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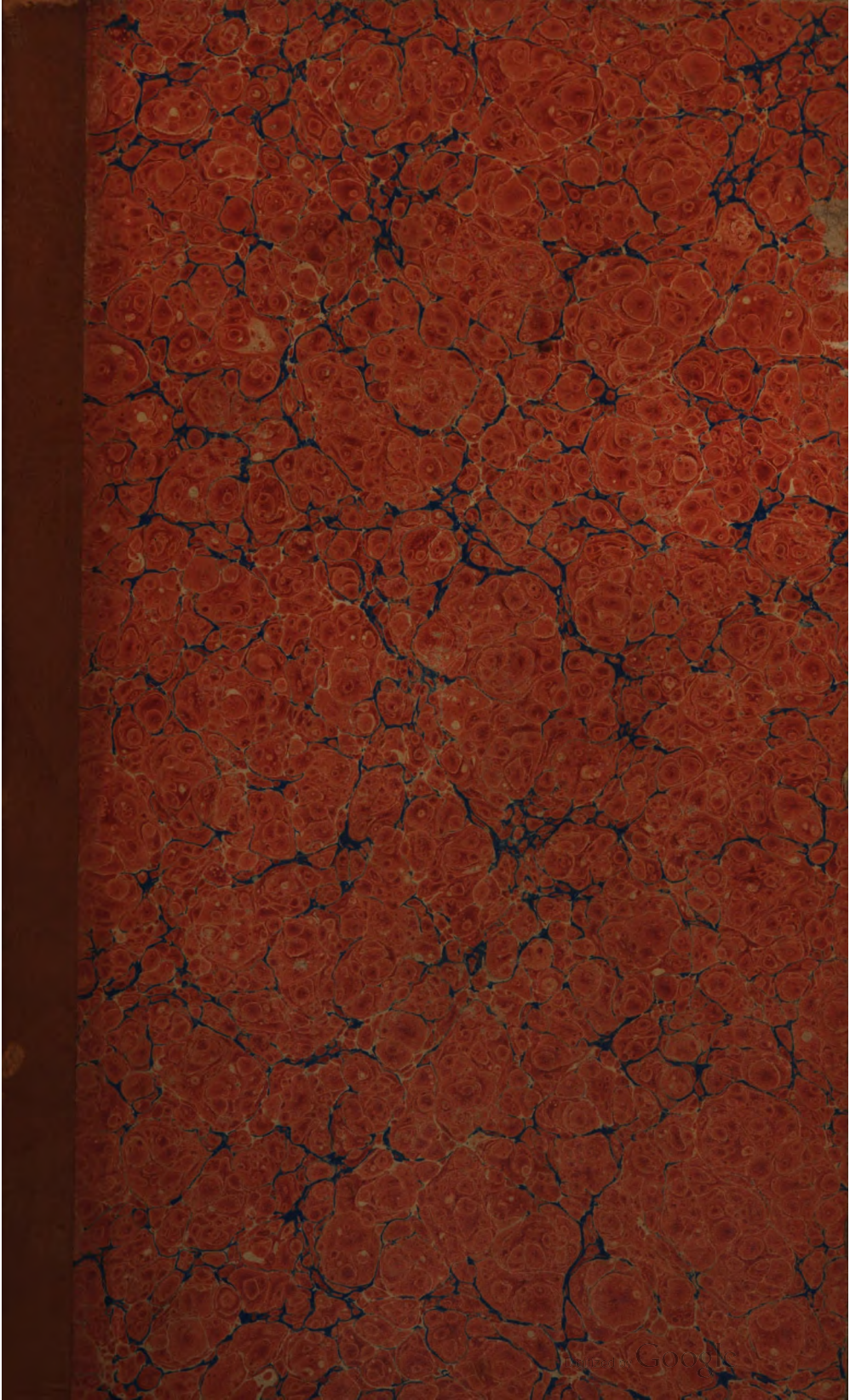
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THE
RUINS OF ATHENS;

A DRAMATIC MASQUE.

FIRST PERFORMED AT THE
PRINCESS'S THEATRE, OXFORD STREET,
MARCH 5TH, 1846,

Under the Management of J. M. MADDOX, Esq.

WRITTEN AND ADAPTED BY

W. BARTHOLOMEW,

TO THE MUSIC, AS COMPOSED BY

LOUIS VAN BEETHOVEN.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY EWER & CO., NEWGATE STREET,
And Sold in the Theatre.

PRINTED BY J. BONSOR, 134, FENCHURCH STREET.

Price Sixpence.

(1846)

31.

CHARACTERS.

MERCURY..... MRS. STIRLING.
HECTOR, *a Greek Slave*..... MR. LEFFLER.
JANIZARY CAPTAIN MR. PAULO.
PROSPERO..... MR. J. VINING.
WITCHES MESSRS. COURTNEY, HONNER, AND HILL.
MINERVA..... MRS. BROUGHAM.
HELEN, *a Greek Slave* MISS GEORGINA SMITHSON.

CHORUS.

Dervishes. Priests and Priestesses of Apollo.

Shakspeare's Tragic and Comic Characters. Janizaries, Dancers, &c.

SCENE—in ATHENS, and afterwards in LONDON.



P R E F A C E.

“*DIE RUINEN VON ATHEN*,” the prototype of this Dramatic Masque, was written by ERNEST VON KOTZEBUE; and the incidental Music, with that also for its lyric verses, was composed by LOUIS VAN BEETHOVEN, expressly for the opening of the new Theatre of Pesth, in Hungary, on which occasion it was represented, in February, 1812, while Athens was subject to a controul from which she has since been emancipated: although, for the sake of Dramatic effect, an anachronism has been admitted, by which it would appear that she is still under the Ottoman domination.

In addition to the whole of the Music originally performed, two *Airs*, by the same Composer,—not generally known; also portions of his more familiar instrumental productions have been engrafted, for the purpose of rendering the appropriated version more interesting to an English audience: and it is hoped that the intention will be an excuse for the liberty taken on this occasion by its Author, who cannot omit the opportunity of stating, that if his humble efforts prove successful, it will be mainly owing to the united exertions of every one engaged in preparing and representing it, many having voluntarily condescended to appear as silent masquers, to enhance this tribute offered to the genius of the Bard, whose leading characters are performed by them on important occasions.

THE RUINS OF ATHENS.

OVERTURE.

SCENE I.—*An Olympian Cavern: in which Minerva is discovered enchained to a rock.*

CHORUS—(*Aerial.*)

Daughter of high-throned Jove; he calls thee,—
He smiles once more;
His angry frown no longer appals thee,
Vengeance is o'er.

MINERVA.

My father reconciled? O joyful strain!
My guilt at length atoned by centuries
Of lonely grief and vain regret for him
I might have saved from death. O Socrates!
How have I suffered for neglecting thee,
Thou wisest of the wise,—for leaving thee,
Whom I should have rescued, to perish? Yes,
Thy wisdom raised my envy, and thou wast left
To die a martyr for the truth. Great Jove,
How justly hast thou punished me! alone,
Immured within this solitary cell,
Thy once-beloved daughter hath endured
Beyond two thousand years of sorrow: here,
Unseeing and unseen by men and Gods,
I have at last, by expiation, moved
Olympus to relent. Who enters here?

Enter MERCURY.

Hail swift-winged messenger of Jove! music
Has wafted pardon in a sweeter strain
Than ever charmed my ravished ears before.

MERCURY.

It wafted me to tell thee thou art free.

MINERVA.

O joy! the bitter part appears a dream!
 I shall behold my votaries again,
 Shall dwell within the temples they have reared
 To honour me in my beloved Athens!

MERCURY.

Confined within this gloomy narrow den,
 You know not of the changes Time hath wrought:
 Your Athens is no longer what it was.

MINERVA.

What *is* it? Speak!

MERCURY.

A skeleton of beauty,
 Fast crumbling into dust: its relics are
 Its epitaph.

MINERVA.

Impossible!

MERCURY.

'Tis true.

MINERVA.

Let me behold, to credit what I hear.

MERCURY.

Thought, wing our flight; and Athens shall appear.

[*Waving his Caduceus.*]

SCENE II.—THE RUINS OF ATHENS.—*The Acropolis, the Parthenon, the Temple of Theseus, the Temple of the Winds, &c.* HECTOR *is beating rice in an antique vase of marble.* HELEN *carries a basket containing figs for sale.*

DUET.

HECTOR.

Faultless, yet hated,
 Still are we fated
 Thus to slave;
 Every morrow
 Brings new sorrow,
 Freedom waits us in the grave!

HELEN.

See our bowers,
 Yielding flowers,
 Wine and oil :
 We, who rear them,
 Never share them ;
 Slaves of tyrants, we must toil !

DUO.

Thus, our cruel foes oppress us,
 Stripes enforce each stern command ;
 Ah ! will freedom never bless us ?
 Wretched, wretched native land !

MERCURY.

Behold your Athens,—see your Parthenon,
 And yon Acropolis.

MINERVA.

Those ruins !—

MERCURY.

Those

Are all that now appears of mighty Athens.

MINERVA.

Amazement ! yon crumbling walls—

MERCURY.

Your once fair temple.

MINERVA.

Alas ! this godly tower of the winds—

MERCURY.

Is now a Turkish mosque.

MINERVA.

These ruins, where

The swallows build their cells—

MERCURY.

They were of old,

The sacred fane of Theseus.

MINERVA.

Alas !

Is this,—can this be Athens,—she that once
 In glory towered over all compeers !
 Where are her heroes, orators, and sages ?

MERCURY.

Their names are found in Time's recording pages.

MINERVA.

Where are her freemen ?

MERCURY.

All that now remain,
Are like yon abject slave who crushes grain
Within that fragment of the Phidian skill,
Whose forms of beauty stand unrivalled still.
His fathers, called Harmodius their sire.

HECTOR.

By Phaon slighted, Sappho weeps ;
Her burning tears fall all in vain ;
So from Leucate's rock she leaps,
And ends, by dying, all her pain.
Why, why should I thus languish,
When Sappho's daring plunge quells every anguish ?

MERCURY.

You sing a melancholy song.

HECTOR.

What cause
Have I, whose life is one of toil, to sing
Of mirth ?

MINERVA.

Yet wherefore choose a theme of love ?

HECTOR.

It clings to my remembrance, and recalls
The days of childhood to my mind,—the days
When I was happy.

MINERVA.

'Tis an ancient legend.

HECTOR.

It must be ; 'twas carroll'd when I was a boy,
And none can tell who sang it first.

MERCURY.

And who was Sappho ?

HECTOR.

Sappho ? I suppose
She lived when we were free as grass-hoppers.

MINERVA.

Pray what is that in which you beat your rice ?

HECTOR.

I know not, and I care not what it is :
I found it here ; it serves my purpose well.

MINERVA.

It once adorned yon temple.

HECTOR.

May be so.

MINERVA.

Art thou a Greek ?

HECTOR.

Aye ; born in Athens.

MINERVA.

And a slave, degraded and degrading.
Oh Jove, what changes Fate has made in Man !

MERCURY.

That lovely girl who offers fruit for sale ;
Her laurelled ancestors adorned the tale
Of bards and heroes : one was Miltiades,
The conqueror at Marathon.

MINERVA.

Oh glory,

How do thy beams by spreading, fade !

HELEN.

See, winter flies away,
Spring decks the bowers ;
Her beams of gold array
The balmy showers,
And wake on every spray
The leaves and flowers.

While every bird in spring,
Loving,—united,
Upsoars on Freedom's wing,
And trills delighted :
Slaves, if they dare, must sing,
“ Freedom is blighted !”

MERCURY.

Goddess, she comes imploring your assistance.
Suppose you question her.

MINERVA.

Fair maiden ; say,
When last was the procession of the Peplus ?

HELEN.

What d'ye mean, lady ?

MINERVA.

The sacred garment
Woven by maidens for the goddess :—

HELEN.

The boddice ?

MINERVA. (*To Mercury.*)

Alas, the poor degraded wretch !

HELEN.

These figs,
Beautiful lady, are good and cheap :—buy some !

(*DERVISHES without, shouting and singing.*)

MINERVA.

What noise approaches hither ?

MERCURY.

A procession,
To worship one in song, of whom you never heard.
The temple of Boreas and the Zephyrs,
Re-echoes now the praises of great Mahomet.
Here come his votive Dervishes, to do
His holy rites.

(*Enter DERVISHES, singing and dancing grotesquely.*)

CHORUS.

When thou did'st frown, the moon was banish'd ;
At thy rebuke, her splendour vanish'd :
Kaaba ! * Mahomet, hail !
By thee bestridden, Alborak † was driven
To soar swift as light, with thee to heaven ;
Kaaba ! great Prophet, hail !

(*The Dervishes enter the Temple of the Winds.*)

* KAABA :—*The holy stone of Mecca ; by which the followers of Mahomet swear.*

† ALBORAK :—*The beast on which the Prophet flew in one night from Mecca to Jerusalem : and some say from thence to heaven.*

MINERVA.

What nonsense hath assailed mine ear ?

MERCURY.

'Tis called devotion : sacred unto him
They idolize.

(Turkish March heard approaching.)

HELEN.

Good strangers, have a care ;
Here come our stern oppressors' Janizaries !
We must be gone. [*Exeunt* HELEN and HECTOR.]

Enter, with drawn swords, a troop of Janizaries, marching to music ; the Chief detains one of the men.

CHIEF. *(Pointing to a Sarcophagus.)*

Here is the very thing we want : this trough
Of stone will make a famous manger for
Our Pacha's horse. Go, bring a steed or two,
And drag it hence.

[*Exeunt* JANIZARIES.]

MINERVA.

A pure sarcophagus dishonoured thus !
Let us depart from this accursed place :
Lead me to where they worship and revere us.
Away to Rome !

MERCURY.

Ah, goddess ! not to Rome ;
For there our sacred fanes are fallen and debased ;
And we are quite forgotten, even as here.

MINERVA.

What then,
Is there no spot where knowledge still is rife,
And Wisdom's throne is reared ?

MERCURY.

Yes, far away,
An isle unknown to thee, now cherishes
The Muses and their arts : there, temples rise,
And we are worshipp'd still in other forms
And names : 'tis there, the relics of our fanes
Are honored and adored by Freedom's sons :

There, Commerce gathers wealth to foster Art,
 And Art devotes her efforts still to us.
 There, Bards awake the lofty strain of song ;
 Thalia and Melpomene there reign
 Triumphantly.

MINERVA.

Then now farewell to Athens :
 My once beloved Parthenon, adieu !
 Hence from this home of slaves, and let me see
 The land where Freedom reigns.

MERCURY.

Haste there with me.
 This very day, the people of its capital,
 Within a temple raised to our Apollo,
 The Graces, and the Muses, crown a Bard
 In effigy,—wise as your Socrates,
 Profound as Plato, sublime as Æschylus,
 Tender as Sophocles, pathetic as
 Euripides, daring as Pindar ; in wit,
 An Aristophanes, in strains of love
 More passionate than Sappho. “ He was a man,
 Take him for all in all, we shall not look
 Upon his like again.” Nature beholds
 Her image in his mirror.

MINERVA.

Let us away :
 Desire's impatience ill endures delay !

MERCURY waves his Caduceus, and the Scene changes to

SCENE III.—LONDON. *The facade of the Royal Exchange, the Bank of England, and the Statue of the Duke of Wellington appear.*

MERCURY.

Now by the power of thought,
 The wondrous change is wrought !
 This is the great emporium of the world ;
 The city of an isle where all are free :

Here, slaves of other lands, are slaves no more.
 Neptune hath placed his trident in *her* hand,
 Who sits upon its regal pinnacle ;
 And Jove hath granted her the power to wield
 His conquering thunderbolts by land and sea,
 To guard her subjects, to uphold their laws,
 And to maintain their freedom when assailed.
 Oppressors crouch before her awful frown ;
Just monarchs woo her friendship, and obtain it ;
 And victors lay the laurels and the palms
 They gain in distant countries at her feet.
 Her land has been assailed on every side ;
 And should it be again, she is prepared
 To stand against all enemies, and prove
 Victoria and Victory are sisters !

(Pointing to the Exchange.)

Within that temple Commerce rears to me,
 Merchants from every quarter of the globe resort,
 To barter for, or buy the produce wrought
 By her industrious artizans, who toil like bees,—
 And like the bees, turn all they touch—to gold !

(Pointing to the Bank.)

That is the hive wherein they store their wealth :
 For money is their honey, which is gain'd
 By industry ; and thus obtained, 'tis sweet.

(Pointing to the Statue.)

There stands the trophy of a hundred victories :
 The hero yet exists.

MINERVA.

The hero never dies :

He lives in the remembrance of the past.

MERCURY.

Then *he* will live as long as time shall last,
 Wreath'd with the laurels he has nobly won,
 And wears with so much unassuming grace:—

MINERVA

Which I henceforth will cherish, ne'er to fade,
 In this most favor'd land.

SCENE IV.—*The interior of the Temple dedicated to Apollo and the Muses; in the centre is an Altar, which Groups are employed in decorating with garlands, &c.*

Enter in procession, to music, the various Characters of Shakspeare's Dramas; passing across the stage. The Comic, precede a car, drawn by Satyrs, in which is Thalia; the Tragic, precede a car, wherein is Melpomene.

CHORUS.

Men. Twine ye the garlands.
Women. Garlands we braid.
Men. Deck ye the altars.
Women. See them array'd.
Men. Strew your odours.
Women. Breathe their perfume.
Men. Yonder our friends advance.
Women. Greet them with song and dance.
 See, they come! [*Procession enters.*
 Apollo's throng,
All. We bound along,
 With smiles of welcome we meet ye;
 With choral song,
 Within his temple we greet ye.
 Shakspeare's creations,
 Nature's relations,
 Welcome and hail!
 Enter our portal
 Heirs of his fame;
 He is immortal,
 Live with his name.

Enter MINERVA and MERCURY, in mantles which disguise them.

Dance by a Group of Fairies, from the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM; after which, they retire.

MINERVA. (*To Mercury.*)

What motley group was this?

MERCURY.

As from the brain

Of the Olympian Thunderer, all arm'd
 The heiress of his godlike wisdom sprang ;
 So, from the Jove of Helicon came forth
 These creatures of his mind. And well he said,
 When picturing your own Athenian Theseus :—
 “ The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
 Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven ;
 And as imagination bodies forth
 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
 Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing,
 A local habitation and a name.”

MINERVA.

And did he this ?

MERCURY.

He did ; and hear what more,

From yon grave personage about to speak.

PROSPERO. (*Waving his wand.*)

“ Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves ;
 And ye, that on the sands with printless foot
 Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him,
 When he comes back ; you demi-puppets, that
 By moonshine do the green-sour ringlets make,
 Whereof the ewe not bites ; and you, whose pastime
 Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
 To hear the solemn curfew ; by whose aid
 (Weak masters though ye be,) I have bedimm'd
 The noon-tide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
 And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
 Set roaring war ; to the dread rattling thunder
 Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
 With his own bolt : the strong-based promontory,
 Have I made shake ; and by the spurs pluck'd up
 The pine and cedar : graves, at my command,
 Have waked their sleepers ; op'd, and let them forth
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic
 I here abjure : and, when I have required
 Some heavenly music (which ev'n now I do)
 To work mine end upon their senses, that

This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And, deeper than did ever plummet sound,
 I'll drown my book."

The Witches of Macbeth attract the attention of MINERVA.

MINERVA. (*To Mercury.*)

"But what are these
 So withered and so wild in their attire,
 That look not like th' inhabitants o' the earth,
 And yet are on't?"

1st Witch.

"Hail!

2nd Witch.

Hail!

3rd Witch.

Hail!"

1st Witch.

Hail, Minerva,

In ancient Greece, Athena of th' Athenians:—
 And here, and *now* Britannia of the Britons!

All. (vanishing.)

Hail!

PROSPERO.

"These were all spirits, and
 Are melted into air, into thin air:
 And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
 The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind."

CHORUS.

Susceptible hearts in our bosoms are beating;
 Our feelings respond to a smile, or tear;
 Here, kindred Art and Nature meeting,
 Charm us in fiction whene'er you appear.

SOLO AND CHORUS.

PRIEST OF APOLLO.

Deign, great Apollo, now to hear our supplication;
 And let his form whose memory we revere,—
 His, whose wise precepts exist still in shapes of his creation,
 Enthron'd within thy temple now appear.
 Our Bard whose art embellished Nature,
 Shall ever be admired—renown'd.

MINERVA.

Let him appear in form and feature ! [Thunder.

The Statue of Shakspeare rises, and Minerva crowns it with an Olive wreath.

CHORUS.

'Tis he !—behold his brow by Wisdom crown'd.

MERCURY.

“ What need hath Shakspeare for his honour'd bones,
 The labour of an age in piled stones,
 Or, that his hallowed relics should be hid
 Under a starry-pointing pyramid ?
 Dear son of Memory, great heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name ?
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment
 Hast built thyself a live-long monument.
 For whilst to th' shame of slow endeavouring Art
 Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
 Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
 Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
 Then thou our fancy of itself bereaving,
 Dost make us marble with too much conceiving ;
 And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.”

CHORUS.

Hail mighty Master, hail !
 “ Great heir of Fame !”
 Sacred wisdom in thy pages,
 Shines for all succeeding ages,—
 Halos thy name !

TABLEAU—*The Curtain falls.*

