

The last fair scion of his princely house—
 Look'd calmly on, and mark'd his agonies
 With cruel joy, thyself, in thought, secure,
 Now that, in thy fell swoop, thou'dst boldly clutch'd
 The soaring eaglet, whose proud flight thou fear'd.

HEROD, (*with increasing anger.*)

Now, by my crown, and by the God I serve,
 But for the foolish love, that makes me still
 Dote on thy beauty with impassion'd heart,
 These baseless calumnies should work thee death !

MARIANNE.

Thy love, said'st thou !

If only that defends me from thy wrath,
 Where will my safeguard be, when these poor
 charms

Shall yield to envious time's corroding touch ?
 For thine's an earthly passion, fed by thoughts
 Gross as itself, and transient as thy youth.
 What knowest thou of that ethereal fire,
 Kindled in virtuous hearts by God's own hand,
 And burning ever with an upward flame,
 Bright and unwar'ring as the sun's pure light.
 Not in thy soul—

HEROD, (*interrupting her.*)

Nay, Marianne, thou dost wrong me much !
 No soul exists without some quick'ning spark
 Of the divine, to raise it o'er the brute.
 And if in mine dwells one ethereal thought,
 It shapes itself in love, strong and intense,
 Aye, and enduring as my endless life,
 For thee, my wife, the mother of my babes,
 The chosen partner of my heart and throne.

MARIANNE.

Fair words, forsooth—yet by thy acts I judge—
 And that spake not of love which bade thee shed
 The virtuous Joseph's blood—thy faithful friend—
 And all, because a slanderous tongue awoke
 Thy jealous fears—casting reproach on him,
 But ill deserv'd, and with foul calumny
 Dishonouring me, thy chaste and wedded wife.
 Nay, prithee speak not yet—I still would ask,
 If that was love, which doom'd me too to death,
 Should aught but good befall thee from the hand
 Of Antony, when summon'd to defend
 Thy forfeit life, against the fearful charge
 Of my poor brother's fate ? Thy cheek grows pale,
 And well it may—but yet I have not done.
 Who stain'd his hands with good Hyrcanus' blood,
 My aged grandsire ? Mild and pure old man,
 Whose silver'd head, the weight of fourscore years
 Had bow'd to earth—and who, with patient hope,
 Waited his summons hence, in God's good time.
 Yet with rash, impious haste, thou snapt the thread,
 The frail and worn-out thread, of his poor life—
 He whom thou should'st have cherish'd—of that race,

That proud, illustrious race, from whom have sprung
 High-priests to serve the altar, and crown'd kings,
 Worthy to hold the sceptre, which they sway'd.
 These are strong proofs of love—stronger than
 words—

Though thou dost bind each syllable with oaths !

HEROD.

Nay, I entreat thee, peace !

Peace, if thou would'st not turn to bitterness
 The love of a true heart. Aye, true to thee,
 Though against others it may oft have sinned.
 Yet not to that extent thou fain would'st urge—
 Of thy young brother's death—nought I can say
 Will win a patient hearing from thine ear.
 But for Hyrcanus, thou dost know full well
 Of his intrigues with Malchus—our sworn foe,
 The Arabian king. He, and thy mother too,
 Whose restless soul,—

MARIANNE, (*sternly.*)

Speak not of her !

A weary bondage hast thou made her life !
 What with thy spies, thy guards, thy stern com-
 mands,

She is the veriest slave who owns thy rule.
 Aye, as a proof of thy regard for her,
 Thy fond true love for me—say, did'st thou not,
 When last for Rhodes thou sailed—thou and thy
 train,

To meet imperial Cæsar, leave us both
 Imprison'd in yonder fortress, round whose base,
 The everlasting waves of ocean dash,
 Mingling discordant with the clanging sound
 Of bolts and bars, fit music for the wretch
 Whose life is forfeit to his country's laws—
 But for thy queen ! for her who was a queen !
 Shame to thy manhood, for the dastard act !
 Shame, deeper shame, that thou should'st still pro-
 sume

To prate of love to her thou hast abused,
 The helpless victim of thy lawless power !

HEROD.

'Tis vain to stem thy wrath with soothing words,
 Or reason's stronger aid. Fierce as it burns,
 I almost think, thy mother speaks in thee.
 'Tis Alexandra's voice, her flashing eye,
 Her look of proud command. Scarce can I trace
 My Marianne in this altered form,
 That hurls defiance from her queenly brow
 On him she once adored. Yet well she knows
 That for her safety, Herod placed his queen
 In Alexandria's fortress. Peace was there,
 And faithful friends were round her, to protect,
 And many joys were garner'd there for her,
 That dwelt not in his home. Say I not right ?
 Smile on me, sweet, and I will all forget,
 All but my love, that, like a potent spell,