

1860.
M. ELLINGER & CO., 12 JOHN STREET,
New York.

M. M.
TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

BY KARL GUTZKOW.

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS,

Arriel Costa,

Dramatis Personæ.

MANASSEH VANDERSTRATEN, a rich merchant
of Amsterdam.

JUDITH, his daughter.

BEN JOCHAI, betrothed to Judith.

DE SILVA, Physician, her uncle.

RABBI BEN ANIBA.

TRIEL ACOSTA.

ESTHER, his mother.

REUBEN, } his brothers.

JOEL, }

BARUCH SPINOZA, a boy.

DE SANTOS, Rabbi.

VAN EMBDEN, Rabbi.

A SEXTON.

SIMON, servant to Manassch.

A Servant of De Silva. Scatons. Guests. People.

SCENE: Amsterdam and environs.

TIME: The year 1640.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS IN THE YEAR 1860,
By M. ELLINGER & CO.
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States,
For the Southern District of New York.

URIEL ACOSTA.

ACT I.

DR. DE SILVA'S Laboratory—Evening Dawn.

SCENE I.

Enter DE SILVA and BEN JOCHAI.

SILVA (*showing BEN JOCHAI in through the centre door.*)

Think you to get away so soon again? No, no! Once more you've passed this threshold here,—

And now remain, Ben Jochai. Ah! at last At home! Alas! physicians have no rest. I pray, excuse me, if you had to wait.

(*During these words he has laid off his hat, and now extends his hand to BEN JOCHAI.*)
Be welcome, then, at Amsterdam!

JOCHAI.
De Silva,

Accept my thanks!

SILVA.

How you have changed
Since your departure, sixteen years ago!

The foreign sun has quickly ripened you.
Upon this very spot, before these books,
I pressed the parting kiss upon a youth's
Unfurrowed brow. But now, indeed; a man
I see return! Still more: deep cares I read
Upon your forehead. Has your second home,
Stepmother-like, with ill-concealed regret,
Received the richest son and heir of Holland?

JOCHAI.

'Tis Amsterdam the same that once I left.
Her spirit, young and free, hath gained in strength—
Recovered fast from woes by Spain inflicted,
Through her success in commerce and in trade.
And yet, in all this variegated busy life,
The proud of her self-conquered liberty,
She has preserved for us, the sons of Judah,
Her wouled love and toleration kind.

SILVA.

Her commerce loves the gold our brethren brought
Concealed from Spanish restless avarice,
When fleeing hither from their former homes.
And—looking deeper still into the matter—
We are permitted here to live in peace,
On these two grounds—you smile? Well, smile, my
son,
De Silva is accustomed still to make
Divisions, when some matter he explains.

JOCHAI (*extending his hand to SILVA, with a forced smile*.)

I find no change, as yet, in this respect.
De Silva, the renowned physician, who
Has fathomed Nature's deepest mysteries,
And—gratefully I own—my teacher, has
His "First" and "Secondly" not yet forgot.

Oh, happy he, who thus to think has learned!
I cling to Aristotle's principles—
'Tis he—

JOCHAI.

You meant to speak about the Jews.

SILVA.

You're right. If this Republic does abstain
From hating and oppressing Judah's race,—
As they do fare in Spain and Portugal,
And in the Rhenish lands, on Danube's banks,—
It is, I first maintain, because a nation,
Such as the Dutch, that loves the Book of God
And draws her faith from that unailing source,
Must honor us who, during times of dark
Idolatry, did guard the eternal light,
The *Revelation* of the (Only) God:—
Who are the Guardians of the unailing promise,—
And David's sons, from whom their Savior,
Himself a Jew, sprang forth in older time.
By that still warmly flowing blood, from whence
Young Liberty hath grown into this land.
For nations that themselves have learned to taste
The bitter unctions of persecution,
Can ne'er oppress their kind, from prejudice.
The Netherlander turned his chains to swords,
And to convert those swords with glory crowd'd
Again to shackles for his suffering brethren—
No, no! a noble nation must abhor it!
Such are the reasons. Tell me now, my son,
Did they abroad not call you happy, when
You turned again toward your Amsterdam?

JOCHAI.

I did the same. For, till of cheering hope,

Descending to this land of blooming isles,
I found, on board a ship that lazily
Dragged on its course, sufficient time—

SILVA.

To think
With joy of meeting her again; and how
Your loved one would run, with open arms,
Her friend and husband to embrace again—
You come from Van der Straten's villa now?

JOCHAI.

Oh! let me breathe a little while.
(Sits down.)

SILVA.

How strange!
You seem exhausted!—Are you grieved? Speak
out!

JOCHAI.

Three days Manasseh there bestowed on me
His wonted, well-known hospitality.

SILVA.

And Judith? Your betrothed—already link'd
To you, when yet in cradles both ye slept,
To you in Inlilabes already wedded—
Your heart's beloved queen in sports of youth—
The heavenly how'r? Thus may I speak her praise,
Altho' she is the daughter of my sister.

JOCHAI.

Engaged to me in Inlilabes? My friend,
I fear your niece will prove them idle dreams.

SILVA.

What?

Let me briefly tell you all I saw.

JOCHAI.

I lay in Van der Straten's arms, he called
Me son, and praised his daughter's faithfulness;
Then chatted much about his palaces,
His gorgeous parks, his wondrous fountains, and
Of marble statues made in ancient style
For him, in Florence, Rome and Venice:—
Of Rubens and Van Dyk, of light and shade,
And of perspectives—but you know him well,
How he is wont to change, with Midas-hand,
All into gold whatever he may touch.

SILVA (aside.)

But copper orientimes is mixed with gold.

JOCHAI

What is it you remark?

SILVA.

I reckoned just,
How many carats such a Midas-hand
Might hold;—I do not love his luxuries.

JOCHAI.

Nor does Exchange approve such idle show.

Yet, tho' I saw in Paris and in Rome,
In Naples all of which Manasseh here
Attempts to have but artificial copies,
His temples still would have attracted me,
Had I but seen the Goddess there appear.
I looked for Judith—and, with anxious steps,
I wandered through the park's still, shady paths—
At last,—two years we had not seen each other—
I found her,—but not her alone—(Rises)—a stran-
ger

Sat by her side within a vine-clad bower.
A mighty scroll of parchment, opened lay,
Before the Two in silence buried deep.
On drawing nigh, it seemed as tho' the maidens

Stern glance would drive the uninitiated
 Way from the sacred precincts of a Temple.
 She recognizes me,—extends her hand,
 Whose freezing cold sends through my nerves a
 chill,
 Although her countenance did falsely smile.
 My silence asked her who the stranger was.
 "My teacher!" said she, with enthusiasm,
 And pointing then to me, she breathed to him,—
 A dying echo—"This is my betrothed."
 And fainting nigh, the stranger rose, her hand
 Releasing from his own.—My fever and
 Amazement with convulsive strength controlling,
 I nerved myself, and asked his name—

SILVA.

His name is Uriel Acosta.

JOCHAI.

Ah!

No wonder that you also know his name;
 The servants' lips, Manassch's timid eye,
 And every monument, each statue told
 The breach of faith committed by you niece.

SILVA.

Your words excite my deep astonishment.
 What you have now described may well have stirred
 Deep feelings of surprise and doubt in you.
 You err, however;—Judith's coldness is
 No proof of love for Uriel Acosta.
 In silence I beheld this whole affair
 Mature.—A youthful thinker, first to Lav
 Devoted earnestly, he went to travel, and
 Is held at once, wherever he appears,
 A brilliant mind, tho' no philosopher.
 Not *what*, but *how* he writes, I do esteem.
 Oporto's heavenly sounds are still upon

His lips, with sweetness striking on your ears;
 As tho' but yesterday on Tajo's banks
 He plucked from sunny vines the sweetest grapes,
 He writes, indeed! the purest Portuguese.
 And yet, his heart feels not for Judah's sons,
 For Mamech's Theredinths he hath no thought,
 He never saw the Lord within the bush,
 And tho' attached to brethren of his faith,
 He never goes to Synagogue to pray.
 Half Christian and half Jew he moves in air,
 And raises *Donk* upon the throne of *Fath*,—
 And has, by chance Manassch's favor gaining,
 Ensnared his child, not in the net of love,
 But in the meshes of his speculations.
 And now she thinks herself above us all,
 And scorns her duties, and neglects her heart.
 You must accept her, as she gives herself;
 Perhaps she will, when yours, again reform.

JOCHAI (*in passion*).

With woman, admiration is but love;
 Him does she love the more, whom she admires.
 I do not wish to stand in others' shade,
 Tho' cast by highest glory!—Well I know
 Manassch as a weak, unmanly man;—
 You are the soul of all the family;
 Proceed—convene them all! the brothers, sisters,
 The cousins, too, and nieces,—let Acosta
 Be joined as member—

SILVA.

Not so fast, Jochai!

JOCHAI.

If he be more acceptable to you,—
 Why not receive him now?

SERVANT.

A pupil once of yours, I recognize Him yet,—desires to see you for a moment,— You loved him much, I know, and let him in. *(Steps back, shows Uriel in, and exits.)*

Enter Uriel.

JOCHAI *(aside)*.

Himself!

SILVA *(aside)*.

Acosta here!

URIEL.

Do I intrude?

(Long and oppressive pause.)

SILVA.

Come you to the physician? Welcome then! Physicians even on enemies must wait.

URIEL.

On enemies, De Silva?—I have come, Once more to greet my teacher, ere I part.

JOCHAI *(aside)*.

Before he parts!

SILVA *(introducing Jochai)*.

Ben Jochai.—You do know him?

URIEL.

We are acquainted.

JOCHAI.

You astonish me— You think—you say—depart from Amsterdam?

SILVA.

Dispel that thought! You speak of my opponent!

JOCHAI.

Your opponent?

SILVA *(after a pause)*.

I never wish aught evil to my foe,— Nay, wish him well;—yet never would myself Create his happiness, still less be link'd To him by ties of near affinity.—

A book appeared, not many days ago, By Uriel, in which he strives to prove Away, by sophistries, full many points That I have writ on matters of Religion. My pupil once, he thus assails his teacher!

His book has cut him off from Israel's fold, His fathers' sacred faith, and thus from me!

JOCHAI.

Thus we are able now to act together! I love your niece,—more burningly I felt It, when her brilliant eye again met mine. But still, the cloud *must* be removed 'twixt her And my most sacred rights and happiness;— Yet do I scorn to beg for either.—Silva, Are you not willing now to plead my cause? For noble pride will never condescend To be its own defender.—Night is near, Do you not long for rest from heavy toil?

SILVA.

You go—and after such report? You ought To give me stronger proof for your suspicions.

Enter SERVANT.

Remain one moment more. *(To the SERVANT.)* What is the matter?

URIEL.

From whence you come, there I shall go,—depart
To-morrow morning, at the break of day.
I wish to see the world, see other men,
And since I long to give to all I love
My parting salutation,—ere I part—
I've come to you, De Silva,—here accept
My friendly hand—

SILVA (*refusing Uriel's hand*)

The hand which to the ground
Hath thrown the fruits of my most toilsome cares,
As tho' they were some useless physics ?

URIEL.

Silva !

I told you, I came not to the physician ;
To see the *thinker* Silva, I am here.

And if my health of thought be now impaired—
Of which to judge myself I venture not—
You know, that, if a cure should here avail,
The *soul* alone must heal the malady !

SILVA.

As pupil you have once sat at my feet !
Have learned of me, wherein the thought consists,—
Your work is but a war against your teacher !

URIEL.

I am astonished—can we *learn* to think ?

Are teachers to be found, and pupils in
Domains of highest knowledge, where each thesis
Arises only from our innermost soul—

As once the flower from the blood of Ajax ?
The ancient system of our faith which rests
Half on Tradition, half on Holy Writ,

On sacred books, and works profane of men,

I have illumed with reason's burning light,
Not vain conceit to find at last the truth,
What every man were to acknowledge, no !
My folly caused alone me so to speak,
My blindness caused me so to see,
My deafness so to hear—*mine own* alone !
What we ourselves believe will be believed.

SILVA.

In your position I should follow Christ !

URIEL.

De Silva !

SILVA.

God might then forgive the Jew,
That he has slandered his parental faith !
The noblest and the best are roused in wrath
Against the work you wrote on our Religion.
The Synagogue with all its dogmas claims
The sacred right of loving veneration.
For even now that we have just escaped
The martyr-death prepared by fanatics—
Yea, even now, when once again the praise
Of Israel's God ascends, like incense sweet,
Into the air no longer filled with treason,
Should now young liberty serve us alone
To crumble all that stood so many years
And, midst the woes of Israel, remained
Firm like a rock, the anchor of his hopes ? !
No ! not ! And even if mine own sagacity,
And reason with her cunning self-conceit
Should say : " 'Tis dead and obsolete,—" with God's
Assistance we shall still preserve the whole
And cling to our endeared delusion yet,—
As we would ne'er in happiness discard
A servant who protected us in woe.

With fountains, brooks, and flowers and with herds,
And, when my tongue more freely yearns to speak,
To hold converse with forests' winged disciples.

JOCHAI (*aside*).

I breathe again.

SILVA.

And Judith lets you go?

ACOSTA.

And Judith? Why this question?

SILVA.

Is she not

The pupil of your deep philosophy?

URIEL.

She must from hence frequent the school of life.

SILVA.

For woman 'tis the best.—If you but ask
Your pupils' future husband, you shall find

He entertains the same view.

URIEL.

No! Jochai!

Forbearance is a brilliant crown for wealth.

Remove all lights that you might have to shine

In lustrous sport upon your nuptial feast.

For Judith you need no such idle halo,

Need golden goblets not, nor silver plates—

Thereon to serve to her her humble meats—

Surrounded by her father's boundless wealth,

She learned to taste the joys of abstinence,

“Be to thyself enough!”—she learned of me.

(*Forgetting himself.*)

But if you wish to take her by surprise,

It is your heart I mostly venerate.

URIEL.

Though rash in love you be and rash in hatred,
Your noble heart your errors sanctifies;

My book you have but little yet perused,—

Oh! read it, and do not repeat as true,

Whatever patients have reported to you;

With pious purpose have I come to you,

To bid farewell, not to your hatred,—no!

Not from the vasculating heart de Silva's,

Nor from that thinking which no thinking is,

No feeling deep, but only vague emotion—

As now it is not day, nor perfect night—

I've come to bid in peace farewell, my friend,

To you white locks—Farewell! I feel it here,
We shall no more on earth each other see!

JOCHAI.

Forgive, Acosta, that I now intrude

Myself,—tho' not a word you have addressed

To me—if our acquaintances upon

Your travels should await you—

ACOSTA.

You're too kind!

JOCHAI.

Do but command! Pray, do you go to Paris!

A letter from our house will introduce

You into many palaces. Or if

You visit London—

ACOSTA.

Southward runs my way,

Perhaps to Germany,—to Heidelberg,—

I seek, wherever it be, a quiet vale,

To spread a golden roof above her head,—
 Prepare the noblest joys of life for her,—
 It is her due! She came from heaven down,
 Earth hath no part in her existence,—no!
 She is a treasure buried midst you all,
 A seraph that resolved for once to move
 'Mong mortal men, as tho' she were like us!
 Oh! touch her never with the hand just stained
 By stirring up the heaps of gold profane.
 Oh! pray to her,—approach her as you would
 Approach a Saint!—Let me from hence depart!
 A glance at what remains with you, can ne'er
 The pangs of parting soothe!—God be with me!

(Starts to rush out, when)

The middle doors opens, and enter TWO SEXTONS, each bearing a large burning candle, followed by RABBI SANTOS, holding a book in his hand.

SANTOS (aside.)

Acosta!

SILVA (aside.)

Rabbi Santos!

JOCHAI (aside.)

What means this?

SANTOS.

Acosta, stay, that you may hear yourself
 The mission which hath brought me here this eve!

SILVA.

The mission? Rabbi, why you burning lights?

SANTOS.

Before the dark of night? De Silva, see,
 This light Acosta's reason represents,

Pretending to outshine God's revelation.
 URIEL (smiling.)

You deem you candlestick to be the Sun? What shall I hear?
 What do you want of me?

SANTOS.

This book, De Silva, sends the Synagogue
 To you, the Rabbi wise, and deeply learned
 In matters of Religion and our Law.

You are requested by the Congregation
 Most conscientiously to scan this book;

Not alter rules of deep philosophy,
 No, you must but examine, whether it

Accords with Judaism,—whether he
 Who dared to publish such a work, can still

Be numbered with the sons of Judah,—hope
 To share with them the promised bliss of heaven.

SILVA.

If deep obedience affords me honor,
 Such sacred mission glory will accord.

SANTOS.

Behold you light—it means the author's soul!
 The Synagogue and her directors wish
 To learn if it should longer burn, unclear
 Amidst the pure and lustrous Congregation.

Take then this book! In seven days from this,
 The Council of the Three expect to hear

Your own decision. Are you willing this
 To do,—confirm it by two written words.

(Silva takes the book, opens it and grows pale, seeing that
 it is Uriel's work.)

URIEL (with deep anxiety.)

Pronounce the word, De Silva! Falter not—

URIEL ACOSTA.

As fables that can never trouble you.
Farewell! Depart with cheerful mind and heart!
(*Exit through the middle door.*)

URIEL (*alone.*)

Think'st thou, that I would still exile myself
To distant valleys, just to favor thee?
A coward once I strove to save myself
And Judith from a struggle of the heart—
Shall I evade the contest of the spirit, too?
No, never! Who would serve the truth, must never
Deprive it of its highest glory—that
Of valor, which the truth alone imparts.
What can of right within me further speak?
I must remain now, tho' our hearts should break.

(Exit.)

'Tis I, whose light of life your blinded zeal
For our Religion threatens to extinguish.
SILVA (*with sympathetic emotion.*)
You are th' accused, Acosta.

SANTOS.

Are you moved
By sympathy? This book be naught but book
To you—its author is unknown to you.

SILVA (*to Santos.*)

Step in—two lines will testify for you,
That I received the sad and solemn mission.—
—Acosta! Trembling do we feel the reins
Of our own fate intrusted to our hands,
Invisibly, by some benignant God,
Unto our injury or benefit.

But ah! what bitter pang it causes us,
When called upon to be a brother's fate,—
To represent the allwise God and Judge,
Thus to become a brother's Providence!

Profoundly I regret that I believe
In voices from on high,—that I behold
In human orders oft the will of God.
My people sends this book,—in probing it,
I shall consult the Talmud and the Law.

(Exit, followed by Santos and the Serlous.)

JOCHAN.

You stand aghast, Acosta? Never mind
The whole affair! In travelling explodes
To dust and air whatever is far away.
And when in distant lands, where other tongues
And other customs men in love unite,
You will, let happen here to you what may
And be announced to you by letters, hold

URIEL ACOSTA.

ACT II.

The garden on Manasseh's Villa. In the background an Estrade covered with carpets, and accessible by a few stairs.

Enter MANASSEH, reading in a slip of paper which he holds in his hand,—and SIMON.

MANASSEH.

It cannot be!—He dare not come,—no, no!
De Silva,—Ben Jochai,—Van der Emden,—
De Castro,—very well,—but lo! this name—

SIMON.

Was written down by Judith.

MANASSEH.

Cannot be!
Does she not know the fate awaiting him?

SIMON.

Here's she herself; let her explain it now.

Enter JUDITH.

JUDITH.

Be welcome father! Long indeed! you left
Again us here in solitude, until
Mist flowers you can shake from you the dust
Collected on Exchange in Amsterdam.

MANASSEH.

Yet cares do also here bid welcome me!

URIEL ACOSTA.

JUDITH.

Does festal order here not meet your eye?
As you on Sabbath love to see? Are not
Such guests, as you are wont to see, invited?

MANASSEH.

But how couldst thou include Acosta, too?

JUDITH.

For seven days we have not seen him here.—

MANASSEH.

Have I not written thee what fate awaits him?

JUDITH.

'Tis just the reason why I bade him come!

MANASSEH.

Who's shunn by all?

JUDITH.

Him even do I seek!

MANASSEH.

He will not come, methinks, because he feels
How delicate it was to bid him come,—
More delicate it is to stay away!—

JUDITH.

Since when is Vanderstraten so punctilious?
The friend of Dyk, of Rubens, such believer?

(pointing to the statues.)

Upright and the ancient prophets, all
Inveigh against you images, because
The Law prohibits them. I cannot think
That you, of marble busts the gallant patron,

REHEARSAL.
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Now do I wish to be informed by others,
As Silvia yesterday attempted. Thou
Art Ben Jochai's betrothed from childhood's time,—
Such is our people's custom—and thou must
To-day appear with him before our friends.

JUDITH.

This spectacle—

MANASSEH.

Must be performed to-day.

JUDITH.

How, father,—

MANASSEH.

Well! I know that Jochai don't
Appear to thee alike the bridegroom sung
By Solomon;—yet, follow life's commands!

As two betrothed, the world must think that love
Has caused you to unite for life and death.

As to the rest,—your hearts must see to that.

JUDITH.

An easy calculation this, you think,
As you would count your *debts* and your *credits*.

MANASSEH.

Enough! Acosta dare not come to-day;
Such is my firmest resolution! Guard
Me against excitement!—you do know I hate

To see aught serious disturb my path.

(*Ascends the Estrade.*)

JUDITH.

O worldly shrewdness, fathomless for me,—
Unable to possess this heart of mine!

Should be afraid your fellow to protect.

MANASSEH.

Our brethren know me well to be a man
Of liberal views; I glory in the fact
That Vanderslatten can be seen no more,
While praying, wrapt in his phylacteries.

I am no hypocrite, do publicly
Profess that Universalism, which
Selects the best of all the better lessons
Which Moses taught, and Christ, and Socrates.

But when religious struggles are begun,
And dust stirred up of ancient prejudices,
From which the masses never will be free—
I take the part of the existing faith,

Unable to dispense with outward duties.

JUDITH.

The Artist will be ever courted, while
The Thinker we would shun from cowardice.—

MANASSEH.

This, too, I had to hear, that Uriel's
Attentions paid to thee create suspicion.—

Two thoughts alone I know, that dear to me,
The first—you smile,—it is,—I do confess,
The happiness at home, amidst my wealth,
The comforts which afford me peace and rest.

As to the second, I confess, I bow
To th' universal voice, I never scan
Its inner worth: *It is*,—and I obey!

JUDITH.

Thus Truth and Art will never walk together!

MANASSEH.

The will of life and custom is severe;—

How can my countenance bely my heart,—
How can I smile in love when I must hate,—
How hatred show when burning love I feel?

He comes—'tis he—the door I saw him open—
He steps along the winding mirrle-path,—
The flowers seem to greet him with delight—

Am I my father's cold and heartless child?

What can prevent me now with fervor loud

And happy joy to press him to my breast,—

To let him feel the throbbings of my heart?—

—My timid heart is silent yet,—it must,

By free and independent action, gain

The sacred right to solve the contradiction

That sunders lip from eye, and eye from heart.

Yet nothing I have done—and hide my face.

Enter URIEL.

URIEL.

I come, my friend, because you wished it so,
And hope to meet no strangers in this place—

JUDITH.

You only come, because I wished it so?

Where tarry you? Why do you shun our house?

For heaven's sake, at such portentous time!

What dreadful news about you have I heard!

URIEL.

The conflict 'tween the Synagogue and me?

JUDITH.

The Synagogue can never alarm my heart.

No, Uriel, you were about to see!

You could indeed! so cruelly depart,

So suddenly in nightly darkness go!

URIEL.

Be calm! I pray you, leave this tender tone!

Be what you're doomed to be, Jochar's wife!
We have so oft discussed this point,—and wept—
Oh! let us not reopen wounds of old!

JUDITH.

You should not speak of resignation!

URIEL.

Judith!

JUDITH.

I hate you, if you speak so quietly!

URIEL.

You know the law of Jewish families;

The father wills, the child obeys:—the chains

At first of iron, change to bonds of roses!

A hothouse is indeed! the life of man—

JUDITH.

Speak thus, Acosta, when you are alone,
Conversing with your cold and doubting thoughts;—

Speak thus not here upon this sacred spot,

Where you've disclosed to me the warmest life!

Know ye no more you verdant foliage,

The blissful peace, when from your lips I heard

The stories of the raging wars on earth?

O Uriel! these are the how'ry paths

In which I often walked led by your hand,—

And pointed out to you some unknown herb!

You looked at it and called it by its name,—

You brought me fire,—and glasses wonderful,—

And showed how nature yields to human mind,—

How metals,—every pebble,—every plant,

Contains some dormant, mystic power,—yes!

And death should dwell within ourselves alone!

No spark from steel, no healing balm from poison!

No, Uriel! you have erected once

Before my eyes a heavenly ladder, high,—

And now, when I have reached the greatest height,

Move in domains of sweetest bliss, you take

Away the scaffold!—Never more can I

Retrace my steps, to dwell in common space!

URIEL.

How we have loved—on every verdant spot

It is inscribed with burning tears of ours.

But ah! it must not be,—it will not be—

I know we are not made for thoughtless bounds.

Perhaps, if we had not conversed with books,

And never discoursed on stars, on endless space,

But clung to all that nearest lay to us,—

Perhaps that then our wild impatience

Of stormy passions might have raged and roared,—

—But heaven may forbid that I should err,

Unable patiently to bear my grief,

Have carried thee upon a dangerous crossway,

And cruelly have told thee then: "My love,

Thou art obliged to make thy choice, or die!"—

—Thou know'st the fate awaiting me?—The ban!

A curse will drive me off your habitations!

And never dar'st thou love the cur'd. Indeed!

An honor is this curse to me—yet, how

Could I desire another take a part?

JUDITH.

Acosta, can a nation ever reject

The noblest and the best of all its men?

URIEL.

And yet, it will be done!—Beloved Judith,

(*seizing her hand.*) Once more, farewell! (Seeing Ben Jochoai here?)

And guests around?—Are we then not alone?

What hast thou done?—Dost pay me honor thus?

You checked crowd can only humble me!

Enter JOCHAI, in a brilliant, festive attire, descending from the terrace with GUESTS.

JOCHAI.

An everlasting Farewell this, indeed!

I see you everywhere bid leave, Acosta.

In Heidelberg I thought you long ago,

To teach the forests winged inmates to think!

JUDITH.

No hurry yet. For here in Amsterdam

(Pointing to the feather on Jochoai's cap.)

There're birds in greater need of wisdom yet.

(Takes Uriel's arm and carries him, against his will, up to the terrace.—Music at the distance.)

JOCHAI.

The last this is, thou biddest me defiance!

How sweet is that revenge which Fate presents

And need not be aroused by man himself.—

—She leads him fearlessly into the crowd—

Enter SILVA and MANASSEH, on the terrace, followed by GUESTS.

MANASSEH.

It must not be!

SILVA.

Be calm!—Be calm!

MANASSEH.

O horror!

Against my stern protest!

SILVA.

Be quiet now.

You must protect your guest against insults.
Our Sanhedrim has not condemned him yet.

MANASSEH.

But custom, he should know, does never await
The judgement, but will follow prejudice.

(*Exit.—Silva comes down.*)

JOCHAI.

I am amazed, De SILVA, have you changed
Your views?

SILVA.

Has any man a right to act,

Before the Judge has yet pronounced the judgment?

JOCHAI

Thus Silva speaks who has condemned the book?

SILVA.

Condemned the book? Where have I'er proclaimed,
That such was done by me?

JOCHAI.

De Silva!

'Tis known that the Sanhedrim have received
Your verdict reading thus: "*He is no Jew!*"

SILVA.

You do, indeed! not comprehend my words.

JOCHAI.

I comprehend that you protect him still.

SILVA.

What? I protect him not,—and yet, I do!
I almost do believe that I have changed!
Behold! how overfull is human heart
Of notes and melodies,—almost as full
As instruments of which we might believe

The artist had exhausted all the airs,
And all the fullness of his melodies—:
And yet again, again his hand will strike
Some new, enchanting, unexpected chords,
Drawn from the depth of never-ceasing founts.—
List, how I fared with that investigation.

JOCHAI (*aside*).

What shall I hear?

SILVA.

My friend Jochai,—
When I to solitude profound retired,
Secluded with the book from all the world,
Read o'er and o'er again the paragraphs,
Oh!—then—I know not how—I felt convinced,
Within my inmost soul, of many points,—
Yes! many points roused up again in me,
With magic power, the philosopher.
A voice within me spoke: "*Impossible!*
Beware to priests the giving to deliver,—
Him, Plato's great disciple to betray!"
And willingly would I've ascribed unto
The Law and to the Talmud thoughts profound
Which I discovered here and there, amongst
The many fallacies and sophistries.

But as I could not do so, having vowed
To judge by Talmud and Torah alone,
I wrote below the end these words,—
And nothing more.— "*The author is no Jew!*"

JOCHAI

But these are double-meaning words—

SILVA.

No, no!

I wrote what must condemn him as a Jew.
And, pray, is he a Jew? Is he compelled.

URIEL ACOSTA.

Submissively to bow his head to this
Degrading curse? No, no—Acosta may
Whenever he chooses, call himself a *Christian*

JOCAL.

Silva?!

SILVA.

And none could Judith take from you!

JOCAL.

What say you,—Uriel a Christian?

SILVA.

Yes!

His father once renounced his faith, embraced
Christianity, and had his children taught
In schools of Jesuits. But they returned
To Judaism, when they had arrived
Upon these shores as exiles from their home.
Did Uriel the same? Well may he claim
The Christian's name, if so he choose.

JOCAL.

A Christian?

This must forever sunder him from Judith.

SILVA.

'Tis so!—but let us now to work!—you act
From hatred—never mind—and ~~let~~ Let that
Alone!—Step into yonder verdant grove—
I hear that the Sanhedrim are informed
That Uriel is here at Vanderstraten's;—
De Santos soon will bring the sacred curse!
Whenever he comes, the Messenger of Fate,
You must come forth—while I remain afar—
And say: "Acosta, thou a Christian art!"
Since Judith never can become a Christian,

URIEL ACOSTA.

You clear from all suspicion thus your love.
And I, who don't believe that Uriel
Is persuaded to believe, yet must
Bestow respect upon the thinker—I
Need then not blush before the face of—Plato!

(Exit;—Jochai follows him with joyful anxiety.)
Enter MANASSEH and OTHER GUESTS, male and female,
coming down from the terrace.

MANASSEH.

What say'st thou, Simon, Priests before the gate?
Rabbi De Santos thus does honor me?

Enter URIEL and JUDITH.

URIEL.

They come!

JUDITH.

What have you? Look but bold and brave!
Where is De Silva? (*The Musicians stop.*)
What have the players then?
Has suddenly a gale amidst the piece
Reversed the music-leaves?

URIEL.

Look yonder—there

They are,—the Priests—and with the cornets, too!
All look aghast towards the *Estrade*, where enter Rabbi
SANTOS, accompanied by FOUR OTHER RABBIS:—the
latter put slowly and solemnly small cornets upon their
lips, and draw a deep, protracted note,—at the conclu-
sion of which:

MANASSEH.

The sign of excommunication! Ah!

Disturbing thus our peace.

SANTOS (*with a solemn voice, from the balcony*)

The cornet greets
 You all!—Remember Abraham, who would
 With joy to God his only son once offer.
 But God, the Lord of hosts then said: "Go, take
 And sacrifice, in Isaac's stead, the ram
 That thou beholdest yonder, caught within
 The thicker's branches by its horns." And then
 The Patriarch released his pious son,
 And offered up the ransom animal.—
 Whoe'er professes Adonai, our God,
 May step aside! No sacrifice the Lord
 Desires of Abram's sons—Acosta, thou,
 Thou stay alone!

(*All step to the other side,—Judith hesitates.*)
 And Vanderstraten's daughter?
 Dost thou not, too, profess Gool Adonai?

(*Judith joins, slowly and hesitatingly, the others.*)
 Enter JOCHAI and DE SILVA.

URIEL.
 She, too! Oh, error's magnet draws with force!
 —Think'st thou to stand upon Sinai's mount?
 Hath Moses chosen thee to speak for him?
 Who vested thee with power over me?

SANTOS.
 If thou'rt a Jew, thou knowest well—the Lord!
 JOCHAI (*stepping between.*)
 What wilt you here, respected Sires?—De Santos,
 Will misery you conjure on our heads?
 'Tis true, in Amsterdam we have the power
 To execute amidst the Congregation
 The law and sacred customs of our race.—
 Yet, only on the Day;—Acosta is
 A CHRISTIAN!

ALL.
 Christian!

JUDITH.

God!

JOCHAI.

You mean to curse him?
 The Christian is beyond your mighty arm!

JUDITH (*Aside.*)

This word that saves him now, must cause my death!

SANTOS.

If Uriel a Christian, then my mouth
 Is silenced. (*Raising his hands for a benediction.*)
 May the Lord bless Israel's race.

URIEL.

Who dares pronounce,—who says—

JOCHAI.

Thy father did
 With all his family in Portugal
 Abjure his fathers' ancient, hallowed faith:

As yet, no public act of thine has brought
 Three hark among the tribes of Jacob's race.

Thou art a Christian—accept our thanks,
 That thou hast deigned to come amongst us here.

MASSSEN.

Come in unto our feast!—The Christian will
 Exchange, that in meats and drinks we yield
 To sacred customs of the Israelite.

And here they felt redeemed again and free.
 Each hastened now, to wash at once away
 The christning drops that stained the Jewish blood.
 My mother, sisters,—all are Jews again!
 Can I apply the same to me, who came
 Matured in age to Amsterdam?—Will I
 The tender *Gabriel*, my christian name,
 Convert into the gloomy Uriel?
 I am at liberty, and—I confess,
 I crave to dive into the mighty stream
 Of life, to glide along with all the world.
 And yet, I would abstain—you ask me, why?
 Know ye, why Joseph in the land of Egypt
 Wept tears of fervent joy, when he beheld
 His brothers who had sold him for a slave?
 What is it that, altho' disgusted with
 The rubbish which as custom followed us
 From Eastern lands, unites us outwardly
 As brothers, tho' we seldom feel as such?
 'Tis *honor* that cements the rotten bond,—
 'Tis *honor* that alone binds me to you!
 Altho' enjoying here in Amsterdam,
 As men, some slight respect, ye still remain
 A timid game removed from distant woods,
 Which trembles at each Christian salutation.
 Suspected once you must go hence again,—
 The children of Ahasverus must go,
 And wander, wander, wander restlessly!
 But craving not for cheering, sweet repose,
 As Christian to enjoy refreshing peace,
 While weary ye and homeless wander e'er—
 I wish to suffer with the suffering,—
 You may pronounce the curse! I am a Jew!

A Christian—!! Should scornful arrogance
 When yet a child and studying our law,
 I was baptized.—No light-encircled Priest,
 To God ordained, performed the rites
 Upon my father, mother and my sisters;—
 We were not won by pious legends, nor
 By gold,—godfather stood for all of us
 The cruel hangman of the Inquisition.
 For seven years, our way to Christian schools
 Led us—with trembling hearts and tottering feet—
 From *dread*, we were most faithful Christians!
 But wonderful the soothing force of habit!
 Before the holy altar, clad in robes,
 The golden censers swinging,—now the Priests,
 Responses chaunting with the choir,—anon
 To Christian's doctrines listening at my school—
 To have then learned more than Talmudic laws
 And Rabinism,—*now* I deem my happiness!
 All that I am, I have become as Christian!
 In limp streams of culture could I bathe,
 Could act as others,—free with all alike;
 The air was mine, the quick'ning rays of light,—
 My eye could bask in forests' cheering green,—
 And I could love what'er another loved,
 Of every glorious deed, the breathing echo
 Of history would e'er reverberate
 Within my breast, as in the breasts of others.
 I was a Portuguese,—I had a home,
 A fatherland, where I could live and hope.—
 But when our parents with their brethren left,
 We followed them to these befriended shores!

URIEL.

SANTOS.

If you be Jew alone to mock us here,
 "Were better you remained still *Gubriel!*
 —Your godless book hath been consigned to flames,
 And thou—be cursed by us!—Anathema on you!

The prayer of thy lips be ne'er fulfilled,
 The breath thou breathest pestilence exhales;
 Thine eyes send poison forth,—and palsied limbs
 Shall make for children thee a mocking sport.
 This is the curse pronounced o'er thee by me!
 Where on thy wand'rings'er thou knock'st, a foe
 May turn thee off! In sickness and disease
 To poison turn each drop of medicine!
 Whene'er death should come to call thee hence,
 Die on the road, thy head towards the West!

ALL. (*bending their heads.*)

Woe!

URIEL.

I shudder! not for me, no! for the error
 That thus deceives itself, to please the Lord!

SANTOS.

With blindness struck thou shalt attempt to move.—
 But cursed the hand that offers thee its aid,
 And when thou fallest, open may the earth,
 To swallow thee as Patan and Abiram!

ALL

Woe!

SANTOS.

The Synagogue does cast thee off—and cursed
 The breast that nursed thee—

URIEL.

Mother!

SANTOS.

Cursed the friend
 Who would be true to thee in misery!—

Thy kindred who feel yet for thee, be cursed!—
 Whatever approacheth thee,—be cursed and dead!
 While thirst for love shall burn thy inner part,
 A woman's love shall never cheer thy heart!

URIEL. (*stepping boldly forward.*)

Thou liest now, Rabbi!

MAYASSEH.

Audacious girl!

SILVA.

Remove her hence, Jochai!

JOCHAI.

The treach'rous maid!

JEPITH.

I will betray you and myself! For treason
 On you is faithfulness to God! Ye tremble,
 That curses from such lips would blessing bring?

Condemn the Gods whom we profess; they are
 The true ones; learn to pray to *them!* He is
 By woman loved! Believe in better prophets!

(*Sinks into Uriel's arms. Pause. General amazement.*)

JUDITH.

Thus thou art mine! I've conquered thee by truth,
And that in future I may openly
Proclaim my love unto the world, I hasten
To win my father's heart and approbation.
Have I obeyed the God whom thou hast taught?
Whose voice the flames within the heart proclaim?
Oh! let us hope! Come follow me, my friend!
The world has conquered *he, who wills* indeed!

(*Exeunt Judith and Uziel.*)

SANTOS.

The church beholds for one, two victims now!
No righteous man can tarry in this place.

(*Descend with his associates the terrace and exit through the front of the stage. All follow.*)—*during which—*

JOOBAI (*to Manasseh and Judith.*)

The law of heaven I but little value,

The human part I see alone,—your treason.

And yet, I too, believe in ancient Gods,
They teach the swiftest thing to man: *Revenge!*

(*Follows the last departing guests, so that Manasseh, Uziel and Judith are alone left on the stage.*)

MANASSEH.

How I may yet awake from such a dream,
Into my life, I cannot know; but leave
The whole to him who seems to rule the world:
Mischievous Chance!—Beloved child! to pave
Again the road to peace and rest is not
An easy task. Acosta, you remain
Meanwhile upon this villa with your course—
The Muses here will never spur your sight.
But I must back to Amsterdam. And thou,
My daughter, custom bids thee follow me!

(*Exit.*)

What then to do,—with pain it shall be weighed!

That has produced the work;—true genius
 Would rather give his work away for naught,—
 The price you pay is for the work's possession,
 That quiet, happy, joy-inspiring feeling.

(Approaches a picture, and contemplates it with his
 hands crossed on his back.)

The beautiful here to enjoy alone,
 Alone, and undisturbed by human eye,
 And not addressed by blind curiosity,
 By silly talks of would-be connoisseurs:
 No other joy like this can earth afford!
 Here, where eternal repetition is,
 A beautiful something but once exists—
 And where this One, well-known and genuine,
 And holy, unprofane, as love-divine,
 Belongs, and is attached to us alone—
 Here men will speak of numbers and of
 prices!

Enter UURITH.

UURITH.

I sought you, father,—and you here at last.
 You seem profoundly lost in yonder pictures—
 You seem depressed—

MANASSEH.

Yes, *seem*, but am not so.

UURITH.

The sacrifices brought by you in these
 Sad days of heavy grief have wearied you.

MANASSEH.

(One is but happy, as thou know'st thyself,
 Through others' grief—)

*A room in Manasseh's house at Amsterdam;—it is or-
 namented after the taste of Manasseh, with pictures
 and busts;—the latter stand on the mantle-piece.*
 MANASSEH seated at a writing table and making calcula-
 tions.

ACT III.

Uncertain fortune built on wind and sea!
 Into the winds and seas I write my numbers,
 The order of my book presents no helm,—
 The billows wash the finest numbers away;
 In port alone, in port we can sit up.
 (Rises and paces once the room, whereupon he takes
 another book from the table.)
 Much rather do I read this little book!
 The pictures, statues, the mysterious sports
 Of limpid but mischievous rivulets,—
 Fine edifices,—all are written down
 Together in this book with what they cost.
 Their cost's too high according to exact usage!
 Ye talk of what a picture may be worth,
 Complain that Artists overrate themselves?
 Are pictures paid by what their value says?
 The price you pay for pictures, never goes
 For paint, or canvass, or the time they cost
 The Artist,—even not the genius

JUDITH.

The cursed, unhappy man
Whom all avoid, and who would now not pass
The sacred threshold of his mother's house,
You hold concealed from raging Fanatics,
Secured within our villa's peaceful walls,
And hesitate not, even to call him Son!
They say, you're cold, a worldly, heartless man,
And stern appears your nature's outward form—
But oh! would that they knew thy tender heart!

MANASSEH.

Thou overtest me, beloved child!
That I protect Acosta, I do not
On his account; I own, the spirit that
Would ever rebel against the world, remains
For me a stranger which I cannot love.
He's dear to thee, as thou hast there proclaimed,
Most wildly violating all your duties—
Yet, let me not in words perform again
The scene—

JUDITH (aside.)

Which is, indeed! my very life!

MANASSEH.

All world shall know that after Uriel's
Full recantation, I shall not release
To give him Judith's hand, whose heart he has—
And why I'm weak, thou feelest well, my child!
Yes, for myself!—for your paternal heart—
And for yourself, your tender, human heart!

JUDITH.

MANASSEH.

Thou art mistaken child! Tho' I don't hate
The world, yet I do never crave to love it.
I learned to know such qualities of men,
That forced me but for me alone to live.
Thou wast a child, when—fifteen years ago—
One morning on Exchange the words were read:
"Manasseh Vanderstraten's house has failed!"
Gigantic letters there inscribed proclaimed:
A little pity here, some counsel there,
Compassion here, a shuddering shoulder there,—
That's all I found on shore from all the wreck.

JUDITH.

And not my mother, father?

MANASSEH.

Yes, thy mother!
Best ever be her memory! 'Twas she
That gain inspired me to activity.
Once more she saw our sun of fortune smile—
She died in wealth—exhausted by the strength
Which she assumed, thus forced, before the world.
The icy world!—This saddening conviction,
That we can in ourselves alone confide,
That none will intercede in our behalf,
That we alone, perhaps a wife, a child,
Create our happiness—behold! this is
The reason why I have exiled my life
To selfish comfort, and begin to feel
Most bitter sufferings, whenever the world,
The real world, approaches my abode.

Enter SIMON.

SIMON.
De Silva sends the message, that you may
Expect his visit in some moments here.

(Exit.)

JUDITH.

De Silva?

MANASSEH.

Yes! And Uriel?

JUDITH.

Is hid
In yonder room, as you have ordered.

MANASSEH.

Does
The younger world accuse the old one yet?
Do we impede your way to happiness?
De Silva still loves Uriel, effects
His reconciliation with the Church,
And seeks to soothe Ben Jochais wild revenge—

Go, call Acosta.

JUDITH.

Oh! that I knew some great and glorious deed!
I am ashamed for ever to receive.
Thanks, beloved father!

MANASSEH.

Go! call thy friend!

JUDITH.

Do not appear to be
So cold, while glowing warmth your soul pervades.

You love art's outward beauty; why not love
The greater beauty of the noblest heart?

MANASSEH. (Looking after her.)
(Exit.)

"Oh! that I knew some great and glorious deed!"
The one, however, that would grieve her most,
She certainly excepts. De Silva comes.

Enter DE SILVA.

Accept my thanks, that you have come so soon,
Thus to promote your brother's happiness.
Complain not, Silva! Nor rebuke me now,—

But least of all I crave your consolation.

SILVA.

You shun for ever human grief, 'tis strange!
And yet, it ever holds you prisoner.

MANASSEH.

Have you addressed the Council of the Three?

SILVA.

I come just from the Synagogue.

MANASSEH.

Is all

Prepared for Uriel's recantation?
I wish that all be speedily arranged,
Lest hatred and hostility increase
The wrath of error and fanaticism.

SILVA.

You deem but error what I call Belief.

MANASSEH.

That hatred, too, which to ensnare me seeks,
That base revenge,—are matters of belief?

All friends of Joehai cease to notice me.
And on Exchange I have observed, they seek
The points where I am most defenceless, thither
To send the arrows of their enmity.
Whene'er a merchant is thus pressed by foes,
He's surely lost.

SILVA.

Have patience now, and hope

MANASSEH.

Have patience now and hope, when single moments
My whole existence may annihilate?
If Joehai is resolved to ruin me—

SILVA.

Manasseh!

Let it be enough! But haste,
Yes, haste! See Uriel—and teach him,—do,—
Whatever forms he must observe. I fear
The hordes of fanatics by Priests aroused,
Might turn their savage rage upon ourselves.
I go—Acosta comes—speak you to him.
—We are alone, De Silva, tell me, pray,
Your heart itself abhors the crafty priests,—
How can enlightened men be orthodox? I
I know not how philosophy herself
Constructs the ancient rubbish, to arrive
Again at last upon her starting point.
As child, of course, each willingly believes,
When blinded Faith demands: "Twice Two are
Five!"

But never can Philosophy, methinks,
Some mystery in child-like faith beholding,
Attempt to *prove* to me: "Twice Two make
Five."

Excuse; my clerks require my presence now;—
And reason's simple ciphering appeals
To common sense.

SILVA.

The Lord's infinitude
With numbers to compute he would attempt.

Enter URIEL.

URIEL. (*Stopping at the door.*)

'Tis I, De Silva. May the cursed man
Approach the advocate of righteous souls?

DE SILVA.

Alas! most often, and unwillingly
Do we suppress within our inmost hearts
The holiest:—our duty.—Uriel,
Unwillingly have I condemned you.

URIEL.

Well
I know! You left a door of rescue open,—
The only one that I could never choose.

SILVA.

My heart is moved, that you still feel for Judah,
Altho' your motives seem too worldly, as
The love of Judah almost hellish seems!
Enough! I greet you as my kinsman now,
The more rejoiced to tend you thus my hand,
Since such a talent, such a genius
Will thereby be preserved for Amsterdam.

URIEL.

Whence comes such possibility, De Silva?
An angel's love is now my bliss of life!

But how can I accept, what to maintain
I know no means that law would now permit?

SILVA.

You err! I left the Council of the Three
Just now; the meeting was inclined to you
In mercy. Vanderstraten's son-in-law
Will not be burthen'd much with heavy trials,
The rites of his atonement to fulfill.
You are expected. Step intrepidly
To all the places interdicted. Thrice
Knock at the portal of the Synagogue,
Nor let the swarming mob disharten you.
A Sexton soon will carry you before
The Chief-Rabbi Akiba, who will send you
To custody. The Council thus command.

URIEL.

I listen—am amazed at what I hear—
To greet you here, they sent me hither.—I
Have come for this. Of what do you now speak?

SILVA.

Your recantation!

URIEL.

What? of what, De Silva?

SILVA.

You feign profound amazement, yet you know
That recantation can alone redeem you.

URIEL.

My recantation? A wful word! My lips
Do tremble while pronouncing it.—De Silva,
Who has informed you that I do expect
To be redeemed from excommunication?

Acosta! calm your spirit now, I pray!
Shall your delusion pass for character?
To wed a child to the execrated name of Jew.
Is forfeit of the glorious name of Jew.
Besides, if you do further tarry here,
You are no longer safe in Amsterdam—
The Christians us protect, not you!

URIEL.

I know,
And have some time reflected, how I could
As far as human power might be able,
Still longer feed mine interdicted life;
But if you ever called yourself a thinker,
If light from heaven ever shone on you,
How can you calmly speak of "Recantation"?

SILVA.

Repentance even heroes ornaments.

URIEL.

A hero through a second deed repents.

SILVA.

An error to avow is no disgrace.

URIEL.

To me belongs the error, not to priests.

SILVA.

Repentance is not for the priest.

URIEL.

And if for God, I know its way myself.
†*

O Uriel! 'tis this I do in you
 So deeply now regret,—this empty boast
 Of honor—where this honor matters naught—
 This small and spurious coin you think to throw
 Upon the counting-table of your God!
 The Lord but little values man's repentance;
 It is required but for the general order,
 For the disturbed accordance of the Whole,
 Whose spokesman is the consecrated priest.
 Regard the Whole, the boundless edifice!
 What are you there? An atom in a World!

SILVA.

You think you're free, and of your thinking boast—
 When Nature I observe, in Winter's death,
 In blooming Spring, and Autumn's withering life,
 When, setting glasses on this feeble eye,
 I see the worm in distant Saturn,—then
 I feel that naught we are with even ourselves
 And are dependent ever on the Whole,
 But free alone in stern necessity.
 If I should ever see this different,
 Then shall my reason's wit be not refused,
 To claim its right in matters of Religion!

SILVA.

Is then a boastful cipher only, too,
 The Universe

URIEL.

If you inhate yourself—

SILVA.

A perfect world I am unto myself!

URIEL.

And say—the 'thousand years th' firmly stood,
 As law of faith: "It may be error still!"
 But thousand years this error has now lasted,
 Has Tens of Thousand through the woes of life,
 And Millions safely led beyond the grave—
 Has thy belief but one made happy yet?
 Thy hand upon thy heart!—Acosta, even
 Not thee alone!

URIEL.

Perhaps,—perhaps, De Silva!
 It may be right to call the blind man's staff,
 That led him safely for three thousand years
 Through life, his clear, and pure, and seeing eye.
 That staff assists the blind to seek, to touch,
 Protects him 'gainst a fall,—is eye for him.
 But suddenly a ray of light breaks through
 The blind man's eye,—he sees with seeing eye,
 Looks full of happiness up to the sun,—
 He cannot name the things which he beholds,
 He grasps at things that injure him,—he staggers,—
 His bright, but new-born eye hath not acquired
 As yet, his staff's well tried and lasting strength,
 That darkly could his dark world comprehend—
 Yet, since the truth would not at once afford
 Life's happiness, full happiness,—because
 The blind redeemed from darkness, staggers, falls,
 He should the unaccustomed contemplation
 Of verdant, blooming life, call error,—sin,
 His first rejoicing at his new-born sight!
 No, no! my eye redeemed from error, may
 Feel keenest pain while gazing at the light,
 The pang of Truth I never shall recant!

SILVA.

Go then thy way—the curse will follow thee
 Upon thy heels, and Judith will not charge

A second time the lie upon De Santos;
Nor will she to her father leave the grave,
To go with thee into the woods—Farwell!

(*Tarrying.*)

Your smile of blindness forced the thought
Of your blind mother on my memory—

(*Starts to leave, and returns again.*)

Acosta! deeply rooted is amongst
Our race the charm of home. Once, now and then,
In olden times, a branch would separate
Itself from off the parent stem of love,
—As Absalom from David—; afterwards,
When in exile, and persecuted,—then
One consolation cheered us : children's love :—
The loving care of parents still remained ;
And brothers that would call us brothers yet—
And firmer, aye ! more fervently the tie
Of reverence for home encircled us.
We sacrificed our liberty, respected
Our aged parents' prejudices, and
We boasted not of our maturity,
To practice this, and that to leave undone ;—
We waited till they had departed hence,
And then our own redeemed opinion would
Unfurl its banner, broad and clear, to all.
Are these but morbid feelings to thy mind,
That would but little care for others' pain ?
For Judith's love, and Vanderstraten's pain,
Oh ! do decide it now, which shall prevail,
Thy spirit's freedom, or thy loving heart—
Thou must examine well thing inmost soul,
Then do whatever thou think'st the best. Farwell!

(*Exit.*)

Doth truth appear the nobler part, or love ?
Well many do I know who sacrifice
Wheat'er adorns their soul, the noblest grace
Of heart, their country and their sacred faith,
To sweep away whatever lies between
The virgin kiss of rosy lips, as those
Of Judith, and wheat'er adorns themselves.
I love her ; yet I must despise myself
If, like a timid shepherd in a tale,
Or like a whining lover on the stage,
I'd languish now, and melt away like wax !
First to believe, and then recant ?—Commit
From cowardice such perjury ?—No, no !
Conviction is the brightest garb of man,
A golden heegee with which no princely hand,
Nor priestly gift can ever adorn his breast ;
Conviction is the warrior's noblest banner,
With which he falling falls with glory crowd.
The poorest man, in masses lost, acquires
A coat of arms which he himself deities
And breaks, when he discards his own belief !
The voices sweet may whisper now to me :
" Thy heart does guide thee better than thy soul,
Love never can deceive itself, like thought—
I cannot otherwise. " 'Tis knightly pride
That now does set its spurs into my sides,
And hushes ev'ry sound of pallid fear.
If I have erred, I've erred for truth ; for Priests,
However, I will not recant.

URIEL. (*Alone.*)

URIEL ACOSTA.

(*Starts to go.*)

One comes !

SIMON. (*Behind the Scene.*)

Step in ! I shall inform my mistress.

URIEL.

Who
Is that ? I hear the steps—to see my face
Each pious man, and hypocrite avoids—

SIMON. (*Behind the Scene.*)

Here ! here ! be pleased to wait in this saloon !

(*The door is opened.*)

URIEL. (*Seeing the persons entering.*)

Eternal God ! what do I see—my mother !

(*Steps aside.*)

Enter ESTHER ACOSTA, REUBEN,

JOEL.—(*Esther being blind is led by her sons.*)

REUBEN.

Repose, dear mother ! Here !

(*Seats her on a chair.*)

ESTHER.

Pray, will she come ?

JOEL.

I have not sent her in, as yet, our names.

ESTHER.

Oh ! that my eyes could see her—!

URIEL. (*Kneels down before his mother.*)
Mother !

ESTHER.

Thou ?
'Tis thou—mine Uriel—this hand is thine—

URIEL.

Thou recognizest still thy cursed son ?

ESTHER.

'Tis still thy hair—thy beard—thy tender cheek—
And tears upon thy cheeks ?—Yes, yes ! 'tis thou—
The curse could work no change upon my son !

REUBEN. (*With profound grief on his countenance.*)

My brother ! we have come for Judith here.

Our mother wished, the being that doth love
Thee, and did boldly, too, confess her love—

She wished her daughter now—

URIEL. (*Rises*)

To see ? Reuben, [her !
Pronounce the word, "to see ?" Could eyes but see

ESTHER.

She's beautiful, they say ; but brighter still
Than all her charms that once will wither,—seems
To me the love which she accords to thee—
In thine affliction she hath clung to thee—

URIEL.

Are you announced ? Long since she has desired,
To see my mother—I prevented her to go ;
To call her mine, our fate will ne'er permit !

I knew it well!

ESTHER.

URIEL.
How knew ye?

JOEL.

Mother means
The excommunication sunders you.
Of recantation naught has yet been heard.

REUBEN.

And further have we come, because we do
Intend to leave, with mother, Amsterdam,
And go to Hague, in future there to live,
Where we are strangers and unknown to all.

URIEL.

To Hague? And carry there our mother, too?

ESTHER.

What is this then to me? I think in Hague,
I were in Amsterdam! To Tajo's banks
My dreams have often carried me while here!

URIEL.

And why the hardships of this journey now?

JOEL.

Excuse, beloved brother—

ESTHER.

Tell him not!

The trade by father once bequeathed to us
Did swifly flourish and increase—

REUBEN.

URIEL.
Thou art

A broker well known on Exchange—

REUBEN.

But now—

URIEL.

They shun you on account of me?

JOEL.

'Tis so.
Well knowing that thy excommunication
Can never pain or affect thy mind,
Their enmity can not withstand to show
Where'er it be, the pow'r of victory,—

Us they do strike!

ESTHER.

Not me, my son! not me!

REUBEN.

Our energy they steadily do cramp,—
They do avoid us, will not speak to us,
And tremble even at our salutations;
Of business, of trade yet to expect
Some farther gain and benefit, is idle hope,—
And thus we are resolved to emigrate.

URIEL. (*Aside.*)

Misavens!

ESTHER.
I go most willingly,

And even tho' again to cross the sea.
But what the object? Uriel, thou canst
No refuge find wherever Jews are dwelling.

And when I die—forever have I thought,
When those whose eyes are seeing, die, in death
Their eyes would *break*;—but mine, I hoped would
Again reflect with former brightness, and
Behold again my children; yet, thy face
In vain I'll seek with seeing eye in death!

(*Uriel turns away with deep emotion.*)

Manasseh's sprightly daughter carries long.

JOEL.

List! doors are opened—

REUBEN.

Rustling robes I hear.

Enter JUDITH.

JUDITH.

You wish to see me, worthy gentlemen?
And yonder aged, blind and venerable Lady?

(*After some reflection.*)

Acosta—'tis? Our loved mother!

(*Kisses her in wd.*)

ESTHER.

Oh! let me, angel, rather kiss thy brow!
No!

JUDITH.

I've long desired your blessing to receive,
The picture of the noblest son to read
Upon your countenance—

ESTHER.

Go on, my dear,—
Oh! praise him—do! I love thee for it more.

JUDITH.

The world will yet admire him, mother; and
Till then he hath us!

ESTHER.

Oh! what heavenly sounds!

O God! one glimpse alone grant to mine eye!
And yet, alas! when death removes me hence,
I cannot even him bequeath to you!

JUDITH.

Not to his wife?

ESTHER.

His wife?—Thou! It be his wife?
Oh! grieve thy parents not so deeply, child.
Flee not with him!—Thy father hath but thee!

But thee, the only daughter, hath Manasseh!

JUDITH.

What means this, Uriel? Thou wouldst not?!

(*Looks for a long time at him, with trembling and despair.*)

Oh! pardon, Heaven!

That ever I believed this earth could grant
Beatitude for so much fervent love!

(*Sinks at Esther's feet.*)

(Struggles with himself, looks with deep emotion at the group of his mother, Judith and his brothers; the latter stand with profound sadness in their countenances, behind the chair of their mother.—Aside.)

How true thy speech, De Silva. Deeply root
The charm and love of home among our race!
Why are ye still? Do not torment me! Speak!

JUDITH.

He loves us not, O mother!

URIEL.

My breast I feel the dart—Oh! could I scream!
Do thus imploringly not look at me!

The tears of joy against mine arid eyes.
Are tears of bitterest woe that moist your cheeks,

You're silent?—Look and sigh?—Expect of me
The one and most exorcising deed?

To sacrifice my spirit for my heart—
My holiest conviction for my love?

Thou Pride—why dost thou wildly thus revolt?
Thou bristly monster, gnash not now thy teeth,

Be worm!—be man—be beast—
[submit] *groan*,—*cringe*—

Who saves me from the silent glance of love?
Protect me 'gainst yon silent eyes? Blind mother!
Oh! shut thine eyes—have mercy! shut thine eyes—
Thine eyes—I'll do it—do it—do it—

(Exit staggering and backwards;—the others are powerfully excited.)

URIEL

He does it for his mother.
JUDITH,

ESTHER.

No! he goes
For thee alone!

JOEL.

O God! this moment bless!
ESTHER.

ESTHER.

Oh! let me! let me, child!
I must embrace him,—Uriel! my son!
Let me to him!—Where art thou, Uriel?
Who dares to call himself his enemy?
Who boasts to have a nobler heart?—Judith,
Come! let us loudly in the streets proclaim:
"This is a son that truly loves his mother!"

(Exit quickly, led by Joel and Rebekah.)

JUDITH (Alone,—at the window.)

He's in the yard—hid scarcely in his cloak—
His head uncovered,—wild, he's rushing on,—
He stops—O God!—he changes now his way,—
He hurries—your street—the right or left?
He moves—he turns towards the Synagogue!

(Leaving the window.)

So suddenly?—And yet, perhaps for me!

So suddenly—perhaps too rashly—heaven!

If he repent!—'Tis here I feel the weight!
And threatening a voice appears to ask:
"Is woman then man's everlasting curse,
Belittling him since earth was first created?"

His eye was vacant as if broke in death—
 And cold his hand,—he staggered on his feet—
 (runs towards the window and exclaims :)
 Acosta, don't!—don't! ah! it is too late!
 O Fate! deal mercifully with our guilt!
 (Slides into a chair.—*Curtain falls.*)

ACT IV.

IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

SCENE I.—*The Vestibule, a low department with doors to the right and left.—Tribets with Hebrew Inscriptions about the walls.—In the background, a large door leading to the Synagogue.*

Enter DE SARTOS and DE SILVA.

SILVA.

And no one was admitted ever since?

SARTOS.

He hath remained alone: so wills the law.
 When he approached the Temple's door to enter,
 He well perceived the finger of the Lord.

SILVA.

The finger of the Lord throws never stones.

SARTOS.

But in his brethren's wrath he must have felt
 What he himself would not confess to feel.
 Denied, fasting night, his garments torn,
 He sank within our Temple's court.—And now
 Secluded in his solitude from all
 That could disturb his pious meditations,
 He waits for his redemption and forgiveness.

SILVA.
 May heaven grant, that he shall find them both.
 And of his mother's sickness he was not
 Informed? .

SANTOS.
 His brothers wished to be admitted,—
 His mother's danger might have frightened him,
 Appeared to him as caused but by his curse—

SILVA. (*Aside.*)
 What noble, pious foresight!

SANTOS.
 Judith, too,
 Manasseh's daughter, Baal's prophetess,
 That dared to turn my curse's edge, would often
 Beg for admission—

SILVA.

Was not granted either?
 All Amsterdam repeats the sad report
 Of Vanderstraten's second bankruptcy.
 Ben Joehai managed well to show Manasseh,
 By artful schemes and vengeful snares,
 The power of the richest merchant-prince,
 In pictures, parks and statues. Gliding on,
 Secure, and free from cares, he would receive
 The certain rents his money ever brought.
 But suddenly the young and trickish merchant,
 Whom Judith had rescued, caught him in traps,
 Such as he learned in London and in Venice,
 And taught him well, by one sagacious blow,
 To set upon one house the merchant world.

Manasseh is defeated—Ben Joehai,
 Still full of love in spite of his revenge,
 Extends, relying on his deep despair
 And woe, the hand of peaceful settlement.
 And what is it? Can Judith hesitate
 Herself as victim to present? Aye! must
 She not the utmost awful do, betray
 Her friend,—not sacrifice her life itself,
 Him to redeem, who never can exist,
 Unless existing midst his happy comforts?
 And all—all this you have withheld from him?

SANTOS.
 All intercourse, through trial-time forbidden.
 The world is during trial-time forbidden.

Enter SEXTON with a letter.

SEXTON.
 A letter here for Uriel Acosta.

SANTOS.
 Do you not know, it will not be received?

SEXTON.
 His brother Reuben brought it here himself.
 He begs imploringly, to hand it him.

SANTOS.

Return the letter, it is not allowed,
 That any message should disturb the cell
 Where penance undergoes its preparations.
 (*Exit SEXTON with the letter.*)

URIEL ACOSTA.

SILVA.

Pray, where is such command? You prevent
 A quiet, peaceful sigh to reach the youth?
 Or Judith's woes, her sleepless nights,—the fall
 Of Vanderstraten, he shall have no tidings?
 You know, he will recant but for his bride,
 He will recant but for his mother, Santos!
 The tidings of a loving, yet despairing heart,
 The tidings of his mother's death, to keep
 Concealed from him, is far from honesty.

SANTOS.

Behold you aged Rabbi Ben Akiba
 Whom pious faith rejuvenates! Acosta
 Shall from the Rabbi's hand receive the text
 And copy of the recantation.—You
 May meanwhile join the praying Congregation.
 Your wish will very soon be gratified.

SILVA:

I go; accept my counsel; wisely act
 Towards Acosta; for you owe him thanks,
 That such a noble man's submission will
 Increase your priesthood's influence and might!
 I wish that well may end this awful day,
 And his repentance you may not repent!

(Exit.)

Enter Rabbi Ben Akiba, a venerable priest of ninety
 years, led by Two Younger Rabbis,—Rabbi Van
 Der Embden, holding a parchment scroll in his hand.

AKIBA. (After being led to the President's chair, near
 the table; standing.)

Have you the recantation, Embden?

URIEL ACOSTA.

EMBDEN.

Here,
 Most venerable Ben Akiba,—copied well,
 Upon this parchment.

AKIBA.

Let the penitent
 Once more his sin before us now confess.
 Sit down,—believe me, Rabbi, 'All hath been
 Already!

SANTOS.

Uriel is coming there!

AKIBA.

'All hath already been!—Sit down, my brothers!
 Van Embden may as Secretary serve—
 The spoken word in air and dust escapes.
 "All hath already been"—believe me, Rabbi!
 Epicureans, Doubters, Sceptics,—tho'
 Our youth may think: 'See, these are novel things!"
 'All hath already been!—believe me, Rabbi,
 Of every thing our Talmud gives account,—
 'All hath already been,—already been!"

(Sits down.)

Enter Uriel, pale and broken down.

AKIBA (rising.)

Sit down, Acosta! yonder stands a chair—
 Yes, yonder,—is it not so, Rabbi?—Do,—
 Sit down, Acosta! Know, I number ninety,—
 And ninety years need not apologize
 For wearied legs,—indeed! for wearied legs!
 (Sits down again.)

Acosta you have wished the shorter term—

SANTOS.

AKIBA.
Let me, De Santos,—Ben Akiba has
To speak with Uriel,—“All, all hath been!”
Behold young Uriel Acosta—there
Have ever been two ways for doubters, when
They had become well surfeited with doubting—
One way of penitence is short, but rigid,
The other smooth and mild, but long protracted.

URIEL.

I choose the shorter—strike the death-blow—quick!
I wish not to reflect how I might die!—

AKIBA.

What hastest thou upon thy feet so young,
That yet may wander long until your rest,
May long yet hold until your final halt?
Repentance is for us not, no! it is
For thee!—Why ruriest thou so wildly on?
For me thou needest not the shorter penance!
The? I may not, the Lord will see it still!

URIEL.

Must I then ever and again repeat,
What I so often have confessed to you?

AKIBA.

No, no! I know, in fasting, penance, reading
The Talmud thou hast little confidence—
So hath it ever been,—hath ever been,—
I ask thee then, Acosta, once more here,
Dost thou within thy inmost heart perceive
That in thy book thou hast profaned our God?

URIEL.

The God that of the Jews buds the God,
I've never understood, offended oft—
You have it written down in yonder record.

SANTOS.

Equivocal—deceitful,—and fallacious
Is all thou hast thus far conceded us:
'Tis sophistry—do prove what thou believ'st,—
Give proofs for what thou feignest to believe!

AKIBA.

Do thou not urge upon the feeble man!
How can you ever prove what you believe?
Can you our sacred Revelation prove?
De Santos,—pardon—sometimes you do speak,
As Epicureans will do!—Give proofs!
The sun is proven, since it shines on us,
And proven is the fire, because it burns,
The Revelation of our God is proven,
Because it is contained in Holy Writ.

(To SANTOS)

Of you not—

(To ACOSTA) not of you I wish the proofs.

EMDEX.

Then simply tell us what thou dost believe!

URIEL.

I told you—did repeat it after you,—
That God hath chosen Jacob's race,—to them
Alone revealed Himself from face to face,—

To *them* His being shown by human means;
 And spoke to *them* alone in signs and wonders;
 To *them* alone vouchsafed His Revelation,
 Where every word, and every letter 'en,
 Must be revered as written down by God.—
 I do believe, my spirit went astray—
 Believe, that letters to explain, the word
 Of God to scrutinize, is blasphemy;—
 This I believe—and I repeat it here—
 That you do now exempt me from the proofs.

SANTOS.

He shows but scorn by his confession.

ARIBA.

The longer way—and thy confession will
 Decend and permeate thy inmost heart.
 I pray thee,—choose the longer way, Acosta!
 And heavenly peace will enter then thy breast.
 Such doubters, like thyself, Acosta, are
 But driven on by wild desire of thinking.
 Well many have existed in the Talmud,
 Whom too excessive knowledge led astray.
 There lived (half turned towards his colleagues)
 a famous doubter once, by name
 Elisah Ben Abyah, pupil 'en
 Of one of Israel's wisest Rabbis;—his
 Disciple Rabbi Meir was again.
 And as he was a doubter, he was banned. (Rises)
 Elisah Ben Abyah was like thee;—
 And shunning even to pronounce his name,
 They called him *Acher*,—*Acher* means the *Other*,—
 The *Other* then,—the Talmud calls him thus—

The *Other* was Elisah.—There arose,
 When they had buried him, up from his grave,
 A dark, protracted smoke,—*Ms* grave, it smoked,—
 Until his pupil Rabbi Meir calmed
 His soul unto repose by ardent prayer,—
 The pupil for his teacher prayed there;
 And from the grave no longer rose the smoke;
 And such an *Acher* thou art—All hath been.
 (Sits down again.)

URIEL.

Have I to novelty's renown aspired?
 The smoke of *Acher* is the fiery soul,
 The flaming mind which ye in him entomb'd;
 I am myself an *Acher*, am the *Other*,
 The eternal *Other*;—for in being *Other*
 The guarantee of lasting growth does rest.—
 I tell you how the tale must be explained.
 An *Acher*—I believe—hath never lived!
 The *Acher* is the symbol of the thought,—
 For only in the *Other* I behold myself,—
 But in the *Other* I do feel my truth,
 I learn my own distinction in the *Other*,—
 The other is of Doubt the holiest
 Symbolic sign. And Doubt is Faith's sustainer:
 And as the Talmud wiser is than you,
 It gives to *Acher*, who's a picture only,
 Who never lived, a famous teacher and
 A more renowned disciple, pious both:
 For pious faith from doubt alone proceeds.

ARIBA.

De Santos! Hear I right?—There never lived
 Elisah Ben Abyah? He, a man,
 A real being—living in our Talmud—
 Is but an empty symbol, but a myth—

And what Religion firmly holds embraced,
As flesh and bone, a living body,—that
Be vision only,—phantoms, idle dreams,
That human form received in after times?
In truth! too new is such opinion, worth
Attemperment—for this hath, as yet, not been!
Present to him his recantation's text.

(SANTOS. Handing him the parchment.)

Thy Fate, not humbleness hath conquered thee.
Of all thy lips have here confessed, thy soul
That still persists in evil, nothing knows!

(Pointing towards the door which leads to the Synagogue)

Upon you Tabernacle read the sins,
Which thou lay'st to thy door with artful cant,
Before the people congregated there.

URIEL.

Before the Congregation?

AKIBA.

Read alone,
At first, whate'er with force and emphasis
You must confess before the Congregation.

Why! Why! the Acher did not live? Acosta,
Lost thou not live? Why should then Ben Abyah
Be but a myth?

URIEL.

Alas! too true! I live!

AKIBA.

And why then should that Acher not have lived?
Yes, yes! my son! go and recant thy sin!

More sober in your thinking to remain;—
And read the Talmud oftener at home!
All doubters have returned, and whate'er
Of wisdom man may think to find anew,
It is the blossom of some ancient germ,—
The new is but above! But here below
All hath already been,—already been,—

(While he is led through the door on the right.)

And read the Talmud oftener—youth Acher!

(While going out.)

Hath been already,—all hath been already.

(Santos and Van Embden follow.)

URIEL.

(Alone;—contemplating the parchment.)

Confession of my shame! more truthfully
Thou art not pictured on this parchment here,
With bloody daggers, arrows, viper-tongues,
Than here within my breast with crimson wounds,—
No balm can ever heal these burning wounds,—
And tho' all-soothing time may cure them, yet,
The scars forever left, will not adorn
My brow, as those of gallant warriors.—

Within my prison's walls I thought last night,
My mother did appear,—so tender, mild,—
She would console her son,—and by her side,
Entered by a snowy, dazzling light,—
Stood forth—I awoke—and cold again,
The naked prison-walls saluted me.

And anger seized on me, as Galilei,—
*G

Yes, Galliel!—When upon the rack,
Thou hadst been forced to swear: "The earth stands
And to the Cardinals with thunder-voice
Thou spak'st thy famous word: "And yet it moves!"
And this, "And yet it moves!" would never leave
Me since, reverberating ever and
Again, within my ears: "And yet, it moves!"
"And yet it moves!"

(*A Psalm is sung behind the scene by children.*)

What mean you voices? Hark!

The harmonies of innocent, pure children!

So must it be? Almighty God! for me—
What is it unto Thee, that I do cringe—
Is there for me no helping arm to come?

(*REUBEN. Behind the scene.*)

I must—let me to him—I must!

URIEL.

It is

My brother's voice!

Enter REUBEN.

REUBEN.

O Uriel!

URIEL.

I need
Not love before my shame, but after it!

REUBEN.

They will not grant admission us to thee,
Forbidden to see our brother's countenance,—

Desist! Our relatives have sentime here,
We'll suffer willingly,—urge not on thee
The recantation! Do it not for us!

URIEL.

Most solemnly I vowed it to our mother!

REUBEN.

Our mother! Yes! the living one! But ah!
In vain her eye, whose blindness broke in death's
Approaching night, to catch one glance of thee—

URIEL.

Our mother's dead?—Our mother is no more!

REUBEN.

I wrote thee, but my letter was returned—
I, therefore, forced my way to reach thee here,—
Yes, yes! our mother moves no more on earth,
Where human curse may injure us!

URIEL.

No more!

And yet, through all this woe, some consolation,
A smile may steal itself thro' these my tears:
I thank my bitter fate, that she believed
Conciliated me, ere such I am,—
And died before I suffered, what I suffer—

REUBEN.

Desist! we emigrate to Hague, and seek
Some other fortune there—

URIEL.

What sayest thou?
Can I desist? Dost thou not know, my heart

URIEL ACOSTA.

Or Christ, or Huss to turn a jealous glance,
Up to the thrice more bloody death of shame!

(Ascends resolutely the steps to the Tabernacle.)

REUBEN.

O awful, heart-appalling turn of Fate!

He does not know what even now must be
Decided in the house of Vanderstraten!
He does recant for his beloved mother,
Who's dead!—and for a bride who now perhaps—

SANTOS. *(Proclaiming to the Congregation.)*

Hear Israel, break forth in joy, all lands!

URIEL. *(Reading from the parchment.)*

"I, Uriel Acosta, Portuguese
"By birth, and Israelite by my Religion,
"Do here, before the face of God, confess,
"To feel unworthy of His boundless grace,
"As boy already did my lips profess
"The Christians' faith rejected by my heart.
"And then again professing Jacob's faith,
"With outward show and base hypocrisy,
"I was not Jew, nor Christian, hated both;

"Especially I hated Judah's race;—
"I scorned whatever they held holy, and
"Whatever the Law forbids, I'd do from spite.
"And when my reason's power could not lend
"Conviction's show to mine iniquities,
"I would resort to ridicule.—I wrote
"A book which Behai dictated me;—
"Cursed be the hand that wrote the book,—that hand
"Is even apt to take its mother's life—"

URIEL ACOSTA.

Belongeth not to me with both its halves;
The one our mother hath returned to me—
The other—

REUBEN.

Judith?

URIEL.

Hear'st thou, brother? List!

(The choral is concluded, and the cornets are sounded.)

SCENE II.—The Interior of the Synagogue. A few
'steps lead to the Tabernacle, which commands a view
of the nave of the Temple. The latter is illuminated by
chandeliers and side-lamps.—Before the Tabernacle
are seated DE SANTOS, VAN EMBDEN, and TWO OTHER
RABBINS, with their Tablets (prayer-scrolls) over their
heads.—The change of the Scene must be made so
suddenly and swiftly, that REUBEN and URIEL who
do not leave the stage, appear as though they had been
in the Synagogue before.)

SANTOS.

I summon thee before this court, Acosta!
And Israel awaits thy penitence!

REUBEN.

No! brother! Judith—

URIEL.

Let me, thou pronouncest
The name which must become fore'er my Fate!
Have courage now, thou coward fool! nor step
Unto the right or left,—to Socrates,

That lie is not thine own!—

REUBEN. (*Aside.*)

URIEL.

"And dipt in blood
"I had the pen that wrote it. And whate'er
"My own reflection could not reconcile
"In Judah's holy faith, is fallacy;
"And what the fount of reason I would call,
"From which I counselled you to cheer the thirsty,
"Was water from the trough of th' unclean brute,
"That we have ever despised from olden times.
"The very word of God, His Revelation
"Have I most wickedly perverted;—have
"Its sense disfigured by my own inventions;—
"Have falsified our prophets' heavenly words,
"With self-complacent joy my falsehoods loving—
(*Cannot continue and faints; the Rabbins catch and support him.*)

(*Sinks down.*)

"And now I feel myself so deeply sunk
"Within my own opinion's arrogance,
"That I by my repentance will remove
"The justest punishment, this curse of ban.
"And my submissive mind to manifest,
"To prove that haughtiness is far from me,
"I will without the threshold of this Temple,
"As penitent, upon the ground. And each
"Of you may raise his foot, step on my body,
"And pass—"

REUBEN.

What hear, I?!

SANTOS (*takes the Scroll and reads:*)

"On this Temple's door,
"Before this sacred Synagogue lie down,
"As penitent, upon the ground. And each
"Of you may raise his foot, step on my body,
"And pass thus over me before the threshold!"

REUBEN.

You shall affront no one, or me with him!

(*Rushes out.—In the meanwhile, URIEL has been carried from the Tabernacle to the outside door.—All the Rabbis follow.*)

Enter JOCHAI and SILVA, through the door in front.

SILVA.

What will ye do? Oh! shame on you, Ben Jochai!
Has your excessive luck bewildered you?

JOCHAI. (*Looking towards the outside.*)

Behold! thou haughty boy, laid low in dust!

He shall be told it,—told it in the dust,
That he has blundered in his calculations.

Thou hast recanted for a phantom only!
Judith is mine—no palm of victory
Will from her hand for thee grow forth and bloom!
(*Hurries out across the Tabernacle.*)

Enter URIEL, wildly excited and with distorted features,
 --on the *Tabernacle*.

URIEL.
 Hush! Hush! Be silent all! I know you all!—
 The wealthy Ben Jochai—was it Ben Jochai,
 Whose foot just now has trodden on my head?

SILVA.
 Submit, Acosta, to the will of Fate,
 Bear calmly, mildly what it has ordained!

URIEL.
 'Tis you, De Silva—
 SANTOS.
 If for Judith only
 Thou hast recanted, God may punish thee.
 She'll be the wife of Jochai!

URIEL.
 Have I heard
 Correctly?

SILVA.
 Uriel! how all this could
 Have happened, ask not—bear it, as it is!

URIEL.
 (Struggles fearfully, to accustom himself to the truth
 of the information. His breast is heaving, while his
 eyes are rolling fearfully.—At last he sinks in des-
 pair upon DE SILVA'S breast.)

I bought my death for two dead bodies.—SILVA,
 Too mortal, ah! is mortal man on earth!

SILVA.
 Ye mighty powers of Hate! are ye the same
 That stand as Guards before the gate of heaven?
 Are Cherubim with flaming swords God's angels,
 Or are they Demons from the nether world?
 How hath this happened all? I think and wail,
 While sinful overbearing triumphs there!

(Looks out.)

Ben Jochai is resolved to be the first
 To tread audaciously on Uriel.
 Thou wretched man! thou, too, wilt falter once!
 He does it—dares—Acosta springeth up—
 And horror stares from his indignant eye—
 His rival Jochai's words he must have heard—
 He rends his clothes, so deeply thus disgraced—
 They give him way—he rushes hither—Fate!
 Can I believe that thou art heaven-born?

Enter DE SANTOS, VAN EMBDEN, BARBINS, in deep
 consternation.—THE CONGREGATION.

SANTOS.

(The door be opened)

EMBDEN.

Dismiss the Congregation!
 He desecrates the Temple!

ALL.

He blasphemes!

Which ye can scarcely ever understand!
 We seek deliverance from the ancient yoke!
 But Reason be the symbol of our faith;
 And when we doubt to find at last the truth,
 'Tis better, other Gods still then to seek,
 Than with the ancient ones in curses speak!

SANTOS.

Thou deem'st the thinker in thee now be free?
 Thy demon only thou hast sent abroad!

URIEL.

My demon! yes, De Santos, yes, my demon!
 Your God I do believe, God Adonai,
 The God who into dust His foe prostrates!

The God who from His mouth sends burning fire,
 Who takes revenge upon the third generation!
 I am a man, as this your God of wrath,—
 And serve I will your God of vengefulness!

(Rushes out.)

SILVA.

To this it hath now come! Oh! I might rend
 My clothes and weep repentant tears, that I
 Could lend my hands to such ungodly deeds!
 Of sacrilege,—the Priests, of faith's decline,
 The Temple's watchmen bear alone the guilt!

SANTOS. *(To the Rabbin.)*

What now be done, Akiba will decide.
 At Jochar's nuptials we shall meet to-morrow.

(Curtain falls.)

Thou Sacriligist, end thine expiation!
 The final penance is, as yet, not done!

SANTOS.

Some further penance? Hear! *And yet it comes!*

URIEL.

SILVA. *(Aside.)*

The word of Gahiel!

URIEL.

Sink, ye rocks,
 Down from my breast! Thou tongue, be free again!

To Samson's last, convulsive dying strength!
 Within mine arms I crush your mighty pillars—
 The blinded fiddler once presumes to be
 Himself the hero, and would sing his own
 Affliction, playing for a cheerful dance
 His song, that ye in pleasure may indulge.
 Once more—it is the last—I shake my head,
 And say: "Twas fallacy whate'er I read!"

SANTOS and CONGREGATION.

Away, away with him!

URIEL.

Would ye deny
 The brilliant sun by yonder candle-light?
 Assert, the stars believe what we believe?
 Ye deem yourselves immortal in your error?
 Ye day-lies,—but for fleeting moments born,
 And atom-like in endless space forlorn!
 On words you chain the spirit, and on words,
 The eternal God,—on earth's created nature,

SCENE, AS IN THE SECOND ACT.

A C T V.

Enter GENTLEMEN and LADIES, ascending the L. trade; SERVANTS, carrying wine-pitchers on silver salvers across the stage;—JOCHAI, gorgeously dressed as bridegroom;—DE SILVA, followed by OTHER GENTLEMEN.

JOCHAI.

Let joy to-day supremely rule, my friends!
She stands before the gate, impatiently
Awaiting till the ling'ring Sun hath set.
Adorned with roses, goblets greet you here!
Who'er hath grief, may drown it in our wine!
Who'er feels lonely, may by dance be cheered!
And mark ye this: Who'er retire at eve,
To have his way illumined by the glow-flies,
Would not remain to hear the warbling-lark,
And see the blush upon the bridal cheek,
When Judith as my wife the morning greets—
Him call I jealous; for he seems to feel
No sympathy with my triumphant luck.

SILVA.

Let first of all the priest pronounce the blessing;
The sacred rite has not yet been performed!

O haste, ye ling'ring, lazy moments, haste!
Ye pointers on the dial look like arrows,
Yet, seem to be with lead, not feathers winged.—
—She's yonder! look, De Silva! there's your niece!
Can ye be silent? No admiring Ah!
When ye behold a bride who needs no jewels,
Her heavenly charms to heighten and adorn!

SILVA.

Enraptured by your happiness you let
The poet's lips not sing the nuptial lay,—
What needs have I to stammer then her praise?

Enter GENTLEMEN with LADIES,—JUDITH,—in bridal attire, led by MANASSEH.

JOCHAI.

You're moody, Silva!—Look at her yourself!
Does mourning woman wear such festive garments?

SILVA.

Brides do not dress themselves,—they're dressed by
[others.]

JUDITH.

Be welcome, worthy friends!
(*To JOCHAI.*) The documents,
Which you have promised, are delivered all?

JOCHAI.

Be not so cruel,—Oh! here to betray
How I have won this boundless happiness!

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JUDITH.
Do solemnly confirm, beloved father,
That you're again all you had been before!

MANASSEH.
I am again Manasseh Vanderstraten.

JUDITH.
No reservations? You are placed again
In all your former, unmolested wealth?

MANASSEH.
Be satisfied! The final step of this
Thy noble sacrifice confirms the whole,
And seals my happiness that makes me blush.

JUDITH.
Now let us go!

(She starts, but is nigh fainting.)

MANASSEH.
My child!

JOCHAI.
Feel ye not wght?

SILVA.
One moment only let her here repose.
Let her alone!—I'll lead her to the altar.

(Exit JOCHAI, followed by all, except JUDITH and DE SILVA.
Repose a little while upon this turf.

JUDITH.
Not here! not here!—Upon this bench—look there—
See you yon ghost with pallid countenance?

SILVA.
You dream, my child!

JUDITH.
It is reality!
Immovable it stands before mine eyes—

SILVA.
Immovable alone I see thine eye!—
Why! raise thyself upon thy noble worth!
Well proud be of thy great and glorious deed!

JUDITH.
Have Pride you ever seen in tears, De Silva?

SILVA.
Th' impatient one,—indeed! Have courage, child—
And do you know what happened?

JUDITH.
All and nothing.

SILVA.
Rescind this page from out your book of life!
Since yesterday no tidings reached us. First,
He went to rest upon his mother's grave,—
The guards, however, chased him from the spot;—
He was then seen within his sister Rachel
Spinosa's house, whose little son Baruch

He uses to instruct in ancient Greek,
 His double curse makes thus him fugitive—
 If he be wise, he must himself now feel,
 That by revenge he'll sink still more.

JUDITH.

Revenge?
 Oh! could I see it, that Revenge which he
 Hath sworn, and I do conjure on myself
 From Chance, from Fate, from Heaven, or from Hell!
 For all is sweet that comes from him we love,
 Why not revenge?

SILVA.

What has he to revenge?
 Ben Jochai's shallow boasts of golden treasures?
 The faithful daughter's noble sacrifice?
 The conflict of thy duties in thy woe?
 Again I love thee for this noble deed
 That pure proceeded from thy filial heart.
 Thou wert obliged to save thy father—yes!
 Thou art in truth again my sister's child.

JUDITH.

(*Thinking of suicide.*)

When mother died, De Silva, tell me, do I
 How bore my father his affliction?

SILVA.

Let
 It be—those olden times are past—

JUDITH.

Oh, speak!
 How bore my father his bereavement? Speak!

SILVA.
 Thy worthy mother Inez Silva!—Oh!
 A monument for her adorns this Park!

JUDITH.

Converted into marble, grief was hushed?
 De Silva, tell me also, brother Perez,
 Who died already, when a tender child—

SILVA.

Why dost thou wander back to former times?
 What he was to his father, thou canst read

(*Pointing outside.*)

Engraven on yon slender marble shaft!

JUDITH.

Farewell, De Silva!

SILVA.

Judith, art thou sick?
 Thy countenance grows paler, and thy breast
 Is heaving fearfully—

(*Calls outside.*)

Bring water! Water!
 Almighty God! What was this, Judith?

JUDITH.

'Tis over now—

SILVA.

Postpone the marriage-rite!
 Your strength will fail, assuredly.

Enter SERVANT, with a goblet of water on a silver salver.

JUDITH. (*Pointing to the table before the turf-seat.*)
There! There!

(*Observing, for some time, the servant as he placed the water on the table;—Exit SERVANT.*)

Your arm, De Silva!—Lead me to the altar!

(*Exit.*)

Enter URIEL, *accompanied by* BARUCH SPINOZA, *who holds some flowers in his hand.*

BARUCH.

How long it is, beloved uncle, since
You have not brought me to this gorgeous park;
They seem to celebrate a solemn feast.

URIEL. (*To himself.*)

'Twas Judith! clad in bridal garbs! The Priests
Who cursed me, will her marriage solemnize!

If I should interfere! Lay down this hand,

I blame her not, she did what I have done!

But him I challenged to a duel; ah!

The coward threw the gauntlet back, and sent
The scornful message by his messenger:

"We are no Portuguese Hidalgos here!"

BARUCH. (*Plucking flowers.*)

Dear mother told me that of all the spots
Which to avoid you have determined, you
Would fly to-day from this, most certainly;
And yet, while dreaming we have reached it now!

URIEL.
"We are no Portuguese Hidalgos here!"
No! wretched cowards! Buying human souls!
With gold embroidered, empty pepper-bags!

BARUCH.

While thus soliloquizing do you think?
Come, uncle, let us draw conclusions! Ask!
And splendid answers I can give, I think,

(*Smiling.*)

The questions I do want alone for them.
The case, they say, with others is reversed.

URIEL.

Oh, do not think, my child! Sleep, like the flower
That in her variegated beauty blooms,
Reflecting ne'er who has created her!

And let thy spirit float on Ocean-like,
Upon its deepest fullness proudly rocking;—
Remain upon high Sea, far from the coast.

Where men with questions will torment thy mind.
"Art thou a Christian, or an Israeli,

Art thou a monarchist, or a Portuguese,

Art thou a monarchist, or Republican,—

Will thou, that One alone, or All should rule?"

When thus they ask thee, listen not, my child!

And let thy answer sleep within thy breast.

BARUCH.

One comes—may I these lievers place at home
Before the window?

URIEL.
Cast them 'way, Spinoza!
They've died already in thy hand. My son,
Go home.

BARUCH.
Will you not go along with me?

URIEL.
The sun is setting,—go, my son, and greet,
Them all!

BARUCH.
Will you remain, to join the feast?

URIEL.
Perhaps! May God conduct thee!—Go!
I'll come!

BARUCH.
I leave the flowers here,—they are decayed.
And do you know, how I discriminate
The flowers on their stem, and the decayed?
The flowers *there* are thoughts, and *these*, perceptions!
God thinks in those, and man doth here perceive.
And as the difference but fragrance is,
Vitality, and blooming, vivid tint,
I designate by life and being—God.

Decayed flowers are no flowers more;
Deprived of life and their existence, these
Perception can alone in them be valued,—
They're nothing else, and quietly may die.
Pray, laugh my uncle, when I speculate,
As you have always smiled on such occasions;
You look so grave to-day.—Come early home!

We may then read some Greek before retiring.
(Exit.)

URIEL. (Contemplating the flowers, and looking after
Baruch.)

"They're nothing else and quietly may die!"
Thou clever child! Upon thy torch-head stands
Already, too, the stamp of thought and woe?
I've often drawn yet *poison* from such flowers!—
The settlement of all summations—*Death*,—
Yes, *Death*, the final sum of all our numbers!
Ben Joehai! Thou heart-purchasing hidalgos!

(Draws a pistol.)
Present thy drafts, the day of payment's come!

(Takes mark of Joehai.)

Stand still as I did, when thou trod'st on me!
Thou Croesus, let thine eye-lids now not move!
One breath—yet one do take, thou coward—Ah!

(His arm sinks.)

The rings they have exchanged—retraction now
Would be in vain,—and fiddle my revenge!
No man should ever think,—no! no! 'Thing arm
Will lose its strength, however strong thy mind—
Yes, yes! a withered flower I am, too,—
Perception has alone in me yet value!
Am nothing thus—can die resignedly!
(Exit.)

Enter MANASSEH, SILVA, GUESTS, JUDITH,
 JOCHAI, — SANTOS.

JUDITH.

One moment only let me tarry here!
 Too keenly do I feel this novel state!
 I will collect my strength,—precede, I pray!

JOCHAI.

It is your first request as Jochai's wife!
 I must, although unwillingly, fulfill it.

(*To the others.*)

Come with me, worthy guests! The solitude
 That Judith ever cherished, hath a right
 To offer her the first congratulations.

(*Exeunt.*)

JUDITH. (*Alone.* Looks for some shade around her,
 and draws then a paper from her bosom, from which
 she pours some powder into the water on the table.)

De Silva, thou hast told me, that my father
 Will find his consolation. Be it then!

(*Drinks.*)

A monument will do as well as I!

Enter URIEL.

URIEL.

Behold the wife of Jochai—
 This you, Judith? I could not but once more

JUDITH. (*Leaning against the bench.*)
 Here she is!

URIEL.

If I should still intend to emigrate,
 Would you not let me go? O Judith, see
 Thy friend before thee, parched and burnt, reduced
 To ashes!—Misery!—Crushed down!—An atom!
 Where is that lofty, loving courage thing,
 Which raised me, tho' I would withstand, to heaven,
 And could inspire my heart with burning love?
 O speak! what think'st thou of thyself and me?
 How may we both uplift ourselves again?

JUDITH.

Forgive, that I our sufferings compare!
 Which is the poorer, O mine Uriel,
 Thou, thou, or I?

URIEL.

Oh! ever have I feared
 The love of woman!—In my ear resounds
 The word which thou hast spoken to the Priest.
 What awful, heart-appalling change has come!

JUDITH.

Forgiv'st thou me, my friend?

URIEL.

Forgive! And thee?
 I know that otherwise thou couldst not act.
 Oh! that myself could otherwise have done!
 To hate one's self, despise one's self, alas!
 Is bitterest pang!

JUDITH.
Believe thyself therefrom!

Rejoice the world with valiant confidence,
Confess thy truth with heroes' bravery!

URIEL.

Who can believe me henceforth? No! whoever
Hath not pursued the straightest path,

—And would he even change the stone to bread—
Is not believed,—all faith will be denied
To him, who has but *once* belied his faith.

JUDITH.

One comes—

URIEL.

Thou growest pale—

JUDITH.

Farewell, my friend!

URIEL.

What means this, Judith? Tell, this paleness—

JUDITH.

Look not at me! Thou shalt but hear of me!

URIEL.

What means yon goblet? Judith, shouldst thou—?

Enter MANASSEH, SILVA, GUESTS.

MANASSEH.

Where stays my child?

SILVA.

Acosta here?

URIEL.

Observe

Your niece, De Silva!

MANASSEH.

Child, how feeblest thou?

JUDITH.

My father, easy,—easy!

MANASSEH.

Feel her hand! Almighty God! what is this?—Heav'nly Fall'er!
So cold!

SILVA.

Just as your marble,—O Manasseh,
Thou poorest wealthy man,—thy child—

MANASSEH.

Is dying!

URIEL. *(Aside.)*

It is the poison from my withered flowers!

Enter JOCHAI, SANTOS and GUESTS in cheerful
carelessness.

URIEL.

Look yonder, Ben Jochai!—Thou haughty woeer,
Who would'st exchange for papers human hearts,
And wert on payment-day outwitted yet!
Come! let thy foot insultingly again
Tread on my neck, before this altar here!

(Kneels before JUDITH.)

JOCHAI. (Undone.—Aside.)

United with a corpse!

MANASSEH.

Oh! save her, Silva!

SILVA.

It is too late! My art is bankrupt here!

JUDITH.

Acosta, seest thou? Couldst thou believe,
That'er my soul, by thee so tender made,
Should know not what it owed to faithful love?
My father is redeemed, but only thus!

(Takes the myrtle-wreath from her head.)

Alas! I dreamed of quite another world,
Of sweeter hopes this life would realize!
A feeling spring alone was given me—
A little fragrant,—but beautiful
It was,—replete with bliss that quickens even
My dying hour with joy—farewell, my father!
Forgive the sacrifice of higher love!

(Hands the wreath to ACOSTA.)

Thou noblest soul, accept this wreath, tis thine!

(Reclines and dies.)

URIEL. (Presses weeping, the wreath to his lips,
places it into JUDITH'S hand and rises.)

Manasseh! statues love you, sarcophagi,
The artist's hand affords you consolation!
If your beloved child you should imbed
Near yonder weeping willow,—grant me, too,
I pray, a resting-place near by! Nowhere
I'll find a grave, with Christians not, nor Jews!

I am of those who die upon the road.

Once, I do hope, they may perhaps observe
That lonely tombstone, and exclaim: Here rest
The ashes of a poor and weary pilgrim,
Who moved towards the promised land of Truth!

He saw it not! But from above a cloud
Descended, rosy, on his dying eye—
That cloud was Love—

(Pointing to JUDITH.)

See here, what love can do!
And now I leave to you this world of error,
Of doubt, of arrogance, and persecution!

Throw larger stones yet on your fellowmen,
Who, like myself, were panting after God,
Would venture to behold Him face to face,
Without the interceding word of priests—
No longer can I bear my own on earth.—

In summer, and brighter centuries,
The day will come when men, in Hebrew not,
Nor in the Greek, or Latin tongue,—no! in
The tongue of spirit and of truth will say:

For paths like these, the world had not yet room,
For hames like these, the air was yet too sultry,
He was compelled to go, because he dared not stay;
Have ye prevailed—well, yonder is the place,
The banner of your triumph to erect:
Manasseh, I do mean you weeping willows!—
My genius; thou follow'st me!—Not you!
From thence I will denote to you the spot,
Where victory you gain, and I—my peace!

(All stand in amazement and follow him with their
eyes, as he passes before them to leave the stage. After
some pause, the discharge of a pistol is heard behind
the scene.)

SANTOS. (Stepping towards the side where URIEL dis-
appeared.)

The Church prevails—two sacrifices fell!

SILVA. (Holds him back,—looks alternately outside,
and at JUDITH, whom MANASSEH holds in his arm.)

Do not disturb this moment's solemn awe!
Two witnesses of that belief which scorns
The world!—Oh! do not judge; for as we stand
Against in horror here—the murderers
Of this angelic pair are we!—Go! Go!
And preach forbearance, toleration, love!
And what is true belief?—Alas! I see
The lustre of the ancient Temples fade!
Believe what ye believe! But from conviction!
Not what we do believe, De Santos, wins!
No! how we do believe it, will prevail!

(Group.—Curtain falls.)

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