

THE

LAST OF THE GREEKS;

*Surgeon Royal. 1831*

OR,

THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

A Tragedy.

BY LORD MORPETH.

SECOND EDITION.

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## PREFACE.

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It will easily be perceived that the following Play, if for no other reason than the uniform progress of the story towards an inevitable catastrophe, would be ill adapted to dramatic representation. I fear that the experiment which I have now ventured to make may only have the effect of teaching me, that it is not much better calculated to be read. I have however been willing to hope, that the events which are now attracting so much of public attention in the East of Europe, though they did not suggest the undertaking, may confer upon it a portion of interest, which it could not have commanded by any merit of its own.



It is hardly requisite to observe, that Miss Baillie has published a Tragedy upon the same subject. I should naturally shrink from entering into such formidable competition ; but I believe, that except in so far as our common authorities have necessarily led us to allude to the same prominent events, we shall not be found to have clashed.



## PROLOGUE.

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While in rapt mood the fancy loved to stray  
O'er the bright realms of her peculiar sway,  
And saw in mystic vision pass along  
The buried forms of glory and of song,  
The nymphs, the heroes, and the gods, whose love  
Stooped from the sky to deify the grove;  
What was the angry sound, that dared invade  
The solemn stillness of each haunted glade,  
O'ercame the murmurs of Castalia's rill,  
The leafy whispers of Dodona's hill,  
And filled the shore, the islands, and the main,  
From Ceta's caverns to Messene's plain?  
It was the clang of arms — the cry of strife —  
The shout of Freedom starting into life.

There went a voice of mourning through the land:  
Lo! by yon rampart on the sea-beat strand,  
A sad and solitary form is seen;  
Pale is his brow, and proud, yet calm, his mien;  
His curling lip seems formed for scornful ire,  
But in his eye there gleams a poet's fire;  
The bay-leaf girds his hair — I know him well;  
'Tis He — the master of the chorded shell.  
The Muse, that loved and mourned him, could not save  
From grief, from error, and an early grave.  
Yet here at least let angry censure cease;  
Honour to BYRON, when the theme is Greece.

But hark ! another and a louder wail  
O'er the far billow loads the western gale.  
Land of the wise, the eloquent, the free,  
Weep for a stranger, worthy e'en of Thee ;  
Whose lips drank deep of all thy springs ; whose mind  
Learned of thy lore to fascinate mankind ;  
Who loved thee in his boyhood's careless hour,  
Who pitied in his high career of power,  
Who would have saved — on thine Achaian shore  
Mourn, Freedom, mourn — for CANNING is no more.

Yet rear again thy drooping head, and raise  
The choral pæans of forgotten days,  
The strains once chaunted on thine azure sea,  
The songs of Salamis and Mycale.  
Ne'er were thy hopes more fair, than when the day  
Gilt the armed prows in Navarino's bay ;  
Ne'er was thy star more high, than when the night  
Closed on the smouldering horrors of the fight.  
Though not thine own the glory of the deed,  
It is enough of triumph to be freed.  
Roll swiftly on, ye numbered hours ! unfold  
New arts, new honours, and revive the old :  
Not e'en one shattered link of Moslem chains  
Shall mar the fertile gladness of the plains ;  
Where only anchored round the Colian cliff  
The pirate's pinnace, or the fisher's skiff,  
Commerce shall bid her sons unarmed resort,  
And peaceful navies crowd the friendly port ;  
While Liberty shall bless the toils of peace,  
And Bards and Patriots live again for Greece.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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CONSTANTINE PALÆOLOGUS ...	Emperor of the Greeks.
GIUSTINIANI .....	General of the Genoese forces.
CARDINAL ISIDORE.	
PHRANZA .....	Great Chamberlain.
LASCARIS .....	Son to Phranza.
ALCIPHON .....	} ..... Greek Officers.
THEODORE ....	
ALEXIUS .....	
MANUEL .....	An old Soldier.
ISMAEL .....	} ..... Turkish Officers.
CARAZES .....	
EVANTHE .....	Daughter to Phranza.
THOMAS .....	A Widow.

Officers, Soldiers, Son to THOMAS, Servants.

SCENE, CONSTANTINOPLE.



THE  
LAST OF THE GREEKS.

# LAST OF THE GREEKS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*A Street or Square. A crowd of soldiers and citizens discovered: Alciphron and Manuel among them.*

*Voice without.* A sally from the rampart    Hoa ! this  
way.

*2d Voice.* More soldiers to the rampart.

*Alciphron.* On ye sluggards ;

By this last effort all our hopes are crowned.

Move forward.

*Voice without.* Send more soldiers : as ye prize  
Your lives, no more delay.

*Alc.* Now follow me,  
Each one of you that dares.

[Exit, with some of the soldiers

*Manuel.*

Alas the day !

These aged limbs can carry me no farther.

They talk of fighting, where I must not follow ;

I hear of danger, which I may not face.

*1st Soldier.* I will not to the walls.

*2d Soldier.*

Nor I.

*Man.*

You will not ?

*1st Sol.* We but expose ourselves to certain death,  
Perched up together on the naked wall,  
A mark for all their murderous instruments.

*2d Sol.* Besides, no change can make us suffer more  
Than we endure now daily ; danger, toil,  
Perpetual watching, hunger, thirst, disease :  
What can the Turks inflict more terrible ?  
What heed we, if a master must be o'er us,  
Whether 'tis Constantine or Mahomet ?

*Man.* Shame on ye, factious, heartless citizens,  
On ye and on your sons, inglorious brawlers.  
Oh, for an hour of vigour in this arm !  
I swear I would not wreak it on the foe,  
Till it had better taught ye all what are  
The duties of a man.

*1st Sol.*

Old man, 'tis well

For such as you to speak, who never saw  
These new invented thunderbolts, contrived

By hellish powers, and most infernal magic,  
That sweep away whole ranks of us at once,  
Make breaches in our thickest walls, and cleave  
Our stoutest breast-plates and best tempered armour,  
As the east wind sports with the gossamer  
On a clear morning.

*Man.* Sally forth, hem them in  
Among their own unwieldy batteries,  
And turn their thunder back on them ; methinks,  
The devil, if he made them, will play fair  
To either side.

*Voices without.* Rescue ! Rescue ! Rescue !  
The Emperor is surrounded.

*Enter Lascaris.*

*Lascaris.* Slaves and cowards !  
Heard ye that shout, and stand ye here and gape ?  
By Heaven, I kill the man that does not move.  
Constantine to the rescue ! Constantine !

[*Exit with most of the soldiers.*]

*Enter Thomais, trying to detain her Son.*

*Thomais.* My son, my son, oh ! go not hence. He will.  
Oh ! stop him, sirs, let him not pass ; my son,  
Go not, for mercy.



*Son.* Heard ye not the cry,  
Constantine to the rescue, ho ! [Exit.

*Thom.* He goes ;  
He heeds me not, ungrateful boy ! I lost  
His father in the siege, and he too now  
Leaves me thus desolate.

*Man.* Be comforted.  
Let him at once avenge his father's death,  
And save his sovereign's life.

*Thom.* He'll lose his own.

*Man.* Think better of it ; no pitched battle this,  
'Tis but a moment's skirmish near the gate,  
And they'll be here again.

*Thom.* Would we could hear  
Something of what is passing.

*Man.* Ha ! a shout,  
A glad one too, I think.

*Thom.* Pray Heaven it prove so !

*Enter Alciphron and Soldiers.*

*Man.* What from the field ?

*Alc.* The foe has been repulsed,  
And Constantine's again among his troops,  
Unhurt, tho' desperate has been the struggle.  
In our last sally from the town, some chance

Had left him nearly single 'mid a crowd  
Of angry foes ; with fearless energy  
He long maintained his stand, and many fell  
Around ; at last the throng had borne him down,  
When on a sudden valiant Lascaris,  
With a most well-timed succour from the walls,  
Burst in upon the knot of men, beat off,  
Slew, scattered them, and saved the Emperor.  
What is that shouting ?

*Enter Soldier.*

*Sol.* A truce, a truce.

*Alc.* На !

What means this ?

*Sol.* Till to-morrow's dawn a truce,  
At Mahomet's request.

2d Sol. We want it more  
Than he can do. But let us hence, and search  
Betimes for some refreshment and repose.  
I'm sure we've earned it.

1st Sol. Come this way with me.  
(To Thomais) Neighbour, thy son is dead.

*Thom.* Tell me once more,  
But be quite sure before you speak.

*1st Sol.*

'Tis so.

I saw it done.

*Alc.*

Was he the youth that fell

In the last onset by that Tartar's lance ?

*1st Sol.* The same.

*Alc.*

Then mourn not, nor look wild with grief.

Thou shalt be honoured among Grecian mothers ;

For mark me while I tell thee how he fell.

Thou heard'st me saying how the Emperor

Was over-borne by numbers, ere the band

Brought up by Lascar's had time to reach him.

Stretched on the ground he lay ; a savage Ismaelite

With his long lance had marked him for his own.

The space that there was yet between them seemed

Quite to preclude all hope, when from the midst

Darted a youth ; more quick than mortal thought

Onward he rushed, and with a desperate bound

Sprang full upon the body ; as he fell

His breast received the weapon, that for him

Was meant not. It was thus that thy son died.

*Thom.* Can this then comfort me ? or shall I weep

One drop the less because he saved a life

I care not for, and lost his own, in which

I lived, and breathed, and moved ? O cant of comfort !

My only son ! my brave and dark-haired boy !



Shall I not see thee more for all my life ?

'Tis much too wretched.

*Alc.*

Be more moderate.

The matrons of old Greece received not thus

The tidings of their sons in battle slain.

*Thom.* And think'st thou that I wish to be like  
them ?

*They* mothers ! but they never knew their sons,

They never reared them, never lived with them.

Thou know'st not what he was to me : kind, gentle,

Patient, uncomplaining : prop of my age,

Joy of my eyes, and solace of my soul.

My heart must break.

*Alc.*

I know thy loss is great,

But we I fear can do thee little good :

So God befriend thee in thy need.

*Thom.*

Yet stay.

Where is he ? I must see him, must embrace —

Oh miserable thought ! must bury him.

Lead me to find him.

*Man.*

I will with thee, woman,

We are both old and feeble, and alone

On the wide earth ; but none will seek to hurt us.

Worldly privations give the privilege

To pass along unquestioned, and secure

From further harm. No enemies are found

So fierce, but pay respect to misery.

Come, lean on me—this way.

*Thom.*

Look upon me,

Ye conquerors ! ye men of arms and blood !

Ye, that lay waste this fair and bounteous earth,

Her peopled cities, and her teeming plains :

Ye, that drill men like slaves, slay them like sheep,

To purchase sway or fame (just Heaven above !).

Look on me now, for stern and pitiless

As ye must be, if once ye could but feel

One little part of all the pangs that rack

My bleeding breast, ye would in mercy sheath

Your murderous swords, and let the world be glad.

[*Exeunt.*

---

## SCENE II.

*An Apartment in the house of Phranza.*

*Evanthe standing at a window.*

*Evan.* The morning air comes softly thro' the lattice ;  
The summer breathes out from her jessamine bowers,

As tho' there were not war and death around  
To taint their new-born fragrance. When our fate  
Brings no congenial promise of enjoyment,  
There is a gloom in nature's loveliness.  
What profit have we in the clear blue heaven,  
The scented air, the many-coloured earth,  
The groves, the gardens, and the porticoes  
That line our beauteous seas, while here we sit  
Hemmed and pent in 'mid armed battlements?  
'Tis strange my father comes not; sure his age  
Braves not the leaguered wall, nor tented plain,  
The scenes where younger men must fight and bleed.  
Ah for the woes of Greece! when will an end  
Be put to all their long and dreary list?  
But some one passes thro' the court;—I know  
The footsteps of my sire.

*Enter Phranza.*

My dearest father.

*Phran.* Heaven bless my child; but thou look'st pale  
and harassed,

And thy pulse flutters. Hast thou waited long?

*Evan.* Oh! very long, but you are come at last;  
And my worn spirits, and my watching eyes,  
Forget all else in your reviving presence.



May but my gratitude be strong enough  
For your continued safety ! But now speak  
Of all that has been done since last we met.

*Phran.* My anxious child, but seldom from that time  
Have I been parted from the Emperor's side ;  
And if in such a season of dismay  
A feeling as of comfort could have cheered  
My aged breast, it would have been called forth  
By the fair spectacle my eyes surveyed.  
Hadst thou but seen him, as he trod the round  
Of the long rampart, share each painful toil  
With his o'erburthened troops, recal anew  
The ebbing tide of courage to their hearts,  
Appease the sullen, animate the stout,  
Make faction tame, and cowardice alert,  
And all with such a mild considerate goodness,  
Such high resolve, such dignified endurance,  
Thou wouldst have deemed the ills that close around him  
Were but the appointed instruments to call  
His goodness forth, in all its truth and lustre.

*Evan.* Speak on, my father ; let me hear yet more,  
For I should ne'er grow weary of the theme.

*Phran.* 'Tis rightly said ; it pleases me to find  
That thou art glad to hear thy sovereign's praise.  
Thy brother too has earned most high renown ;

By a hot sally from his post he saved  
The Emperor's life, and bade our foes retreat.

*Evan.* My valiant brother—saved his Emperor's life !  
What pride and glorious joy must now be his,  
Is he still fighting ?

*Phran.* No, we have a truce  
Until the dawning of to-morrow's sun.  
Ere long the Turkish sultan Mahomet  
Will send his final terms to Constantine.  
They must decide our fate.

*Evan.* And do you think  
They will be such that he can deign to hear ?

*Phran.* Nought will he hear, of this remain assured,  
That honour can condemn.

*Evan.* I will swear to that.  
Has he a subject would not act like me ?

*Phran.* My poor excited girl, could all our men,  
Citizens, soldiers, nay grave senators,  
Feel in their cold and calculating hearts  
But half the eager loyalty that dwells  
Upon thy artless lips, the days of Greece  
Might not e'en now be numbered. Kiss thy sire,  
I love thee for't.

*Evan.* But see, my brother comes.

*Enter Giustiniani and Lascaris.*

Welcome, most dear and honoured Lascaris ;  
I feel such pride in thee ; never till now  
Have I quite known how tenderly I loved thee.

*Lasc.* My good Evanthe, seest thou not our guest ?  
The brave and chivalrous Giustiniani  
Honours my father's roof ; he thinks, no doubt,  
The dames of Genoa would not thus accost  
A stranger, and a hero.

*Giust.* I beseech you,  
Talk not of Genoa's dames, or any stock  
Of our less smooth Italians, while my eyes  
Have the blest privilege to gaze on charms  
That make their coarser beauties valueless.  
Where should we find among our mongrel race  
Of trading merchants, or of Gothic nobles,  
That faultless symmetry of form and motion,  
That perfect outline of the classic face,  
Which mark the pure descent of Greece ?

*Evan.* My Lord,  
Mock me not thus, because in these rough times  
I chance to be without the wonted veil  
Our maidens ever wear in such high presence.

*Phran.* Nay, I am sure the brave Giustiniani



Will not reprove our lack of ceremony ;  
Council and war must need engross our time ;  
And since there's much demand for both, Evāthe,  
Offer the wine-cup to our noble guest,  
We will then onward to the Emperor ;  
Much he may need our prompt advice, and much  
Our stout adherence.

*Lasc.* Pledge me, honoured warrior,  
Pledge me in yonder mantling grape of Chios.  
We'll drain it to the glory of the brave  
Who die in battle.

*Giust.* 'Tis too stern a pledge,  
While there is gentler inspiration here.  
This to the fairest of the maids of Greece,  
The bright Evanthe.

*Evan.* Grecian maids, my Lord,  
Now only strive for one pre-eminence—  
Which best shall love their monarch.

*Giust.* This it is,  
I see, to have an emperor unwed.

*Evan.* With your permission I retire, my father,  
My presence cannot suit your grave debates.

*Phran.* Go not, my child ; we must ourselves away ;  
May we soon meet again ; till then dismiss  
Every uneasy thought, and hope the best.

*Lasc.* Evanthe, fare thee well.

*Giust.* And in his turn,  
Albeit unworthy of your favour, lady,  
The humblest of your vassals takes his leave.

[*Exeunt all but Evanthe.*

*Evan.* I like not that bold stranger : I could see  
The angry shadow flit across his brow,  
When I seemed moved not by his formal phrase.  
He wears a satisfied and conscious air  
In all his strained and laboured courtesies,  
As if not meant to honour their poor object,  
But rather show how great a man it is  
Who stoops thus low. Oh ! how unlike to some,  
And greater far than him, who only seek  
To gladden, and in their own eyes exalt  
All whom their ready notice greets ; whose smile,  
And look, and slightest word, are sure all round  
To scatter pleasure, for they wish to please.  
But whither rove ye, vain and idle thoughts ?  
Back, back into my bosom ; droop and mourn  
In silence there, and learn to be forgotten.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Lady, a stranger in the Turkish garb  
Admittance humbly craves of you.

*Evan.*

A Turk!

What does he here?

*Ser.*

It is the time of truce,

And he is one of those the Sultan sends

To lay his terms before our Emperor.

*Evan.* Tell him my father is already gone,  
And he will find him at his Prince's side ;  
For me he cannot want.*Ser.*

This have I told ;

But something, said he, to your father's welfare  
Of intimate concern, most privately  
He wishes to impart.*Evan.*

Ha! said he so?

Admit him instantly.

[*Exit Servant.*]

I have no choice,

But what does this portend?

*Servant introduces Carazes.**Carazes.*

Your pardon, lady,

That I have now thus ventured to obtrude  
A foreign, and I fear a hated presence  
Upon your privacy. I wish to serve  
Your father and his house; let that at least  
Bear no offence with it.*Evan.*

Most courteous stranger,



Whatever be the purpose of your visit,  
Receive for its most friendly opening thanks.

*Car.* I am the son of Calil Bassa, lady,  
First vizir of the Sultan Mahomet :  
Who, when your sire, the just and learned Phranza,  
Came to the Othman court ambassador,  
While Sultan Amurath yet filled the throne,  
And Greek and Turk most happily for both  
Were joined in peace, did in his house receive,  
Attend, and honour him with meet observance.  
But amply did he think himself repaid  
In the rich converse and the smooth demeanour  
Of his good guest : he was not wont to meet such,  
I e'en must own it, 'mid his kindred tribes.  
Many rich presents they exchanged at parting,  
And further promised, in their hour of need  
If one could have assistance from the other,  
He should command his friendly offices.  
Thus did our sires : but now, where there was peace,  
Is war. I come within these walls with Ismael,  
The prince of rich Sinope, who is charged  
With offers to your Emperor from our camp.  
This by my father's credit has been wrought.  
May Alla speed the issue ! but perchance  
His sovereign will has otherwise decreed.

It therefore was the vizir's further wish,  
That here beneath his roof we should devise  
What might ensure the safety of his friend.

*Evan.* Show but one way in which he can be safe,  
And I will bless you for the pious counsel.

*Car.* The sea and shore are ours ; a bark, a steed  
Might bear him undiscovered hence.

*Evan.* Oh ! Sir,  
Judge not thus poorly of the loyal Phranza —  
That he would leave his country and his prince  
At their last gasp of life.

*Car.* We knew, alas !  
Your father's soul, and feared its stubborn virtue,  
That makes e'en ruin duty. Listen then  
To what I next propose, for this at least  
A foe may offer, and a patriot hear.  
There is an angle in the line of rampart,  
You may remember, where the western wall  
Close to the brink of the Propontis runs,  
Of access almost desperate, and thence  
But feebly guarded ; at the hour of sunset  
Walk there, and you shall learn, if aught of note  
Is in the Moslem camp resolved ; you then  
May shape such measures as you list.

*Evan.* I hear,

And am most grateful ; whatsoe'er the event,  
My soul has told me it may fully trust you.  
I will remember faithfully.

*Car.*

But hark !

The trumpet calls me to our solemn audience.  
So fare you well, most bright and gentle lady.  
You will not scorn my heart's unfeigned petition,  
Tho' it comes breathed from unbelieving lips :  
The blessings of the just be on your house. [Exeunt.

END OF ACT I.



## ACT II.

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### SCENE I.

*A Street.*

*Enter Alciphron and Theodore.*

*Alc.* At length a few short moments of repose  
Suspend the labours of ill-fated Greece.  
For fifty days we've seen without a pause  
The work of desolation move along ;  
Each night upon our chance-found post we've laid  
Our bodies wearied with their rough day's toil,  
To be awakened by the morrow's cannon.  
Now all around is still : the shout, the groan,  
The many-voiced confusion of the war,  
The clang of hollow hoofs, and rattling mail,  
The thunder of the loud artillery,  
The fiery onset, and the desperate rescue,  
Have ceased to echo round the walls' wide circuit,  
While either army, hushed in stern repose,  
Breathe from their wonted task of blood.

*Theo.*

Alas!

What can this short-lived interval of rest

Do but retard our ruin? Or if not

Our ruin—must I speak it—our dishonour?

*Alc.* Full well I know our lone and perilous state;  
But come what may, be sure that Constantine  
Can brave defeat and death, but not dishonour.

*Theo.* Not with less zealous homage, Alciphron,  
Than you my princely Master I revere:  
But he is man; if Heaven declares against him,  
What can he do?

*Alc.*

That will this hour decide.

You know that in pursuance of the truce  
The ambassadors of Mahomet ere long  
Will have pronounced their master's last resolve.  
What that may be, we've yet to learn, but still  
Must fear the worst; for if our Emperor  
Can boast a soul that will not stoop to baseness,  
The savage Sultan is as deaf to pity.

*Theo.* Alexius comes this way; he seems in haste,  
And may have more to tell.

*Enter Alexius.*

*Alex.*

Well met, my friends.

Will ye not hear the doom that seals our fate?

*Theo.* Is the time come?

*Alex.* The Turkish ministers  
Are now within the walls; next time perhaps  
They will not come in peace.

*Alc.* Where does Constantine  
Receive their message?

*Alex.* In the Hippodrome,  
Surrounded by his troops, and court, and nobles,  
His faithful people, and his brave allies.  
Such was his will; and for the last time haply,  
Constantinople puts on all her grandeur.

*Theo.* May she not wear it as her funeral robe!

*Alc.* And if she does, she dies becomingly.  
This clouded period of her last decline  
Is not least glorious in Byzantine annals.  
Who would not deem her short and hopeless hour  
Spent in the throes of dying bravery,  
More precious far than all the long-drawn years  
Of guilty splendour and successful crime,  
With the foul train of feud, conspiracy,  
Revolt, and murder, that have marked in turn  
The frequent changes of her blood-stained purple?

*Alex.* I hear the stirring note of martial music.  
They will have met. Let us to the Hippodrome.

[*Exeunt.*]



## SCENE II.

*The Hippodrome.*

*The troops entering and placing themselves. Enter on one side, Alciphron, Theodore, and Alexius. The others afterwards, as described.*

*Alc.* By heaven these troops still wear a goodly show.

*Theo.* Aye, if they would but fight. The old Greek  
valour

Has fallen off apace in these last days.

They lead the pageant, or they swell the train

With gay and gorgeous bearing, as you see ;

But when the work begins in earnest——

*Alex.*

Then,

Those that now follow have the hands to fight.

*Alc.* You rate them well ; the Emperor's body-guard ;  
Oft have I seen them on the well-fought day

Ply on their steady valour, which the Turk

May yet have further cause to rue. Next come,

With measured tread and motion regular,

The stout Varangians : from the breezy North

They drew their rugged line, and thence derived,

Far from the sun of these enervate climes,

The hardened sinew and unyielding soul.

Who in their very stillness would not read  
Heroic purpose? Lo! as bold a band,  
Tho' more irregular their bravery,  
Albania's mountain sons; their crags at least  
Are still unconquered—the last haunts of Freedom.

*Alex.* But see, the sons of commerce and of war,  
Whom Genoa sends to aid us, and, oh! shame  
To all the Western world, she sends alone.

*Theo.* Mark you how o'er them all superior towers  
The proud Giustiniani; he is deemed  
The model and the rule of chivalry;  
In all the laws of courtesy and honour  
Most delicate, and of approved experience:  
May his days set in glory!

*Alex.* Next moves on  
The peaceful train of lazy senators,  
The lords of villas, theatres, and gardens,  
The hoarders of the wealth that might have saved us\*.

*Alc.* And now the more distinguished few advance,  
The pillars of the state, and throne, and army;  
The reverend Patriarch of our holy church,  
With him the Roman legate Isidore,  
The warlike Lascaris, the prudent Phranza,  
And, blow, ye trumpets blow—the Emperor!

\* See that fine passage in Irene—

“That wealth, too pleasing for their country's use, &c.”

*Constantine takes his seat upon his throne, the others stand round.*

*Const.* Princes, and Senators, to whose high charge  
The welfare of the East has been consigned,  
My valiant Generals, my brave allies,  
Associates of my counsels and my arms,  
I have assembled you this day to hear  
The last proposals of our enemy ;  
That if in any wise I seem to make  
An answer unbecoming of my station,  
Or of my fortunes, you may interpose  
Your sage advice.

*Isidore.* May the Most High, my son,  
Direct you right.

*Giust.* We throw ourselves, great Sir,  
Implicitly on your imperial wisdom.

*Const.* Give entrance to the Sultan's messengers.

*Officers of the Court introduce Ismael, Carazes, Turks, &c.*  
Ambassadors of Sultan Mahomet,  
We wait to hear what you are charged to speak.

*Ism.* The Lord of nations, and the King of kings,  
The vicar of the one and only God,  
And of his holy Prophet upon earth,  
Our mighty Sultan, Mahomet the Second,





But further tell him, were the added wealth  
Of Europe and of Asia ours to give him,  
The produce of each realm that e'er obeyed  
The sceptre of my great progenitors,  
Constantinople scorns the name of tribute.  
And bounded as is now her flight of empire,  
The Roman eagle ne'er shall stoop so low  
In base submission to the Moslem crescent.

*Ism.* Hear what his mercy next vouchsafes to yield ;  
To every Greek a free and full permission  
To leave their native city, to embark  
Their wives, their children, and their property,  
And seek some other shore in peace and safety.

*Const.* What, leave our city ! leave Constantinople !  
Does he not know then, vain unhappy man,  
The thrilling magic in the name of country ?  
The sons of rapine that infest his ranks,  
The wandering Tartar, and the houseless Turkman,  
May leave without a pang their barren wilds,  
To wanton in the sunny plains of Greece.  
But educated man, endowed with reason,  
Clings with an offspring's fondness to the land  
That saw his birth, and holds his father's ashes.  
Let loose then all your dark reserves of wrath ;  
Butcher our citizens, and raze our homes ;  
We'll find a grave among our country's ruins :

For, oh ! I feel, my own thrice beauteous city,  
That I can die for thee, but not desert thee.

*Car. (aside)* How his words move me !—Pardon, Emperor,  
That youth like mine should dare to interpose.  
Your thoughts are noble, and bespeak a soul,  
Albeit a foe, I cannot but admire.  
But ere it be too late, reflect awhile  
Upon the city's lone and lost condition.  
No progress made—your numbers thinned each day—  
And e'en the remnant scantily supplied—  
Want, mutiny, disease, all thickening round,  
Nor yet one transient hope of late deliverance.

*Const.* I thank thee, courteous stranger ; but one thing  
Survives e'en hope itself, and that is, honour.

*Car.* Honour can ne'er demand our country's ruin.

*Const.* No, but it counts no ruin like disgrace.

*Car.* By numbers overpowered, the bravest yield.

*Const.* But court the danger when their choice is insult.  
I know our risk is great ; our hope must be  
Most, as it ought, in Heaven. But look around,  
I am not all deserted on the earth ;  
There lives a remnant of the sons of Greece,  
Who feel for what a land they fight ; my guard,  
My own imperial guard, still cleave to me.  
Behold Albania's bowmen ; and see here  
The lances of my Latin chivalry.



Hast thou forgot the day—who could forget ?—  
When five adventurous barks, with their stout crews,  
Burst through your crowded navy ? From the shore,  
Where on his steed, secure of victory,  
As at some costly spectacle he sat,  
Your Sultan saw, and maddened as he saw,  
The foul defeat ; while from her ramparts Greece  
Beheld the triumph, and dismissed her sorrows.

*Car.* But think within these walls—

*Const.* Hast thou forgot  
Huniades and Scanderbeg still live,  
And live to conquer, as they oft have done ?  
The clans of Hungary still brood revenge :  
Nay more, religious faction is asleep ;  
The holy father of the Roman church  
(This reverend Cardinal will be my witness)  
Has deigned to consecrate our pious warfare.  
The united call will wake the western world,  
Range at our side the hardy Russian tribes,  
In honour's cause rouse France's gallant nobles,  
And arm for Greece the fearless sons of Britain.

*Ism.* Peace, Carazes ; you only swell their pride.  
If they are obstinate on their undoing,  
On their own heads be it. Yet one choice remains ;  
Give it thy answer, and we then depart.  
Embrace the Prophet's faith, the Koran's creed,

And be our friends and equals ; share our reign,  
Honoured of men, and favourites of Heaven.

*Const.* My friends, my countrymen, my fellow Christians,

Now are we humbled and abased indeed.

The worshippers of Mahomet have asked us  
To change our faith—and we have lived to hear it.

Oh ! may our swords at least give fitting answer.

I must away with courtesy's tame forms

And phrases ; I must tell thee, infidel,

How my soul sickens at thy faith, thy Prophet,

And all his creed of blood and sensual joys.

Ye first have called on us to pay ye tribute ;

That touched our honour. Ye next bade us leave

Our country ; that was twined around our hearts.

Now ye would make us sacrifice religion,

The God we worship, and the Heaven we hope for.

Back to thy master ; tell him that the men

He dares insult, but shall not trample on,

Reject his offers, care not for his friendship,

Heed him not, fear him not, and do defy him.

*Ism.* Come, Carazes, from this doomed place.

*Car.* Alas !

This bodes a fearful sequel.

*Const.* Give them conduct

Far as the gates. [*Exeunt Ismael, Carazes, Turks, &c.*]

The assembly is dissolved.

Thou, Phranza, stay. Farewell, my honoured lords,  
We meet ere long.

[*Exeunt all but Constantine and Phranza.*

Draw near, my faithful friend.

Our fate is sealed.

*Phran.* It is.

*Const.* Have I done wrong ?

Was I too hasty, or too plain ?

*Phran.* My liege,

Such was your duty ; and if conscious pride

Or joy at such a season could be felt,

They should be yours, despite of fate and ruin.

*Const.* The siege will be renewed without delay.

Hast thou the lists which thou didst promise me

Of all on whom we may rely to bear

Their part in the great struggle we must make ?

*Phran.* With sorrow and deep shame I must confess,

That of the city's thronged inhabitants

We may not count above five thousand men,

Able or willing to bear arms for all

That makes the life they cling to worth possessing.

*Const.* The spiritless cowards ! and these are Greeks.

*Phran.* They once were called so.

*Const.*

Oh ! my soul is sick,

Sick unto death.



*Phran.* Droop not, my Emperor,  
Still I conjure you droop not ; summon forth  
The deep resources and high energies  
That dwell in you, and will appear when bidden.  
Success has left us : be content with glory.

*Const.* What can a single arm, unseconded,  
Do among failing thousands ? Hard the task,  
To wake a race of profligates to virtue,  
To fire with bravery a herd of cowards,  
And goad a helpless rabble on to slaughter.

*Phran.* Why this was not the mien, nor these the words,  
Which to the infidel but now revealed  
A soul to every ill superior.

*Const.* No :  
My ardour with its provocation vanished ;  
The succours that I boasted are not nigh ;  
The hopes I spoke of died upon my lips.

*Phran.* The lot we may not choose, we must fulfil.  
I know a common soul might well shrink back,  
For all now rests upon your single head.  
Think what her monarch owes to Greece.

*Const.* Alas !  
I can bequeath no kingdom to her sons.

*Phran.* You can bequeath them more—a bright example.

'Twas all Leonidas could do before you.

*Const.* But grant the struggle ended : when our blood  
Has flowed, and life has fled, in honour's cause,  
What then remains for those we leave behind —  
The old — the tender, and — oh ! my best friend  
Thou hast a daughter —

*Phran.* Touch not on that chord,  
I do implore you ; spare a doating father,  
Nor speak of that on which I dare not think.

*Const.* My poor devoted country ! mark the fate,  
That in its wakened justice Heaven decrees  
For guilty empires, that like ours have run  
Thro' long dark æras of disgrace and crime.  
What is the tale our annals tell ? A throne  
Often usurped, and often won by blood ;  
Uncharitable priests, unwarlike nobles,  
An idle discontented populace,  
Lust in our chambers, faction in our streets,  
And through each rank and order of the state  
One wide, unawed, and withering corruption.  
Our sins are wreathed around our neck ; our days  
Are counted ; we are judged, and are condemned.

*Phran.* Had more among our sovereigns been like him  
Before me now, we had not thus been lost  
To virtue, or to glory.

*Const.* I must tell  
My counsellor 'tis no time for flattery.

*Phran.* You never found me much disposed to use it ;  
Nor will I now, when I remind my Emperor,  
'Tis no time for despair. Shall it be said  
In future ages, when they read our story,  
Constantinople yielded to her foes,  
And sued a heathen freebooter for leave  
To change her master, and renounce her faith,  
Because her Prince ——

*Const.* No more : I own the call,  
And here I shake forth from my soul all doubt,  
All fear, all lingering in the onward path  
Of dreadful duty. Stern resolution, chase  
Each weakness that besets the mortal frame,  
From me, and from my people ; nerve our limbs,  
And steel our hearts ; in watching and in war  
Make us resigned, and vigilant, and valiant ;  
And force the nations round us to confess,  
Howe'er we lived, at least like Greeks we died.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.



ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*The Rampart. Enter Evanthe.*

*Evan.* This is the place appointed, and the hour ;  
But neither have my ear or eye received  
A sound or symbol of intelligence.  
Did the young foeman mean perchance to mock  
My foolish hope ? or, as I rather guess  
From his ingenuous presence, is the wish  
Unaided by the power to serve ? How still  
All seems around, which to a lonely woman  
Is yet more awful than the din and strife  
Of war itself. I must not yet turn back ;  
I will go onward to that farthest bastion,  
Then to my home again. [ *Exit.*

*Enter Constantine.*

*Const.*                      The sun has sunk ;  
But still a bright reflected line of light

Plays on the outline of the opposite hills ;  
While nearer me the palaces and domes  
Of the fair city, and the lawns and gardens  
Along the beach of either continent,  
Sleep in the pale soft twilight. Scarce a breeze  
Shakes the tall cypress branches, or a ripple  
Stirs the calm surface of the wide Propontis.  
O sight of matchless and o'erwhelming beauty !  
Thus dark and silent seem to sleep together  
Europe and Asia ; but upon their verge  
Are met their fierce and mutual ravagers.  
On that still shore there frown for many a league  
The tents of Turkey ; while within these ramparts  
The Greek expects each morrow's dawn, and trembles.  
Peaceful and soothing is the face of nature ;  
How much unlike her ruthless spoiler man,  
Who counts the lagging moments of repose,  
Then starts afresh to suffer and destroy. —

What form is that, that comes thus rapidly ?  
Evanthe here ! alone too — with flushed cheeks,  
And panting bosom, and dishevelled hair —  
The gentlest of her timid sex — what means it ?

*Enter Evanthe hastily.*

*Evan.* O my good liege !

*Const.* Compose thyself, I pray,  
My trembling fair one, and then speak.

*Evan.* Read, read,  
Instantly read. (*gives a paper.*)

*Const.* But what is this, and whence  
In thy hand ?

*Evan.* On an arrow's head hard by  
I found it ; 'tis of fatal interest ;  
Read it without delay, I do conjure you.

*Const.* (*reads*) " Upon receiving our report, the Sultan  
has resolved to assault the city with all his forces by  
land and sea at sunrise to-morrow."

Dost thou know who wrote this ?

*Evan.* The vizir's son,  
Who promised in regard of ancient friendship  
To warn my sire, ere any thing extreme  
Should be resorted to.

*Const.* It must be true ;  
Who waits ?

*Enter two Officers.*

Give orders to my body-guard  
To muster in the palace court, with all  
The captains of the companies ; then bear  
This notice to the quarter of the Allies ;



Commend me to Giustiniani ; bid him  
Be at his post by sunrise ; I shall come  
Among my troops forthwith. [Exit 1st Officer.

You will convey  
My greeting to the patriarch ; let him ope  
The gates of St. Sophia wide ; the church  
Must give us all her prayers. [Exit 2d Officer.

I too must go.  
Evanthe take my long, my kind farewell.  
How beautiful seems all we look upon  
This evening ! Can it be thy last, O Greece ?  
Must it be followed by a morn of death ?

*Evan.* O speak not thus, my lord. Is hope quite fled ?

*Const.* I fear, utterly. The storm is gathering,  
Heavy and black with ruin ; it will burst ;  
Who can foretel its ravage ? aye, my child,  
My poor Evanthe, in that hour of wrath  
May Heaven befriend thee !

*Evan.* Do not think on me.  
Leave me to Him whose saving power upholds  
Alike the greatest and the meanest thing ;  
Who honours Constantine, and pities me.

*Const.* Stay, for a moment I would speak to thee.  
I know not what it is, the glorious scene,  
The gentle sea-breeze, or the solemn twilight,

Or else the deep and sure presentiment  
That heralds forth to me the closing hour  
Of empire and of life ; but some strong impulse  
Is busy in my soul, and drives me on  
To say what prudence would in different times  
Have bid me most conceal. Aye, it may shock  
Thy maiden delicacy ; but oh ! think  
I die to-morrow, and forgive my folly.  
Listen : thou oft hast met, thou long hast known me ;  
Say then, in calmer hours, in happier years,  
In other stations, or in other climes,  
Couldst thou have ever learned—to like—to love me ?

*Evan.* How ! when my life has taught me little else  
Than to adore thee ?

*Const.* Let my ears believe  
The bliss they seemed to hear.

*Evan.* Couldst thou but know it,  
Know all my fond devotedness of love,  
My dreams by day, my watchings by the night,  
All full of thee ; not that I thought it love ;  
'Twas reverence, 'twas worship, what was more  
Than should be paid to man—I thought thee more,  
So pure from every taint of human frailty.  
Thou wast my hero, like the men of old  
Whom poets tell of in the early days

Of our Greek story ; first, like them, in valour,  
And, more than them, in every Christian virtue.  
All that thou art I thought thee—save one thing—  
That thou couldst e'er have loved—loved ! and me too !  
Ye powers of mercy, had I thought but that !

*Const.* Evanthe !—

*Evan.* And thou hast heard me tell all this !  
Oh ! now thou wilt despise me utterly.

*Const.* Evanthe, my Evanthe ! 'twere to wrong  
My nature's honest feelings to deny  
That I have heard with more than happiness  
The free avowal of thy virgin love.  
Oh ! what a scene of bliss might now be mine,  
Of bliss for thought too great, had my lot been  
In some sequestered valley of the earth,  
Where war and empire yet were never heard of,  
To tread the quiet path of humble life,  
With virtue and thy love to guide and gild it.

*Evan.* Oh ! call not up such visions of delight,  
Lest they o'erpower my soul, and when I wake,  
I sink beneath the stern reality.

*Const.* But why in lowlier scenes, or meaner life,  
Seek I to hide thy matchless worth, Evanthe ?  
Thou, who wert born to be the world's bright wonder,  
And add new lustre to the throne of kings.



Oft has my fancy drawn a maid like thee,  
Thyself, since all has now been told, whose smile  
Should cheer me on to deeds of hardy daring;  
Who, when I back returned from toil and war,  
Should greet me to my home, and from her lips  
Pour forth the calm thanksgiving, that should shame  
The pomp of triumphs and the shout of armies.

*Evan.* Alas! thy subject was not born, my sovereign,  
For such high destinies; had I but been  
Some maid of Georgian or of Servian line,  
Some dowered and high-born child of Europe's princes,  
Thou hadst not blushed to own me for thy bride,  
The envied partner of thy throne and love.  
But oh! with whom would I have changed my lot,  
My own blest lot, all lowly as I am,  
In spite of fate, to be preferred by thee?

*Enter Officer.*

*Off.* The troops are mustered; in the palace court  
They wait your orders.

*Const.* Hear you that, Evanthe?

*Evan.* I hear that Greece expects her Emperor.

*Const.* I thank thee for the warning, noble maid,  
Born to inspire my duty, as my love.

I go. We may not meet again on earth

But it will soften ruin to have thus  
Spoken and felt together ; welcome now  
The toil, the struggle, and the agony ;  
I am above them all. Evanthe loves,  
I know it, and can even bear to leave thee.  
Without there ! I am coming. [Exit.

*Evan.* Oh ! I wish  
That I could think for one short minute calmly.  
Confusion's in my brain, mist o'er my eyes,  
And tightness on my heart. To-morrow was it ?  
Ah ! true, they said, the city falls to-morrow.  
Farewell ye soft delights, 'mid which my youth  
Has gaily glided, little valued then,  
The lute, the dance, the mind at ease within,  
And all this paradise of nature round me.  
Oh ! I have lived, and more too, I have loved :  
Was it a crime to love ? it cannot be ;  
For since the hallowed flame was lit, I feel  
No sacrifice too great or difficult  
For my weak nature ; all I could resign  
That once has pleased ; all dare, that once appalled.  
Would I had been a man to prove it true !  
Then placed by him upon the crowded rampart,  
Beneath his eye I should have fought—each blow  
Aimed at his foes, and when I fell, my death  
Perchance had bought the life of Constantine. [Exit.

## SCENE II.

*A Room in Giustiniani's Quarters.*

*Enter Giustiniani.*

Methinks my life grows very wearisome  
In this famed city ; it presents in truth  
A strange assemblage of society :  
A brawling rabble, disputatious Priests,  
A pompous Cardinal, a prosing Patriarch,  
A herd of avaricious Senators,  
And maids too coy to greet you with a glance.  
Then I must hear cried up in every street  
This same immaculate Palæologus,  
The pattern of all men and emperors.  
Do what I will in camp, or hall, or bower,  
Where hitherto I've held the foremost place,  
He still outshines me, by some monkish knack,  
That fools call principle, and wise men cant.  
Could I but gently rid me of my compact,  
With credit in the world's eyes, I would soon  
Resign him to the Othman's tender mercy.



*Enter Officer.*

*Off.* My lord, the Emperor sends health and greeting.

*Giust.* What would he with me? must I come to church?

*Off.* At sunrise he expects the enemy  
Will lead his forces to assault the town.  
He prays that you will marshall all your men  
By your old post, the gate of St. Romanus,  
To wait the onset at the earliest dawn.

*Giust.* To hear is to obey. So tell your master.

*[Exit Officer.*

Now ho! within there!

*Enter Servant.*

Carry round my summons  
To all my partisans; deck forth the board  
With glorious cheer, and fill the goblets high  
With every vintage that the glowing sun  
Embodies with rich flavour; bring the harp  
And dancers; we may die perhaps to-morrow.  
What should we do this evening, but be merry? *[Exit.*

## SCENE III.

*The Palace Court by torch-light ; the Area filled with  
Officers and Soldiers.*

*Alex.* Are all your men assembled, Theodore ?

*Theo.* They are.

*Alex.* What think you, how are they disposed ?

*Theo.* So as we most could wish. All that are here  
Seem full of zeal and loyalty. Know you  
Why we are met at this unwonted hour ?

*Alex.* There must be tidings from the enemy's camp ;  
But we shall learn more soon ; the Emperor  
Comes to yon portico above, and seems  
In act to speak.

*Soldiers.* God save the Emperor !

*Theo.* Now silence all below. The Emperor speaks.

*Const.* Sons of the Greeks, a title once of glory ;  
Heirs of the Romans, once a name of power ;  
Hear yet again your Emperor, your Chief,  
Your Fellow-soldier in the fields of battle.  
I know that in the camp of Mahomet  
A last attack has been resolved ; which made,  
Our foes retreat with shame and loss before us,

Or else the city falls. My countrymen,  
Hear ye that last and dread alternative ?  
The City, the august imperial City,  
The mistress of the world, the greater Rome,  
The high place of dominion, and the seat  
Of pure religion ; the first Christian City,  
Constantinople falls. Say, shall it be ?  
Now must your choice be made.

*Sol.* We'll fight for it,  
For Constantine, and for Constantinople !

*Const.* What, shall the fierce malignant Infidel,  
The Turkish Sultan and his miscreant crew,  
Their Mahomets, and Amuraths, and Bajazets,  
Dare to profane the walls of Constantine,  
The golden palace of an hundred Cæsars,  
The towering dome and temple of Jehovah ?  
In such a cause, what aid of man and Heaven  
Must not be on our side ? Oh ! where is now  
The blazing cross, that to the bannered host  
Of our great founder promised certain conquest ?  
He sought in arms his Roman countrymen ;  
We move our standards 'gainst the tribe of Othman.

*Sol.* A miracle, a miracle, to save us !

*Const.* Yet stay, my gallant soldiers ; be ye firm  
And droop not, tho' no prodigy from heaven  
Attest our righteous cause ; by human means



God oft has worked his will, and in the stead  
Of intervention visible, employed  
Man's practised discipline and fearless valour.  
Be yours the soul that bore to victory  
The warlike Theodosius; yours the arms  
That, wielded by the might of Belisarius,  
Poured wide dismay among the flying Vandal.  
A foe more merciless than Alaric  
Is at your gates; the ravenous wolves of Turkey,  
The enemies of man and Christendom.  
Think what would be the curse of their success;  
Place full before your eyes the varied horror:  
The broken crucifix, the trampled mitre,  
A prey to unbelieving Mussulmen:  
Your aged parents, and your pleasing homes,  
To the heart's mirth so often vocal made,  
Now only echoing back the plunderer's tread:  
Your wives, the partners of your chaste embrace,  
Led to the harem of a turbaned master;  
Your children doomed to slavery,—nay more,  
To all its foulest forms—ye cannot bear it,  
I see ye cannot—swear then ye will fight  
For life and honour, for your God and country.

*Sol.* We swear to fight!

*Const.* Fight bravely, manfully,  
Fight to the death.

*Sol.* We swear to die or conquer !

*Const.* May He, who reads the heart, now be my witness,

That thus to hear your animated shout,  
Gives me a keener joy than e'er I knew  
Amid the perfumed halls of palaces.  
And here before ye all your Emperor  
Swears he will share his fortunes with your own,  
Your triumph, or your grave. All have I tried  
That Prudence counselled, that Compassion prompted,  
That Honour or Religion would allow,  
To avert the fearful crisis ; but our foes  
Know not a law, save cruelty and rapine,  
Nor we a hope, save daring, desperate valour.

*Sol.* Lead us, lead us to battle !

*Const.* Aye, call on,

I hear ye.—Oh ! my best and bravest subjects,  
How will our swords cleave thro' the Moslem ranks,  
And gleam athwart the battle ! Give to rest  
This night ; refresh yourselves with food and sleep.  
To-morrow's early dawn will summon all  
For our great work, nor shall ye find me wanting.

*Sol.* God save the Emperor, noble Constantine !

*Const.* Farewell, and may the God of armies guard ye.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

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### SCENE I.

*Before the Church of St. Sophia, which is faintly lighted up within. Alciphron and a guard of soldiers at the door.*

*Enter Theodore.*

*Theo.* How now, Alciphron? Whence the imperial guard

Drawn up before the church?

*Alc.*

Because e'en now

Within its sacred precincts Constantine,

Fearing the last extremity, receives

The holy Sacrament.

*Theo.*

If piety

Like his could aught avail us all, we still

Might hope to be preserved.

*Alc.*

See where he kneels

In yon deep niche, lit by the scanty gleam



Of a few torches ; his most chosen friends,  
Men who both love their Prince, and fear their God,  
Surround him. Lo ! the Patriarch's time-worn head  
Is raised to Heaven, as with uplifted hand  
He rears the sainted chalice : soothing sight,  
That breathes of peace amid the din of war,  
And calls up blessing from the depth of ruin !

*Theo.* Hark to the solemn organ ! how it fills  
The pillared nave, and dies along the roof  
Of the high dome.

*Alc.* 'Tis for the female throng :  
The holy sisterhood of St. Sophia,  
And other maidens of illustrious birth,  
At the high altar to the Virgin chaunt  
Their trembling orisons.

*Theo.* Far other sounds  
Struck on my ear, as in my way I chanced  
To pass the quarter where the Italian force  
Is stationed ; there gay laughter, and fierce shouts,  
The harp and chorus, and the ribald jest,  
Resounded ; lights innumerable glanced  
From open windows, and all seemed in street,  
In chamber, and arcade, to be the abode  
Of men unawed and dissolute. 'Tis strange,  
That men can thus enure themselves to spend

In wanton merriment the last few hours  
Of an existence that may close to-morrow;  
Reckless of all the secrets that may burst  
Upon their wakening souls.

*Alc.* That strain again!  
And see the suppliant band is passing by.

SONG OF VIRGINS, WITHIN THE CHURCH.

Untainted Mother ! Spotless Maid !  
Thy virgin vot'ries hear and aid.  
Thy city and thy children save,  
Our homes from fire, our fathers from the grave.

Incarnate Wisdom ! Heavenly Word !  
Be our adoring accents heard.  
Protect from sacrilege thy shrine \*,  
And guard the anointed head of Constantine.

In helplessness, in agony,  
On thee we lean, to thee we cry.  
From thy true servants turn afar  
The fury of the Moslem scymetar.

*Alc.* How solemn and magnificent appears  
Yon temple now ! The light plays fitfully

\* St. Sophia is the divine wisdom personified.

On the gilt shrines and marble-cruled walls,  
 The granite, and the dark-grained porphyry,  
 The pale Carystian, the Laconian green,  
 And the Numidian's saffron hues. Glorious,  
 But sad, most sad the sight. In a few hours  
 The shrieking nun may to those altars cling,  
 And find no refuge ; holy blood may stream  
 Upon the radiant floors ; where Constantine  
 Now worships the true God, the imam's voice  
 May lift blaspheming prayers to Mahomet.

*Several females come out of the church. Evanthe speaks  
 to one.*

*Evan.* Sister, our pathway home some little space  
 Together lies. Pray bear me company.

*Female.* Most readily I will.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter from the church Constantine, Phranza, Lascaris,  
 Alexius, &c.*

*Const.* Thanks, loved and honoured friends. Our  
 minds will feel  
 Refreshed and strengthened by the holy rite  
 We now have shared in, cheerfully to meet  
 Whate'er it be of toil, and risk, and death,



The hastening hours bring on. Since all who now  
Around me stand, tho' few they be, on earth  
May hardly hope to meet again together,  
I fain would ask each one of you, that if  
In the unheeding days of youthful power  
In word or act I may have done him wrong,  
He would forgive me freely ; if in aught  
He has against me sinned, I him forgive.  
The minutes pass ; 'tis time that we should part,  
Companions, more than subjects ; we have lived  
United in the sunny morn of youth  
And joy, and in the hour of mortal risk  
We have been tried, we have stood firm, and shrunk not ;  
Nor will we now. To all who may survive,  
May Heaven grant happy years and peaceful homes.  
Props of my throne—friends of my heart—farewell,  
Now and for ever.

*Lasc.* My Lord, my Emperor, my gracious Master,  
I e'en must say how all my soul reveres you.  
All ties beside, man's friendship, woman's love,  
Are weak, are poor, are pitiful, to this,  
My bosom's free and unbribed loyalty.  
None else could ever reach my high-idea  
But you ; so mildly brave, so meekly wise ;  
Soft and unbending in the easy hour

Of social mirth ; the pride of courtly halls,  
The lion of the battle. Check me not —  
It is not flattery, you know it is not ;  
For could that baseness ever taint my words,  
The prospect of to-morrow would forbid it.

*Const.* My good, my cherished Lascaris, no more  
Of this, I pray thee ; it unmans my soul ;  
It makes me wish to have more days of life,  
And power to show ye all how much I prize ye.  
Again farewell ; all leave me to myself  
A little while. *[Exeunt all but Constantine.]*

The sun of Greece has set :  
Long has it travelled thro' her various day,  
Gilded her morn with overpowering lustre,  
Shed sickly light upon her clouded noon,  
And darkly lowered o'er her stormy eve.  
How thrilling every lesson in her page  
Of early prowess, and of long decay,  
Of strength and weakness ; since the Spartan King  
Stood in the gap, and the barbaric host  
Rolled back before the conquering shout of Athens.  
Then rose domestic faction ; then the rule  
Of petty tyrants, to be swallowed up  
In the broad sovereignty of Rome ; since that,  
Empire has narrowed all her bounds ; the Goth,  
The Hun, the Vandal, have o'errun these plains,

Profaned the sage's haunt, the Muse's grove,  
The toils of Grecian art, and Roman power,  
The Pagan temple, and the Christian altar;  
And now the Moslem will achieve the ruin.

[*Shriek heard without.*

What sound was that? A shriek—a female shriek—  
Ah! Do my ears tell true? Evanthe's shriek!  
Another, and another! Let me fly  
To see who dares e'en look on her with insult. [Exit.

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SCENE II.

*A Street.*

*Enter Giustiniani, forcing along Evanthe.*

*Evan.* O spare me, spare me! I am terrified,  
Almost to madness; for sweet pity's sake  
Leave me, and let me go.

*Giust.* Fair excellence,  
Thou canst not think in reason I should lose  
A prize I've sighed for long, and now possess.  
Or haply deem'st thou that this very morn  
I did not mark thy cold accost, thy brow  
Austere, thy lip disdainful—

*Evan.* By my soul's truth



I meant no slight—how could I, Sir?—to one  
So brave, who ever has so much deserved  
From my poor countrymen. You will not then  
Bring such foul wrong upon the name of soldier?  
Better respect my feebleness, your fame,  
My virgin honour, and your spotless knighthood,  
And be not thus resolved on my undoing.

*Giust.* Thy Grecian eloquence flows wondrous smooth,  
And we will heighten it in the mantling juice  
Of Tenedos—I've some at hand. On, on.

*Constantine meets them.*

*Const.* Unmannered dastard, if thou lovest thy life,  
Let go.

*Giust.* Who dares oppose Giustiniani?

*Const.* The Emperor of the Greeks. Obey thy Master.

*Giust.* My Master! hot-brained, raw, conceited youth,  
Where in the narrow circle of thy knowledge  
Hast thou e'er seen, or read, or heard it told,  
A free Italian owned he had a Master?

*Const.* Nay, on my soul, thou shalt not lord it here;  
This is not Genoa, nor the crowded quay  
Where trafficking Patricians learn to cheat  
In these new fangled arts of merchandize,  
Which their brave fathers, like a leprosy,  
Had scorned to approach; where men are taught to barter

For a close bargain, or a greedy gain,  
The soul's unbought, unpractised honesty.

*Evan.* Oh ! not for me, risk not so much for me ;  
You will offend him mortally.

*Giust.* Forbear.  
To check him, I implore it. Hast thou done ?  
Is there no other insult to be heaped  
On Italy, or on Giustiniani,  
By this renowned and dreaded emperor,  
Who owes him the last penny in his coffers ?

*Const.* Peace, vain Ligurian, peace, insulting boaster,  
While yet is time. What, is it come to this ?  
Must I be bearded in my capital ?  
Must Constantine in Constantinople brook  
The scoffing of a needy partisan,  
Whom he has so far honoured, as to take  
Into his service ?

*Giust.* What it galls thee, does it ?  
And so then I've found out the flaw at last !  
This faultless emperor, this godly hero,  
Lacks somewhat of that vulgar virtue, patience.  
I never knew that saints could be so waspish.

*Const.* A hireling should respect the hand that feeds him.

*Giust.* A sovereign should the arm that brings him  
safety.

*Const.* I scorn thy help ; I care not for thy presence.

*Giust.* That will be proved to-morrow.

*Const.* Do not think,  
Bold as thou mayest be, wary as thou art,  
A blessing can descend on any cause,  
Espoused by such as thee. Can there be aught  
In pride, licentiousness, and blasphemy,  
Honoured or wholesome in the sight of Heaven?  
In my forlorn and most afflicted state  
I called on thee for aid : why did I that ?  
I knew thee brave ; I thought thee generous.  
Brave thou hast been, I know it, and I thank thee.  
I did not look to find thee in my streets  
A drunken bully, and a midnight brawler.

*Evan.* Avert this dreadful mischief, pitying powers !

*Giust.* Is there a pause ? Canst thou not give me more  
From the last sermon that the patriarch read thee ?

*Const.* Aye, sneer at truths thy thoughts can never  
reach ;

Sneer on, but hear me while I swear to thee,  
By the pure blood that boils within my veins,  
By all the glories of the Roman purple—

*Giust.* The Roman purple ! sure thou jestest now.  
Those words recal the days when victory  
Beneath her eagle banners flew untired  
From the sun's cradle to his couch. See now  
Europe and Asia round us ; whose are they ?



The Turk's. Whose vessels ride on yonder seas,  
And choke the wide Propontis up? The Turk's.  
Then view this battered, torn, and tottering city;  
Who thunders at its gate? The Turk, the Turk.

*Const.* If it has pleased the high decree of Heaven  
To humble, to afflict, aye e'en to crush me,  
I bow; but let not living man forget,  
While gazing on my shattered diadem,  
Shrunk from the mighty compass of the world  
To the poor bounds of one beleaguered city,  
Within these walls he still defies a Cæsar.

*Giust.* Thou Cæsar! thou? the proud imperial name:  
Why those that bore it were the lords of earth,  
Whom in their depths the Hercynian forests heard,  
And trembled; whom rough Gaul and haughty Spain  
Appeased with proud submission; whom the Nile  
Poured forth its willing granaries to feed;  
Whom Parthia and remotest India feared.  
But Thou! the monarch of some score of furlongs,  
The mendicant of foreign aid, the scorn  
Of factious citizens and cold allies;  
And where thy sires gave laws, constrained to beg  
Alms from the Goth, and pardon from a Priest.

*Const.* If thou wilt drive me to extremities,  
If thou wilt force me to o'erleap all bounds,  
Know that——

*Evan.* Oh ! hear me—If thy people's weal,  
The safety of thy home and best-loved friends,  
If my poor tears are nothing in thy eyes,  
I yet do pray thee by that solemn rite  
Thou hast this night partaken in ; the vow  
Of peace and pardon thou hast pledged ; the cup  
Thy lips have touched ; forgive, and be forgiven.

*Const.* 'Tis rightly said ; I dare not question it.

*Enter Officer.*

*Off.* My liege, the scouts report there is a stir  
Throughout the Turkish camp, as if of troops  
Preparing to set forth.

*Const.* When the enemy  
Is at our gates, all should be friends within.  
Warrior, thy hand.

*Giust.* I will not give it thee.

*Const.* If in the strong excitement of my blood  
My words have wronged you, and I feel they did,  
I now entreat forgiveness ; I am hasty,  
And easily inflamed. It repents me :  
Say you forget it.

*Giust.* With Giustiniani  
Insult is never wont to pass so lightly.  
But I am bound to fight for thee ; my word  
Shall be respected, tho' my aid is scorned.

To-morrow on the rampart I am still  
Beneath your orders ; when to-morrow's sun  
Has set, my lot will be the grave, or Genoa.  
Aye Genoa!—I recall thy words ; remember  
A Genoese has not cheated thee. [Exit.

*Evan.* He is gone :  
There's joy at least for that ; but much I fear  
He will not soon forgive this sore mischance,  
Of which I've been the sad but innocent cause.

*Const.* Thou wrong'st him there, believe me ; he is free  
And reckless ; but he will not harbour malice ;  
He is too brave for that.

*Evan.* Was he then brave,  
When he assaulted a defenceless woman?  
Or can we trust in man's poor fleeting valour,  
When not sustained and sanctified by Heaven ?

*Const.* O beautiful and good ! again I hear  
The charmed accents of thy voice, again  
Gaze on the modest lustre of thine eye,  
And e'en in this my life's last hour, as if  
By some strange contrariety of fate,  
Meet thee again, that we may part for ever.

*Evan.* Yet no ; 'twere misery too great to happen.

*Const.* Oh ! cherish not that fond deceit. The morn  
Must end the empire of a thousand years,  
And our brief loves.



*Evan.* Drive me not thus by turns  
From joy to anguish, and from both to madness.  
What is it less than frenzy, to reflect  
On all the hours, and days, and years of life,  
We might have been thus blest in? Fate perverse,  
Some treasured gem, beyond the wealth of worlds,  
To find, and in the self-same moment lose:  
To see the sparkling freshness of the fount,  
And on the thirsty margin die. Ye heavens!  
Whose still and listening arch o'ershadows us,  
If there is power to save, and 'tis not sin  
To ask it, ere the stern decree goes forth  
From your eternal threshold, stoop to hear  
My soul's delirious prayer: preserve him safe,  
For me, for Greece, for honour: but preserve him.

*Const.* Nay, summon all the patient fortitude,  
That dwells, I know, beneath that gentle frame;  
Bid me be all thy partial fancy paints me;  
If I deserve it, say thou wilt approve;  
And add to all that honour can enjoin,  
The surer inspiration of thy wishes.

*Evan.* I cannot doubt thy merit; all I hope  
Is thy success.

*Const.* That cannot, must not be.  
O rather join with me in gratitude,  
That after an abused and erring life,

I have at least the privilege to die,  
Where duty bids me, in my proper station.

*Evan.* How blest are all, whose destiny is death!  
Ah! where shall they, whose more unhappy lot  
Is to survive and suffer, find a refuge  
In this rude season of calamity?  
If then, and 'tis the best that can befall me,  
I hide my sorrow in some cell recluse,  
Or haunt of holy sisterhood, by war  
And plunder's iron grasp unvisited,  
'Mid days of prayer, and night-consuming vigils,  
My soul shall cherish still thy pure remembrance,  
And dare to mix thy name, whene'er it bends  
Before its Maker's throne to sue forgiveness.

*Const.* But see, a streak of daylight in the East  
Is feebly glimmering. My hour is come.  
Farewell, I do not ask thee to forget;  
Remember me with kindness, and be happy.

*Enter Lascaris and Alciphron.*

*Alc.* Arm, arm, the foe, the foe! I could descry,  
As at the Golden gate I kept my watch,  
Long files of men with slow and silent tread  
Advancing thro' the gloom; and the dark mass  
Bears up on all parts to the wall.

*Const.* 'Tis well.

Our day's work has begun. Sound th'alarum loud.

Thou, Alciphron, must bear these tidings round.

Giustiniani and the spears of Genoa

Defend the gate of St. Romanus ; line

The western rampart with the imperial guard.

The troops of Venice will protect the harbour.

*Alc.* Which is your post, my sovereign ?

*Const.* Everywhere. [*Exit Alc.*

Lascar, what day is't in the Calendar

That now begins to break ?

*Lasc.* The twenty-ninth of May.

*Const.* A memorable day in future story ;

A landmark in the annals of the world.

To us, I trust, who gaze upon its dawn,

A source of unalloyed and endless praise ;

But to supine and sleeping Christendom,

A crying shame, a scandal, and a sin.

*Evan.* What was that sound, my brother ?

*Lasc.* I heard none.

*Const.* Conduct thy sister home.

*Evan.* Too well I know

Its deep and sullen tone—and now again.

*Const.* I heard it then. It is the Moslem cannon.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.



## ACT V.

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### SCENE I.

*A Street or Square in Constantinople.*

*Enter Evanthé.*

I could not longer stay within ; the air  
Grew hot and stifling, and the fearful sounds  
Pealed in my ears, and there was none to tell  
What my soul pined to know. I will wait here :  
Methinks the din of battle rolls less loud  
This way ; less frequent is the horrible crash  
Of those abhorred engines, that mow down  
Squadron, and wall, and tower, at one fell blow ;  
And fainter wax the shoutings and the groans.  
Is slaughter gorged with victims ? Does the foe  
Prevail ? Does Constantine ? (Befriend him Heaven !)  
Ah ! no, it may not be ; perhaps e'en now  
He falls ; the princely form, the scepter'd hand,  
The eloquent brow, are smeared with dust and gore,

And the Infidel is glad, and bears the corse  
In triumph to his tent. Oh! for the wing\*  
Of the least bird that skims along the air!  
How would I poise myself above the war,  
View all the moving scene of strife beneath,  
And quaff the sounds of havoc, as a strain  
Of some delicious music. Ah! who comes?

*Enter Manuel.*

Speak, are you from the walls?

*Man.*

I am, alas!

Fair lady; aye, and 'twas a sorry sight.

*Evan.* All is not over then?

*Man.*

Not yet, but more

I hardly dare to add.

*Evan.*

If I so far

Might dare to urge your kindness, I should be  
Thankful to hear what you have seen.

*Man.*

I stood

Aloof upon a turret, with a few  
Poor old disabled creatures like myself,  
Who came to mark the fortunes of the day.  
The plain without was covered o'er with troops  
Innumerable, of motley arms and standards.

\* Sophocles Œd. Col. 1080.

Their vanguard stretched along the trench ; their guns  
Were planted at the breaches' very mouth.  
These opened first their voices : when the smoke  
Had rolled away its murky volumed folds,  
Far as my eye could reach the fosse was choked  
With the advancing foe ; the foremost bands  
Were but the refuse of the host, who long  
Crowded and heaved against the wall in vain.  
Death met them every way ; before them rose  
The spear-girt battlement, and in their rear  
The impelling tide of countless multitudes  
Rolled without check or intermission on.  
Their bodies strewed a level path across  
The murderous ditch ; then with a thrilling shout  
Sprang on their track the Anatolian bands ;  
Then all Romania's legions swelled the throng.  
But nobly did they bear their part within,  
With lance, and arrow, and the molten stream  
Of the old Greek fire, upon their men and guns  
And battering rams poured forth unsparingly.  
In this dread period of suspense, I saw  
The Sultan Mahomet ; apart he sat  
Upon a coal-black charger ; in his hand  
He swayed an iron mace, and sternly scanned  
The issues of the conflict ; round him stood  
The executioners of his will, to urge,



To check, to slay. Wild music all the while,  
Cymbal and trumpet, drum and ataball,  
O'ercame the shrieks of pain, and fired the brave  
To deeds of loftier prowess.

*Evan.* Can you tell What in the mean while did the Emperor?

*Man.* I marked him well, 'twas early in the day,  
And 'twas a sight my old eyes liked to look on.  
His post was always where the strife waxed warmest.  
With steady eye he watched; with cheerful voice  
Encouraged; fought with high deliberate valour.  
Where'er he came the troops outdid themselves,  
And the full trench o'erflowed with added deaths.  
I missed him afterwards; they said his presence  
Was needed at the harbour, where the fleet  
Are urging an assault, scarce less terrible  
Than that which shakes the land.

*Evan.* The danger there  
Cannot be quite so imminent?

*Man.* I know not,  
But by the noisy echoes of the guns  
It seems no post of ease.

*Evan.* Where you remained  
What further did ensue?

*Man.* There came at length  
A pause in the attack; our stout defence

Had not once flagged : we almost dared to hope.  
When at a signal from the impatient Sultan,  
His chosen guard the Janizaries rose,  
Ten thousand strong—Oh ! who can paint that onset ?  
'Twas like the lion springing from his lair—  
'Twas like the whirlwind sweeping o'er the Euxine.  
They came, their many-folded turbans waving,  
And their bared scymetars flashing vividly.  
But more than this, thus helpless and unarmed,  
I could not wait to see ; tho' much I fear,  
E'en while I speak, we are no more a people.

*Evan.* O land of blooming plains, and smiling seas,  
Of balmy breezes, and of cloudless skies,  
My native Greece ! no more my feet shall range  
In happy freedom o'er thy varied scenes  
Of past renown, and living loveliness.  
No more my voice amid the virgin choir,  
At evening by the wooded Bosphorus,  
Shall swell the burthen of my country's songs.  
Our harps and lutes may still be softly tuned ;  
The wild play of the waves will still look free  
And joyful ; but the Greek must be a slave.

*Man.* Hark to yon shout—it comes this way—there,  
near,  
And nearer yet—and here is one who runs  
Half-madly past.

*Enter Alexius.*

*Alex.* The foe has gained the breach.  
Where is the Emperor? If he appear not,  
Our men will fly.

*Man.* By the harbour, as I guess.

[*Exit Alexius.*

What boots it now? This is no place for you,  
Soft maiden, for the tide comes rushing on  
And will o'erwhelm whatever crosses it.

*Evan.* I go—but how—but whither? Memory  
Forsakes my dizzy brain, and would not serve  
To guide me thro' the most familiar paths;  
Much less in this wild tumult.

*Man.* I remember  
There is hard by a humble dwelling place,  
Whose tenant is a lone and widowed woman;  
She will not shut her door against distress,  
For she has felt it keenly; if you will,  
We will ask shelter of her.

*Evan.* Kind sir, willingly.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter soldiers, flying.*

*1st Sol.* Fly, fly! The Turks are close behind us, fly!

*2d Sol.* Fly, Mahomet is in the city, fly!



*Enter Constantine, meeting them.*

*Const.* Back, back, what would ye do? What brings ye here?

The rampart is your post. Ye have no other.  
Ye would not surely fly?

*1st Sol.* No, if we still  
Could there maintain our stand.

*2d Sol.* The enemy  
Has gained the wall.

*Const.* Peace, croaking craven dastard.  
Back to your post. The man that does not turn  
Shall find in me a Turk—back, back, I say;  
I follow ye to fight, and if ye choose,  
To conquer still. That's well; again ye know  
Your duty. [*Exeunt soldiers.*]

Heavenly powers! Do I see right?  
By yon dark avenue—(can I mistake?)  
The form of Giustiniani moves this way,  
Retreating. If they should but see him now  
'Tis sure perdition. Oh! unmeasured baseness.  
I must prevent him.

*Enter Giustiniani.*

Does Giustiniani  
Desert his post, and leave the war to others?

*Giust.* A wound disables me; a ball has pierced  
My gauntlet through, as all this streaming blood  
Can testify. I go to find relief.

*Const.* Time was the leader of the troops of Genoa  
Would not have quailed before so slight a smart.

*Giust.* A smart! it tortures me. I've had enough,  
And must pass.

*Const.* Nay, indeed, think better on't.

*Giust.* I've said it.

*Const.* Hear me: I, an Emperor —  
I was one — on these knees, that never yet —  
No matter that — thus humbled, low, and prostrate,  
With prayers, with groans, with anguish of the soul,  
I do implore thee by each tie that's binding,  
A soldier's honour, and a Christian's pity,  
Once more turn back, and yield not to despair.

*Giust.* Loose me, 'tis useless.

*Const.* By the womb that bore,  
The land that reared, and by the God that made thee,  
Desert me not in my extremity.

*Giust.* Reserve thy breath to supplicate the Turks  
For mercy; thou wilt need it of them soon;  
I stay not for them.

*Const.* Look on me — me, Constantine —  
Last night I spoke to thee injuriously;

Revenge thyself with interest; insult  
And spurn me; trample on my crowned head,  
Call me a beggar, hypocrite, and coward;—  
Let not my soldiers see thee turn and flee.

*Giust.* Nor heaven, nor earth, the living or the dead,  
Could now prevail on me to face again  
The fury of that merciless assault.  
I will not back.

*Const.*           Thou wilt not?

*Giust.*                               No: and thus  
The cheating Latin bids farewell to Cæsar.       [*Exit.*

*Const.* He goes, and all my hope is gone with him.  
Hence unavailing helm—hence useless buckler—  
Lie there, and perish in the general ruin.  
Thou only, my true sword, whose tempered worth  
Ne'er yet has failed me in my country's battles,  
Come with me to her bloodiest, and her last.  
Cleave me a way thro' yon blaspheming ranks:  
Hew down th' insulting infidel before me;  
And ere Constantinople is no more,  
Pile me a tomb within the walls I love.  
And thou, my God, whom ever with sincere,  
Tho' all unworthy service, I have sought  
To honour; mid these sights and sounds of strife,  
Look down with mercy on my parting soul;



And give me, ere I leave a sinning world,  
Thy peace, thy pardon, and a soldier's grave.

Now for the Cross and Constantinople. [*Rushes out.*]

*Alciphron and Theodore meet.*

*Alc.* Stay, valiant Theodore, 'tis useless all ;  
That way you meet the foe, in his first flush  
Of fury, goaded by his long repulse,  
And maddened by his triumph.

*Theo.* Yonder too  
They've made another entry near the harbour ;  
Their eager bands pass thro' the Phenar gate,  
And will enclose us soon.

*Alc.* You cannot picture  
Half of the horrors that are acting round us.  
In every street and house with impious shouts  
They call on Alla's name, and slay ; the ways  
Are choked with murdered men, and ransacked bales  
Of costly goods ; the channels stream with blood ;  
The Turk sheds Christian blood, and Europe's silent.

*Theo.* Is Mahomet within the walls ?

*Alc.* He is ;  
He passed in triumph thro' the battered gate  
Of St. Romanus ; at his side were ranged  
The rulers of his towns and provinces ;

His guards, gigantic and invincible,  
Followed in long array, and still they shouted  
Glory to Alla, and his holy Prophet.  
Unseen I watched him as he passed ; 'twas strange  
To mark his savage wonder, while he viewed  
Our streets, our Hippodrome, and palaces,  
Statues, and columns, and tall obelisks,  
That told of long obliterated glories.

*Theo.* And what of Constantine ?

*Alc.* I have not seen him.

*Theo.* If still he lives then, let us search him out.  
We yet may share his fortune, or if death  
Has laid him low, at least bestow a grave. [Exeunt.

*Enter Manuel, Evanthe, and Thomais.*

*Man.* Come forth : we must not tarry here ; the flames  
Are kindled in this quarter, and will gain  
Apace upon us.

*Thom.* Whither wouldst thou go ?  
Is it not then enough that I have lost  
A son and husband in this cruel siege ?  
May I not die in peace ?

*Evan.* Alas ! what sounds  
Are these ? I hear the tramp of armed men,  
Their shouts, and shrieks of men in agony.

Mid what new terrors would'st thou hurry us ?

*Man.* The fire must kill, but man may show some pity.

*Thom.* 'Tis false. They killed my boy—did they show pity then ?

But I have buried him. They cannot touch him ;  
There's comfort in that thought. They may dispose  
Of the poor withered trunk, as best it suits them.

*Man.* Much grief, I fear, like great prosperity,  
But renders us more selfish. Look on her,  
That soft and helpless maid ! Can we leave her  
Exposed to the rude grasp of violent men,  
Or to the scorching flame ? We'll on together,  
And haply we shall reach the sanctuary  
Of St. Sophia : that majestic shrine  
Would even teach an infidel forbearance.

*Enter Ismael and Turks.*

*Ism.* Hold there ! ye are my captives ; seize the maid,  
And bear her to my tent without the walls.

*Evan.* Oh ! mercy—as you hope to find it—mercy.

*Man.* If you believe there is a God in nature,  
Oh ! wrong not—

*Ism.* Peace old man, or I will pluck  
Thy rash and meddling tongue forth. Tear her off,  
And guard her till I come.



*Enter Carazes, and Turks.*

*Car.* Ismael, the Sultan  
Has charged me with his high command, to see  
That all the female captives are conveyed  
To the great church ; they call it St. Sophia.  
There he will choose his portion, and divide  
The rest among his captains ; Ismael's share  
Of spoil in battle won is never least.

*Ism.* I would have rather chosen for myself ;  
But I suppose one Christian's like another.  
The Sultan is obeyed. Fulfil your orders.  
Onward, my valiant men. May Alla guide  
Our path aright, where booty lies the thickest. [*Exit.*

*Car.* It grieves me that we meet again together  
In such a stern relation, gentle lady ;  
To your great temple I will guide you safely ;  
There 'mid the throng of all your countrywomen,  
Your partners in this day's calamity,  
My orders bid me leave you ; but I trust  
My father's influence may thenceforth ensure  
Your safety and your honour.

*Evan.* You are most kind.  
Ask him concerning Constantine. (*to Man.*)

*Man.* Forgive,

If by your courteous bearing thus made bold,  
I ask, brave foeman, whether you know aught  
Of Constantine the Emperor.

*Car.* I do.

Not long ago I found myself entangled  
Among a crowd of combatants ; most were Turks,  
And the Greek Emperor was in the midst.  
Still as I looked, above the stormy fight  
I saw him, with bared head, and sword unsheathed,  
Like some destroying angel, stern and calm,  
The minister of carnage. On a sudden  
I saw him not. Ere I could reach the place,  
The tide of battle carried me away.  
Of this be sure, he died ; and such a death  
Who envies not ?

*Evan.* Thy will be done, O God !

*Man.* O death magnificent !

*Car.* I must again

Remind you that I act not for myself.  
If aught then in your ears should sound more harsh  
Than may beseech a generous enemy,  
Let me be held excused. We must not loiter.

*Man.* You're pale, my child, and tremble ; lean on me.

*Evan.* One moment stay, and I shall then have strength  
To move. The history of my life is o'er,  
A brief, a sad one, but I would not change it

For all that happiness e'er had to offer.  
I will not keep you longer, noble foe ;  
If my poor desolate heart had words to speak,  
You then would know it did not feel ungrateful.  
My kind old friends, misfortune draws us near  
To one another ; lead on now, I follow. [Exeunt.

*Enter Lascaris, speaking to those without.*

Here is a vacant space, my father ; here  
In safety he may rest awhile.

*Enter Phranza, Alciphron, Theodore, bearing along Constantine.*

*Phran.* Then gently,  
Let him down gently here.

*Alc.* O piteous sight !

*Theo.* He opes his eyes.

*Const.* My faithful Phranza, speak,  
For all looks misty to my failing eyes ;  
Tell me what gleams o'er St. Sophia's dome ?

*Phran.* Alas ! my Emperor, the Turkish crescent.

*Const.* Then have I lived enough. I do not doubt,  
All-righteous Heaven, no I do not doubt  
Thy still controlling providence ; thou seest  
The Moslem's triumph and the Christian's fall ;  
Thou seest thy shrine profaned, and this fair city  
The prey of robbers—but our sins deserved it.



*Phran.* Exhaust not all your strength ; yet think of comfort.

*Const.* Yes, I will think of comfort—even now,  
In this dread hour, amid my vanished empire,  
My people's anguish, and the spoiler's yells,  
While my own life-blood fast is ebbing from me,  
I yet will think of comfort. No, thou wilt not,  
Lord of all mercy, hide thy face for ever.  
The time shall come (believe a dying man),  
The time shall come, when yon insulting victor,  
In his dominion's fierce career, shall know  
The mighty retribution. When a people,  
Goaded by wrongs beyond a slave's endurance,  
Shall waken, first to feeling, then to freedom.  
When Greece (for oh ! the glorious, stirring vision  
Is born yet stronger on my parting soul),  
When trampled, roused, regenerated Greece,  
Shall wield her ancient faulchion ; when the Cross  
Shall rear its hallowed banner o'er the nations,  
And Europe shout above the vanquished Crescent.  
Heaven take my soul !

[*Die.*

*Phran.* Last of the Greeks, farewell !

THE END.

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