

(ORIGINAL.)

## A DRAMATIC SKETCH.

BY E. L. C.

[Scene at Jerusalem. An apartment in the palace of Herod. The king reclining on a couch. Mari-  
 anne enters from a balcony, and seeing him, starts, and endeavours to retreat, but he hastily ad-  
 dresses her.]

HEROD.

Ha! my fair dove, thou'rt caught—so fly me not!  
 Come, rest thee here, where this soft perfum'd  
 breeze,  
 Like thy own breath, fans with its wings my cheek,  
 And this pure fount throws up its crystal stream,  
 Bright as thy glance—then, in its marble shell,  
 Falls with a murmur soft as thy dear voice.  
 Come, my own love—sit on this purple couch,  
 And let my head, as on a bank of flowers,  
 Lie on thy lap—whilst thou, with those sweet eyes,  
 Dost read my soul, and see thereon engraved  
 The love no words can speak—deep love for thee,  
 My beautiful, my fair, my cherished one!

MARIANNE.

Alas! I fear a darker tale, than that  
 Which told of love, in any gentle thought,  
 Would meet my gaze, could I in truth behold  
 Thy naked soul, stripp'd of all false disguise,  
 And bar'd to view, as now exposed it lies  
 Before thy Maker's sight. Would'st thou not shrink,  
 Could I indeed peruse all the dark deeds,  
 And darker purposes, that with a pen,  
 Whose point is dipp'd in blood, are written there?

HEROD.

This is no hour, nor am I in a mood  
 For taunts like these. How perfect would'st thou be,  
 But for this bitter taint, which thou dost owe  
 To her who bore thee! Yet, it boots not much,  
 For, spite of it, I love thee with a strength  
 Before whose might, all other passions bow—  
 Though they no pigmies are. Dost't move thy  
 scorn  
 To hear me thus confess myself thy slave?

Or is it, that thou dost indeed detest,  
 More than thou once did'st love, thy wedded lord!

MARIANNE.

And if I do—where shall be found the cause  
 For this great change?—look for it in thyself!  
 Since well thou know'st, when first thou sought'st  
 my love,  
 With what a free and willing heart I gave  
 My young affections to thine earnest suit.  
 How did I cling to thee—how watch thy look,  
 And feel a jealous pang, if e'er it roved,  
 To other face than mine! I lived in thee,  
 My very being was absorb'd in thine,  
 And to my doting love thou seem'd a god,  
 Till from my eyes thou tore th' enchanted veil,  
 And shewed thyself a man—nay, less than man—  
 A monster in his shape!

HEROD,

(starting from the couch, and advancing sternly to-  
 ward her.)

Thou dost forget I am thy king, methinks,  
 To beard me with such words! The lion's paw  
 Cannot be safely toy'd with! Know'st thou that?

MARIANNE.

I dread it not! nor do I aught forget—  
 All is remember'd—all that thou hast done  
 For me and mine—all writ in burning lines  
 On my soul's tablets! List and I will read,  
 How, in a mirthful hour, lured by thy wiles,  
 My fair young brother met a cruel death  
 Beneath the whelming waves, he sought in sport,  
 Whilst thou, thine aim achieved, thy purpose won,  
 To thrust him from thy path—that noble boy—