It is the cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood;
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
 And smooth as monumental alabaster.
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light, and then put out the light:
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore,
 Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd
 thy rose,
 I cannot give it vital growth again,
 It needs must wither:—I'll smell it on the tree.—

[*Kissing her.*]

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
 Justice to break her sword!—One more, one
 more.—

Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
 And love thee after.—One more, and this the last:
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
 But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
 It strikes where it doth love.—She wakes.

Des. Who's there? Othello?

Oth. Ay, Desdemona.

Des. Will you come to bed, my lord?

Oth. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemon?

Des. Ay, my lord.

Oth. If you bethink yourself of any crime,
 Unreconcil'd as yet to Heaven and grace,
 Solicit for it straight.

Des. Alas, my lord! what may you mean by
 that?

Oth. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
 I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
 No,—Heaven forbid!—I would not kill thy soul.

Des. Talk you of killing?

Oth. Ay, I do.

Des. Then, Heaven
 Have mercy on me!

Oth. Amen, with all my heart!

Des. If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth. Hum!

Des. And yet I fear you; for you are fatal
 then,

When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear, I
 know not,

Since guiltiness I know not; but yet, I feel I
 fear.

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They are loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des. That death's unnatural, that kills for
 loving.—

Alas! why gnaw you so your nether lip?
 Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
 These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
 They do not point on me.

Oth. Peace, and be still!

Des. I will so. What's the matter?

Oth. That handkerchief, which I so lov'd and
 gave thee,

Thou gav'st to Cassio.

Des. No, by my life and soul!
 Send for the man, and ask him.

Oth. Sweet soul, take heed,
 Take heed of perjury: thou art on thy death
 bed.

Des. Ay, but not yet to die.

Oth. Yes, presently:

Therefore, confess thee freely of thy sin;
 For to deny each article with oath
 Cannot remove, nor choke, the strong conception,
 That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Then Lord have mercy on me!

Oth. I say, Amen.

Des. And have you mercy too!—I never did
 Offend you in my life; never lov'd Cassio,
 But with such general warranty of Heaven
 As I might love: I never gave him token.

Oth. By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's
 hand.

O perjur'd woman! thou dost stone my heart,
 And mak'st me call what I intend to do,
 A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:
 I saw the handkerchief.

Des. He found it then;
 I never gave it him.—Send for him hither;
 Let him confess a truth.

Oth. He hath confess'd.

Des. What, my lord?

Oth. That he hath us'd thee.

Des. How? unlawfully?

Oth. Ay.

Des. He will not say so.

Oth. No; his mouth is stopp'd:
 Honest Iago hath ta'en order for 't.

Des. O, my fear interprets.—What, is he dead?

Oth. Had all his hairs been lives, my great
revenge
Had stomach for them all.

Des. Alas! he is betray'd, and I undone.

Oth. Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to
my face?

Des. O! banish me, my lord, but kill me not.

Oth. Down, strumpet!

Des. Kill me to-morrow; let me live to-night.

Oth. Nay, if you strive,—

Des. But half an hour!

Oth. Being done, there is no pause.

Des. But while I say one prayer.

Oth. It is too late. [*He smothers her.*]

Emil. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord! what, ho!
my lord, my lord!

Oth. What noise is this?—Not dead? not yet
quite dead?

I, that am cruel, am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.—
So, so.

Emil. [*Within.*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

Oth. Who's there?

Emil. [*Within.*] O, good my lord! I would speak
a word with you.

Oth. Yes;—'t is Emilia:—by-and-by.—She's
dead.—

'T is like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;
The noise was high.—Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave.—Shall she come in? Were't
good?—

I think she stirs again:—no.—What's best to do?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no
wife:

O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

Emil. [*Within.*] I do beseech you, I may speak
with you.

O, good my lord!

Oth. I had forgot thee. O! come in, Emilia.—
Soft,—by-and-by:—let me the curtains draw.—
Where art thou? What's the matter with thee
now? [*Unlocks the door.*]

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. O, my good lord! yonder's foul murder
done.

Oth. What! now?

Emil. But now, my lord.

Oth. It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more nearer earth than she was
wont,
And makes men mad.

Emil. Cassio, my lord, has kill'd a young
Venetian,
Called Roderigo.

Oth. Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd!

Emil. No; Cassio is not kill'd.

Oth. Not Cassio kill'd? Then murder's out of
tune,

And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des. O, falsely, falsely murdered!

Emil. Alas! what cry is that?

Oth. That! what?

Emil. Out, and alas! that was my lady's
voice:—

Help! help, ho! help!—O, lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O, sweet mistress, speak!

Des. A guiltless death I die.

Emil. O, who hath done this deed?

Des. Nobody; I myself: farewell:
Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell!

[*Dies.*]

Oth. Why, how should she be murder'd?

Emil. Alas, who knows?

Oth. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil. She said so: I must needs report the
truth.

Oth. She's like a liar gone to burning hell:
'T was I that kill'd her.

Emil. O! the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil!

Oth. She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

Emil. Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Oth. She was false as water.

Emil. Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false: O! she was heavenly true.

Oth. Cassio did tup her; ask thy husband else.
O! I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

Emil. My husband?

Oth. Thy husband.

Emil. That she was false to wedlock?

Oth. Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,
If Heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil. My husband?

Oth. Ay, 't was he that told me first:
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

Emil. My husband?

Oth. What needs this iteration, woman? I
say, thy husband.

Emil. O mistress! villainy hath made mocks
with love.—

My husband say, that she was false?

Oth. He, woman ;
I say, thy husband : dost understand the word ?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day ! he lies to the heart :
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Oth. Ha !

Emil. Do thy worst :
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven,
Than thou wast worthy her.

Oth. Peace ! you were best.

Emil. Thou hast not half that power to do me
harm,
As I have to be hurt. O gull ! O dolt !
As ignorant as dirt ! thou hast done a deed,—
I care not for thy sword ; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives.—Help ! help, ho !
help !
The Moor has kill'd my mistress ! Murder !
murder !

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, *and* IAGO.

Mon. What is the matter ?—How now, general ?

Emil. O ! are you come, Iago ? you have done
well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.
Gra. What is the matter ?
Emil. Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man :
He says, thou told'st him that his wife was false.
I know, thou didst not, thou'rt not such a
villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago. I told him what I thought ; and told no
more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil. But did you ever tell him, she was false ?

Iago. I did.

Emil. You told a lie ; an odious, damned lie ;
Upon my soul, a lie ; a wicked lie.—
She false with Cassio !—Did you say with Cassio ?

Iago. With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm
your tongue.

Emil. I will not charm my tongue ; I am bound
to speak.

My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed.

All. O heavens forbend !

Emil. And your reports have set the murder on.

Oth. Nay, stare not, masters : it is true, indeed.

Gra. 'T is a strange truth.

Mon. O monstrous act !

Emil. Villainy ! villainy ! villainy !
I think upon 't,—I think,—I smell 't :—O villainy !
I thought so then :—I'll kill myself for grief.—
O villainy, villainy !

Iago. What ! are you mad ? I charge you, get
you home.

Emil. Good gentlemen, let me have leave to
speak :

'T is proper I obey him, but not now.—
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Oth. O ! O ! O ! [*Falling on the bed.*]

Emil. Nay, lay thee down, and roar ;
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent,
That e'er did lift up eye.

Oth. [*Rising.*] O ! she was foul.—
I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your
niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly
stopp'd.

I know, this act shows horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor Desdemon ! I am glad thy father's
dead.

Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain : did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobance.

Oth. 'T is pitiful ; but yet Iago knows,
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed : Cassio confess'd it ;
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognisance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand ;
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

Emil. O Heaven ! O heavenly powers !

Iago. Come, hold your peace.

Emil. 'T will out, 't will out :—I hold my peace,
sir ? no ;

No, I will speak as liberal as the north :
Let Heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago. Be wise, and get you home.

Emil. I will not.

[*IAGO offers to stab his wife.*]

Gra. Fie !

Your sword upon a woman ?

Emil. O thou dull Moor ! that handkerchief
thou speak'st of,

I found by fortune, and did give my husband ;
For often, with a solemn earnestness,
(More than, indeed, belong'd to such a trifle,)
He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago. Villainous whore !

Emil. She give it Cassio ! no, alas ! I found it,
And I did give 't my husband.

Iago. Filth, thou liest !

Emil. By Heaven, I do not ; I do not, gentle-
men.—

O murderous coxcomb ! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife ?

[*IAGO stabs EMILIA, then runs out.*]



*"Yet I'll not shed her blood;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow"*

Oth. Are there no stones in heaven,
But what serve for the thunder?—Precious villain!

Gra. The woman falls: sure, he hath kill'd his wife.

Emil. Ay, ay. O, lay me by my mistress' side!

Gra. He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

Mon. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,

Which I have here recover'd from the Moor.

Come, guard the door without: let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,

For 't is a damned slave. [Exit.]

Oth. I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword.
But why should honour outlive honesty?
Let it go all.

Emil. What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,

And die in music.—[Singing.] *Willow, willow, willow.*—

Moor, she was chaste; she lov'd thee, cruel Moor:
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
So speaking as I think, I die,—I die. [Dies.]

Oth. I have another weapon in this chamber;
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper.
O! here it is.—Uncle, I must come forth.

Gra. If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear:
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Oth. Look in upon me then, and speak with me,

Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Gra. What is the matter?

Oth. Behold! I have a weapon;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day,
That with this little arm, and this good sword,
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop.—But, O vain
boast!

Who can control his fate? 't is not so now.—
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd:
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd? 't is a lost fear;
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires.—Where should Othello go?—
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd
wench!

Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!
Even like thy chastity.

O, cursed, cursed slave!—Whip me, ye devils,

From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
O Desdemon! dead, Desdemon! dead! O!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO, *carried in a chair, and Officers, with* IAGO, *prisoner.*

Lod. Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

Oth. That's he that was Othello;—here I am.

Lod. Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

Oth. I look down towards his feet;—but that's a fable:

If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

[Wounds IAGO.]

Lod. Wrench his sword from him.

Iago. I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.

Oth. I am not sorry neither: I'd have thee live;

For, in my sense, 't is happiness to die.

Lod. O thou Othello! that wert once so good,
Fall'n in the practice of a damned slave,
What shall be said to thee?

Oth. Why, anything:

An honourable murderer, if you will;
For nought did I in hate, but all in honour.

Lod. This wretch hath part confessed his villainy:

Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

Oth. Ay.

Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Oth. I do believe it, and I ask you pardon.

Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil,
Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?

Iago. Demand me nothing: what you know,
you know:

From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lod. What! not to pray?

Gra. Torments will ope your lips.

Oth. Well, thou dost best.

Lod. Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,

Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter,

Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;

And here another: the one of them imports

The death of Cassio to be undertook

By Roderigo.

Oth. O villain!

Cas. Most heathenish, and most gross!

Lod. Now, here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

Oth. O thou pernicious caitiff!—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief,
That was my wife's?

Cas. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd, but even now,

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with
us:

Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,—
If there be any cunning cruelty,



*"O Spartan dog!—
Look on the tragic loading of this bed!
This is thy work!"*

That there he dropp'd it, for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. O fool! fool! fool!

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast: and even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead,—Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state.—Come, bring him away.

Oth. Soft you; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know
No more of that.—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,

Nor set down aught in malice: then must you
speak

Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe; of one, whose subdu'd
eyes,

Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinable gum. Set you down this;
And say, besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian, and traduc'd the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him—thus. [Stabs himself.]

Lod. O bloody period!

Gra. All that's spoke is marr'd.

Oth. I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee:—no way
but this, [Falling upon DESDEMONA.
Killing myself to die upon a kiss. [Dies.]

Cas. This did I fear, but thought he had no
weapon;

For he was great of heart.

Lod. [To IAGO.] O Spartan dog!
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;
Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house,
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you.—To you, lord
governor,

Remains the censure of this hellish villain;
The time, the place, the torture:—O, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [Exeunt.]

