

The Deformed Transformed

George Gordon, Lord Byron

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The Deformed Transformed

George Gordon, Lord Byron

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Stranger, afterwards Cæsar.

Arnold.

Bourbon.

Philibert.

Cellini.

Bertha.

Olimpia.

Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome, Priests, Peasants, etc.

PART I.

Scene I.

A Forest.

Enter Arnold and his mother Bertha.

Bert.

Out, Hunchback!

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Arn.

I was born so, Mother!

Bert.

Out,
Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven sons,
The sole abortion!

Arn.

Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!

Bert.

I would so, too!
But as thou *hast* hence, hence and do thy best!
That back of thine may bear its burthen; 'tis
More high, if not so broad as that of others.

Arn.

It *bears* its burthen; but, my heart! Will it
Sustain that which you lay upon it, Mother?
I love, or, at the least, I loved you: nothing
Save You, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me do not kill me!

Bert.

Yes I nursed thee,
Because thou wert my first-born, and I knew not
If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of Nature. But get hence,
And gather wood!

Arn.

I will: but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers are
So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn me:
Our milk has been the same.

Bert.

As is the hedgehog's,
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple, next day, sore, and udder dry.
Call not thy brothers brethren! Call me not
Mother; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin, out!

[Exit Bertha.]

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Arn. (solus).

Oh, mother! She is gone, and I must do
Her bidding; wearily but willingly
I would fulfil it, could I only hope
A kind word in return. What shall I do?

[Arnold begins to cut wood: in doing this he wounds one of his hands.

My labour for the day is over now.
Accurséd be this blood that flows so fast;

For double curses will be my meed now
At home What home? I have no home, no kin,
No kind not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed, too,
Like them? Oh, that each drop which falls to earth
Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung me!
Or that the Devil, to whom they liken me,
Would aid his likeness! If I must partake
His form, why not his power? Is it because
I have not his will too? For one kind word
From her who bore me would still reconcile me
Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
The wound.

[Arnold goes to a spring, and stoops to wash his hand: he starts back.

They are right; and Nature's mirror shows me,
What she hath made me. I will not look on it
Again, and scarce dare think on't. Hideous wretch
That I am! The very waters mock me with
My horrid shadow like a demon placed
Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
From drinking therein.

[He pauses.

And shall I live on,
A burden to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life? Thou blood,
Which flowest so freely from a scratch, let me
Try if thou wilt not, in a fuller stream,
Pour forth my woes for ever with thyself
On earth, to which I will restore, at once,
This hateful compound of her atoms, and
Resolve back to her elements, and take
The shape of any reptile save myself,
And make a world for myriads of new worms!
This knife! now let me prove if it will sever
This withered slip of Nature's nightshade my
Vile form from the creation, as it hath

The green bough from the forest.

[Arnold places the knife in the ground, with the point upwards.

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Now 'tis set,
And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
On the fair day, which sees no foul thing like
Myself, and the sweet sun which warmed me, but
In vain. The birds how joyously they sing!
So let them, for I would not be lamented:
But let their merriest notes be Arnold's knell;
The fallen leaves my monument; the murmur
Of the near fountain my sole elegy.
Now, knife, stand firmly, as I fain would fall!

*[As he rushes to throw himself upon the knife, his eye is suddenly caught by the fountain,
which seems in motion.]*

The fountain moves without a wind: but shall
The ripple of a spring change my resolve?
No. Yet it moves again! The waters stir,
Not as with air, but by some subterranean
And rocking Power of the internal world.
What's here? A mist! No more?

*[A cloud comes from the fountain. He stands gazing upon it: it is dispelled, and a tall
black man comes towards him.]*

Arn.

What would you? Speak!

Spirit or man?

Stran.

As man is both, why not

Say both in one?

Arn.

Your form is man's, and yet

You may be devil.

Stran.

So many men are that
Which is so called or thought, that you may add me
To which you please, without much wrong to either.
But come: you wish to kill yourself; pursue
Your purpose.

Arn.

You have interrupted me.

Stran.

What is that resolution which can e'er

Be interrupted? If I be the devil
You deem, a single moment would have made you
Mine, and for ever, by your suicide;

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And yet my coming saves you.

Arn.

I said not
You *were* the Demon, but that your approach
Was like one.

Stran.

Unless you keep company
With him (and you seem scarce used to such high
Society) you can't tell how he approaches;
And for his aspect, look upon the fountain,
And then on me, and judge which of us twain
Looks likest what the boors believe to be
Their cloven-footed terror.

Arn.

Do you dare *you*
To taunt me with my born deformity?

Stran.

Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
Cloven foot of thine, or the swift dromedary
With thy Sublime of Humps, the animals
Would revel in the compliment. And yet
Both beings are more swift, more strong, more mighty
In action and endurance than thyself,
And all the fierce and fair of the same kind
With thee. Thy form is natural: 'twas only
Nature's mistaken largess to bestow
The gifts which are of others upon man.

Arn.

Give me the strength then of the buffalo's foot,
When he spurns high the dust, beholding his
Near enemy; or let me have the long
And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,
The helmless dromedary! and I'll bear
Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly patience.

Stran.

I will.

Arn. (with surprise).

Thou *canst*?

Stran.

Perhaps. Would you aught else?

Arn.

Thou mockest me.

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Stran.

Not I. Why should I mock
What all are mocking? That 's poor sport, methinks.

To talk to thee in human language (for
Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester
Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar,
Or wolf, or lion leaving paltry game
To petty burghers, who leave once a year
Their walls, to fill their household cauldrons with
Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at thee,
Now *I* can mock the mightiest.

Arn.

Then waste not
Thy time on me: I seek thee not.

Stran.

Your thoughts
Are not far from me. Do not send me back:
I'm not so easily recalled to do
Good service.

Arn.

What wilt thou do for me?

Stran.

Change
Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so irks you;
Or form you to your wish in any shape.

Arn.

Oh! then you are indeed the Demon, for
Nought else would wittingly wear mine.

Stran.

I'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore, and give thee
Thy choice.

Arn.

On what condition?

Stran.

There's a question!
An hour ago you would have given your soul
To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.

Arn.

No; I will not.

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I must not compromise my soul.

Stran.

What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a carcase?

Arn.

'Tis an aspiring one, whate'er the tenement
In which it is mislodged. But name your compact:
Must it be signed in blood?

Stran.

Not in your own.

Arn.

Whose blood then?

Stran.

We will talk of that hereafter.
But I'll be moderate with you, for I see
Great things within you. You shall have no bond

But your own will, no contract save your deeds.
Are you content?

Arn.

I take thee at thy word.

Stran.

Now then!

[The Stranger approaches the fountain, and turns to Arnold.]

A little of your blood.

Arn.

For what?

Stran.

To mingle with the magic of the waters,
And make the charm effective.

Arn. (holding out his wounded arm).

Take it all.

Stran.

Not now. A few drops will suffice for this.

[The Stranger takes some of Arnold's blood in his hand, and casts it into the fountain.]

Shadows of Beauty!
Shadows of Power!
Rise to your duty

The Deformed Transformed

This is the hour!
Walk lovely and pliant
From the depth of this fountain,
As the cloud-shapen giant
Bestrides the Hartz Mountain.
Come as ye were,
That our eyes may behold
The model in air
Of the form I will mould,
Bright as the Iris
When ether is spanned;
Such *his* desire is,

[Pointing to Arnold.

Such *my* command!
Demons heroic
Demons who wore
The form of the Stoic
Or sophist of yore

Or the shape of each victor
From Macedon's boy,
To each high Roman's picture,
Who breathed to destroy
Shadows of Beauty!
Shadows of Power!
Up to your duty
This is the hour!

[Various phantoms arise from the waters, and pass in succession before the Stranger and Arnold.

Arn.
What do I see?

Stran.
The black-eyed Roman, with
The eagle's beak between those eyes which ne'er
Beheld a conqueror, or looked along
The land he made not Rome's, while Rome became
His, and all theirs who heired his very name.

Arn.
The phantom 's bald; *my* quest is beauty. Could I
Inherit but his fame with his defects!

Stran.
His brow was girt with laurels more than hairs.
You see his aspect choose it, or reject.
I can but promise you his form; his fame
Must be long sought and fought for.

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Arn.

I will fight, too,
But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass:
His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.

Stran.

Then you are far more difficult to please
Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus's mother,
Or Cleopatra at sixteen an age
When love is not less in the eye than heart.
But be it so! Shadow, pass on!

[The phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears.]

Arn.

And can it
Be, that the man who shook the earth is gone,

And left no footstep?

Stran.

There you err. His substance
Left graves enough, and woes enough, and fame
More than enough to track his memory;
But for his shadow 'tis no more than yours,
Except a little longer and less crooked
I' the sun. Behold another!

[A second phantom passes.]

Arn.

Who is he?

Stran.

He was the fairest and the bravest of
Athenians. Look upon him well.

Arn.

He is
More lovely than the last. How beautiful!

Stran.

Such was the curled son of Clinias; wouldst thou
Invest thee with his form?

Arn.

Would that I had
Been born with it! But since I may choose further,
I will *look* further.

[The shade of Alcibiades disappears.]

Stran.

Lo! behold again!

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Arn.

No. As you leave me choice, I am difficult.
If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
Have seen else, on this side of the dim shore,
Whence they float back before us.

Stran.

Hence, Triumvir,
Thy Cleopatra 's waiting.
[The shade of Antony disappears: another rises.]

Arn.

Who is this?
Who truly looketh like a demigod,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs,
Which he wears as the Sun his rays a something
Which shines from him, and yet is but the flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was he e'er human only?

Stran.

Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that formed his urn.

Arn.

Who was this glory of mankind?

Stran.

The shame
Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in war
Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.

Arn.

Yet one shadow more.

Stran. (addressing the shadow).

Get thee to Lamia's lap!
[The shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes vanishes: another rises.]

I'll fit you still,
Fear not, my Hunchback: if the shadows of
That which existed please not your nice taste,
I'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new garment.

Arn.

Content! I will fix here.

The Deformed Transformed

Stran.

I must commend
Your choice. The godlike son of the sea-goddess,
The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus, rolled o'er sands of gold,
Softened by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,

All vowed to Sperchius as they were behold them!
And *him* as he stood by Polixena,
With sanctioned and with softened love, before
The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep passion
For the sweet downcast virgin, whose young hand
Trembled in *his* who slew her brother. So
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece looked her last upon her best, the instant
Ere Paris' arrow flew.

Arn.

I gaze upon him
As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelope mine.

Stran.

You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty if the proverb 's true
Of mortals, that Extremes meet.

Arn.

Come! Be quick!
I am impatient.

Stran.

As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not,
But dream it is what must be.

Arn.

Must I wait?

Stran.

No; that were a pity. But a word or two:
His stature is twelve cubits; would you so far
Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?

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Arn.

Why not?

Stran.

Glorious ambition!

I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David:
But thou, my manikin, wouldst soar a show
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,

If such be thy desire; and, yet, by being
A little less removed from present men
In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found Mammoth; and their curséd engines,
Their culverins, and so forth, would find way
Through our friend's armour there, with greater ease
Than the Adulterer's arrow through his heel
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptize
In Styx.

Arn.

Then let it be as thou deem'st best.

Stran.

Thou shalt be beauteous as the thing thou seest,
And strong as what it was, and

Arn.

I ask not

For Valour, since Deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal
Aye, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.
They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them.

Stran.

Well spoken! And thou doubtless wilt remain
Formed as thou art. I may dismiss the mould
Of shadow, which must turn to flesh, to incase
This daring soul, which could achieve no less
Without it.

Arn.

Had no power presented me

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The possibility of change, I would
Have done the best which spirit may to make
Its way with all Deformity's dull, deadly,
Discouraging weight upon me, like a mountain,
In feeling, on my heart as on my shoulders
A hateful and unsightly molehill to
The eyes of happier men. I would have looked
On Beauty in that sex which is the type
Of all we know or dream of beautiful,
Beyond the world they brighten, with a sigh
Not of love, but despair; nor sought to win,
Though to a heart all love, what could not love me
In turn, because of this vile crookéd clog,
Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have borne
It all, had not my mother spurned me from her.
The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
Of shape; my Dam beheld my shape was hopeless.
Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
I knew the passionate part of life, I had
Been a clod of the valley, happier nothing
Than what I am. But even thus the lowest,
Ugliest, and meanest of mankind what courage
And perseverance could have done, perchance
Had made me something as it has made heroes
Of the same mould as mine. You lately saw me
Master of my own life, and quick to quit it;
And he who is so is the master of
Whatever dreads to die.

Stran.

Decide between
What you have been, or will be.

Arn.

I have done so.
You have opened brighter prospects to my eyes,
And sweeter to my heart. As I am now,
I might be feared admired respected loved
Of all save those next to me, of whom I
Would be belovéd. As thou showest me
A choice of forms, I take the one I view.
Haste! haste!

Stran.

And what shall *I* wear?

Arn.

Surely, he

Who can command all forms will choose the highest,
Something superior even to that which was

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Pelides now before us. Perhaps *his*
Who slew him, that of Paris: or still higher
The Poet's God, clothed in such limbs as are
Themselves a poetry.

Stran.

Less will content me;
For I, too, love a change.

Arn.

Your aspect is
Dusky, but not uncomely.

Stran.

If I chose,
I might be whiter; but I have a *penchant*
For black it is so honest, and, besides,
Can neither blush with shame nor pale with fear;
But I have worn it long enough of late,
And now I'll take your figure.

Arn.

Mine!

Stran.

Yes. You
Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with Bertha,
Your mother's offspring. People have their tastes;
You have yours I mine.

Arn.

Despatch! despatch!

Stran.

Even so.
[The Stranger takes some earth and moulds it along the turf, and then addresses the phantom of Achilles.]

Beautiful shadow
Of Thetis's boy!
Who sleeps in the meadow
Whose grass grows o'er Troy:
From the red earth, like Adam,
Thy likeness I shape,
As the Being who made him,
Whose actions I ape.
Thou Clay, be all glowing,
Till the Rose in his cheek
Be as fair as, when blowing,
It wears its first streak!

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Ye Violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes!
And thou, sunshiny Water,
Of blood take the guise!
Let these Hyacinth boughs
Be his long flowing hair,
And wave o'er his brows,
As thou wavest in air!
Let his heart be this marble
I tear from the rock!
But his voice as the warble
Of birds on yon oak!
Let his flesh be the purest
Of mould, in which grew
The Lily-root surest,
And drank the best dew!
Let his limbs be the lightest
Which clay can compound,
And his aspect the brightest
On earth to be found!
Elements, near me,
Be mingled and stirred,
Know me, and hear me,
And leap to my word!
Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation!
'Tis done! He hath taken
His stand in creation!

[Arnold falls senseless; his soul passes into the shape of Achilles, which rises from the ground; while the phantom has disappeared, part by part, as the figure was formed from the earth.]

Arn. (in his new form).

I love, and I shall be beloved! Oh, life!
At last I feel thee! Glorious Spirit!

Stran.

Stop!
What shall become of your abandoned garment,
Yon hump, and lump, and clod of ugliness,
Which late you wore, or were?

Arn.

Who cares? Let wolves

And vultures take it, if they will.

Stran.

And if
They do, and are not scared by it, you'll say
It must be peace-time, and no better fare
Abroad i' the fields.

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Arn.

Let us but leave it there;
No matter what becomes on't.

Stran.

That's ungracious;
If not ungrateful. Whatsoe'er it be,
It hath sustained your soul full many a day.

Arn.

Aye, as the dunghill may conceal a gem
Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.

Stran.

But if I give another form, it must be
By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid have long
Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your Interlopers. The Devil may take men,
Not make them, though he reap the benefit
Of the original workmanship: and therefore
Some one must be found to assume the shape
You have quitted.

Arn.

Who would do so?

Stran.

That I know not,
And therefore I must.

Arn.

You!

Stran.

I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of beauty.

Arn.

True. I forget all things in the new joy
Of this immortal change.

Stran.

In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow.

Arn.

I would be spared this.

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Stran.

But it cannot be.
What! shrink already, being what you are,
From seeing what you were?

Arn.

Do as thou wilt.

Stran. (to the late form of Arnold, extended on the earth).

Clay! not dead, but soul-less!
Though no man would choose thee,
An Immortal no less
Deigns not to refuse thee.
Clay thou art; and unto spirit
All clay is of equal merit.
Fire! *without* which nought can live;
Fire! but *in* which nought can live,
Save the fabled salamander,
Or immortal souls, which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
Burning in a quenchless lot:
Fire! the only element
Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,
Save the Worm which dieth not,
Can preserve a moment's form,
But must with thyself be blent:
Fire! man's safeguard and his slaughter:
Fire! Creation's first-born Daughter,
And Destruction's threatened Son,
When Heaven with the world hath done:
Fire! assist me to renew
Life in what lies in my view
Stiff and cold!
His resurrection rests with me and you!
One little, marshy spark of flame
And he again shall seem the same;
But I his Spirit's place shall hold!

[An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood and rests on the brow of the body. The Stranger disappears: the body rises.]

Arn. (in his new form).

Oh! horrible!

Stran. (in Arnold's late shape).

What! tremblest thou?

Arn.

Not so
I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape

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Thou lately worst?

Stran.

To the world of shadows.
But let us thread the present. Whither wilt thou?

Arn.

Must thou be my companion?

Stran.

Wherefore not?
Your betters keep worse company.

Arn.

My betters!

Stran.

Oh! you wax proud, I see, of your new form:
I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That 's well;
You improve apace; two changes in an instant,
And you are old in the World's ways already.
But bear with me: indeed you'll find me useful
Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pronounce
Where shall we now be errant?

Arn.

Where the World
Is thickest, that I may behold it in
Its workings.

Stran.

That 's to say, where there is War
And Woman in activity. Let's see!
Spain Italy the new Atlantic world
Afric with all its Moors. In very truth,
There i small choice: the whole race are just now
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.

Arn.

I have heard great things of Rome.

Stran.

A goodly choice
And scarce a better to be found on earth,
Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide too;
For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish scion
Of the old Vandals, are at play along

The sunny shores of the World's garden.

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Arn.

How
Shall we proceed?

Stran.

Like gallants, on good coursers.
What, ho! my chargers! Never yet were better,
Since Phaeton was upset into the Po.
Our pages too!

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black horses.

Arn.

A noble sight!

Stran.

And of
A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,
Or your Kochlini race of Araby,
With these!

Arn.

The mighty steam, which volumes high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very air;
And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies wheel
Around their manes, as common insects swarm
Round common steeds towards sunset.

Stran.

Mount, my lord:
They and I are your servitors.

Arn.

And these
Our dark-eyed pages what may be their names?

Stran.

You shall baptize them.

Arn.

What! in holy water?

Stran.

Why not? The deeper sinner, better saint.

Arn.

They are beautiful, and cannot, sure, be demons.

Stran.

True; the devil's always ugly: and your beauty
Is never diabolical.

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Arn.

I'll call him
Who bears the golden horn, and wears such bright
And blooming aspect, *Huon*; for he looks

Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,
And never found till now. And for the other
And darker, and more thoughtful, who smiles not,
But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a day.
And you?

Stran.

I have ten thousand names, and twice
As many attributes; but as I wear
A human shape, will take a human name.

Arn.

More human than the shape (though it was mine once)
I trust.

Stran.

Then call me Cæsar.

Arn.

Why, that name
Belongs to Empire, and has been but borne
By the World's lords.

Stran.

And therefore fittest for
The Devil in disguise since so you deem me,
Unless you call me Pope instead.

Arn.

Well, then,
Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain Arnold still.

Cæs.

We'll add a title
"Count Arnold:" it hath no ungracious sound,
And will look well upon a billet-doux.

Arn.

Or in an order for a battle-field.

Cæs. (sings).

To horse! to horse! my coal-black steed
Paws the ground and snuffs the air!

The Deformed Transformed

There 's not a foal of Arab's breed
More knows whom he must bear;

On the hill he will not tire,
Swifter as it waxes higher;
In the marsh he will not slacken,
On the plain be overtaken;
In the wave he will not sink,
Nor pause at the brook's side to drink;
In the race he will not pant,
In the combat he'll not faint;
On the stones he will not stumble,
Time nor toil shall make him humble;
In the stall he will not stiffen,
But be wingèd as a Griffin,
Only flying with his feet:
And will not such a voyage be sweet?
Merrily! merrily! never unsound,
Shall our bonny black horses skim over the ground!
From the Alps to the Caucasus, ride we, or fly!
For we'll leave them behind in the glance of an eye.

[They mount their horses, and disappear.]

Scene II.

A Camp before the walls of Rome.

Arnold and Cæsar.

Cæs.

You are well entered now.

Arn.

Aye; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full
Of blood.

Cæs.

Then wipe them, and see clearly. Why!
Thou art a conqueror; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bourbon,
Late constable of France; and now to be

Lord of the city which hath been Earth's Lord
Under its emperors, and changing sex,
Not sceptre, an Hermaphrodite of Empire
Lady of the old world.

Arn.

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

How *old*? What! are there

New worlds?

Cæs.

To *you*. You'll find there are such shortly,
By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold;
From one *half* of the world named a *whole* new one,
Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.

Arn.

I'll trust them.

Cæs.

Do! They will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth.

Arn.

Dog!

Cæs.

Man!

Arn.

Devil!

Cæs.

Your obedient humble servant.

Arn.

Say *master* rather. Thou hast lured me on,
Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am here.

Coës.

And where wouldst thou be?

Arn.

Oh, *at peace in peace*!

Cæs.

And where is that which is so? From the star
To the winding worm, all life is motion; and
In life *commotion* is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and destroying as it sweeps
The stars, goes out. The poor worm winds its way,
Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the subject
Of something which has made it live and die.
You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fixed Necessity: against her edict

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Rebellion prospers not.

Arn.

And when it prospers

Cæs.

'Tis no rebellion.

Arn.

Will it prosper now?

Cæs.

The Bourbon hath given orders for the assault,
And by the dawn there will be work.

Arn.

Alas!

And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from the cross,
Which his blood made a badge of glory and
Of joy (as once of torture unto him),
God and God's Son, man's sole and only refuge!

Cæs.

'Tis there, and shall be.

Arn.

What?

Cæs.

The Crucifix

Above, and many altar shrines below.
Also some culverins upon the walls,
And harquebusses, and what not; besides
The men who are to kindle them to death
Of other men.

Arn.

And those scarce mortal arches,

Pile above pile of everlasting wall,
The theatre where Emperors and their subjects
(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze upon
The battles of the monarchs of the wild
And wood the lion and his tusky rebels
Of the then untamed desert, brought to joust
In the arena as right well they might,
When they had left no human foe unconquered
Made even the forest pay its tribute of

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Life to their amphitheatre, as well
As Dacia men to die the eternal death
For a sole instant's pastime, and "Pass on
To a new gladiator!" Must it fall?

Cæs.
The city, or the amphitheatre?
The church, or one, or all? for you confound
Both them and me.

Arn.
To-morrow sounds the assault
With the first cock-crow.

Cæs.
Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great sieges;
For men must have their prey after long toil.
Arn. The sun goes down as calmly, and perhaps
More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.

Cæs.
I saw him.

Arn.
You!

Cæs.
Yes, Sir! You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape,
And a worse name. I'm Cæsar and a hunch-back
Now. Well! the first of Cæsars was a bald-head,
And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory. Thus
The world runs on, but we'll be merry still.
I saw your Romulus (simple as I am)
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same womb,
Because he leapt a ditch ('twas then no wall,

Whate'er it now be); and Rome's earliest cement
Was brother's blood; and if its native blood
Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 'twas yellow, it will never wear
The deep hue of the Ocean and the Earth,
Which the great robber sons of fratricide
Have made their never-ceasing scene of slaughter,
For ages.

The Deformed Transformed

Arn.

But what have these done, their far
Remote descendants, who have lived in peace,
The peace of Heaven, and in her sunshine of
Piety?

Cæs.

And what had *they* done, whom the old
Romans o'erswept? Hark!

Arn.

They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.

Cæs.

And why should they not sing as well as swans?
They are black ones, to be sure.

Arn.

So, you are learned,
I see, too?

Cæs.

In my grammar, certes. I
Was educated for a monk of all times,
And once I was well versed in the forgotten
Etruscan letters, and were I so minded
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer than
Your alphabet.

Arn.

And wherefore do you not?

Cæs.

It answers better to resolve the alphabet
Back into hieroglyphics. Like your statesman,
And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchemist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have built
More Babels, without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's dull ooze,
Who failed and fled each other. Why? why, marry,
Because no man could understand his neighbour.
They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brotherhood,
Their Shibboleth their Koran Talmud their
Cabala their best brick-work, wherewithal
They build more

Arn. (interrupting him).

Oh, thou everlasting sneerer!

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Be silent! How the soldier's rough strain seems
Softened by distance to a hymn-like cadence!
Listen!

Cæs.

Yes. I have heard the angels sing.

Arn.

And demons howl.

Cæs.

And man, too. Let us listen:

I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They passed the broad Po.
We have beaten all foemen,
We have captured a King,
We have turned back on no men,
And so let us sing!
Here's the Bourbon for ever!
Though penniless all,
We'll have one more endeavour
At yonder old wall.
With the Bourbon we'll gather
At day-dawn before
The gates, and together
Or break or climb o'er
The wall: on the ladder,
As mounts each firm foot,
Our shout shall grow gladder,
And Death only be mute.
With the Bourbon we'll mount o'er
The walls of old Rome,
And who then shall count o'er
The spoils of each dome?

Up! up with the Lily!
And down with the Keys!
In old Rome, the seven-hilly,
We'll revel at ease.
Her streets shall be gory,
Her Tiber all red,
And her temples so hoary
Shall clang with our tread.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

The Bourbon for aye!
Of our song bear the burden!
And fire, fire away!
With Spain for the vanguard,
Our varied host comes;
And next to the Spaniard
Beat Germany's drums;
And Italy's lances
Are couched at their mother;
But our leader from France is,
Who warred with his brother.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome.

Cæs.

An indifferent song
For those within the walls, methinks, to hear.

Arn.

Yes, if they keep to their chorus. But here comes
The general with his chiefs and men of trust.
A goodly rebel.

Enter the Constable Bourbon "cum suis," etc., etc.

Phil.

How now, noble Prince,
You are not cheerful?

Bourb.

Why should I be so?

Phil.

Upon the eve of conquest, such as ours,
Most men would be so.

Bourb.

If I were secure!

Phil.

Doubt not our soldiers. Were the walls of adamant,
They'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp artillery.

Bourb.

That they will falter is my least of fears.
That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on were those hoary walls
Mountains, and those who guard them like the gods
Of the old fables, I would trust my Titans;

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

But now

Phil.

They are but men who war with mortals.

Bourb.

True: but those walls have girded in great ages,
And sent forth mighty spirits. The past earth
And present phantom of imperious Rome
Is peopled with those warriors; and methinks
They flit along the eternal City's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy hands,
And beckon me away!

Phil.

So let them! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of shadows?

Bourb.

They do not menace me. I could have faced,
Methinks, a Sylla's menace; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and deathlike hands,
And with their thin aspen faces and fixed eyes
Fascinate mine. Look there!

Phil.

I look upon
A lofty battlement.

Bourb.

And there!

Phil.

Not even
A guard in sight; they wisely keep below,
Sheltered by the grey parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.

Bourb.

You are blind.

Phil.

If seeing nothing more than may be seen
Be so.

Bourb.

A thousand years have manned the walls

With all their heroes, the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

The liberty of that I would enslave.
And the first Cæsar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.

Phil.

Then conquer
The walls for which he conquered and be greater!

Bourb.

True: so I will, or perish.

Phil.

You can *not*.
In such an enterprise to die is rather
The dawn of an eternal day, than death.
[Count Arnold and Cæsar advance.]

Cæs.

And the mere men do they, too, sweat beneath
The noon of this same ever-scorching glory?

Bourb.

Ah!
Welcome the bitter Hunchback! and his master,
The beauty of our host, and brave as beauteous,
And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.

Cæs.

You will find,
So please your Highness, no less for yourself.

Bourb.

And if I do, there will not be a labourer
More forward, Hunchback!

Cæs.

You may well say so,
For *you* have seen that back as general,
Placed in the rear in action but your foes
Have never seen it.

Bourb.

That 's a fair retort,
For I provoked it: but the Bourbon's breast
Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced
In danger's face as yours, were you the *devil*.

Cæs.

And if I were, I might have saved myself
The toil of coming here.

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Phil.

Why so?

Cæs.

One half

Of your brave bands of their own bold accord
Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.

Bourb.

Arnold, your
Slight crooked *friend's* as snake-like in his words
As his deeds.

Cæs.

Your Highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer I am none;
And for my deeds, I only sting when stung.

Bourb.

You are brave, and *that's* enough for me; and quick
In speech as sharp in action and *that's* more.
I am not alone the soldier, but the soldiers'
Comrade.

Cæs.

They are but bad company, your Highness;
And worse even for their friends than foes, as being
More permanent acquaintance.

Phil.

How now, fellow!
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.

Cæs.

You mean I speak the truth.
I'll lie it is as easy: then you'll praise me
For calling you a hero.

Bourb.

Philibert!
Let him alone; he's brave, and ever has
Been first, with that swart face and mountain shoulder,
In field or storm, and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of licence,
And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famished sullen grumbling slave,

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Whom nothing can convince save a full meal,
And wine, and sleep, and a few Maravedis,
With which he deems him rich.

Cæs.

It would be well
If the earth's princes asked no more.

Bourb.

Be silent!

Cæs.

Aye, but not idle. Work yourself with words!

You have few to speak.

Phil.

What means the audacious prater?

Cæs.

To prate, like other prophets.

Bourb.

Philibert!

Why will you vex him? Have we not enough
To think on? Arnold! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.

Arn.

I have heard as much, my Lord.

Bourb.

And you will follow?

Arn.

Since I must not lead.

Bourb.

'Tis necessary for the further daring
Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost ladder's
First step.

Cæs.

Upon its topmost, let us hope:
So shall he have his full deserts.

Bourb.

The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hilled city hath

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Retained her sway o'er nations, and the Cæsars
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or priest,
Still the world's masters! Civilised, barbarian,
Or saintly, still the walls of Romulus
Have been the circus of an Empire. Well!
'Twas *their* turn now 'tis ours; and let us hope
That we will fight as well, and rule much better.

Cæs.
No doubt, the camp's the school of civic rights.
What would you make of Rome?

Bourb.
That which it was.

Cæs.
In Alaric's time?

Bourb.
No, slave! in the first Cæsar's,
Whose name you bear like other curs

Cæs.
And kings!
'Tis a great name for blood-hounds.

Bourb.
There's a demon
In that fierce rattlesnake thy tongue. Wilt never
Be serious?

Cæs.
On the eve of battle, no;
That were not soldier-like. 'Tis for the general

To be more pensive: we adventurers
Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should we think?
Our tutelary Deity, in a leader's shape,
Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof from hosts!
If the knaves take to thinking, you will have
To crack those walls alone.

Bourb.
You may sneer, since
'Tis lucky for you that you fight no worse for 't.

Cæs.
I thank you for the freedom; 'tis the only
Pay I have taken in your Highness' service.

The Deformed Transformed

Bourb.

Well, sir, to-morrow you shall pay yourself.
Look on those towers; they hold my treasury:
But, Philibert, we'll in to council. Arnold,
We would request your presence.

Arn.

Prince! my service
Is yours, as in the field.

Bourb.

In both we prize it,
And yours will be a post of trust at daybreak.

Cæs.

And mine?

Bourb.

To follow glory with the Bourbon.
Good night!

Arn. (to Cæsar).

Prepare our armour for the assault,
And wait within my tent.
[Exeunt Bourbon, Arnold, Philibert, etc.]

Cæs. (solus).

Within thy tent!
Think'st thou that I pass from thee with my presence?
Or that this crooked coffer, which contained
Thy principle of life, is aught to me
Except a mask? And these are men, forsooth!
Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's bastards!
This is the consequence of giving matter
The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,
And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
Ever relapsing into its first elements.
Well! I must play with these poor puppets: 'tis
The Spirit's pastime in his idler hours.
When I grow weary of it, I have business
Amongst the stars, which these poor creatures deem
Were made for them to look at. 'Twere a jest now
To bring one down amongst them, and set fire
Unto their anthill: how the pismires then

Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and, ceasing
From tearing down each other's nests, pipe forth
One universal orison! ha! ha!

[Exit Cæsar.]

PART II.

Scene I.

Before the walls of Rome. The Assault: the Army in motion, with ladders to scale the walls; Bourbon with a white scarf over his armour, foremost.

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

I.

'Tis the morn, but dim and dark.
Whither flies the silent lark?
Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
Is the day indeed begun?
Nature's eye is melancholy
O'er the city high and holy:
But without there is a din
Should arouse the saints within,
And revive the heroic ashes
Round which yellow Tiber dashes.
Oh, ye seven hills! awaken,
Ere your very base be shaken!

II.

Hearken to the steady stamp!
Mars is in their every tramp!

Not a step is out of tune,
As the tides obey the moon!
On they march, though to self-slaughter,
Regular as rolling water,
Whose high-waves o'ersweep the border
Of huge moles, but keep their order,
Breaking only rank by rank.
Hearken to the armour's clank!
Look down o'er each frowning warrior,
How he glares upon the barrier:
Look on each step of each ladder,
As the stripes that streak an adder.

III.

Look upon the bristling wall,
Manned without an interval!
Round and round, and tier on tier,
Cannon's black mouth, shining spear,

The Deformed Transformed

Lit match, bell-mouthed Musquetoon,
Gaping to be murderous soon;
All the warlike gear of old,
Mixed with what we now behold,
In this strife 'twixt old and new,
Gather like a locusts' crew.
Shade of Remus! 'tis a time
Awful as thy brother's crime!
Christians war against Christ's shrine:
Must its lot be like to thine?

IV.

Near and near and nearer still,
As the Earthquake saps the hill,
First with trembling, hollow motion,
Like a scarce awakened ocean,
Then with stronger shock and louder,
Till the rocks are crushed to powder,
Onward sweeps the rolling host!
Heroes of the immortal boast!
Mighty Chiefs! eternal shadows!
First flowers of the bloody meadows

Which encompass Rome, the mother
Of a people without brother!
Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
Plough the root up of your laurels?
Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning,
Weep not *strike!* for Rome is mourning!

V.

Onward sweep the varied nations!
Famine long hath dealt their rations.
To the wall, with hate and hunger,
Numerous as wolves, and stronger,
On they sweep. Oh, glorious City!
Must thou be a theme for pity?
Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
Alaric was a gentle foeman,
Matched with Bourbon's black banditti!
Rouse thee, thou eternal City;
Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
With thine own hand to thy porch,
Than behold such hosts pollute
Your worst dwelling with their foot.

VI.

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!

PART II.

The Deformed Transformed

Ilion's children find no Hector;
Priam's offspring loved their brother;
Rome's great sire forgot his mother,
When he slew his gallant twin,
With inexpiable sin.
See the giant shadow stride
O'er the ramparts high and wide!
When the first o'erleapt thy wall,
Its foundation mourned thy fall.
Now, though towering like a Babel,
Who to stop his steps are able?

Stalking o'er thy highest dome,
Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

VII.

Now they reach thee in their anger:
Fire and smoke and hellish clangour
Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
Death is in thy walls and under.
Now the meeting steel first clashes,
Downward then the ladder crashes,
With its iron load all gleaming,
Lying at its foot blaspheming!
Up again! for every warrior
Slain, another climbs the barrier.
Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches
Europe's mingling gore enriches.
Rome! although thy wall may perish,
Such manure thy fields will cherish,
Making gay the harvest-home;
But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome!
Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish!

VIII.

Yet once more, ye old Penates!
Let not your quenched hearts be Atés!
Yet again, ye shadowy Heroes,
Yield not to these stranger Neros!
Though the son who slew his mother
Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother:
'Twas the Roman curbed the Roman;
Brennus was a baffled foeman.
Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
Rise! for yours are holier charters!
Mighty Gods of temples falling,
Yet in ruin still appalling!
Mightier Founders of those altars,

PART II.

The Deformed Transformed

True and Christian, strike the assaulters!
Tiber! Tiber! let thy torrent
Show even Nature 's self abhorrent.

Let each breathing heart dilated
Turn, as doth the lion baited!
Rome be crushed to one wide tomb,
But be still the Roman's Rome!

[Bourbon, Arnold, Cæsar, and others, arrive at the foot of the wall. Arnold is about to plant his ladder.]

Bourb.
Hold, Arnold! I am first.

Arn.
Not so, my Lord.

Bourb.
Hold, sir, I charge you! Follow! I am proud
Of such a follower, but will brook no leader.
[Bourbon plants his ladder, and begins to moust.]

Now, boys! On! on!
[A shot strikes him, and Bourbon falls.]

Cæs.
And off!

Arn.
Eternal powers!
The host will be appalled, but vengeance! vengeance!

Bourb.
'Tis nothing lend me your hand.
[Bourbon takes Arnold by the hand, and rises; but as he puts his foot on the step, falls again.]

Arnold! I am sped.
Conceal my fall all will go well conceal it!
Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust anon;
Let not the soldiers see it.

Arn.
You must be
Removed; the aid of

Bourb.
No, my gallant boy!
Death is upon me. But what is *one* life?
The Bourbon's spirit shall command them still.
Keep them yet ignorant that I am but clay,

The Deformed Transformed

Till they are conquerors then do as you may.

Cæs.

Would not your Highness choose to kiss the cross?
We have no priest here, but the hilt of sword
May serve instead: it did the same for Bayard.

Bourb.

Thou bitter slave! to name *him* at this time!
But I deserve it.

Arn. (to Cæsar).

Villain, hold your peace!

Cæs.

What, when a Christian dies? Shall I not offer
A Christian "Vade in pace?"

Arn.

Silence! Oh!

Those eyes are glazing which o'erlooked the world,
And saw no equal.

Bourb.

Arnold, shouldst thou see
France But hark! hark! the assault grows warmer Oh!
For but an hour, a minute more of life,
To die within the wall! Hence, Arnold, hence!
You lose time they will conquer Rome without thee.

Arn.

And without *thee*.

Bourb.

Not so; I'll lead them still
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe not
That I have ceased to breathe. Away! and be
Victorious.

Arn.

But I must not leave thee thus.

Bourb.

You must farewell Up! up! the world is winning.
[Bourbon dies.]

Cæs. (to Arnold).

Come, Count, to business.

Arn.

True. I'll weep hereafter.

The Deformed Transformed

[Arnold covers Bourbon's body with a mantle, mounts the ladder, crying

The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome is ours!

Cæs.

Good night, Lord Constable! thou wert a Man.

[Cæsar follows Arnold; they reach the battlement; Arnold and Cæsar are struck down.

Cæs.

A precious somerset! Is your countship injured?

Arn.

No.

[Remounts the ladder.

Cæs.

A rare blood-hound, when his own is heated!

And 'tis no boy's play. Now he strikes them down!

His hand is on the battlement he grasps it

As though it were an altar; now his foot

Is on it, and What have we here? a Roman?

The first bird of the covey! he has fallen

[A man falls.

On the outside of the nest. Why, how now, fellow?

Wounded Man.

A drop of water!

Cæs.

Blood's the only liquid

Nearer than Tiber.

Wounded Man.

I have died for Rome.

[Dies.

Cæs.

And so did Bourbon, in another sense.

Oh, these immortal men! and their great motives!

But I must after my young charge. He is

By this time i' the Forum. Charge! charge!

[Cæsar mounts the ladder; the scene closes.

Scene II.

The City. Combats between the Besiegers and Besieged in the streets. Inhabitants flying in confusion.

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Enter Cæsar.

Cæs.

I cannot find my hero; he is mixed
With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here? A Cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper! Could they doff
Their hose as they have doffed their hats, 'twould be
A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly; the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since the mire
Is of the self-same purple hue.

Enter a Party fighting Arnold at the head of the Besiegers.

He comes,

Hand in hand with the mild twins Gore and Glory.
Holla! hold, Count!

Arn.

Away! they must not rally.

Cæs.

I tell thee, be not rash; a golden bridge
Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee
A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,
But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of Thetis' son,
I dipped thee not in Styx; and 'gainst a foe
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart
More than Pelides; heel; why, then, be cautious,
And know thyself a mortal still.

Arn.

And who

With aught of soul would combat if he were
Invulnerable? That were pretty sport.
Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions roar?

[Arnold rushes into the combat.]

Cæs.

A precious sample of humanity!
Well, his blood's up; and, if a little 's shed,
'Twill serve to curb his fever.

[Arnold engages with a Roman, who retires towards a portico.]

The Deformed Transformed

Arn.

Yield thee, slave!

I promise quarter.

Rom.

That's soon said.

Arn.

And done

My word is known.

Rom.

So shall be my deeds.

[They re-engage. Cæsar comes forward.]

Cæs.

Why, Arnold! hold thine own: thou hast in hand
A famous artisan, a cunning sculptor;
Also a dealer in the sword and dagger.
Not so, my musqueteer; 'twas he who slew
The Bourbon from the wall.

Arn.

Aye, did he so?

Then he hath carved his monument.

Rom.

I yet

May live to carve your better's.

Cæs.

Well said, my man of marble! Benvenuto,
Thou hast some practice in both ways; and he
Who slays Cellini will have worked as hard
As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks.

[Arnold disarms and wounds Cellini, but slightly: the latter draws a pistol, and fires; then retires, and disappears through the portico.]

Cæs.

How farest thou? Thou hast a taste, methinks,
Of red Bellona's banquet.

Arn. (staggers).

'Tis a scratch.

Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me thus.

Cæs.

Where is it?

Arn.

In the shoulder, not the sword arm

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

And that 's enough. I am thirsty: would I had
A helm of water!

Cæs.
That's a liquid now
In requisition, but by no means easiest
To come at.

Arn.
And my thirst increases; but
I'll find a way to quench it.

Cæs.
Or be quenched
Thyself.

Arn.
The chance is even; we will throw
The dice thereon. But I lose time in prating;
Prithee be quick.

[Cæsar binds on the scarf.]

And what dost thou so idly?
Why dost not strike?

Cæs.
Your old philosophers
Beheld mankind, as mere spectators of
The Olympic games. When I behold a prize
Worth wrestling for, I may be found a Milo.

Arn.
Aye, 'gainst an oak.

Cæs.
A forest, when it suits me:
I combat with a mass, or not at all.
Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine;
Which is just now to gaze, since all these labourers
Will reap my harvest gratis.

Arn.
Thou art still
A fiend!

Cæs.
And thou a man.

Arn.
Why, such I fain would show me.

Scene II.

The Deformed Transformed

Cæs.

True as men are.

Arn.

And what is that?

Cæs.

Thou feelest and thou see'st.

[Exit Arnold, joining in the combat which still continues between detached parties. The

scene closes.

Scene III.

St. Peter's The interior of the Church The Pope at the Altar Priests, etc., crowding in confusion, and Citizens flying for refuge, pursued by Soldiery.

Enter Cæsar.

A Spanish Soldier.

Down with them, comrades, seize upon those lamps!
Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the chine!
His rosary 's of gold!

Lutheran Soldier.

Revenge! revenge!
Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance now
Yonder stands Anti-Christ!

Cæs. (interposing).

How now, schismatic?
What wouldst thou?

Luth. Sold.

In the holy name of Christ,
Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a Christian.

Cæs.

Yea, a disciple that would make the founder
Of your belief renounce it, could he see
Such proselytes. Best stint thyself to plunder.

Luth. Sold.

I say he is the Devil.

Cæs.

Hush! keep that secret,
Lest he should recognise you for his own.

Luth. Sold.

Scene III.

The Deformed Transformed

Why would you save him? I repeat he is
The Devil, or the Devil's vicar upon earth.

Cæs.

And that's the reason: would you make a quarrel
With your best friends? You had far best be quiet;
His hour is not yet come.

Luth. Sold.

That shall be seen!

*[The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward: a shot strikes him from one of the Pope's Guards,
and he falls at the foot of the Altar.]*

Cæs. (to the Lutheran).

I told you so.

Luth. Sold.

And will you not avenge me?

Cæs.

Not I! You know that "Vengeance is the Lord's:"
You see he loves no interlopers.

Luth. Sold. (dying).

Oh!

Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crowned with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive
My feebleness of arm that reached him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'Tis
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon 's
No more; the Harlot of the Seven Hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sackcloth
And ashes!

[The Lutheran dies.]

Cæs.

Yes, thine own amidst the rest.

Well done, old Babel!

*[The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the Pontiff escapes, by a private
passage, to the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo.]*

Cæs.

Ha! right nobly battled!

Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great professions,
Together by the ears and hearts! I have not
Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus
Took Jewry. But the Romans had the best then;
Now they must take their turn.

Soldiers.

He hath escaped!

Scene III.

The Deformed Transformed

Follow!

Another Sold.

They have barred the narrow passage up,
And it is clogged with dead even to the door.

Cæs.

I am glad he hath escaped: he may thank me for't
In part. I would not have his bulls abolished
'Twere worth one half our empire: his indulgences
Demand some in return; no, no, he must not
Fall; and besides, his now escape may furnish
A future miracle, in future proof

Of his infallibility.

[To the Spanish Soldiery.

Well, cut-throats!

What do you pause for? If you make not haste,
There will not be a link of pious gold left.
And *you*, too, Catholics! Would ye return
From such a pilgrimage without a relic?
The very Lutherans have more true devotion:
See how they strip the shrines!

Soldiers.

By holy Peter!

He speaks the truth; the heretics will bear
The best away.

Cæs.

And that were shame! Go to!

Assist in their conversion.

[The Soldiers disperse; many quit the Church, others enter.

Cæs.

They are gone,

And others come: so flows the wave on wave
Of what these creatures call Eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the Ocean,
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So, another!

Enter Olimpia, flying from the pursuit She springs upon the Altar.

Sold.

She's mine!

Another Sold. (opposing the former).

You lie, I tracked her first: and were she

The Pope's niece, I'll not yield her.

[They fight.

Scene III.

The Deformed Transformed

3d Sold. (advancing towards Olimpia).
You may settle
Your claims; I'll make mine good.

Olimp.
Infernal slave!
You touch me not alive.

3d Sold.
Alive or dead!

Olimp. (embracing a massive crucifix).
Respect your God!

3d Sold.
Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.
[As he advances, Olimpia, with a strong and sudden effort, casts down the crucifix; it strikes the Soldier, who falls.]

3d Sold.
Oh, great God!

Olimp.
Ah! now you recognise him.

3d Sold.
My brain 's crushed!
Comrades, help, ho! All's darkness!
[He dies.]

Other Soldiers (coming up).
Slay her, although she had a thousand lives:
She hath killed our comrade.

Olimp.
Welcome such a death!
You have no life to give, which the worst slave
Would take. Great God! through thy redeeming Son,
And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as
I would approach thee, worthy her, and him, and thee!
Enter Arnold.

Arn.
What do I see? Accurséd jackals!
Forbear!

Cæs. (aside and laughing).
Ha! ha! here 's equity! The dogs
Have as much right as he. But to the issue!

Scene III.

The Deformed Transformed

Soldiers.

Count, she hath slain our comrade.

Arn.

With what weapon?

Sold.

The cross, beneath which he is crushed; behold him
Lie there, more like a worm than man; she cast it
Upon his head.

Arn.

Even so: there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye such,
Ye would have honoured her. But get ye hence,
And thank your meanness, other God you have none,
For your existence. Had you touched a hair
Of those dishevelled locks, I would have thinned
Your ranks more than the enemy. Away!
Ye jackals! gnaw the bones the lion leaves,
But not even these till he permits.

A Sold. (murmuring).

The lion
Might conquer for himself then.

Arn. (cuts him down).

Mutineer!
Rebel in hell you shall obey on earth!
[The Soldiers assault Arnold.]

Arn.

Come on! I'm glad on't! I will show you, slaves,

How you should be commanded, and who led you
First o'er the wall you were so shy to scale,
Until I waved my banners from its height,
As you are bold within it.

[Arnold mows down the foremost; the rest throw down their arms.]

Soldiers.

Mercy! mercy!

Arn.

Then learn to grant it. Have I taught you *who*
Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements?

Soldiers.

We saw it, and we know it; yet forgive
A moment's error in the heat of conquest
The conquest which you led to.

Scene III.

The Deformed Transformed

Arn.

Get you hence!
Hence to your quarters! you will find them fixed
In the Colonna palace.

Olimp. (aside).

In my father's
House!

Arn. (to the Soldiers).

Leave your arms; ye have no further need
Of such: the city 's rendered. And mark well
You keep your hands clean, or I'll find out a stream
As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.

Soldiers (deposing their arms and departing).
We obey!

Arn. (to Olimpia).

Lady, you are safe.

Olimp.

I should be so,
Had I a knife even; but it matters not
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down
Upon destruction, shall my head be dashed,
Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee, man!

Arn.

I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured thee.

Olimp.

No! Thou hast only sacked my native land,
No injury! and made my father's house
A den of thieves! No injury! this temple
Slippery with Roman and with holy gore!
No injury! And now thou wouldst preserve me,
To be but that shall never be!

*[She raises her eyes to Heaven, folds her robe round her, and prepares to dash herself
down on the side of the Altar opposite to that where Arnold stands.]*

Arn.

Hold! hold!
I swear.

Olimp.

Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even Hell would loathe thee.

Scene III.

The Deformed Transformed

I know thee.

Arn.

No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though

Olimp.

I judge thee by thy mates;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.
I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;
Take mine, 'tis all thou e'er shalt have of me,
And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptized me God's,
I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeeméd infant) than the holy water
The saints have sanctified!

*[Olimpia waves her hand to Arnold with disdain, and dashes herself on the pavement
from the Altar.]*

Arn.

Eternal God!
I feel thee now! Help! help! she's gone.

Cæs. (approaches).

I am here.

Arn.

Thou! but oh, save her!

Cæs. (assisting him to raise Olimpia).

She hath done it well!
The leap was serious.

Arn.

Oh! she is lifeless!

Cæs.

If
She be so, I have nought to do with that:
The resurrection is beyond me.

Arn.

Slave!

Cæs.

Aye, slave or master, 'tis all one: methinks
Good words, however, are as well at times.

Arn.

Words! Canst thou aid her?

Scene III.

The Deformed Transformed

Cæs.

I will try. A sprinkling
Of that same holy water may be useful.
[He brings some in his helmet from the font.]

Arn.

'Tis mixed with blood.

Cæs.

There is no cleaner now
In Rome.

Arn.

How pale! how beautiful! how lifeless!
Alive or dead, thou Essence of all Beauty,
I love but thee!

Cæs.

Even so Achilles loved
Penthesilea; with his form it seems
You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.

Arn.

She breathes! But no, 'twas nothing, or the last
Faint flutter Life disputes with Death.

Cæs.

She breathes.

Arn.

Thou say'st it? Then 'tis truth.

Cæs.

You do me right
The Devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deemed:
He hath an ignorant audience.

Arn. (without attending to him).

Yes! her heart beats.
Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wished to beat with mine should vibrate
To an assassin's pulse.

Cæs.

A sage reflection,
But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall we bear her?
I say she lives.

Arn.

And will she live?

The Deformed Transformed

Cæs.

As much
As dust can.

Arn.

Then she is dead!

Cæs.

Bah! bah! You are so,
And do not know it. She will come to life
Such as you think so, such as you now are;
But we must work by human means.

Arn.

We will
Convey her unto the Colonna palace,
Where I have pitched my banner.

Cæs.

Come then! raise her up!

Arn.

Softly!

Cæs.

As softly as they bear the dead,
Perhaps because they cannot feel the jolting.

Arn.

But doth she live indeed?

Cæs.

Nay, never fear!
But, if you rue it after, blame not me.

Arn.

Let her but live!

Cæs.

The Spirit of her life
Is yet within her breast, and may revive.
Count! count! I am your servant in all things,
And this is a new office: 'tis not oft
I am employed in such; but you perceive
How staunch a friend is what you call a fiend.
On earth you have often only fiends for friends;
Now *I* desert not mine. Soft! bear her hence,
The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit!
I am almost enamoured of her, as
Of old the Angels of her earliest sex.

The Deformed Transformed

Arn.
Thou!

Cæs.
I! But fear not. I'll not be your rival.

Arn.
Rival!

Cæs.
I could be one right formidable;
But since I slew the seven husbands of
Tobias' future bride (and after all
Was smoked out by some incense), I have laid
Aside intrigue: 'tis rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or what is more difficult
Getting rid of your prize again; for there's
The rub! at least to mortals.

Arn.
Prithee, peace!
Softly! methinks her lips move, her eyes open!

Cæs.
Like stars, no doubt; for that 's a metaphor
For Lucifer and Venus.

Arn.
To the palace
Colonna, as I told you!

Cæs.
Oh! I know
My way through Rome.

Arn.
Now onward, onward! Gently!
[Exeunt, bearing Olimpia. The scene closes.]

PART III.

Scene I.

A Castle in the Apennines, surrounded by a wild but smiling Country. Chorus of Peasants singing before the Gates.

Chorus.

The Deformed Transformed

I.

The wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice!

II.

The spring is come; the violet 's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun:
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow on the hills cannot blast her bower,
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

III.

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odour and virgin hues.

IV.

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthened hours;
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget
The virgin virgin Violet.

Enter Cæsar.

Cæs. (singing).

The wars are all over,
Our swords are all idle,
The steed bites the bridle,
The casque 's on the wall.
There 's rest for the rover;
But his armour is rusty,
And the veteran grows crusty,
As he yawns in the hall.
He drinks but what 's drinking?
A mere pause from thinking!
No bugle awakes him with life-and-death call.

PART III.

The Deformed Transformed

Chorus.

But the hound bayeth loudly,
The boar 's in the wood,
And the falcon longs proudly
To spring from her hood:
On the wrist of the noble
She sits like a crest,
And the air is in trouble
With birds from their nest.

Cæs.

Oh! shadow of Glory!
Dim image of War!
But the chase hath no story,
Her hero no star,
Since Nimrod, the founder
Of empire and chase,
Who made the woods wonder
And quake for their race.
When the lion was young,
In the pride of his might,
Then 'twas sport for the strong
To embrace him in fight;
To go forth, with a pine
For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
Or strike through the ravine
At the foaming behemoth;

While man was in stature
As towers in our time,
The first born of Nature,
And, like her, sublime!

Chorus.

But the wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, and we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo from every voice!
[Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.]

FRAGMENT OF THE THIRD PART

Chorus.

When the merry bells are ringing,
And the peasant girls are singing,

The Deformed Transformed

And the early flowers are flinging
Their odours in the air;
And the honey bee is clinging
To the buds; and birds are winging
Their way, pair by pair:
Then the earth looks free from trouble
With the brightness of a bubble:
Though I did not make it,
I could breathe on and break it;
But too much I scorn it,
Or else I would mourn it,
To see despots and slaves
Playing o'er their own graves.

Enter Count Arnold.

Arnold.

You are merry, Sir what? singing too?

Cæsar.

It is
The land of Song and Canticles you know
Were once my avocation.

Arn.

Nothing moves you;
You scoff even at your own calamity

And such calamity! how wert thou fallen
Son of the Morning! and yet Lucifer
Can smile.

Cæs.

His shape can would you have me weep,
In the fair form I wear, to please you?

Arn.

Ah!

Cæs.

You are grave what have you on your spirit!

Arn.

Nothing.

Cæs.

How mortals lie by instinct! If you ask
A disappointed courtier What's the matter?
"Nothing" an outshone Beauty what has made
Her smooth brow crisp "Oh, Nothing!" a young heir
When his Sire has recovered from the Gout,
What ails him? "Nothing!" or a Monarch who

The Deformed Transformed

Has heard the truth, and looks imperial on it
What clouds his royal aspect? "Nothing," "Nothing!"
Nothing eternal nothing of these nothings
All are a lie for all to them are much!
And they themselves alone the real "Nothings."
Your present Nothing, too, is something to you
What is it?

Arn.

Know you not?

Cæs.

I only know
What I desire to know! and will not waste
Omniscience upon phantoms. Out with it!
If you seek aid from me or else be silent.
And eat your thoughts till they breed snakes within you.

Arn.

Olimpia!

Cæs.

I thought as much go on.

Arn.

I thought she had loved me.

Cæs.

Blessings on your Creed!
What a good Christian you were found to be!
But what cold Sceptic hath appalled your faith
And transubstantiated to crumbs again
The *body* of your Credence?

Arn.

No one but
Each day each hour each minute shows me more
And more she loves me not

Cæs.

Doth she rebel?

Arn.

No, she is calm, and meek, and silent with me,

And coldly dutiful, and proudly patient
Endures my Love not meets it.

Cæs.

That seems strange.
You are beautiful and brave! the first is much

The Deformed Transformed

Arn.

Not so always!
There is a cause at times.

Cæs.

Oh, yes! when atoms jostle,
The System is in peril. But I speak
Of things you know not. Well, to earth again!
This precious thing of dust this bright Olimpia
This marvellous Virgin, is a marble maid
An Idol, but a cold one to your heat
Promethean, and unkindled by your torch.

Arn.

Slave!

Cæs.

In the victor's Chariot, when Rome triumphed,
There was a Slave of yore to tell him truth!
You are a Conqueror command your Slave.

Arn.

Teach me the way to win the woman's love.

Cæs.

Leave her.

Arn.

Where that the path I'd not pursue it.

Cæs.

No doubt! for if you did, the remedy
Would be for a disease already cured.

Arn.

All wretched as I am, I would not quit
My unrequited love, for all that 's happy.

Cæs.

You have possessed the woman still possess.
What need you more?

Arn.

To be myself possessed
To be her heart as she is mine.