Hannah Cowley, "A Day In Turkey; Or, The Russian Slaves" (1791)

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4. **A Day in Turkey; or, The Russian Slaves**

Hannah Cowley

Betsy Bolton

HANNAH COWLEY (1742–1809) was a prolific English dramatist and poet who is best remembered for her satire and subtle wit in portraying contemporary British political events and the political and social roles of women.

Born Hannah Parkhouse, Cowley grew up in Tiverton, Devon, where her father was a bookseller and local councillor. She relocated to London in 1772 following her marriage to Thomas Cowley, a Stamp Office clerk who later worked for the East India Company until his death in 1797. Thomas Cowley remained in India throughout his career, during which time Cowley wrote in London and raised her four children. Following the death of Thomas, Cowley returned to Devon to begin editing her plays and to continue to produce her prodigious body of poetry. While several of Cowley’s plays enjoyed lengthy runs, most specifically *Who’s the Dupe* and *Belle’s Stratagem*, others such as *Albina*, were initially shelved due to literary rivalry and theatrical jealousies. A three-volume collection of her *Works* was published in 1813, including a memoir, 11 of her plays, and most of her poetry.

According to the memoir included in the 1813 three-volume collected works, Cowley’s writing career began after attending the theatre one evening with her husband. “So delighted with this? said she to him – why I could write as well myself! His laugh, without notice, was answered in the course of the following morning by sketching the first Act of *The Runaway*” [I, viii]. Cowley sent the sentimental comedy to David Garrick, who responded with encouragement and suggestions for revisions; the play opened at Drury Lane on 15 February 1776 and ran for 17 performances. Twelve more plays followed this opening success:

*Who’s the Dupe* (Drury Lane, 1779)

*Albina, Countess Raimond; A Tragedy* (Haymarket, 1779)

*The Belle’s Stratagem* (Covent Garden, 1780)

*The World as It Goes; or A Party at Montpelier* (Covent Garden, 1781) – revised as *Second Thoughts Are Best* (Covent Garden, 1781)

*Which Is the Man?* (Covent Garden, 1782)

*A Bold Stroke for a Husband* (Covent Garden, 1783)

*More Ways than One* (Covent Garden, 1783)
Cowley's most successful plays were the farce *Who's the Dupe* and the full-length comic *Belle's Stratagem*, each of which received more than 100 performances before 1800. In all, Cowley was one of the most prolific and important female dramatists of the period.

To contemporaries, Cowley was also famous as part of a plagiarism scandal and later as part of a poetic romance. Cowley's public accusation that Hannah More's *Fatal Falsehood* had plagiarized parts of *Albina* effectively discouraged More from any further writing for the stage, and Cowley herself avoided further tragedy for nearly a decade. The poetic romance was a much happier affair: in 1787, under the pseudonym of Anna Matilda, Cowley began to write poems responding to those of Robert Merry, who was publishing in *The World* as Della Crusca. Throughout a poetically ardent two-year correspondence, Cowley and Merry remained ignorant of each other's identities: their verse, stressing feeling and ornament, became a popular model (known as Della Cruscan verse) both to follow and to denounce: other poets also participated in the Della Cruscan circle. Perhaps inevitably, when Cowley and Merry finally met, they found each other disappointing and the correspondence came to an end. Still, the romance had produced *The Poetry of Anna Matilda* (1788) and, with other Della Cruscan writing, *The Poetry of the World* (1788).

*A Day in Turkey; or, The Russian Slaves* is the penultimate production of an experienced playwright. Politically sophisticated yet flippant, impossibly sentimental yet sexually vulgar, the mixed drama experiments with opposing qualities while simultaneously unveiling their common ground. The orientalism of *A Day in Turkey* is often crude, but the play undercuts its Western predilections as well as its assumption of Eastern despotism. Hannah Cowley at once espouses, and criticizes, sentimental ideology.

Cowley's *A Day in Turkey* mingled Della Cruscan sensibilities with comic flair, special stage effects, and political savvy to comment on contemporary manners and contemporary politics. The play responded to topical debates about the ongoing hostilities between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (now Turkey) – hostilities sparked by Russia's bloody recapture of a military base at Oczakow (in modern Ukraine, roughly 70 kilometers from Odessa) in 1788. The British government, worried that Russia's desire for conquest might destabilize Europe's balance of power or threaten Britain's own supremacy, tried to broker a peace treaty between Russia and Turkey. When diplomacy faltered in March 1791 and tensions in the area began to heat up, Britain started to arm itself for a possible war with Russia. Parliamentary debates over this strategy were intense and colorful, with some members depicting Russia's Catherine the Great as a savage ruler, both sexually and imperially voracious, while others stressed the impropriety of siding with a Turkish sultan against a Christian empress. Playing off the gendered and racial imagery of these debates, *A Day in Turkey* premiered on 3 December 1791 with a sentimental, romantic resolution to the conflict. The opening was undoubtedly timely – a peace agreement between Russia and Turkey was finally reached in January 1792, when the play received most of its 14 performances – but *A Day in Turkey* was performed through the end of the season, and revived for three additional performances early in 1794. Indeed, it's worth remembering
that the debates raised by the Oczakow debacle took place against a broader orientalist back­
drop. *A Day in Turkey* drew on a comic sketch of Turkish manners Cowley had originally sent
to Garrick back in 1779 – and Turkey remained a popular theatrical topic for years, as shown
by the success of Colman's orientalized *Blue Beard* (1798).

At the same time, however, the play’s politics refer as much to the French revolution as
to Russian-Turkish relations. The comic figure *A La Greque*, French valet to the Russian
nobleman Orloff, makes repeated references to revolutionary events in France, focusing in
particular on the end of aristocracy there. His remarks are at times almost painfully flippant:
it's hard to see how audiences could have taken them seriously enough to protest, unless they
were objecting to the flippancy itself. But it is also true that in the early 1790s, the French
revolution was itself inseparable from local British politics. The 1792 edition of *A Day in
Turkey* introduces the play with an “Advertisement” disclaiming any knowledge of politics;
it specifically invokes Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) in order
to disavow Wollstonecraft’s demand for women’s participation in politics. The epilogue to the
play, by contrast, quotes extensively from Edmund Burke’s conservative *Reflections on the Rev­
olution in France* (1790). On the face of things, then, Cowley seems to side with Burke against
Wollstonecraft. Yet in Act V, the plotting Italian Lauretta makes several references to the rights
of women – references at once ironic and rousing. And Cowley’s note to her epilogue posi­
tions Burke not as a politician but as a lover – “A man whom politics seized, and seems to have
dragged reluctantly from LOVE” – and quotes from his overwrought description of Marie
Antoinette, a passage often considered a weakness in Burke’s *Reflections*. In one sense, then,
what makes Wollstonecraft and Burke apt bookends for the material of Cowley’s play is their
joint interest in sensibility or sentiment as both a personal and a political stance, and their very
different visions of female power.

Julie Ellison’s summary of sensibility may offer a useful point of entry for thinking about
the ambiguities of feeling in *A Day in Turkey*: “Sensibility is not simply a taste for pathos but
a varied, contested, and ambivalent discourse of emotional action. Authors working in the
languages of sensibility not only deploy its conventions, but comment on their conven­tion­
ality. [. . .] Sensibility can become, under certain circumstances, an idiom of female ambition
and citizenship, invested in national success” (228–30). The plot of *A Day in Turkey* shows the
power of sentiment – focused and intensified through the lens of romantic love – to trans­
form a despotic oriental tyrant into something not unlike a love-sick English gentleman.Yet
within the play, sensibility is deployed primarily by the markedly unsentimental character
Lauretta. Without her intervention, the more sentimental characters (Alexina, Orloff, Ibrahim)
would remain alienated, imprisoned, un-enlightened. In a similarly ambivalent way, Cowley’s
own deployment of sentiment allows her to comment on the Oczakow debates and British
responses to the French revolution while seeming to resit female engagement in politics. The
conventions of sensibility offer Cowley (and, to a lesser extent, her characters) a variable and
contested “idiom of female ambition and citizenship.”

In a departure from Cowley’s normal practice, the play uses songs, dances, and exotic sets
and costumes to appeal to the shifting tastes of late eighteenth-century theatre audiences.
Critics complained as much about the play’s mixed form as about its politics. The memoir
introducing Cowley’s collected works emphasized that *A Day in Turkey* was a mixed drama,
and one can see some of what was “mixed” in the complaint of one earlier critic that “the
language is in parts inflated, in others it is replete with trite sayings, strained witticisms, and
broad vulgarity. The perceived strength of the drama, its claim to popularity, lay in its “stage
pageantry,” its exoticism and orientalism.

The casting of the major parts suggests that Cowley may have had specific actors in mind
as she wrote the play. At 51 years of age, Elizabeth Pope (née Younge) was old to play the
newly wed Alexina, but she was a reigning actress thought to excel in performing sentimental
wives and daughters; when she died in 1797, a critic in the Monthly Mirror claimed that “Her
heart spoke in every thing said.” William Farren, who played her husband Orloff, was 15 years
younger than Mrs. Pope, but as early as 1783, he was judged “peculiarly adapted to rigid,
strong, and masculine parts in Tragedy”: Cowley’s play, while comic, nonetheless provided
him with just that kind of role. Harriet Esten, who played Paulina, was twenty-six in 1791;
four years later, F. G. Waldron called her “a little enchanting made-up manufactured piece
of elegance” and proclaimed her “the perfect mistress of the use of a fine pair of eyes.” Ibra­
him was played by 27-year-old Joseph Holman, an actor noted for his “graceful figure” and
“noble mien,” though critics complained about his tendency to bellow, rant, and rage – skills
not entirely out of place for the ostensibly despotic Bassa. The relative youth of this second
romantic pair would have underscored the affinities between them. Lauretta was acted by
Isabella Mattocks, aged forty-five when the play opened. Five years later she was described as
“still alert and gay,” with an “aspect penetrating, strong, and bold,” specializing in “snip-snap
chat.” Impertinence, a degree of vulgarity, and a specifically female authority made Mattocks
perfect for the part of female schemer, capable of unraveling oriental despotism. A La Greque
was played by the 23-year-old John Fawcett, a young but very popular comic actor, in whose
mouth “sentiment infallibly converts into farce and ridicule,” according to the Dramatic Censor
in 1800. Joseph Munden, who played Mustapha, was a popular character actor, known for his
“wonder-working face,” and his “broad and voluptuous” style of performance.

When Cowley revised A Day in Turkey for inclusion in her collected works, she made
the play more of a reading text than a script for performance. Some changes make the piece
more focused and concise: the character Fatima is cut, and Muley becomes Selim, reducing
confusion between the names Muley and Mustapha, and erasing the 1792 Selim’s nonessential
speeches. The songs are revised and new songs are introduced: freed from specific actor’s vocal
limitations, Cowley could use the songs more as poetic interludes. The language of the play is
heightened throughout. In the first scene, for instance, Paulina responds to her family’s new
refugee status pragmatically in 1792 – “We are driven from our cottage; we have no longer a
home – let us run some where to seek another” – and sentimentally in 1813: “Driven from our
little Estate, we must forth into the wide World!” This heightening of language and feeling
has perhaps its greatest impact on the most farcical characters: Lauretta, who in 1813 becomes
the Georgian Zilia, and A La Greque, whose most vulgar jokes and language vanish from
the text. Indeed, both characters move in the direction of sentimental behavior: in 1813, for
instance, Zilia works to transform the Bassa not just for amusement, as Lauretta did in 1792,
but to gain liberty for herself and her fellow slaves. In 1792, A La Greque invaded the harem
in search of willing women; in 1813, he goes on Orloff’s behalf to discover more about Alex­
ina’s whereabouts. A few verbal revisions are particularly striking: in 1813, all five references
to “seraglio” and ten to “harem” have been excised, along with all seventeen 1792 references
to “Christian” or “Christians.” The first set of deletions downplays the sexual emphasis of the
original play; references to women's rights and the French revolution have also been toned down in the later version. At the same time, references to "Christians" have been replaced by national epithets — "Russian!" or "Frenchman!" — or by looser references to benevolent doctrines: the revised play works to distinguish Europe from Turkey on cultural rather than religious grounds.

This text of *A Day in Turkey; or, the Russian Slaves* is based on the first edition, published in London by G.G.J. and J. Robinson in 1792, with some reference both to the Larpent edition (LA 921) and to the revised version of the play printed in *The Works of Mrs. Cowley, Dramas and Poems*, published in London by Wilkie and Robinson in 1813. Footnotes include the most striking new passages or revisions from the 1813 text. This anthology's edition of the play modernizes the period styles of capitalization and dramatic format.

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**Advertisement**

HINTS have been thrown out, and the idea industriously circulated, that the following comedy is tainted with POLITICS. I protest I know nothing about politics; — will Miss Wolstonecraft¹ forgive me — whose book contains such a body of mind as I hardly ever met with — if I say that politics are *unfeminine*? I never in my life could attend to their discussion.

TRUE COMEDY has always been defined to be a picture of life — a record of passing manners — a mirror to reflect to succeeding times the characters and follies of the present. How then could I, pretending to be a comic poet, bring an emigrant Frenchman before the public at this day, and not make him hint at the events which had just passed, or were then passing in his native country? A character so written would have been anomalous — the critics ought to have had no mercy on me. It is *A La Greque* who speaks, not I; nor can I be accountable for his sentiments. Such is my idea of tracing CHARACTER; and were I to continue to write for the stage, I should always govern myself by it.

THE illiberal and false suggestions concerning the politics of the comedy I could frankly forgive, had they not deprived it of the honour of a COMMAND.² The passages on which those misrepresentations were built, were on the second night omitted, but immediately afterwards restored; and the DAY IN TURKEY leaves the press exactly as it has continued to be performed amidst the most vivid and uninterrupted plaudits — or interrupted only by the glitter of soft tears; a species of applause not less flattering than the spontaneous laugh, or the voluntary collision of hands.

Some of the performers in this comedy have play'd so transcendently well, that their names deserve to be recorded; but to particularise any, when all have aim'd at perfection, would be invidious.

H. COWLEY.
Feb. 17, 1792.
Prologue
Spoken by Mr. Harley.

NOT from the present moment springs our play,
Th' events which gave it birth are past away —
Five glowing moons have chas'd night's shades from earth,
Since the war fled which gave our Drama birth.
"Not smiling peace o'er RUSSIA'S wide-spread land,
Wav'd gently then, her sceptre of command.
No! thousands rush'd at red ambition's call,
With mad'ning rage to triumph — or to fall.
'Twas then our female bard from BRITAIN'S shore
Was led by fancy to the distant roar” —
'Twas then she saw sweet virgins captives made,
'Twas then she saw the cheek of beauty fade,
Whilst the proud soldier in ignoble chains,
Was from his country dragg'd to hostile plains.
Thus was her bold imagination fired
When battle with its horrid train retired;
Yet, sure the story which she then combin'd,
Should not to drear oblivion be resign'd —
No — let it still your various passions raise,
And to have touch'd them, oft, has been her praise:
Trusting to candour, she solicits here,
Your smile of pleasure, or your pity's tear;
For tho' the time is past, the FEELING true,
She dedicates to NATURE, and to YOU!

Note – The lines distinguished by italics are from the pen of DELLA CRUSCA.³

Dramatis Personae

MEN:
Ibrahim Mr. Holman
Orloff Mr. Farren
A La Greque Mr. Fawcet
Mustapha Mr. Munden
Azim Mr. Cubit
Selim Mr. Incledon
Muley Mr. McCready
Ismael Mr. Farley
MEN:
Old Man
Son
Second Turk
Male Slaves, &c.

WOMEN:
Alexina
Paulina
Lauretta
Fatima
Female Slaves

Mr. Thompson
Mr. Cross
Mr. Evatt
Mrs. Pope
Mrs. Esten
Mrs. Mattocks
Mrs. Martyr
Mrs. Fawcet, Mrs. Rock, And Others.

Act I

Scene I: A forest. In the back ground a Turkish camp. Several Turks are seen at a distance passing and repassing with haste; some of them look out from amidst the trees, and then retire.

Enter Paulina, precipitately. At the bottom

PAU. Where - O, where shall we fly? (Looking round wildly). Brother - Father - come! We are driven from our cottage; we have no longer a home - let us run some where to seek another.

(Enter Old Man and Son).

SON. Come father lean on me, and let us walk faster, or we shall be pick’d up by some of the turban’d gentry. They are out a foraging; and they always consider christians as useful cattle. Let us fly.

FATHER. Fly! alas, with the load of seventy years upon my shoulders, how hard a task! We shall never escape them, child - Thou’lt see thy father murdered, and worse luck than that will be thy fate.

PAU. Worse luck than to be murdered! I should be glad to see the day - What worse can happen?

OLD MAN. Thou’lt be made a slave, - slave to a Turk (Cries). - I shall see thee in a vile Turk’s seraglio, 4 no better, as it were, than the handmaid of a Jew. 5

PAU. Well, I may out-live such a misfortune as that; but I never heard of out-living a throat cut - So, dear father, cheer up, and let us hurry on to the next village. Peter, take care of that bag - for it contains all we have in the world.

SON. Aye; and if it hadn’t been for some of our own soldiers, I had been a lost man - They were so kind as to strip our cottage yesterday, and left us no more than I can very conveniently move under.

PAU. Yes; and more than all that, they took away my very best gown, and my new fur cap! (Crying). yes; and he who took them said it was in friendship, for that otherwise my very best gown and cap would certainly get into the hands of the enemy.

SON. Yes; it was truly a friendly action, and they perform’d it like gentleman - No
words, but their very looks were oaths, and
the black eyebrows of one of them spoke
louder curses than I ever heard between
fifty Siberian boar-hunters (Clashing of
swords without). There — there! d'ye hear?
Our friends are coming down upon us;
and our enemies are at hand! Come, let us
run (With a look of terror). — From friends
and enemies, holy Michael, defend us!
(Exeunt).

(Clashing of swords; A La Grecque enters running
at top, then stops, looks back and speaks).

A LA GR. There it goes — there it goes! Nothing
can save thee, my gallant master — This
comes of your reconnoitering — Had you
not better have been in your tent, quietly
breaking your fast, than here, breaking the
heads of the Turks — So, now he's disarm'd —
Well, nobody bid ye — 'tis all your own
fault — Now, how comely he looks with his
arms folded, and his sword in the hands of
that beetle-brow'd Turk! Pardie!

I feel now
as great a man as my master.
(Enter Orloff, surrounded by Turks).

MULEY. Courageous Russian, thou art ours!
Could valour have saved thee, captivity
and you had never met — Your empress,
we trust, has not many such soldiers in the
neighbouring camp. — Come, droop not,
Sir, this is the fortune of war.

ORL. Had I been made your prisoner, whilst
on a post of duty, I could have borne my
lot — A soldier can support not only death,
but even slavery, when a sense of duty
gives dignity to his chains; but my chains
are base ones, for I reconnoiter'd without
command, and have lost my liberty
without glory.

A LA GR. Then I have lost my liberty too
without glory, for I attended you without
command, and now — Oh, le diable! I am
valet de chambre to a slave!

TURK. Let that not affect thee! The fortune
of war, which has wounded your master's
pride, ought to elate yours, for you are
now his equal — both slaves alike.

A LA GR. (Eagerly). Are we so? And has he no
farther right to command me, nor threaten
me? Kind Sir, tell me but that — tell me but
that —!

TURK. None, none.

A LA GR. Hum! (Puts his hat on, takes out his snuff
box, takes snuff, then goes to his master, and offers
his box). Take a pinch, don't be shy.

ORL. Scoundrel! (Throws up the box with his
arm).

A LA GR. Nay, no hard names — let us be civil
to each other, as brother slaves ought to
be — And now I think of it — Hark ye!
I suppose your slaves take rank according
to their usefulness.

TURK. Certainly.

A LA GR. Well then, my master — I mean that
man there, who was my master, can do
no earthly thing but fight, whilst I, on the
contrary, am expert at several.

MULEY. Your qualifications?

A LA GR. They are innumerable — I can sing
you pretty little French airs, and Italian
canzonettas — No man in Paris, Sir — for
I have the honor to be a Frenchman — No
man in Paris understands the science of
the powder-puff better than myself — I can
frize you in a taste beyond — Oh, what you
are all CROPS, I see — fore fronts, and back
fronts — Oh, those vile turbans, my genius
will be amongst you, and a frizeur will be
of no more use than an oyster-woman. —
Why, you look as though you had all been
scalp'd, and cover'd your crowns with
pillows.

TURK. Christian, our turbans are too elevated
a subject for your sport.

A LA GR. Dear Sir, (Pointing to his turban, and
then to the ground), drop the subject, it will
be proof of national taste.

MULEY. Thy speech is licentious and empty;
but in a Frenchman we can pardon it — 'tis
national Taste — However, if your boasted qualifications end here, it is probable, you will be a slave as little distinguish'd as your master.

A LA GR. Pardonnez moi! I can do things he never thought of — You have heard the story of the basket-maker amongst savages? I do not despair of seeing my master my servant yet — Courage, Monsieur le Compte! I'll treat you with great condescension, depend on't, and endeavour to make you forget in all things the distance between us.

MULEY. He seems too deeply absorb'd in melancholy, to be roused by thy impertinence!

A LA GR. Poor young man! Times are alter'd, to be sure; and at present he's a little down in the mouth; but he's fond of music, cheer him with a Turkish air — Hélas! all the air we have will be Turkish now.

ORL. Ah, no! forbear your music, and bring me your chains! Drag me to your dungeons! The intellectual bitterness of this moment cannot be increased by outward circumstance.

A LA GR. Chains and dungeons! Why sure the ghost of our dead bastille has not found its way hither — Hey, Messieurs! Have you lantern posts too, and hanging Marquisses in this country?

ORL. (Angrily). Peace!

A LA GR. Peace! That's a bold demand. — Your Empress can't find it at the head of a hundred thousand men, and the most sublime Grand Signior is obliged to put on his night-cap without it, though he has a million of these pretty Gentlemen to assist him — Besides, England has engross'd the commodity.

ORL. Come, Sir, let us not loiter here — I would have my fate determined, and my misery compleat. Alas! is it not already so? Yes, my heart has been long the property of sorrow, and it will never relinquish its claims.

MULEY. I shall lead you to the palace of the Bassa — it is in the neighbourhood of yonder camp which he commands, what your fate may then be, his humour determines.

A LA GR. Then I hope we shall catch him in a good humour, and what care I whether a Turk or a Russian has the honor to be my master? Now you see the misfortune of being born a Count! Had he lost no more than I have, he'd be as careless as I am — Come, brother slave — no ceremony, no ceremony, I beg.

(Exeunt — A La Greque pulls back his master, and walks out before him).

Scene II: Rocks. Enter Peter — runs across the stage, is follow'd by Paulina shrieking — they go off — Two Turks pursue them, and bring them back

TURK. Stay, stay, young ones! it is but manners to wait for your father — You see he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

PAU. Aye, very true — Oh, Peter, how could we run away, and leave our father?

PETER. Why, we only took care of number one, and we have a right to do that all the world over. So we are captives now then, and slaves in downright earnest?

TURK. Aye.

PAU. Look at my poor father! If your hearts were not harder than those very rocks, you could never make a slave of him.

(Enter the Father, guarded by two Turks).
FATHER. O my dear children! Those flints which wound my feet are not so sharp as the wounds which gash my heart for you.

PAU. There! - Do ye hear? O the miseries of war! I wonder war is ever the fashion - Pray, sir, what made the king of the Turks and our old empress agree to go to war together?

TURK. To give brave soldiers an opportunity of running away with such pretty girls as you.

PAU. O fye on them! I think if they were now to see my father and brother Peter, and I in this condition, they'd both be ashamed of themselves.

TURK. (To the Father). Come, Honesty, cheer up! at the next village there is a waggon, into which you and your family shall be put, and carried to the end of your short journey.

PAU. Laws! A waggon - whose is it?

TURK. It shall be your own for the present.

PAU. Our own! that's droll enough; so we are made slaves in order to ride in our own carriage.

(Exeunt).

Scene: The gardens of the Bassa, decorated with palms, fountains, &c. in the Eastern style.

Enter Mustapha

MUS. Where is she? Where is she? I don't see her here - She's generally leaning on that fountain, looking like the nymph of the stream, swelling it with her tears.

AZIM. (Without). But I say no - do you mark me, I say no -

(Entering with two Slaves).

MUS. Then I say yes, do ye mark me? What a bawling you make - What are you coming here for, hey?

AZIM. To look for that insolent female slave, that Russian, that I may manage her a little.

MUS. You manage her! Your ill humour towards her is never to be satisfied - You are as malicious as you are high - Don't I know how to manage an obstinate female as well as you?

AZIM. Ha, ha, ha! All the knowledge that nature cou'd contrive to pack into that little carcase of thine woul'd be insufficient for such a purpose - Manage an obstinate female! The greatest generals in the world, and the greatest tyrants have been foil'd at it - Leave her to me - I have discretion - she shall be kept on bread and water.

MUS. Mark his discretion! Keep a pretty woman on bread and water to make her contented and kind.

AZIM. 'Tis right, I'll maintain it to her teeth - for, first, she is Russian and a bear -

MUS. The beautiful Alexina a Russian bear! Well, secondly?

AZIM. She is a christian, and those christians are the most unnaturalist creatures in the world - Why, man, they betray their friends, and love their enemies, ha, ha!

MUS. Do they so? Then she's no christian - for as to loving her enemies, I have heard her say to thy face, that she hates thee - So, let her be treated like an honest Turk.

AZIM. So she shall - an honest Turk returns hate for hate, and so, d'ye see, her feast shall be a fast.

(Goes off at the top).
MUS. Take care of the orders I gave ye—When our master arrives, let no one be over busy to speak of this Russian slave—if possible, I would have him forget that she is in the haram.

SLAVES. We shall be careful. (Exeunt Slaves).

(Enter Alexina from the top, follow'd by Azim).

ALEX. Pursue me not, thou inexorable slave! You invade my retirement, you drive me from solitude, though solitude alone can mitigate my sorrows.

AZIM. Nonsense—Solitude and retirement! they were made for birds of night; owls may rejoice in them, but women should seek day-light.

ALEX. Day-light gives me no joy. Through eleven weeks have I dragg'd on a torpid existence—See! (Going to a tree). Here is the sad register of my days of infelicity. My bodkin on its tender rind hath mark'd the return of each unhallow'd SABBATH;—the wounds now but just discernible will deepen as the tree advances to maturity, and speak in another age, the miseries of Alexina. (Takes up a folded paper from amongst the shrubs). A paper!—poetry! ah, how descriptive of my own sensations—which of my companions hath thus melodiously sung her sorrows? (Reads).

I a poor captive feel each day
That slowly creeps with leaden pace,
Blest freedom here ne'er lends her ray—Her bright steps here, we never trace.
Oh that wild on some high mountain
I could catch the wand'ring winds,
Or starting from some desart fountain,
Emulate the bounding hinds!

The clouds that swim in air's soft ocean,
Seem to scorn my prison towers,
Zephyr's light unfetter'd motion,
Deeper, heavier, makes my hours.

AZIM. (Snatching the paper from her hand). Such a wailing about freedom and liberty! why the christians in one of the northern islands have established a slave-trade, and proved by act of parliament that freedom is no blessing at all. No, no, they have only proved that it does not suit dark complexions. To such a pretty creature as this, they'd think it a blessing to give every freedom—and take every freedom.

AZIM. Come, come, be gay and happy, like the rest of the slaves. How stands your mind to-day towards a handsome Bassa? Our master is returning from the camp—The cessation of hostilities will give him a short leisure, which he will certainly devote to pleasure and his haram.

ALEX. Mustapha, do not let that unfeeling slave talk to me—thou hast humanity.

MUS. Would I could administer to his disease, it is a terrible one! the love of talking is in him an absolute frenzy! To silence him is impossible—but as I have power over him, I can oblige him to retire—Go!

AZIM. Go! What, shall an insolent christian?—MUS. Go, go!

AZIM. She shall repent. (Exit).

ALEX. Doth your master indeed return to-day?

MUS. Yes; and all the women of his haram are preparing for his reception—they, half frantic with joy, wonder to behold your tears.

ALEX. I am not a woman of his haram (With disdain).

MUS. For protection! I am myself a slave—Rise, dear lady.

ALEX. (Rising). But thou hast power with thy master. Oh! invent some excuse—say something to save me from the interview.

MUS. I will consider—I—(Music at a distance).

Nay, if it must be so, conceal yourself at once,
for I hear the music which announces his approach; and he will probably hasten hither.

ALEX. O miserable speed! I go — Mustapha, on thy eloquence depends my breath — The moments of my life are numbered by thy success — Press fearlessly the cause of virtue, and glow with the sainted subject. Thus, tho’ a slave, thy soul’s high state Shall prove its origin divine, Soar far above thy wretched fate, And o’er thy chains sublimely shine. (Exit).

MUS. Why, as to chastity, and all that, which you make an orthodox article of, sweet one! we Turks are a sort of dissenters — a woman’s virtue with us, is to CHARM, and her religion should be LOVE. — Ah, ah! here comes Ibrahim, and his whole haram — His creed is love, and there is not a more orthodox man in the country. (Enter Lauretta and Fatima hastily).

LAUR. Ah! Mustapha, the Bassa is arrived full of triumph, full of wishes, panting to behold Alexina — What will become of her? Where is she?

MUS. She just now ran off on that side, and I shall run off on this — for I have not settled what to say about her, and BASSAS and TYGERS are animals not made to be trifled with. (Exit).

FAT. Well, let that pretty melancholy slave feel as she pleases — I, for my part, am half out of my wits, to think how happy we shall be now the Bassa is come back — we shall have nothing but whim and entertainment. — Have you been looking at the new pavilion to-day?

LAUR. No.

FAT. O dear! it is almost finished. — The hangings are gold tissue, and when our beautiful sofa, which we have been making for him is set up, and the Bassa sees it all together, he will be transported. — Do you not think so? Hark! here he comes with all the ensigns of war at his heels. — O no — they come first, I protest — I’ll stand here, and take a view of the whole.

(A march is played. Standard bearers advance first; they are followed by female slaves, who dance down the stage to light music, and exit. The chorus singers follow; Female Slaves strewing flowers from little baskets succeed; the Bassa then appears at the top with his principal officers).

CHORUS: Selim, Lauretta, Fatima, &c.

Hark! sound the trumpet, breathe the flute, And touch the soft melodious lute: To heav’n let ev’ry grateful sound ascend, Thanks for our prince restor’d, Our lover, and our friend. Victorious hero! blooming sage! The scourge and glory of our age! Let roseate pleasures round thy footsteps twine, And lead thee on to joy, And bless thy valiant line! Vain breathes the trumpet, and the flute,
And lost the soft melibious lute,
When, Ibrahim! thy praise they wou'd display.
Sunk in the lofty theme,
As twilight yields to day!\(^{25}\)

\(\text{IBRA. }\) Enough of praise, and of triumph!
A sweeter triumph than your songs can bestow, awaits me – Where is the lovely Russian, who, tho’ my captive more than two moons, I have not yet beheld?

\(\text{AZIM. }\) We rejoice in our lord’s return, that her pride may be humbled. – The insolence of her carriage, and the perverseness of her temper, are intolerable.

\(\text{IBRA. }\) Thou hast seen her, Muley, does she justify Azim’s description?

\(\text{MULEY. }\) She is reserved, my lord, reserved and melancholy – but she is too gentle to be insolent.

\(\text{AZIM. }\) Muley knows her not – Canst thou believe it, mighty Bassa, the idea of surrendering her charms to thee, and of being raised to the honour of thy notice, has never once softened her ill humour, nor abated her melancholy.

\(\text{IBRA. }\) Indeed! \(^{26}\) Bring her to me instantly – yes, instantly bid her come to my presence, and tell her – No – hold – I will receive her in my hall of audience, dazzle her with my greatness, and astonish her into love.

\(\text{LAUR. }\) Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!

\(\text{IBRA. }\) Why that laugh, Lauretta?

\(\text{LAUR. }\) Why that laugh, Lauretta?

\(\text{IBRA. }\) Ha, ha, ha! at your new invention of astonishing people into love. – If you can contrive to do that, you will be the most astonishing Bashaw\(^{27}\) in all Turkey.

\(\text{IBRA. }\) How then?

\(\text{LAUR. }\) Grandeur and dignity to inspire love!
Ha, ha, ha! they may inspire your pretty captive with veneration and respect – but veneration and respect is an atmosphere so cold, that love starves in it.

\(\text{IBRA. }\) What then must I do to touch her heart with love?

\(\text{LAUR. }\) Affect humility, not greatness. You must become a suppliant, before you can hope to be a victor.

\(\text{IBRA. }\) Dost thou speak truth, my pretty Italian? – Thy country is the country of love, and thou should’st be an adept in the science.

\(\text{LAUR. }\) Yes; I know the history of the heart, and do assure you, that you must become the slave of your captive, if you ever mean to taste the sublime excesses of a mutual passion.

\(\text{AZIM. }\) (Contemptuously). Mutual passion! Sir, she is your slave, command her! Such baseness may befit an Italian, but a mussulman is more sensible to his dignity.

\(\text{IBRA. }\) I will hear you both further on the subject – The iron labour of the war is for a few weeks suspended – and during that cessation, Pleasure! I am thine. Prepare your banquets, compose your delights, let every hour teem with fresh invented joys, till I forget the toils of the sanguinary field, and bathe my wounds with rosy-finger’d love. \((\text{Exit with part of his train})\).

\(\text{FAT. }\) Well, he’s in delightful spirits – But how strange it is that the Russian slave shouldn’t have presented herself to welcome her master, and to give him an impression of her charms.

\(\text{LAUR. }\) Stranger if she had, when nothing frightens her so much as the idea of inspiring him with a passion – I am interested for her, and it is for this reason I shall endeavour to make Ibrahim pursue a conduct not usual from a mighty mussulman to his slave.\(^{28}\) \((\text{Exit})\).

\(\text{FAT. }\) Hark ye, Azim! What makes your lovely countenance look so grim, when we are all so gay? I declare your grim face suits the day as little as a black patch upon a gold robe – Change it, man, change it! and don’t be
afraid of losing any thing by it, for you must look carefully to pick up a worse. (Exit).

MULEY. Azim, since I saw thee last, I have trod the paths of glory — I have slumbered amidst the frosts of the night, I have toiled amidst the streams of burning day; but I return and find thee the same. — With me all things have chang’d, but thou art unalter’d. — Thy temper, like the deep shadow of the forest, is sometimes chequer’d by the dart of the angry lightning, but the serene cheerfulness of the morning dwells not with thee.

AZIM. Well, and what then? If you like me not, thwart me not. There’s room enough in Turkey for thee and for me. — Let the crow and the vulture rest on the same tree; but may thou and I live as far apart as the streams of Ilyssus, and the waters of the Bosphorus.

SELIM. Surely thy evil disposition must be a scourge so thy soul — it must be affliction to thee.

———

SONG: Selim

———

Ah! teach thy breast soft pity’s throb,
And harmonize thy rugged mind,
Ah! teach thy lid soft pity’s tear,
That gem of sentiment refined.

Could’st thou once know the tender bliss
The sympathizing bosom knows,
When at meek sorrow’s sacred touch,
Responsive sadness round it flows —

No more thy brow wou’d wear that frown,
Thy glance no more so sternly dart,
But joys would glitter in thy eye,
And peace cling gladly to thy heart.

(Exeunt).

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Act II

Scene: An apartment in the Bassa’s palace. Ibrahim discovered, seated under a canopy, Officers and Slaves attending.29 Enter Muley

IBRA. Say, valiant Muley, where are your prisoners?

MULEY. Waiting at your threshold for admittance.

IBRA. Are they of rank?
Muley. I suspect one of them conceals his rank with the hopes of lowering his ransom— the other is his servant.

Ibra. Bring them before me. (Exit Muley).

(Re-enter Muley with Orloff and A La Greque).

Ibra. Who are you?

Orl. A soldier.

Ibra. The enemy of our faith.

Orl. The enemy of those only who oppose the interests of my sovereign— To chastize them I this morning bore a sword which your slaves won from me, hardly! Let them consider it as the noblest acquisition of the day.

Ibra. Christian, this air of intrepidity, when amidst the soldiers of the Russian camp, might have suited thy condition; thou art now a slave thyself, acquire then that humility which becomes thy state.

Orl. Dishonourable! I demand my liberty. — A truce has been proclaim'd, and —

Ibra. Not till after thou wert captured; thou art, therefore, by the laws of arms, fairly our prisoner. — Give him the slave's habit, and set him to labour. Who art thou?

A La Gr. Not a Russian, dear Sir, 'pon my honour, nor the enemy of your faith; I believe it's a very genteel faith, and I have all the respect in the world for Turkish gentlemen. — I never saw prettier behav'd, prettier dress'd people in my life — they have as much politeness and good breeding as tho' they were my own countrymen.

Ibra. Of what country are thou?

A La Gr. Oh, Paris, Sir, Paris. I travell'd into Russia to polish the brutes a little, and to give them some ideas of the general equality of man; but my generosity has been lost; — they still continue to believe that a prince is more than a porter, and that a lord is a better gentleman than his slave. O, had they but been with me at Versailles, when I help'd to turn those things topsy turvey there!

Ibra. Did you find them equally dull in other respects?

A La Gr. Yes. Finding they would not learn liberty, I would have taught them dancing, but they seem'd as incapable of one blessing as the other; so, now I am led a dance by this gentleman (Turning to his master). into your chains, in which, if I can but dance myself into your favour, I shall think it the best step I ever took.

Ibra. The freedom of thy speech does not displease me.

A La Gr. Dear Sir, I am your most obedient humble slave, ready to bow my head to your sandals, and to lick the dust from your beautiful feet.

Ibra. Ha, ha, ha!

A La Gr. Ah, ah! — ça ina! — ça ina! (Springing).

Ibra. Go, take thy late master into thy protection, and see if thou canst inspire him with thy own good humour; his chains will be the lighter.

A La Gr. Oh Sir, as to chains, I value them not a rush; if it is your highness's sweet pleasure to load me with them, I shall be thankful for the honour, and dance to their clink — Bless ye, Sir, chains were as natural t'other day to Frenchmen as mother's milk.

Ibra. Take them away. (Exit Orloff, A La Greque, &c.).

Ibra. Well, Azim, where is the lovely Russian? (Enter Azim).

Azim. Mighty lord, thy servant dares scarce pronounce his errand. — She refuses to come.

Ibra. How!

Azim. I delivered your commands, I ordered her on pain of death to appear instantly before you, yet she still refuses. She talks of her sacred honour, and I know not what.

Ibra. (Pausing). Cold, — unimpassion'd, — not to be awed, — and a sacred regard for her honour — Then, at length, I shall taste the joy of overcoming RESISTANCE. (With an action of pleasure).

Azim. What means my lord?
IBRA. I am satiated, I am tired with the dull acquiescence of our eastern slaves, and rejoice that I have at length found one, who will teach me to hope and to despair.

AZIM. Mighty Bassa, she will have the insolence to despise equally your threats and your love - Punishment ought to be inflicted.

IBRA. Beware how thou endeavourest to weaken her hauteur! I will abate nothing of her inflexibility, I will be enamour’d of scorn, her cruelty shall be my triumph.

(Enter Lauretta).

AZIM. I say then, my lord

IBRA. What! am I to be opposed - retire, slave!

LAUR. Why do you not go? have you not leave to depart? Come, try the fresh air, Goodman Whiskers. (Pulling him out by the sleeve). I declare, my Lord, that busy meddling slave is not able to conduct an affair of this sort - but, Sir, if you will follow my advice, I’ll engage -

IBRA. I’ll follow no advice — My heart spurns at instructions, and equally contemns both your lessons and his -

LAUR. Upon my word, he’s advanc’d a great way in a short time — follow no advice! (Aside).

IBRA. There is a transport which I have never yet experience’d, but which my soul longs to possess — Yes, my heart languishes to remove the timid veil of coyness, to soften by sweet degrees, the ice of chastity, and to see for once, reserve sacrificed at the altar of tenderness; these, cruel Love! are the luxuries thou hast never yet bestowed on me. (Exit).

LAUR. So, so! ’tis dangerous to give some people a hint, I find — I thought to have held the master-spring, and to have managed him like a puppet; but presto! he’s out of sight before I knew I had lost him, and leaves his instructor groveling behind — I must seek some other field for my talents, I see. (Considering).

Yes, I think, I think that may do — Muley, and the other four, with our little Mustapha — Yes, yes; with these half dozen, I’ll weave a web of amusement to crack the sides of a dozen gloomy harems with laughter — Mercy! what a sleepy life wou’d our valiant Bassa and his damsels lead, but for my talents at invention. (Exit).

Scene: The garden. Enter Mustapha, Azim, and Fatima

MUS. All thy malice is not worth that. (Snapping his fingers).

FAT. That’s right, my little Mustapha, (Patting him on the shoulder). don’t mind him; he’s never happy, but when he’s plaguing somebody — What has the pretty Russian done to you, that you should be so set on making her wretched?

MUS. I tell thee Alexina shall not be made miserable whilst I have hair in my beard.

FAT. There, do you hear. Mr. Sour-Chops?
I am sure if all the slaves who have the care of us, had your ill-nature, I had rather sink down into the condition of a water-carrier, than live in a great man’s harem.

AZIM. I tell thee, that should she become the favourite slave, thou will repent thy blind prejudice — We shall then all be in her power — tremble at her revenge.

MUS. Tremble thou, whose persecutions will make thee a proper object of her revenge — for me, what will she have to return me but offices of respect and kindness? Go, go, thy turbulent spirit makes thee hateful.
VOICE. (Without). Fatima! Fatima!

FAT. I'll come instantly – And you should come with me. (Running up to Azim). Nay, 'tis in vain to resist, there is a dozen of us in the next walk, and we'll mould you into a better temper'd monster before we have done with you, I warrant. Selima! Basca! come and help me.

MUS. Begone, I say.

FAT. O, what you move, do you? The creature is mended already. (Exit, dragging out Azim).

MUS. So, my Lord Bassa, that hasty step, and that eager look proclaim thy errand – I know thou wilt catch the bird at last; but I will keep the little flutterer from thee as long as I can.

(Enter Ibrahim, hastily).

IBRA. Where is the Russian slave? the women tell me she spends her hours in my garden, but I cannot see her here, though her fragrant breath seems to salute me from the rose trees, and her melodious voice from amidst the bushes, where the painted songsters pour forth their strains. Where is she, Mustapha?

MUS. I saw her awhile ago at the right there somewhere, but may be she's at the left by this time – There's no guessing.

IBRA. Azim complains that she is an insolent and scornful beauty, not gentle, nor complaisant in the least.

MUS. I'll follow the lead, and destroy every wish he may have to behold her. (Aside). Yes, yes; as to insolence, match me her fellow if you can – Bless us, to see the difference! Why, my Lord, our Eastern beauties are so gentle, so complying, they scarcely give you time to wish.

IBRA. Thou say'st right (Smiling).

MUS. Pretty creatures! if a man does but look at them, they drop like a ripe cherry from the bough – No coldness, no disdain; but as to this proud Russian, it would be easier to march an army to St. Petersburgh, and whip the Empress through a keyhole into your baggage waggon, than to subdue her petulance.

IBRA. Dost thou think so? Oh, ev'ry word thou utterest gives new ardor to my hopes, new impulses to my desires – I adore her.

MUS. Alack! alack (With surprize).

IBRA. Oh, Mustapha, my imagination paints her till my heart grows sick with love! I see the beauteous scorch'd dart living lightnings from her eye, and her cheek glow with chaste disdain; I weep in anguish at her feet, I implore her compassion – Melted with my love, yet still rigid and reserv'd, I behold the bewitching conflict in her soul – I triumph in the discovery, yet conceal my delight, still implore, still complain, then seize some happy instant, when her whole soul is touch'd, and boast a victory indeed!

MUS. What then – What then, my Lord, you are not displeas'd at her haughtiness?

IBRA. Displeas'd! (Smiling).

MUS. So, so, so! I have been driving on when I thought I had been pulling back; spurring a mettled courser, and neglecting the check rein (Aside).

IBRA. Go on to paint her – pencil her in all her fascinating pride, deck her in the coldness which dwells on the polar Alp! My glowing soul shall burn at the description, and blaze with the fierceness of newly tasted love.

MUS. Why, as to that – to be sure as to that, she is as cold as the Alps, and all their snowballs – she perfectly make's one's teeth chatter at her. – But then –

IBRA. What? (Impatiently). then what?

MUS. Why, if truth must be spoke, there is, after all, something oddish about her.

IBRA. Oddish!

MUS. Why now, my Lord, look at me – pray look at me – Ay, my Lord Bassa, examine me well.

IBRA. To what purpose?
MUS. Why the ladies of your harem say that this
same beautiful Russian is exceedingly like me.
IBRA. Ridiculous!
MUS. Particularly about the nose. (Ibrahim
shews impatience). Nay, there are handsome
likenesses, my Lord — I don't say but that
she may be rather handsomer.
IBRA. Thou art mad.
MUS. Not that ever I saw the likeness
myself — except something in the shape
indeed — But there I have the advantage,
for her right shoulder, and her right ear,
have too right an understanding, they are
always together. Then her hair, to be sure
it may suit some people, but according to
my fancy, the colour is execrable.
IBRA. Wretch, wert thou a christian, I
shou'd believe thee intoxicated with wine —
But I'll this instant seek the charmer, and judge
how far — (Going off).
(Enter Selim on the opposite side).
SELIM. My Lord, a Messenger from the Divan.
IBRA. (Turns and stamps). What say'st thou?
SELIM. A message from the Divan with
weighty dispatches.
IBRA. What is all this? What does the wind
carry now?
MUS. (Angrily). Whims and oddities of all
sorts and colours — The humours of Bassas
I find it is as impossible to guess at, as at
the weight of moonshine.
SELIM. See! Alexina is weeping in that arbour.
MUS. Bless her! And her cheeks through the
shining tear, look like carnations when
they are first washed in the dew of the
morning. — Retire for a moment. (Exit
Selim).
(Enter Alexina from an alcove).
ALEX. O Mustapha! I have witness'd thy kindness
trembling and grateful — But, alas! what will
it avail? The darkness of night hangs upon
my soul — Hope has forsaken me!
MUS. Ay, that's because you did not grasp her
fast — Treat Hope as you would a favourite
lover, Lady! never lose sight of it.
ALEX. Thou art light!
MUS. Even so is hope — as light as one of your
own country rein-deer — and to carry on
the comparison, it will whisk you like
a rein-deer over all the bitter frosts of life:
Buckle hope to your sledge, and you will
travel over the tiresome waste, disdaining
the blast, and smiling at the tempest.
ALEX. O that I could seize her! But how is
it possible within these walls? These walls,
the temple of loose desires, the abode
of a tyrant and his slaves? Mustapha!
could'st thou effect my escape?
MUS. There indeed, hope will give you the
slip — for I could as easily escape into the
air, and pluck a feather from the flying
eagle, as help you in that, and to tell you
the truth, my master will not much longer
be dallied with.
ALEX. Dreadful words! Thou canst not guess
at their weight — a tumbling rock to crush
this worthless frame, would not, — could
not give me half the horror.
MUS. She frightens me — her eye is wild!
ALEX. I do swear to thee, — THEE! to whom
my fruitless vows were paid, never to
forget that I am thine — never to suffer
the slightest violation of our sacred love.—
This (Drawing a dagger). is thy surety. To be
used in that moment, when heav'n itself
will approve the suicide, when applauding
angels will nerve my arm to strike the
blow! and this vow, I call thee, heav'n,
from thy highest throne, to witness and record! (Exit).

MUS. By my turban, I hardly know where I stand. Women of different countries have different souls, I believe; and I am sure this is the first time this sort of soul was ever in a harem (Walks a little, and considers). Come hither, Selim. (Enter Selim).

MUS. Go to the Janissary Heli, he has sent me notice, that he has captured some slaves and other merchandize. - Tell him I shall be directly there, to look at his women and his velvets.

SELIM. So! then we shall have some other females, fate willing to plague us. I swear of all the merchandize out traders deal in, that of women is the most troublesome and unprofitable - And our wise and puissant Bassa is as much out in his chart of courtship, as he would be in that of the moon. - Why, he's as melancholy as a moping Spaniard on the outside of his mistress's grate.

———

DUETTE: Selim and Mustapha

Deuce take whining,
Pouting, pining,
What jokes in all this pother
If one wont do,
Nor let me woo,
I'd fit me with another.
If blue eyes frown,
I'd turn to brown,
Nor lose an hour in sighing,
Shou'd all the sex
Combine to vex,
They'd ne'er see me dying.45

———

Scene: A wide court with several unfinished buildings. Slaves discover'd at work at a distance. Two Slaves drive barrows across the stage, and go off, followed by A La Greque

A LA GR. Aye, wheel away, comrades — wheel away! Hang me if I do though. I'll wheel no more of their rubbish. Let the Bassa dig his own dirt (Oversetting the barrow). Why the sun here in Turkey seems to mind nothing but how to keep himself warm (Seating himself on the ground). The poets talk of his being a coachman by trade; but hang me if I don’t believe he was a baker, and his oven is always hot. — I wish he'd make acquaintance with a north wind now, for half an hour, or a good strong south wester. — Lud, lud!46 how I long for a wind! If I was in Lapland, I'd buy all that the witches of that country have bottled
up for ten years to come (Sings).
Blow, ye pretty little breezes,
Bustle, bustle midst the treeses.
(Enter Azim).
AZIM. How now, you lazy boar! What are you seated for, and tuning your pipes in the middle of the day? — To work — to work, sirrah!
A LA GR. Tuning my pipes! Why, I like to tune my pipes — and I don’t like to work, good Mr. Mussulman — I don’t indeed!
AZIM. Then you shall smart, good Mr. Christian (Shaking his whip).
A LA GR. What, would you take the trouble to beat me such a day as this? My dear Sir, the fatigue wou’d kill you — I can’t be so unchristian as to suffer it. (Azim gives him a stroke). Nay, if you strike, (Getting up). I stand. — Pray, Sir, what may be your office in this place?
AZIM. To keep you and your fellow-slaves to their duty.
A LA GR. And who keeps you to your duty?
AZIM. Who? why, myself to be sure.
A LA GR. Then I think yourself is a very ill-favour’d scoundrel, to oblige you to perform a duty so distressing to your politeness.
AZIM. You are an odd fish!
A LA GR. No, I am one of a pair — I have a twin-brother just like me.
AZIM. The man who was taken with you?
A LA GR. No — he has not such a good fortune; he’s a Russian count, poor fellow! and was my master. — Gad, I could make you laugh about him.
AZIM. Well!
A LA GR. About two months ago, Mr. Slavedriver, he was married.
AZIM. Well!
A LA GR. A pretty girl, faith, and daughter to one of our great Russian boyards — a boyard ranks as a marquis did in France, and as a laird still does in Scotland — I love to elucidate.
AZIM. Well!
A LA GR. So, Sir, a few hours after the ceremony, before the fun was gone down, and before the moon had thought about dressing herself for the evening — Whip! his pretty bride was gone.
AZIM. Where?
A LA GR. That’s the very thing he would get at. — Ma’am and he were walking like two doves in the boyard’s garden, which garden was border’d by trees, which trees were border’d by the sea — Out springs from the wood forty Turks with forty sabres, and forty pair of great monstrous whiskers, which so frighten’d the bride, that, instead of running away, she fainted away, and staid there.
AZIM. Hah, hah! then my countrymen had a prize.
A LA GR. That they had, worth two Jews eyes. Six of them hurried off with her to (a) felucca, which lay at the edge of the wood; and all the rest employ’d my master. I suppose they would have had him too, but the boyard, with a large party of friends, appearing at the top of a walk, they thought fit to make off with what they had. — Well, my master’s bridal bed was, that night, the beach, where he staid raving and beating himself, as tho’ he took himself for one of the Turkish ravishers.
AZIM. Ha, ha, ha! thy story is well — so, all that night, he walk’d in the garden — Oh, and the nightingales, I warrant, sung responses to his complaints, and the melancholy wood dove cooed in sympathetic sorrow. — It must have been very pleasant.
A LA GR. O, a pleasant night as could be; but it cost a fortnight’s lying in bed; for a hissing hot fever laid hold of him; and the doctors, with all their rank and file of phials and bolusses, could hardly drive him out of his veins.
AZIM. Well, now go to your labour (Twirling him round).
A LA GR. O, my dear domine, I have not finished yet. — I want to tell you how he join’d the army, to have an opportunity
of revenge, and how, in all the skirmishes
we have had, he has drawn more Turkish
blood than –
AZIM. Go! you are an idle rascal, and would
rather talk an hour than work a minute –
Go, or I will draw some of thy French blood
to balance accounts with your master.
A LA GR. Sir, you are extremely polite; the most
gentleman-like, civil, courtly, well-behav’d
slave-driver I have ever had the felicity to
encounter (Takes up the ba”ow). My service
to your Lady, Sir! (Azim lashes him off).
AZIM. The time he mentions, about two
months, is about the period when our
Felucca landed Alexina, and his account
tallies exactly with the account of the
sailors – Aye, it must be so – Now, would it
add to her misery to know that her husband
is so near her? I must consider, and she
shall either know it, or not, according to
the effect which I think it will produce. –
I know she hates me, and let her look to it.
(Enter Orloff).
My good Lord Count, pray be so good as
to take this spade in your hand – Dig
you must, and shall – I have had the
honor to bring down as noble spirits as
yours to the grindstone before now.
ORL. Inflict your punishments! to those I can
submit, but not to labour.
AZIM. Why not? Has Nature made any
distinction between you and the rest of
the slaves? Look at yourself, Sir! – Your
form, your limbs, your habit! are they in
aught different from the rest?
ORL. (Haughtily). BIRTH has made a
distinction! 53
AZIM. That I deny – The plea of birth is of
all others the most shadowy. There, at least,
Nature has been strictly impartial: the son
of an Empress receives life on the same
terms with the son of a peasant.
ORL. Pride then, and Fortune, make distinctions.
AZIM. True; but Fortune has deserted you, and
pray recommend it to your pride to follow
her, that you may, without trouble, attend
to your business. – Here! take the spade.
ORL. (Snatches the spade, and flings it down).
There, if you dare again to insult me, I’ll
hurl thee there, and tread on thee.
AZIM. Now, if the Bassa had not commanded
me to be gentle to him, I would have
beaten him with thongs till his broken
spirit brought him to my feet for mercy:
but if I can’t bend it, I’ll torture it. (Aside).
So, you think to master me, do ye?
ORL. I think not of thee.
AZIM. No, I suppose – Ha, ha! – I suppose
your pretty wife is –
ORL. My wife – my wife – Oh, art thou
appriz’d that I had a wife? (Azim grins). Oh!
speak to me, tell me if thou know’st her –
Nay, turn not from me! – All the lineaments
of thy face become important – if thou
wilt not speak to me, let me gaze on them,
and there gather my fate.
AZIM. Well, gaze and gaze! Can’st thou there
read her story? Dost thou know
whether
she breaths, and
where?
Dost thou behold
thy lovely wife triumphant in a seraglio, or
submissive in a bathing house?
ORL. Oh, villain! monster! neither. By every
glittering star in heaven, if she lives, she’s
chaste! (Pauses, and strikes his forehead).
Had I gold and jewels, I would pour the
treasure at thy feet, but now have mercy
on me – Oh, I beseech thee, tell me if
Alexina lives.
AZIM. Ha, ha, ha! if Alexina lives! (Laughs
again, then walks slowly off).
ORL. Nay, thou shalt not avoid me – I will
pursue thee, kneel at thy feet, perform the
most menial offices, so thou wilt tell me of
my Alexina!
AZIM. (Turning). Now, where are the
distinctions of thy birth? Do they prevent
thy feeling like the vulgarest son of Nature?
ORL. Thou shalt chide long, if thou wilt at
length soften the anguish of my soul – Oh,
hear me, hear me! (Follows him out).
Act III

Scene I: The garden. Enter Mustapha

MUS. Come along, I say — Why, what do you stand there for? — O the difference of women! This is a stubborn one, I warrant her — Though she saw me pay down the money for her, she has not the least notion that she's a slave — Well, if you won't come, Madam, I'll fetch ye. — (Goes out and re-enters with Paulina, new-dress'd).

PAU. Law! how you hawl — I tell ye, I don't like to walk here — Let me alone. (Trying to disengage her hand).

MUS. Come, come, Madam, none of your airs — You must here be obedient and civil — Come along. The Janissary of whom I bought you, told me you was a good natured, complaisant creature.

PAU. Yes, but he was not as rough as you are; he made me throw away my peasant weeds, and gave me all these fine cloaths. See this tiffany, all spotted with silver; look at this beautiful turban — He gave it me all!

MUS. Why, that was only to set off your beauty, that you might fetch a better price; but I bought you for your good humour only. Here is a sweet woman who pines and sighs till she puts one in mind of a myrtle blossom, all paleness and fragrance.

PAU. (With quickness). What's that to I? I suppose I shall be pale and flagrant too, if I am to be kept down by you.

MUS. Who wants to keep you down? Behave yourself prettily, and you may live as merrily here as sparrows upon a may-bush. The gentle creature for whom I bought ye, is your countrywoman, and I guess'd you might divert her with your sensible prattle.

PAU. Ah, did you so? Why, you guess'd as though it was your trade then — for I am the most divertingest creature in our whole village, and if I could but see my father, and brother Peter —

MUS. Well, if you behave discreetly — I'll buy your father, and brother Peter.

PAU. Buy! buy! Why, you talk of buying us, as though we were baskets of eggs, or bales of cotton.

MUS. Yes, it is the mode here — Every country has its fancies, and we are so fond of liberty, that we always buy it up as a rarity.

PAU. What, did you buy all those ugly men that I see at work yonder?

MUS. Men! Make no mistakes, child — It would be death for a man to be seen here. None ever venture a foot within these shades.

PAU. No! why then do you venture here?

MUS. O, as for me, I — I — hold your tongue, (Angrily). and make no impertinent enquiries.

PAU. But I will make enquiries. What do all them there ugly men do here, I say?

MUS. Why them there ugly men were bought to keep you pretty women in order.

PAU. In order! Why what controul have they over us?

MUS. Oh, they are guards and spies; and are now and then convenient at taking off a lady's head, or suiting her neck with a bowstring, when the whim happens to seize a great man, of amusing his seraglio with a tragic gala.

PAU. Why, what wicked wretches you all are, then! Get out of my sight, do! You look so ugly I can't bear ye, and if I was a great man, I'd string you all together upon a rope that shou'd reach from here to Saint Petersburgh.
MUS. Ah, you have a spirit, I see — Hark ye, hussey. (Seizes her arm).

PAU. O, dear heart, do not look so ferocious!

I really believe you are a female tyger.

MUS. Dread my claws then! See, here is the gentle creature for whom I bought thee — had she had thy impertinence, she might have pined in solitude for me.

(Enter Alexina, hastily).

ALEX. Nay, but it is — Impossible! And yet it is so! Art thou not Paulina, the daughter of my father’s vassal, Petrowitz? — Alas! thou art. Unhappy girl! what —

PAU. Goodness, goodness! If it is not the Lady Alexina, may I be whipt!

ALEX. Dear Paulina, what dreadful destiny brought thee hither?

PAU. Destiny do you call him? (Looking at Mustapha). Why, this place is full of dreadful destinies, I think. Some with black whiskers, some with grey ones. Was it this little odd destiny who bought you too?

ALEX. Alas! thy question brings back such a rush of sorrows — Oh! thou canst not be ignorant that I was torn from my husband within the very hour that made me his, (Weeps). and dragg’d from bliss to slavery.

PAU. I did not know that you was here — but I am monstrous glad to meet you here — It is the luckiest thing — I have always been in luck!

MUS. Yes, that compliment is proof of it. You are vastly lucky there! Well, go on, and amuse her, child — I shall enlarge your party presently. (Goes out).

PAU. The little body is as pert as though it was five feet high — But, for all him, I will say, my dear lady, that I would not but have seen you here for the best gown I have — Not even for this, though it is so fine.

ALEX. Hah, Paulina! I fear that this dress is the mark of thy dishonor — I fear thou art undone!

PAU. Undone indeed! I think we are both undone; to be brought into such an odd, out-of-the-way country as this — ha, ha, ha, ha. I have been here but an hour, and it seems an hundred — In one place a parcel of copper-colour creatures, without tongues, pop out, glaring with their sawcer eyes, and if you want to talk and be a little sociable, ba, ba, ba, is all you can get — I believe they learnt their alphabet of the sheep — Then in another corner —

ALEX. (Impatiently). Pray reserve your observations — I have questions to ask, which tear my heart-strings to pronounce — Speak to me of Orloff — Oh, my Orloff! Speak to me of my parents. — Did they support the moment which dragg’d me from them?

PAU. Truly as bad as you cou’d wish. — At last ’t was said that my Lord, the Count, went into the army, and there he has play’d about him valiantly! I warrant he’ll pay the Turks for robbing him of you, though, may be, they won’t like his coin.

ALEX. Oh, preserve him THOU, in whose hand remains the fate of the battles! (Enter Mustapha, with Lauretta).

MUS. Here, I have brought ye Lauretta; she is a girl of enterprize, and I have a fancy which her intriguing spirit will bring to perfection.

ALEX. Alas! how can she serve me? Can she restore me to my country — to my husband —?

MUS. Fear her not — she has as many plots as dimples; so I leave ye together. — Stand on one side. (To Pau. who is in his way).

PAU. Aye, on any side but your’s, Mr. Destiny (Crosses). — I hope you and I shall always be at contrary sides.

MUS. So I hope, Miss Nimble Tongue! For if you were always beside me, I should soon be beside myself. (Exit).

LAUR. Dear madam, look a little cheerfully — I have a thought in my head — Hark ye, my dear (To Paulina) — you are a Russian, I find — What sort of lovers do your countrymen make?
PAU. How should I know? I never had but three - One was old enough to be my father, so, I used to kneel down and ask his blessing - So, one day, he gave me a curse, and walked off. - The next was a schoolmaster, and he had such a trick of correction, that, had I married him, I should have been in constant fear of the birch. - The third was a soldier - but as I neither liked to follow the camp, nor to live a widow bewitch'd, I made him beat his march. 57

LAUR. Brava! you dispos'd of them all like a girl of spirit, and yet, I think, had the case been mine, I should have taken a march with the soldier - I do love soldiers. - A regiment on its march always makes my heart shiver to pieces amongst a thousand Caesars and Alexanders. (To Alexina). Has the Bassa seen you yet?

ALEX. He sent by Muley to command me to his presence, but I will first rush into the arms of death.

LAUR. Ha, ha, ha! such a resolution in this country! Rather rush into the arms of death, than into the arms of a handsome lover! the notion is exotic - it is an ice-plant of the North - and our hot sun will wither its honours, depend on't.

ALEX. (Scornfully). Are you the friend who was to sooth my sorrows? Alas! where shall HONOR be honor'd, if the mouth of WOMAN casts on it contempt!

LAUR. Ah, pardon my levity, for I mean to serve you.

ALEX. In you, the contented inhabitant of a seraglio, such profanation may be pardon'd; but alas! in the world, the grace of chastity is scarcely longer acknowledged! I have heard the wife and the daughter affix ridicule to the name. O virtue! where canst thou expect worship, when the speech of the matron and the virgin unhallows thy sacred idea?

LAUR. I am not so lost, but I can feel and thank you for your reproof; and as the first fruits of it, I will labour for your escape from a situation, which, to you, must be misery indeed! But, madam, we must confer alone - I intreat you to retire with me.

ALEX. Alas! so miserable is my situation, that I am obliged to accept services from those whom the feelings of my heart wou'd impel me to shun. (Exit).

LAUR. (To Paulina, who is following). Ah! not so quick, miss! Do you stay here 'till I return - Stir not, I charge you. (Exit).

PAU. Stay here, indeed! There is pretty good care taken that one shou'dn't run away. The walls are as high as a cathedral, and such frightful looking oddities prowling about, that a mouse could not run from one shrub to another without observation - How they all stare at me! So! there's another of them - He looks rather better than the rest - but I shall have nothing to say to him. (Regard her dress, &c.).

(Enter Ibrahim, follow'd by slaves. He turns and speaks to them with impatience).

IBRA. No more, no more of business. Let not a thought of public duty here obtrude itself - I have already sacrificed those hours to it, due to a dearer cause. (The Slaves retire). And now for my reward! Now will I seek the charming obdurate, nor ever leave - Hah! she is there! The lovely fugitive - I have found her - I have found her!

PAU. Heigho! what shall I do with myself! I'll gather flowers for lady Alexina.

IBRA. Yes, she has a thousand charms, and my heart is already in her chains. - How dared Mustapha deceive me? He talked of deformity - her form is symmetry itself, and her hair which he decried, is fit for the bow-strings of the god of love.

PAU. Hang this sharp thorn, it has made my finger bleed.
then tosses her head scornfully away). What a true picture they have given me of her scorn! Will you not speak to me?

PAU. (Looks at him again). I wonder at some people.

IBRA. What dost thou say? Oh, that mouth is too lovely to be closed so soon.

PAU. (Talking to her flowers). You are very pretty, and you are very sweet, but you are not compleat yet - Good Mr. What-d'-ye-call - reach me that flower that grows so high.

IBRA. With transport! (Presents the flower). Shall I arrange them for you?

PAU. Get along, do!

IBRA. Teach me to do something that may not displease you.

PAU. Get out of my way, I say.

IBRA. Do you know me?

PAU. Not I, nor never desire to know ye - I wish I was out of this wretched place altogether, I know that.

IBRA. It shall be the business of my life to make you happy in it.

PAU. You! ha, ha, ha.

IBRA. You are surely unacquainted with my rank, and my situation.

PAU. No, no - I know that. - Do hold your nonsense.

IBRA. (With displeasure). Your haughtiness I was prepared to bow to, but I know not how to meet your contempt.

PAU. Don’t begin to redden at me - I mind ye no more than I do this fallow leaf - There - see - I blow it, and away it flies - go after it - there lies your way.

IBRA. But not the attraction - You bid me go, whilst your eyes chain me here.

PAU. Then I’ll shut them - There - now how do you like me?

IBRA. In vain you shut your eyes, unless you cou’d likewise hide that rosy mouth, those teeth, those features, that form! I could love you though you were blind.

PAU. Love! What, can you love? Such a hard-hearted - Turkish - creature as you love?

IBRA. Can I? yes, to distraction! It is not possible for me to tell you how I could adore you - Whole days wou’d be lost in gazing on your charms! I could hang on your breath like the humming-bird in the vapour of the rose, and I should drink your glances, till my soul, sick with excess of pleasure, would leave me scarce power to murmur forth my bliss.

PAU. Now, what can he mean by all that? I believe a bishop could not talk finer! (Aside). I tell ye what, mister, you may make grand speeches about this and that; but I hate both you and your love; and if ever you teize me with it any more, I’ll make you repent, that I will (Sings).

SONG: Paulina

You think to talk of this and that,
And keep me here in silly chat,
But I know, I know better.
There clearly lies, kind Sir, your way,
Pursue it then I humbly pray,
And me you’ll make your debtor.
Why, bless my stars, it’s very odd,
That here upon this harmless sod,
I cannot stay in quiet.
A Day in Turkey; or, The Russian Slaves

But now you know so clear my mind,
Mayhap you'll leave me here behind,
The path seems wide, pray try it.

BRA. Charming songstress! — I dare not pursue her. — How well she knows the power of love, to treat with disdain the man in whose hands is her fate! Hah! would I suffer her thus to leave me, but that at last she must be mine! Go then, lovely tyrant, indulge thy scorn, and treat me like a humble slave — A moment comes when thou shalt repay me! (Exit).

PAU. (Coming down). So! he's gone!

(Enter Alexina, Mustapha, and Lauretta).

LAUR. [sic] Hah! see what sweet flowers I have gather'd for you! Why did you stay so long?
ALEX. Oh, let me embrace thee!
PAU. What, all this for the flowers?
ALEX. No, for hope — for soft returning hope!

Paulina, the powerful Bassa is thy slave — He loves thee — I have witnessed your interview, and bless that fortune which has done for me in an instant, what, by a train of artifices, we meant to have procured.

MUS. Ah, but, you little rogues, 'tis I that have done it, 'tis I that have brought about all this, though like some other great actions, more is owing to chance than skill.

PAU. Why, what have you done to be so full of your brags?

LAUR. What, are you not sensible of your happiness? To have subdued the heart of one of the handsomest, and most powerful men in the empire?

PAU. Men! — What are you talking about? Oh then, that handsome man is not one of those odious creatures who bowstring us? Laws! how could I treat the gentleman so? I'll run after him, and make it up. (Running off).

ALEX. (Following and holding her). Stay! or you undo me.

PAU. Well then, the next time I see him, I'll tell him that I am asham'd of myself; and I'll try by all due civilities to appease his anger.

ALEX. Oh, not for worlds — Still you will undo me, my fate is in your hands.

MUS. Hark ye, my pretty maid, our Bassa, like all great men, has his fancies, he does not like too much honey on his bread.

PAU. Laws! Ha, ha, ha!

LAUR. If you wish to retain his heart, you must plague it — if you are tender you'll lose him.

PAU. Why, that's the way in my country too; as soon as our ladies grow fond, their lovers grow cold; for all the world like the little Dutch painted man and woman in the weather box, when one pops out, the other pops in — never in a mind.

MUS. Keep the lesson in your mind, and you may be a great lady — only take care not to begin your pops too soon. You see she is apt.

LAUR. O, as a parrot! Come, my good girl, you shall go to my chamber, and I will give you the prettiest lesson you ever learnt — I'll teach you in half an hour all the arts of a fine lady, and you shall be able to play on your lover as you would on your harpsichord. The whole gamut of his mind shall be in your possession, and every note of it obedient to your wish.

ALEX. Be attentive to her lessons, my dear Paulina; perhaps my honor, and my felicity, depend on your success — O preserve your own innocence, and be the guardian of mine!

PAU. Preserve my own innocence! Ay, to be sure I will — for my father has read to me in many a good book, which says, that a woman, when she loses her innocence, loses her charms, and that, like a faded rose dropt from the tree, the foot of every passenger will tread on her in her decay. O,
who would lose their innocence! My dear lady, why, your eyes look as bright again as they did when I first saw you.

ALEX. It is because Hope hath shed its lustre on them. (Lauretta leads off Paulina). My heart is full; my veins confess a warmer flow, and the brightest visions glide before me. O, nature! thou who hast made us capable of so much bliss, why is it thy decree that we shall sink in sorrow? Why must our joys be so often shrivelled by the cold touch of indurating DESPAIR! (Exit).

(Enter Selim and Fatima).

FAT. Selim, was not that the Russian slave who departed as we enter'd? Surely it was, and with a look of pleasure! –

SELIM. Pleasure! I am glad to hear it. I am sure her melancholy has thrown a gloom over the whole harem.

FAT. What an odd whim it is in our master to grow fond of the mind of a woman! Did ever any body hear of a woman's mind before as an object of passion? 59

SELIM. I don't understand it.

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**DUETTE: Selim and Fatima**

Give me (you) a female soft and kind,
Whose joy 'twould be to please me (ye);
The beauties of her precious mind,
Would neither charm nor teize me (ye).
The dimpled cheek, and sparkling eye,
To me (you) are wit and sound sense;
And better worth a lover's sigh,
Than stores of mental nonsense.
The touch of honied velvet lips
Is reason and bright science,
And he who at the fountain dips,
May scorn the Nine's alliance. 60

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**Act IV**

Scene I: A quadrangle – On one side of the square is a very high garden wall; behind which are heard frequent bursts of laughter – A La Creque is seen moving from place to place, trying to peep through

A LA GR. Devil take the workmen who built the wall! Not a chink or cranny can I find to send in the thousandth part of an eye-beam (Laughs within). There they go again! Oh, you sweet tits you! 61 I wish I was one amongst ye. (Enter a Turk, and crosses). Hark ye, Mr. Gravity! Is there no getting a peep at those jolly girls?
TURK. No.
A LA GR. What, are they never suffer'd to be seen by
a handsome Christian young fellow like me?
TURK. No.
A LA GR. D'ye think they'd take it amiss if a
man was to venture his neck over the wall,
to get at them?
TURK. No.
A LA GR. D'ye believe that the Bassa would
forgive such an innocent piece of curiosity?
TURK. No.
A LA GR. Egad, you manage your words
discreetly — Are you afraid your
stock won't last the winter, shou'd
you spend too many of these summer
months?
TURK. No.
A LA GR. Well done, my boy! Since you are
so fond of the word, I'll give ye a song on
the subject.

SONG: A La Greque

A pretty gemman once I saw,
The neighbours said he studied law,
When full of grief,
In's hand a brief,
A poor man came,
Good Sir, he cried,
Plead on my side,
The lawyer careless answer'd — No!

A rich gown'd parson wou'd you ask
To do a charitable talk
For Tom and Sue,
A couple true,
Who'd fain be tied,
With eye elate,
And strut of state,
The parson surly answers — No!
Should lab'ring honest low-fed Dick,
In spite of starving, very sick
To doctor send,
By some kind friend
To beg advice;
He strait will see
No hope of fee
And ten to one he answers — No!
A senator you ask'd to vote,
The dear red book he knows by rote,
His country's good
He understood
You had in view,
But shou'd he find
No place design'd,
His bow polite you know, means — No!
To a young beauty wou'd you kneel,
And talk of all the pangs you feel?
With eye askance
She'll steal a glance,
And blushing sigh,
But shou'd you press
Her power to bless,
She'll whisper forth a trembling — No!

TURK. I like your song.
A LA GR. I like your praise.
TURK. And to reward ye, I'll shew ye a place,
where, by the help of loose bricks, and
good climbing, I sometimes get a squint at
the girls; — though if it was known, I should
never squint on this side paradise again.

A LA GR. You are an honest fellow, and 'tis
pity you are a Turk — but it can't be
help'd, and 'tis to be hoped a man may
travel to heaven at last, though he nev­
er leaves the country in which he was
swaddled. — Come along! (Hurries him
off).

Scene II: The garden. Enter female Slaves, singing and beckoning to their companions, who enter
from opposite wings all the way up. During the song others enter, dancing to the music

CHORUS — Of Female Slaves

Come away! come away!
Companions so gay!
Come away! come away!
Companions so gay! &c.

SONG, and CHORUS

This is Freedom's precious hour,
Welcome, airy, sportive Mirth!
We'll enjoy thee whilst we've pow'r,
Give to all thee whimsies birth.
Let the cross ones burst with spite,
We'll ne'er heed their shrugs or frowns,
Vary ev'ry sweet delight,
While blythe Joy our labour crowns
CHORUS

Come away! &c.

A LA GR. (From the top of the wall). Hah! hah! you little merry rogues, you're there, are ye? (The women shriek, and all go off, except Lauretta and Fatima).

LAUR. What audacity! Presuming slave, do you know the consequence of your temerity?

A LA GR. Yes, I can guess at it, that you are all set a longing, and you are ready to ask me to come down amongst you.

LAUR. You are impertinent. (Exit).

FAT. Do you hear, young man? — "you are impertinent" — Yes, you are an insolent, presuming, audacious — sweet fellow, hang me if he is not. (Exit).

A LA GR. Ah, you sweet little saucy jade, come under the wall, and blow me a kiss — You won't! Why get along then, you ill-humour'd baggages — Hah! What, you look back, do you? You'd better think on't, and turn — What, the grapes are sour, are they? Ah, ah! I understand you — this is a fine place for the gypsies, hang me if it is not — These Turks have a life on't — Such fine girls, and such fine gardens — Whu! who come here! This is another — Yes, yes, I'll turn Turk — There's nothing like it, I see. (Enter Paulina).

A LA GR. Hark ye, pretty maid — come this way.

PAU. Gracious! where can that voice come from? I see nobody. (Running about).

A LA GR. I say, you little rogue, if — Why, how can this be? If my eyes are my own eyes, and if her eyes are hers, it is Paulina, the daughter of old Petrowitz.

PAU. (Clapping her hands).

As sure as that impudent head was once on the shoulders of A la Greque; who ever thought of seeing it on the top of a Turkish wall? How came you amongst them? Did they buy you too?

A LA GR. Buy me! No, I was taken fighting in a little skirmish, where I had only time to disarm half a dozen Turks, and kill a few Bassas; and now the cowardly rogues have shut me up here, for fear I should do them further mischief — I believe they think I have a design upon the crown.

PAU. Law! only think of it.

A LA GR. Didn't you hear that the Grand Turk had offer'd a reward for my head?

PAU. Your head! — Why, what could he do with it?

A LA GR. Faith, I had no inclination to enquire, so I took to my heels and carried it off.

PAU. Then how came it there? (Pointing).

A LA GR. Didn't I tell ye that a whole army set upon me and my master, and brought us —

PAU. Mercy! is your master here, count Orloff?

A LA GR. Is he? aye, lock'd up within the brazen gates of this —

PAU. Why, if ever I heard the like — Within the same gates is locked up lady Alexina, who was stole from him by these odious Turks.

A LA GR. She here too! Why, this place is like the sick lion's den, where all the beasts of the forest assembled together.

VOICES. (Without). Help! help! here's a man talking to one of the female slaves.

A LA GR. I'll prove ye a liar in your teeth (Goes down).

(Slaves enter).

ISM. Where is the man to whom you talked?

PAU. Man! — Do men grow on the bushes in your country? There is no other way of a man's finding himself in this garden, I fancy.

ISM. I heard his voice — Let us drag her before the Bassa. — Go you and search the gardens.

2ND SLAVE. (Apart). Take care of what ye do — This is the new slave whom we were commanded to treat with so much respect — We shall bring mischief on
ourselves - Her word will go further than ours as long as she's in favour.

ISM. I understand you - (Turning). - I thought I heard the voice of a man, - but sounds deceive one - it might be a bullfinch perhaps - beg pardon for the mistake, lady. (Exeunt Slaves).

PAU. A man a bullfinch, ha, ha, ha! These stupid creatures might be persuaded, I dare say, that a cat was a green slipper. Well, how oddly things turn out! - Little does lady Alexina think her husband is so near her. - Hist! A la Greque! A la Greque! - (Looking towards the top of the wall). - Psha! he's gone now - Well, I'll run and bless her with the news, and then take one more lesson for my behaviour to the Bas­sa. - I shall be able, after that, to behave as proudly as though my father were a noble of the land - Let me see - How is it to be a fine lady? First, I must disguise all the feelings of my heart - But how can I do so without telling fibs? Well, fine ladies don't mind that. - Second, when he kneels, I must turn from him, or hum a tune - thus - (Hums). - Did you speak to me, Sir? - And when the charming man - O Lord! I shall never do it, as though I were us'd to it - When he at­tempts to kiss me, I must complain of his insolence, and walk away in this manner. (Walks off scornfully).

Scene: The buildings. Enter Azim, with other Slaves

AZIM. Shall we stand by each other, brothers? Will you be faithful?
ISM. Aye, that we will; we must do as you bid us - You are over us. By allowing that, we generally come over him. (To another).
AZIM. Well then, you see how the case stands; she has come wonderfully into favour, and will, without a doubt, be reveng'd on us, for the severities she receiv'd in our lord's absence. The Bassa has just now threaten'd vengeance to all who displease her.
SLAVE. Will it not displease her then to be put into a prison?
AZIM. 'Tis likely it may - but what is that to us? We can, whenever we determine to do so, connive at her escape; and if we allow her to leave the palace, she'll readily pardon the prison; so, she'll be gratified, and we shall be skreen'd.
ISM. Well, well; let her be locked up as you said, and then persuade him she has escaped.

2ND SLAVE. We can dig down part of an old wall, and drop a ladder at the bottom, and then it won't be doubted.
AZIM. Yes; and that old tower will be a proper place to confine her in; then, if need be, she can hereafter be produced, for I don't entirely approve of poisoning her.
ISM. No, not at present - it may be more convenient hereafter - (Drily). - Where shall we seize her?
AZIM. She is generally in the garden, and alone - it will not be difficult if we watch for a moment when Mustapha is absent.
SLAVE. Here's some one coming.
AZIM. Then let us disperse several ways. People who have a plot in hand should never be seen together - A flight of crows always proclaims a carcase. (Exeunt severally). (Enter Oroff, followed by A La Greque).
ORL. Pursue me not, thou contemptible wretch! My sorrows are too profound to
be interrupted by resentment at thy folly -
Oh, most inhuman fate! To know that my
Alexina lives, to know that she exists in
this province, and not to know where - My
chains are become heavy indeed! - They
are insupportable!

A LA GR. Let me lift them for you, Sir - I can
make them jingle lighter.

O RL. Begone, I say.

A LA GR. Well, I'll go - People often drive their
good fortune from them, like you. I shall
only say, as I was saying before, that this house
has a garden, and that this garden has a wall.

O RL. Oh, my charming bride! could I but
cheer thee by my voice, could I but lessen
thy anguish, by speaking to thee my own.

A LA GR. Well, a wall - What is a wall to me?

O RL. Could I, each morning, when I greet
its rays, behold but thee, I could bear to
live even in this wretched state, and every
heavy night I could creep to my straw
pallet with less despondency, having first
receiv'd from thy sweet eyes, farewell!

A LA GR. To be sure the wall is a high wall, and
a strong wall; but it is but a wall.

O RL. If thou darest mention the wall again.

A LA GR. Well, I won't then; but was I to tell you,
my Lord, what that wall contains, I really
believe you'd forgive all my sauciness for
ten years to come.

O RL. Surely thou hast a meaning! What
would'st thou say?

A LA GR. A meaning! Aye, such a meaning!

O RL. Oh, trifle not!

A LA GR. Why then, in two words, I have climbed
the garden wall, and who do you think I saw
in the garden - Who do you think?

O RL. Oh speak! (Grasping his hand). Speak! my
soul hangs upon thy words - Could'st thou
but know what I feel!

A LA GR. Then, my Lord, there, as sure as you
lost your bride on the day of marriage,
there I saw the fair Paulina, daughter of
old Petrowitz.

O RL. Oh! (Drops).

A LA GR. Mon Dieu! If the joy of that has
been too much for him, how would he
have borne it, if I had seen his wife? (Goes
to him). My Lord - my Lord! Why he's as
pale as death - I dare not tell him now that
Alexina is within a hundred yards of him.

O RL. Bitter, bitter disappointment! it has been
to stab to my heart - Barbarous wretch!
(Rising and seizing him). My Lord - my Lord! Why he's as
pale as death - I dare not tell him now that
Alexina is within a hundred yards of him.

O RL. (Drops).

A LA GR. So! what he is disappointed then! Why
if he would but have had patience, I was
just going to tell him that his wife - but
hang patience! tis a scurvy virtue, and
not fit for a gentleman. I have no patience
to know there are so many fine girls caged
up here for that greedy DOG the Bassa. I'll
try to pick a bone with him, though; - and
if I can once lay hold of one of his pul-
lets, he shall find it difficult to get her
out of my fangs, as it would be to make a
judge dance, or a bishop cut capers. (Exit).

Scene: The prison. Voices are heard without, Alexina shrieks

AZIM. (Entering). Stop her mouth, and drag
her in.

(Alexina is dragged in - her hair dishevell'd).

ALEX. Monsters! if ye are of the human race,
desist - O drag me not from day, and from
my husband!
AZIM. This is your habitation, Madam, make the best of it.

ALEX. At whose command is it my habitation? What is my crime? You act without the knowledge of your Lord — and if you do, doubt not his vengeance! O, it is not possible that he can authorize this cruelty!

AZIM. Come, come, Madam, a few weeks spent here will quiet you a little — Your sorrows won’t be half so violent a fortnight hence as they are now — Let that comfort you.

ALEX. A fortnight! Oh, it is an eternity! Death is nothing to this. Dragg’d at such a moment from light, and health, and hope! (Running wildly about). O, Azim, my HUSBAND is here — my HUSBAND is at hand!

AZIM. Then let him get you out, if he can.

ALEX. O, best of men, hear me! (Kneeling). Tell him only that his Alexina is here, that he may walk round my prison, that I may hear his steps through the chink of these dismal walls, and my soul shall bless thee.

AZIM. Oh, you are mighty humble now; yet you know what insolence I have borne from you.

ALEX. I meant it not — Oh, forgive me, forgive me! Here, take this ring, let it purchase my forgiveness. (Rising). It is rich, but not half so rich as what shall be thy reward, if thou wilt be my friend — if thou wilt pity me!

AZIM. Well, I am so far soften’d that I shall permit thee to use the apartment next to this — It has more air and light — I’ll unlock it — its last inhabitant had it fourteen years. (Whilst he goes to unlock it, Alexina clasps her hands, and fixes her eyes wildly). There! you shall each day have your allowance of food regularly brought; but whether you are ever released or not, depends on yourself — Be patient! That only can serve you.

ALEX. Patient! Oh yes, I’ll try to be patient, though much I fear my brain will be disturbed.

AZIM. Well, you’ll be disturbed by nothing else — Your apartment will be quiet enough, whatever your brain may be — Come, Madam. (Puts her in, and shuts the door). There, she’s safe, and that makes us safe. — Now, let us go to fix the rope-ladder, and then swear she has escaped. Comrades! They talk of countries, where, what we have done, might be punished by the law — but we fear no punishment while we can deceive our master.67 (Exeunt, laughing).

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Act V

Scene: A spacious apartment in the harem. Enter Paulina, running from the top

PAU. (Looking back). The sweet man follows me still. Hah! Lauretta little thinks the difficulty I have had to behave to him as tho’ I hated him — How hard it is when one sees a great gentleman, and so handsome withal, ready to die at one’s feet, to be forced to be snappish and ill-natur’d — Laws! he’s coming here — Which way shall I run next? (Looking about).

IBRA. (Entering).

Oh, fly me not — yet fly! Even the distance you throw me at gives you a thousand
charms, and whilst it tortures, it bewitches me.

PAU. (Aside). I do like to hear him talk.

IBRA. You smile! Ah, did you know the value of those rosy smiles, you would not bestow on me more than one in a thousand hours—Each is worth a diadem.

PAU. I suppose you hope by all this to make me forget I am a captive, and a slave (Pretending to cry, then turning away, laughing).

IBRA. You can be neither—It is I who am your slave—You hold the chains of my destiny—Ha! let me catch your tears!

PAU. I tell you once again, that I can never be happy here—I hate the life people lead in harems—All is dismal, not even a window to the street! Nothing to look at but trees, and fountains, and great whiskers, and black slaves.

IBRA. Could I but have the transport to touch your heart, all those objects would give you new impressions—This hated harem would seem transform'd, and would become an enchanted palace of pleasure.

PAU. But I tell you, I will never suffer my heart to be touch'd. It is very hard that I must belie my conscience so, my heart leaps every time I look at him. (Aside).

IBRA. Who knows what persevering, constant love may do? You may at length be soften'd, at length—Oh rapture! confess the delicious pain!

PAU. (Aside). I long to confess it now, if I might speak out.

IBRA. Most charming creature, deign but to look on me, say only that I am not hateful to you.

PAU. Aye, that would be the truest word I ever spoke (Aside). But I will say that you are hateful to me, and I do declare, if you ever speak to me about love again—I— I don't know what may be the consequence—I must get away, or all the fine lessons will be forgot (Aside). In that room yonder I see ladies singing and playing; but don't you come to us now, I charge you—I will not have you come, or if you do come in half an hour, not a word (Looking back).—No, not one word about love. (Exit).

IBRA. Oh, if there is language in eyes, her words are false—Her lips forbid me love, but her eye invites it—Charming sex! who know how to make refusal bliss; and who can give delight even in denying! Half an hour did she banish me—Oh, I'll follow her instantly—Every moment spent where she is not, is a moment not to be counted in my existence. (Going—Noise behind). Ha! what noise is that? (Puts his hand to his scymeta r). The sounds of violence in the bosom of my retirement!

ORL. (Without). Base slaves, in vain you oppose me! Were your master surrounded by instruments of torture, and ministers of vengeance, I would force my way.

(Forcing in, Slaves endeavoring to withhold him—after them, Muley enters).

IBRA. (Fiercely). Your way! What, here? Those apartments, christian, are sacred; and did not I pay some regard to your fame as a soldier, and your rank in the Imperial army, by Mahomet, your life's quick stream should pay me for the insult.

ORL. Talk not of life, dishonourable man! Restore to me my bride—Restore—but canst thou restore her? Oh, canst thou restore to me the SPOTLESS angel, whom heaven's most sacred ordinance made mine?

IBRA. Wretches! allow a madman to invade my retirement.

ORL. Talk not of life, dishonourable man! Restore to me my bride—Restore—but canst thou restore her? Oh, canst thou restore to me the SPOTLESS angel, whom heaven's most sacred ordinance made mine?

IBRA. Wretches! allow a madman to invade my retirement.

ORL. Thy retirement! Thy life, base Turk! shall be invaded. No madman, but an injured husband stands before thee! Restore her!—Give her back to me chaste as the morn, when trembling, blushing from the alter,
I led her to parental fields—That mom unblest.

IBRA. Slaves! speak, declare whom 'tis he means, or dread my vengeance—A fear hath seiz'd my soul, that curdles all my blood—Should it be so—speak! (Furiously).

MULEY. Mighty Bassa! We fear he means the lovely Russian, who adorns your harem.

IBRA. Ah! (Wildly). Is she his wife? Christian, art thou the husband of the beauteous slave I love?

ORL. Love! Dars't thou give birth to such a phrase? Love! Oh that the words had scorpion's teeth to tear the throat which utters them!

IBRA. And art thou—O curst discovery! It is too true—My heart tells me it is true, and hates thee for the conviction. Tear him from my presence—I dread the energies of my own temper—tear him away, lest I shou'd stain my honor with the blood of her husband whom I adore.

ORL. I will not stir—Give way to all your vengeance—Vengeance would now be mercy.

IBRA. Amidst the agonies I see thee in, thou art my envy! She is thy wife, she surely loves thee, and pants to be restor'd to thy arms—By what tortures would I not purchase with such bliss—Bear him off, I command—Yet hurt him not, but drag him from the harem.

ORL. At your peril, slaves. (They drag him off).

IBRA. And now, oh wretched Ibrahim! what remains for thee? A moment since, the fruit of felicity bent down within my reach; the branches were loaden with happiness, and thy joys bloom'd forth in tender blossoms; but a hurricane is come, the tree is torn up by the roots, and its fruits are devour'd by disappointment.

TURK. Mighty Lord! is not the beauteous slave within thy power?

IBRA. Within my power! No, she is removed from it for ever. As my slave, I have undoubted right over her; but as the wife of another, she is sacred.

MULEY. Then remove her from your presence, and give her back to her adoring husband.

IBRA. Never! O virtue, in exacting that, thy commands are too rigorous. Never, never can I send her from me—I will go this moment, and at her feet—Oh, I dare not—If I see her I am lost—All barriers, human and divine, wou'd sink before me—Beholding her within my grasp, and the dread of losing her, would be a conflict in which I shou'd be lost, and she would be undone! I fly from her—I tear myself from the sweet enchantment—Oh wretched husband, I assume voluntarily the miseries I have bestow'd on thee! (Goes off wildly; on the side opposite that, at which Paulina went).

TURK. What! run away from the woman he loves, when she is in his power! She is his, and I would force her to make me happy.

MULEY. His generous spirit would abhor the deed! What, though his passions are headstrong as the mighty north, which shakes the pyramid to its base, and lifts the rooted forest from the embracing earth, yet will REFLECTION like a celestial minister arrive, and scourge from his soul each spot and sordid tint, that virtue ought to scorn, or manhood blush at. (Exeunt).

(Enter Fatima, and another Female Slave).

FAT. Ah! this room is luckily empty. So bring in the Bassa's seat—We'll set it up here before he goes to the pavilion; that we may judge of it—Come, make haste. (Speaking to those without).

(Enter Fatima, and another Female Slave).

FAT. Ah! this room is luckily empty. So bring in the Bassa's seat—We'll set it up here before he goes to the pavilion; that we may judge of it—Come, make haste. (Speaking to those without).
with festoons; another brings in a small white sattin mattress, trimm'd with gold fringe).

FAT. There, set the stool just there - Now put on the covering - Give me the mattress - There, do you see how nicely it fits? Now bring the canopy.

(Slaves bring in a canopy ornamented with festoons, gold fringe, and tassels).

Fix it just here - There - that will do - Is it not pretty? (Walks around it).

2ND SLAVE. It is delightful! How charmed the Bassa will be when he sees it in his pavilion at supper; and he will praise both our industry and our taste.

FAT. Mercy! What's that noise? - Why - here comes that imprudent slave who was hanging over the garden wall.

(Enter several Female Slaves hastily, followed by A LA Creque).

A LA GR. My dear pretty little creatures, why do you fly from me at this rate? Grant me one kiss to save my life, - for I am famish'd.

FAT. That kiss would cost thee thy life, should it be known.

A LA GR. (Getting to a small distance, and speaking in a rant). Madam! what do you take me for? Do you think that I, Madam, am a man to betray a lady's favours? I, who have been well receive'd by duchesses and marchionesses?

FAT. (Interrupting him). Duchesses and Marchionesses! What are they?

A LA GR. (In his usual tone). They were a sort of female creatures, my dear, who once infested Paris.

FAT. And where are they now?

A LA GR. Now, my sweet charmer, there is not one in the country, I mean of native growth; and if the neighbouring nations do not now and then send them one for a sample, a duchess will be as rare an animal in France, as a crocodile. - You sweet fellow! (Throwing his arm around Fatima).

FAT. You bold fellow! (Breaking from him). Why you are quite at your ease.

A LA GR. I always am; - and I'll sit down on this pretty seat, and be quite comfortable.

FAT. You must not sit there - it is a seat made on purpose for the Bassa. (Two or three endeavour to prevent him).

A LA GR. Well, can't you fancy me the Bassa? (Sits).

(Enter Lauretta).

LAUR. Mercy! mercy! What, a man amongst ye? are ye all bewitched?

A LA GR. No; they have only bewitched me - Ah! you lively little rogue. (Flying to her). - Come here, and sit down by me, and you shall be my Bassa-ess. I like you best of all.

LAUR. If you like your own life - Fly swifter than the light.

A LA GR. (Rising). With you any where.

LAUR. Stranger, this is no place for gallantry, or for jesting; are you not afraid of death?

A LA GR. Afraid of him? No - Death is an aristocrat! and I am bound, as a Frenchman, to hate him.

AZIM. (Without). Search every where, I say - He must be hereabout - I saw him ascend. - Come this way.

LAUR. There! Now your carelessness or your courage will be equally ineffectual. Unhappy stranger, you are on the threshold of death.

(The Slaves clap their hands, and seem agoniz'd).

1ST SLAVE. We too are lost!

A LA GR. Not unless I am found. What a dozen women without a trick to save one man! Ah! I am sensible of my imprudence too late. (Throwshimself on his knees, turning first to one, then to another). Oh, save me! save me!

LAUR. What signifies your kneeling? - yet, it shall signify - Lower! (Pushing him). Lower still! rest on your hands - reach that covering - quick - quick!
(They cover him with the drapery, mattress, &c. and place the canopy behind him).

AZIM. (Without). Come this way then — here he must have entered. (Enters, with others). Fly all of ye — hide yourselves — A man is somewhere in the harem.

LAUR. And what are we to fly for? Is a man a tyger, that we shou’d be so scared? Who is he?

AZIM. The new French slave — Frenchmen, there is no guarding against. — They make free every where.

LAUR. At least they have made themselves free AT HOME! and who knows, but, at last, the spirit they have raised may reach even to a Turkish harem, and the rights of women be declared, as well as those of men.

AZIM. Don’t talk to me of the rights of women — you would do right to go and conceal yourselves as I order’d ye — You, Ismael, and Hasez go and search the inner apartments, I’ll wait here, with the rest, to intercept him, should he escape ye. (Two Slaves go off).

LAUR. O, we’ll intercept him, never fear — you’d better follow the rest. (Pushing him).

AZIM. I choose to wait here, and I’ll sit down, for I am horridly tired.

LAUR. Pardon me, Mr. Azim — I am going to sit there myself. (Sits, on A La Greque).

AZIM. I say I’ll sit there, Madam, so get up.

LAUR. I wonder at your impertinence. Surely we may keep our seats, though we have lost our liberties.

AZIM. I have been walking ever since sun-rise.

LAUR. Then walk till it sets — Motion is healthful.

AZIM. I say I will sit down. — Give me the seat.

LAUR. A sit-down I would give you with all my heart, and such a one as you should never forget; but this seat you shall not have.

AZIM. Say you so — I’ll convince you in a moment.

(Goes to Lauretta, and seizes her hand to pull her up).

ISM. (Without). We have found him — We have found him — There is a door fasten’d on the inside — He must be there.

AZIM. Hah! follow — follow — Now, we’ll shew a Frenchman what liberty is in Turkey. (Exit with the male Slaves. Lauretta rises).

A LA GR. (Getting up with the covering about him). That fellow is certainly descended from Cerberus, or an English mastiff. My precious burden, how shall I thank you! Jupiter, when loaded with Europa on his back, was not half so much charmed with her, as I am with you. (Slaves speak without).

LAUR. Waste not an instant — they are returning — Begone!

A LA GR. Well, good bye then, and heav’n bless ye all, and send to each LIBERTY and a HUSBAND! (They push him off).

2ND SLAVE. What a kind of man he is! How happy must Frenchwomen be to have such lovers for husbands.

LAUR. Yes, my dear, they would be so; but unluckily husbands forget to be lovers — Let us run and appease Azim, you hear he is loud, and his vengeance may fall upon us — Haste — haste!

(Exeunt hastily, all but Fatima).

FAT. I’ll make no haste about it. (Looking round irresolutely). Hang me if I don’t try to change a word or two with that agreeable Frenchman — I shou’d like to know a little of their customs — Such an opportunity can’t happen above once in one’s life — So, Monsieur Azim, ha, ha, ha! What a fool he is now. (Exit).
Scene: The garden. Enter Ibrahim from towards the top, thoughtfully, follow'd at a small distance by Muley. — He sighs deeply

Muley. Alas! my Lord, dare your slave offer you consolation?
Ibra. I can receive none.
Muley. I know that in afflictions like your's, there can be but one support, that is in virtue — there, my Lord —
Ibra. (Interrupting). Yes, I have resolv'd! — She shall be sacred — her chastity for ever inviolate! and perhaps, (Sighing). perhaps I may hereafter restore her to her husband.
Muley. That will be a moment of triumph to yourself. — When magnanimity thus conquers affliction, affliction may be envied. — Such a moment is the imprimatur of heaven and the purified heart — it is the exaltation of virtue.
Ibra. O virtue! when I can do that, thou may'st boast a victory indeed! When I can resolve no more to look on the soft radiance of her eyes — When I can resolve to behold no more the natural and unartful graces that adorn her — When I shall seek those groves in vain for that dear form; when I shall listen, and hear her voice no more — then, then, O virtue! thou may'st boast thy triumph. (After a pause). Leave me, for night and solitude best suit the colour of my mind. (Exeunt).

(A la Greque appears at the top of the wall, where A La Greque had before been seen, and calls to him).

Orl. Quick, pri'thee! mount, and give me the rope — O! thou art as slow as if this moment were not the most precious of my life! As though this garden did not contain my Alexina.

A la Gr. (Appearing). Consider, I have but just had one escape, my Lord, and another escape may escape me — There; here's the rope, if you will be so venturesome — but don't blame me if they should make you dangle at the end of it.

Orl. (Takes the end of the rope, and lets it down). There! Environ'd with dangers as I am, this moment is dear to me, and the first, that for succeeding months has given my benighted soul one gleam of comfort.

A la Gr. Well, my Lord, I leave ye to your comfort — I am off — The very moon over my head seems to say, “Sweet Monsieur A la Greque, your master is very little better than a lunatic; so, take care of yourself” — I am off (Goes down).

Orl. Ye conscious walks, which the feet of my Alexina have so often press'd, ye bending trees, whose boughs have given to her beauties your soft shade; ye fountains, whose murmurs have sometimes lull'd her sorrows to repose, my full soul greets ye! Hah! surely her voice floated on that passing breeze — No — all is still. That passing breeze may bear upon it's wings a thousand notes, but none like hers. O, thou pale moon, thou art not deck'd to-night in half thy glories; shine brighter, put on thy most seductive rays, to tempt my angel from her sad retirement! (Soft music at a distance). Music in the gardens! Near that spot then I shall not fail to find her — It is an adjuration her soul must yield to, for her soul is harmony. (Exit. Music continues a few bars).

(Enter Paulina).
PAU. Where, where can the Bassa conceal himself? I am tired with seeking him - Can he be offended with me, that he flies me thus? Alas! I feel I could not bear to offend him - Oh no, I could not! (Enter Mustapha).

Ah, Mustapha, hast thou seen the Bassa?

MUS. Not I - I have been taken up in watching the motions of Azim, who, I am sure, has some plot in hand, though I cannot divine what - Where is the gentle Alexina.

PAU. (Pettishly). I don't know - I hav'n't seen her a great while.

MUS. Nor I - I'll go in quest of her - Should the Bassa have seen her, I would not give a cockle-shell for our scheme. (Going).

But what's the matter? Why, you look as dismally as a widow at the funeral of her thirteenth husband.

PAU. I can't find the Bassa - I have been looking for him 'till my eyes ache - He flies me now, he does indeed (Sighing).

MUS. Ay, ay, I understand it - You would put too much honey on his bread, though I gave thee the caution - You have been too kind to him.

PAU. (With quickness). I am sure I have not.

MUS. Pho! Pho! I know better - Have you not learnt, child, that fondness is the most cloying food in the world? Dash your sweet sauce with acid, if you would not have it pall upon the palate.

PAU. (Angrily). So I did then - I was as cross as I could possibly be - I never treated a gentleman so hard hearted before. To be sure I must say, that at leaving him, I told him - I told him he might follow me. (Confused).

MUS. Ay, there's the case - You invited him to follow, and he in course runs away. (Angrily).

PAU. Oh dear! (Takes out a fan to hide her tears).

MUS. If I were a woman, wou'd I tell a man to follow me? (Snatches her fan). This is the way you shou'd treat 'em - "Keep your distance, Sir - how can you be so rude? Fie! my Lord, it is quite shocking! (Very affected and extravagant with the motions of the fan). Oh, monstrous! if you come nearer I shall faint! I hate you now, I do indeed - I can't possibly bear ye!" This, you see, would be graceful and captivating! (Throwing away the fan).

PAU. Graceful and captivating! (With surprize).

MUS. I tell ye, the women are all fools! and if the sweet rogues knew what they lost by substituting rouge for blushing, and an undaunted look for modest timidity, we should soon see all their affectations swallow'd by one, and that would be the affectation of modesty. (Exit).

PAU. I hate affectation - For all he thinks he knows so much, the next time I'll follow my own way - I am sure I know as much of the matter as he does.

(Re-enter Mustapha).

MUS. (Peeping in through the wing). Remember the hint I gave you - If our master shou'd see your countrywoman, all your hopes are gone in a hurricane. You may as well attempt to catch a husband with bird-lime as to catch him after that; so prevent it. (Exit).

PAU. How can I prevent it? Besides, Mr. Destiny, I have good reason to think, that, as far as the matter of beauty goes, I am not behind hand with she - Alack-a-day! No, no, he has hit upon it! - As sure as harvest is yellow, Lady Alexina has certainly seen the Bassa, and he'll now be her ADORER as he calls it - May be they are now together, and he is at her feet sighing, as he did to­day at mine - Oh, I cannot bear it - The sight would crack my heart-strings! Now I do feel that I dearly, dearly love him - Oh mercy! He is here - he is here!

(Enter Ibrahim musing; seeing Paulina, starts).
the alter of virtue seems to blaze no more (Gazing on her long). Cruel charmer!
Pau. Cruel! Oh no, my heart melts to see your distress, and I am sure you have no occasion for it.
Ibra. Why didst thou not at first tell me thou wert another's! Why suffer my heart to burn with tumultuous love, to waste itself in glowing flames, whilst thine beats only for another.
Pau. What other?
Paulina sings
"Never 'till now I felt love's dart -
Guess who it was that stole my heart,
'Twas only you, if you will believe me!"

Ibra. O thou enchantress! (Starting back).
Thou wife of Orloff! thou hast my soul in chains - drag it not to perdition!
Pau. Why should you call me wife of Orloff?
Oh, forgive me if I speak too plain - My heart, my whole heart is your's. You have awaken'd its first tender thought, and you shall fill it to the last! There can be no other.

Ibra. Nay then, farewell to every dread! Tho' hell should gape beneath my feet, I shrink not. - Rush on my soul, ALMIGHTY LOVE! absorb each faculty and thought, for I am thine! - (Turning to Paulina). - for I am thine! (Threw himself prone; then rises and clasps her). Transcendent moment! O, bliss too exquisite!

Orl. (Rushes in). Base woman! adulterous villain! (Presents a dagger to Ibrahim's breast).
(Paulina shrieks and runs off).

Ibra. Hah! (Wrests the dagger). my life attack'd - Ho! slaves! (Slaves run in from various wings). Twice to-day! Once in the bosom of my harem, and now in the sacred walks of my garden - Seize him (To the slaves, who obey). Thy death shall expiate thy double crime.

Orl. Dost think to give me terror? - I welcome death - I welcome it 'm idst tortures!

Ibra. Christian, thou know'st me not! Whilst left to myself, I could command myself! My ardent passions I could hold in chains, and suppress that love which honor could not sanction - But thou shalt know when thus oppos'd, I own no law but will - drag him away. (Exit).

Orl. Tyrant, I know that I shall die; but the bitterness of death is past - To live after having seen my wife embrace thee, and embrac'd - Oh madness! speed your death, I rush to meet it.

(Exeunt).

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Scene: The prison. Enter Alexina through the flat

Alex. Surely this is the darkest hour of the night! The dim light my solitary window afforded has long been past, and gloom and silence everywhere prevail. No sound, no footstep, no voice of soft consoling love, or weeping friendship. Can I be her whom the beamy finger'd morn, till lately, ever rous'd to joy? I, her who not a short hour since glow'd with delight - whose troubled sky felicity and freedom began to gild? Oh, the reverse is too deep, too direful!

Voices. (Without). This way - make sure the outer gate.

Alex. Hah! slaves and lights! perhaps they come to end my wretched being - Ah! nature shrinks at the idea, and whilst I almost dread
to live, I fly from death, by impulse irresistible!
(Exit hastily through the fiat).
(Orloff is brought in by Slaves).
slave. There, Sir! Here you must stay till our
master hath determined on the sort of
death you are to die, for we have great
variety in this country. The bowstring
is the easiest you can hope for. We'll
leave you a lamp though, to shew the
apartments, and make your last hours a
little pleasant – Wish your honor a good
night. (Exeunt Slaves).

orl. May this hour of bitterness be short! Here,
on the flinty earth I'll pass it, and give to
thee – despair! The fleeting moments that
remain. (Throws himself on the ground).

alex. What wretch can he be, who, in this
dreary place, is the victim of tyranny and
despotism? (Advancing and looking over him).
By every sacred power it is my husband!
Orloff – (Seizing his hand). my Orloff! (He
starts up, throws her off, and flies to the opposite
side). Dost thou distrust thy senses? It is thy
Alexina – thy wretched – happy Alexina!
orl. Abandon'd woman! dost thou follow me
to my prison to insult my last moments?
Or dost thou come to administer the bowl
derof death?
alex. Heavens! what mean you? (Rushing
towards him with open arms).
orl. Nay, touch me not – By heav'n, rather
than be enfolded in thy adulterous
embrace, I'll – (Draws a dagger). O, my
thoughts are desperate! Avoid me if thou
wouldst live.
alex. Alas! affliction has made him mad.
orl. Oh! (Flings away the dagger).
alex. Or if thou art not mad, to threaten death
is needless. Be witness for me, ye celestial
spirits, that I'll not live an instant to endure
a husband's hate – All other miseries I've
borne, but this last subdues me. (Snatches
up the dagger). Thou accusest me of crimes
I shudder at – Orloff, an adulteress would
not dare this blow.
orl. (Springs forward, and seizes her arm).
Die! Yes, thou ought'st to die; but let my
fate come first – It lingers not – its
ministers are at hand! (Gazing on her).
O, had I not seen thee in his arms, had
I not heard thy vows of never-ending
love to the tyrant.

alex. (Interrupting eagerly). My vows! ah, my
Orloff, a beam of radiance once more
breaks in on my afflicted soul. I have
never seen the Bassa – Nay, look not thus
incredulous – this dungeon proves it –
I am a prisoner here as well as you, and
was this day brought hither.
orl. (Gazing wildly). Oh fate, spare me a
moment! Scarcely dare I give way to the
overpowering thought! yet it must be so!
It was not thee, my heaven! whom I beheld
in Ibrahim's arms – No, it was another, and
Alexina's pure!
alex. As pure as that sacred hour, when at
the alter you receiv'd my virgin vows; and
heaven is witness, that this form has ne'er
been press'd in any arms but thine.
orl. (Clasping her). Then art thou dearer in these
prison walls, dearer in this thy faded beauty,
than when a blaze of charms o'erpower'd
my senses, beneath the haughty dome
where first I woo'd thee.
alex. How matchless is the power of virtuous
love! Having thus seen thee, having thus
once again been press'd to thy fond bosom,
I am prepar'd for death.
orl. Behold! they mean that we should die
together – The ministers of death are
entering.

(mus. Without). Make fast the outer gate –
bring him along. (Entering. Slaves bring in
Azim, in chains; they are followed by Lauretta,
Fatima, and females; Male Slaves bearing
torches). I thought we should nick you at
last. The lime twigs which you have been so busily spreading for another, have at length entangled thyself.

LAUR. Yes, my friend Azim; I promis'd you a set down, and now I think you will have it. Joy — joy to Alexina!

MUS. To Alexina and her lord.

ORL. Ah! what mean ye? A tide of bliss breaks in upon my soul, which yet I dare not yield to.

LAUR. Fear not to trust it! Our master hath heard from Paulina your touching story, and hath sent us to conduct you to his presence.

MUS. Go, Madam! and make room for your persecutor Azim; — he shall take your place here.

ALEX. Farewel — farewel, ye dreary walls! We fly to light, to liberty —

ORL. To love!

(Exit, leading Alexina, followed by part of the Slaves).

MUS. (To Azim). Why you look a little strange; — pray make free, Sir; you are as welcome as though you were at home. (Bowing ludicrously).

LAUR. Come, hold up your head, man! and look round your new apartments. Examine the furniture — is it not elegant! Look through its spacious windows — are you not charm'd with the prospect? Thou monster! to this dreary abode thou wouldst have confin'd innocence and virtue.

AZIM. O, that those cursed chains were off! — I to be imprison'd in a dungeon!

MUS. Come, come — "a few weeks spent here will quiet you a little." I have heard every thing from your accomplice there. "Your sorrows won't be half so violent a fortnight hence, as they are now — let that comfort ye."

AZIM. (Furiously). Dogs!

MUS. Be civil, and "I'll permit thee to use the apartment next to this — its last inhabitant had it fourteen years," you know. (Tauntingly). Nay, it is in vain to struggle, drag him in! (Exit).

(Slaves drag Azim in; the door is shut).

LAUR. Ah! he's caught at last. (Runs up to the door). Good night, my pretty Azim. (Rattles his chains). Good night — I'll give ye a friendly call once a month or so, for the next ten years. (He rattles). Farewel — pleasant fancies hang about your dreams! (Exit, followed by the slaves with torches; Azim rattling his chains within).

Scene: The Bassa's apartment. Enter Ibrahim at top, leading Paulina

IBRA. O, adored Paulina! what wonderful events are these! Thou may'st be mine! it is no crime to love thee. I have struggled against a passion which heaven had determined to reward.

PAU. O, my dear father! Peter! what a day this has been! Here I am going to be a great lady, and not the handmaid of a Jew, as you told me this morning. (To her father).

FATHER. My dear child, I cannot speak for joy. Say something for us to the Bassa — we shrink before him.

ALEX. (Without). Hasten! — O, my Orloff, let us hasten to his presence. (Entering).

Mighty Ibrahim, I no longer tremble to
appear before thee; – in the presence of my husband, I dare to look upon thee, and to ask thy mercy.

IBRA. Mercy! how poor the word! I give ye instant liberty, and in giving ye that, I give ALL, for ye love! What then remains to perfect your bliss!

ORL. Hearest thou, ALEXINA? Ah! what sounds – they rush upon my soul in transport.

IBRA. Valiant Russian, I embrace thee! The poniard you directed to my breast, had it enter’d there, would have pierc’d a heart, which, amidst the turbulencies of war, and the infatuations of a court, has yet preserv’d its OWN RESPECT; – accept its friendship!

ORL. With earnestness unspeakable; and I return it with such gratitude and fervor, as becomes a soldier and a husband.

IBRA. Such charms, I could not have beheld insensibly, (To Alexina). Had I known them before Paulina engrossed my heart – but now, that heart can beat for her alone. Tomorrow you shall be escorted to your camp, and I, to give that dignity to love, without which it sinks into the lowest appetite, will make this charmer mine, by sacred rites.77

ORL. Illustrious Turk! Love has taught thee to revere marriage, and marriage shall teach thee to honour love.

A LA GR. Why what ups and downs there are in this world! My lord, (To Orloff). I am once again your most duteous servant – for fellow slaves, I perceive, we shall be no longer – So there goes my dignity! I’ll make a bold push for a new one though. Azim, I find – pardon me, my lord, (To Ibrahim). Azim, I find, is out of place, will your mightiness bestow it on me, and make me your principal slave-driver?78

IBRA. (Laughing). What wouldst thou do?

A LA GR. Any thing, and every thing. I’d imitate the smack of Azim’s whip, and roll my eyes as he does, to frighten your male slaves, and transform myself into a sattin seat, with a canopy over my head, to amuse your female slaves.

IBRA. Transform thyself into a sattin seat, with a canopy over thy head – thou art bewildered. (To Alexina). Pronounce, Madam, the fate of the profligate slave, whose villainy had nearly brought about such disastrous events – Shall he perish?

ALEX. Ah, in this hour of felicity, let nothing perish but misfortune! Be the benevolent Mustapha rewarded, and let Azim have frank forgiveness.

IBRA. Charming magnanimity! if it flows from your CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, such doctrines must be RIGHT, and I will closely study them.79

ALEX. (Stepping forward). And may our errors have frank forgiveness too! Bestow on us your favour, and make the DAY IN TURKEY one of the happiest of this happy season!

THE END.

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Epilogue
Written by Mrs. Cowley.
Spoken by Mrs. Pope.

Escap’d from Turkey, and from prison free,
Yet still a SLAVE you shall behold in me;
An English slave – slave to your ev'ry pleasure,
Seeking your plaudits as her richest treasure.
   Whilst thus you feast with cheering praise my ear,
For our soft poet I confess some fear.
Perhaps you'll say, – “Two marriages for love!
Thus foolish female pens for ever rove;
But give us, Madam, give us, real life,
Who goes to Turkey pray, to fetch a wife?”
   Critic! a few months past I wou'd allow
Your comment just, but not, Sir Surly, now!
For now we know A PRINCE can cross the seas
T' obtain a wife, a nation's hearts to please.80
“*The age of chivalry*” again returns,
And love, with all its ancient splendor burns;
   Yes –
Tell the rapt Orator whose magic pen
So late chastised the new found rights of men –
   Who fear'd that honor, courage, love were lost,
And Europe's glories in the whirlwind tost;
Tell him “*heroic enterprise*” shall still survive,
And “loyalty to sex” remain alive;
   “*The unbought grace of life*” again we find,
And “proud submission” fills the public mind;
T'wards her, now borne to BRITAIN'S happy coast –
   A husband's honor, and a nation's boast.
“*Just lighted on this orb the vision shines*
“*Scarce seems to touch,*” and as it moves, refines!
O, may she long adorn this chosen isle,
Where the best gifts of fate unceasing smile!
When, “*like the morning star*” at wond'rous height,
She soars at length beyond this world and night,
Still may your blessings to her name be given,
While soft she fades into her native heaven!

Those who read will know, that in the above Epilogue all the passages distinguished by italics are taken from an effusion inspired by another royal lady; — agitating the lightning pen of a man who in his head is all REASON, in his heart all SENSATION. A man whom politics seized, and seems to have dragged reluctantly from LOVE. Let the woman of future times weave to his memory the fairest garlands, and twine amidst laurels and roses the name of BURKE.81
4.1 PREFACE TO A DAY IN TURKEY, FROM THE WORKS OF MRS. COWLEY

Preface to A Day in Turkey; or, the Russian Slaves, from The Works of Mrs. Cowley: Dramas and Poems, vol. II, 1813. 244.

The play was brought out at Covent Garden in the year 1792. The Author's object was to place in a state of comparison the Manners of Europe and Asia, by bringing them in contact in Turkey – where Asia intrudes its Manners in Europe. Much of the florid language of the East is introduced. – The omission of Orloff's song and of Ibrahim's permitted those Characters to be allotted to Performers who were never Singers.

A La Creque is the only portrait on the stage of the giddy Frenchman of the French Revolution, when the term Aristocrat was the common word of disapprobation for every thing that displeased, and the national naïveté still maintained itself – amidst the dread events of the day!
4.2 REVIEW: NEW LADY’S MAGAZINE


THEATRE

On Saturday night was performed here, for the first time, a play called “A Day in Turkey, or the Russian Slaves;” written by Mrs. Cowley, a lady to whose Muse the world has been indebted for much rational amusement. If this production is not to be considered as her happiest effort, truth and candour must allow that it has considerable merit. If Asiatic manners be not, in some instances, delineated agreeably to the received opinion of them in this country, the feeling of the human heart (which we believe to be the same in all climates) are faithfully depicted. The fable is interesting, the dialogue natural and correct, and the moral unexceptionable. The ear is gratified by the music of Mazzinghi, and the eye delighted with the beauty of the scenery and magnificence of the dresses. Some defects, we are aware, might be pointed out, but where excellencies so great outnumber them, we cannot take upon ourselves the ungrateful office, and more particularly as most of them were removed on the second representation.

Of the performers, it is but bare justice to say, that they exerted themselves with the happiest effect, and are entitled to every praise. The Epilogue was excellently spoken by Mrs. Pope, and contained a compliment to the newly-married Royal Duchess, which was properly felt and acknowledged by the loudest plaudits. It was, in fact, Mr. Burke’s celebrated eulogism on the Queen of France versified. The piece bids fair to hold a distinguished rank on the stage.
4.3 REVIEW: ANTI-JACOBIN REVIEW


A collection of the writings of this lively and spirited writer, was a desideratum in dramatic and poetic literature; and, pleased as we have been, heretofore, by the diversified productions of her muse, we were much gratified by the declared intention of producing a complete edition of her works. The re-perusal of them has excited in us the same sensations which individuals experience on the renewal of early friendship. We trace again the scenes of times long past; we dwell with eagerness on those ancient sources of amusement, which delighted us in the days of our youth, and we derive great satisfaction from the discover, that what the enthusiasm of early life applauded, the judgment of mature age approves.

The plays fill two volumes, and the poems one; and the whole are introduced to the reader's notice, by a well-written preface, containing a brief sketch of the author's life, and a short account of her various productions. From this we learn, that Mrs. Cowley was the daughter of Mr. Philip Parkhouse, of Tiverton, in Devonshire, who was educated for the church, but, in consequence of disappointment in his hopes of preferment, abandoned his original intention, and became a bookseller. Mrs. Cowley, who appears to have been his only child, was born in 1743, and, when she was about twenty-five, married Mr. Cowley, who is represented as a "man of very considerable talents." But we, who knew something of Mrs. Cowley, and a little of her husband, could never discover in what his talents consisted; he was, for some time, editor of the Gazetteer, a paper not very remarkable, either for brilliancy of wit, depth of research, or solidity of judgment; and we remember well, that the lady herself paid no great deference to the opinion of her husband. Indeed, she was a being of a superior cast; and, though they passed their time happily enough together, thanks to her discreet and compliant spirit, there did not seem to be any thing congenial in their dispositions. She was lively, open, and engaging; he was sententious, close, and repulsive. We believe, in no instance, did she consult him in the composition of her works. Cowley afterwards entered into the East India Company's service, in which he died, in 1797. He had four children by his wife, the eldest of whom, a girl, died early. The lady's talent for dramatic writing burst forth in a very unusual, and unexpected, manner.

"In the year 1776, some years after her marriage, a sense of mental power for dramatic writing suddenly struck her whilst sitting with her husband at the theatre. So delighted with this? said she — why I could write as well myself. His laugh, without notice, was answered in the course of the following morning, by sketching the first act of The Runaway, and, though she had never before written a literary line, the play was finished with the utmost celerity. Many will recollect the extraordinary success with which it was brought out. It established the author's name at once, and caused incessant applications to her to continue to write."
This, we apprehend, is a solitary instance of so sudden an explosion of dramatic genius. The farce of Who's the Dupe?, the only farce she wrote, was her next production. This was followed by her tragedy of Albina. She then wrote The Maid of Arragon, a long poem, in blank verse. In 1780, she produced The Belle's Stratagem, which was followed, in succession, by Which Is the Man, a Bold Stroke for a Husband, More Ways than One, A School for Grey-Beards, The Fate of Sparta (a tragedy), A Day in Turkey, and The Town Before You; which constitute the whole of her dramatic pieces. Her poems are various, and fill, as before observed, the third volume of this collection. The editor's observations on her dramatic powers are just enough.

"The different departments of the drama, tragedy, comedy, and farce, were kept quite distinct in her mind. The Comedie Larmoyante is never found amongst her works; her tragedies vouch that this was not from inability to touch the passions. As free are her tragedies from the intrusions of the comic muse, as is her Thalia from losing her spirits and shedding tears. Who's the Dupe? is the only instance in which she descended to farce, but, with the utmost flow of humour, she will be found, to have by no means sunk herself with her subject; her mind is always perceived paramount to the vulgarity or the folly which she is describing. Still, she as correctly writes farce, as before she wrote comedy, and afterwards wrote tragedy; is equally at home, as each in its due turn may be requisite, in the humorous, the pathetic, the witty, and the sublime. There is one instance, at the close of her dramatic writing, in which, for variety, she professed to write a mixed drama — A Day in Turkey."

That her talents were diversified, her works abundantly prove, — she had no inconsiderable portion of wit and humour, added to a sprightliness and vivacity which gave spirit and animation to her dialogues, while the fertility of her invention, and her knowledge of human life, supplied her with incidents and characters, which her judgment enabled her to arrange and distribute to advantage. In short, she may be considered as one of the best and chastest dramatic writers of the latter part of the eighteenth century.

"Modern writers," observes the editor, "in general cannot be said to fail in their attempts to bring gentlemen and gentlewomen on the stage — they don't attempt it. There seems to be an inclination but to paint from lower life."

This is, to the disgrace of the age, but too true; indeed, dramatic writing has been too much engrossed, of late, by men who were not in the habits of associating with gentlemen, and who therefore could not be expected to portray their manners, to delineate their characters, or to mark their pursuits. And if this dearth of qualified dramatists had not subsisted, still how were the characters of gentlemen to be represented on our modern theatres, where the most successful actors have degenerated into downright buffoons, seeking to obtain applause by the same vulgar artifices to which the fools and merry andrews of Bartholomew fair have recourse for the same purpose? These men would be as little at home in the representation of a gentleman, as a bear is in his representation of a dancing master. It must also be observed, that the manners of the age have undergone a material alteration; and that while players have been sunk into buffoons, gentlemen have been degraded into coachmen, and pugilists, whose dress, habits, manners, and language, they have studied with much more application and success, than were ever visible in the result of their classical, religious, or moral, pursuits. The writers of plays, then, act wisely in confining their humble efforts to lower life; though the public, it must be admitted, act foolishly, in tolerating such performances.
“But Mrs. Cowley constantly keeps up the elegance of style which comedy, as distinct from farce, should preserve. In her plays posterity may perhaps find as complete specimens as will reach them, of English colloquy towards the close of the eighteenth century, and of manners as characteristic of the day, as the style of the elder dramatists is of theirs.”

Murphy presents the connecting link in the chain between the dramatists of the earlier part of the last century, and Mrs. Cowley; and from their works a pretty correct delineation of the manners of that century may be collected. But what estimate will posterity be led to form of the manners of the present age from the productions of our modern play-writers?

That Mrs. Cowley’s productions should not have been the effect of study will appear surprising, as indeed almost incredible, to those who knew her only by her works. But so the fact was.

“She was accustomed to say that she always succeeded best when she did not herself know what she was going to do, and suffered the events, and even the plot, to grow under her pen. It is this that has so often given an air of real nature to her works. In one instance, however, a portion of one of the plots of a comedy (The School for Grey-beards) was taken from an old play. It was extracted and prepared for her, she knew not whence it came, nor ever saw the original. Her plots, except in this instance, had their origin only in her own mind.”

As a poet Mrs. Cowley did not shine so much as she did as a dramatist. Many of her poetical pieces, however, are highly creditable to her talents; there are strong marks of genius in most of them; and in all there is a total absence of those meretricious embellishments which are too profusely employed in some of the poems of the present day. Sense and nature, indeed, appear to have been Mrs. Cowley’s favourite guides; and she either wholly rejected the aid of art, or else had attained to that perfection of art, of which it has been well said – ‘Ars est celare artem.’ Still, the later productions of her pen, some of which are not published for the first time, do not possess that animation, energy, and fire, which mark the earlier effusions of her muse.

Those around Mrs. Cowley perceived, with surprise, that she never seemed to hold literature in much esteem. Her conversation was never literary. She was no storer up of her letters. She disliked literary correspondence; if she found herself accidentally entangled in it, she instantly retired. The constant reference to, and examination of what had been done, was to her disagreeably retrograde. Native thought always pressed upon her, invention was the natural habit of her mind.

It was still more extraordinary, that she never attended the first representations of her own pieces; and was never known to read a play or a poem written by another person. Travels were her favorite works.

Mrs. Cowley died at Tiverton, her native place, where she passed the last years of her life, on the 11th of March, 1809, in the sixty-seventh year of her age. Her works will very long survive; and we consider the present collection of them as a valuable acquisition to the stock of English literature.

Notes

1 Wolstonecraft: Mary Wollstonecraft, author of A Vindication of the Rights of Men (1790) and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792). Both books were framed in response to the French Revolution: the first attacked Edmund Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790); the second protested the decision by France’s revolutionary government to exclude women from plans for national education. In their mode of public address as well as in their arguments, both books insist on women’s
right to participate in political affairs. Cowley is thinking especially of the second book, as the reference to femininity suggests.

But her disavowal of politics must be taken with a grain of salt, given the explicit political references, especially to “the rights of women” in the first scene of Act V. See also the epilogue’s direct quotations from Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and Cowley’s subsequent note on Burke.

2 **COMMAND:** A performance ordered by royal command: this was both prestigious and lucrative, since people came to the theatre to watch the royal spectators as much as the performance onstage.

3 **DELLA CRUSCA:** Robert Merry, who under the name of Della Crusca, wrote impassioned poems to Anna Mathilda (Cowley) and other poets in the Della Cruscan circle. Quoting a Della Cruscan poem in the prologue would recall Cowley’s fame as a sentimental poetic (but platonic) lover, both introducing and reinforcing the drama’s semi-playful ideal of sentimental love. At the same time, the specific lines introduce the political issues – warfare, etc. – in a man’s voice, but in terms that emphasize female authority: peace is personified as a woman with a scepter; Cowley is a “female bard.”

4 **seraglio:** The interior of a traditional Turkish or Muslim dwelling, reserved for women only (*OED* 2nd ed. 1989).

5 **Jew:** The 1792 play insists on a hierarchy of race and nationalism, ranging from nationless Jews through Turks, French, and Italians (all morally suspect and dark-skinned to varying degrees) to noble and idealistic Russians and the English (invoked in passing references). These lines were cut in 1813.

6 **Pardie:** Short for *par dieu:* by God!

7 **slave:** Le diable means the devil. A valet de chambre is a gentleman’s personal attendant.

8 **pillows:** A La Greque is presenting himself as a Parisian hair stylist. Most eighteenth-century gentlemen wore powdered wigs in a variety of styles, many of which were associated with particular professions or walks of life. Some styles included tight curls or “frizzed” hair; others might treat the foretop (hair directly above the forehead) differently from the rest of the hair. In invoking “forefronts” and “backfronts,” A la Greque is trying to show his expertise through a (mis)use of jargon. Presenting himself as a man’s hairdresser to a nation of turbaned men is of course inept to begin with. Incidentally, the “grecque” was itself a rather formal feature included in some wigs: a roll of hair rising from the forehead and sides of the face and wrapping roughly halfway around the head to form a horseshoe shape when viewed from behind. A La Greque’s reference to an “oyster-woman” may be a slur on Muslim masculinity, equating Muslim soldiers with the eunuchs that guard the harem, since oysters have long been considered aphrodisiacs.

9 **now:** The first meaning of “Turkish air” refers to melody: A la Greque suggests cheering Orloff with a sprightly tune or song. The second stresses A La Greque and Orloff’s new status as prisoners and slaves, breathing Turkish air rather than the air of their own countries. “Helas” is an older French or Norman form of “Alas!”

10 **country:** A reference to the “Law of the Lamppost.” Shortly after the fall of the Bastille (a prison associated with the abuses of France’s absolutist monarchy), profiteers, aristocrats such as marquisses, government officials, and army officers were all hung from lampposts. “À la lanterne!” is a cry associated with the excesses of the early French revolution.

11 **Signior:** The grand vizier, a man appointed by the sultan to head the government of the Ottoman Empire.

12 **commodity:** “Besides, England has engross’d the commodity.” This line was cut in the 1813 edition (appropriately so, given two decades of war).

13 **Bassa:** Title for a military commander of high rank; equivalent to the later form “pasha.” Sometimes spelled “Bashaw” and distinguished by the number of tails, with a “three-tailed Bashaw” being of highest rank. The nearness of the Bassa’s palace to the military front is more than a little unlikely, given the location of Oczakow, but it is theatrically convenient: Cowley strains the theatrical unities, but keeps the drama’s action more or less within a single place and a single day.

14 **mortals:** The ambiguity of this line plays off the larger tension between Wollstonecraft’s radical politics and Burke’s conservative views. Burke had quite famously argued that under the rationalism of the French revolution, “a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order.” The question here is whether Peter recognizes his sister's
Ignorance, or unwittingly reveals his own. See also the conversation between Azim and Orloff in Act II, scene iii.

Cowley's scenes are sometimes numbered and sometimes not in the copytext edition.

bodkin: Probably a dagger, despite the unlikelihood of Alexina being allowed a weapon in the harem. See the end of Act II, scene ii, where Alexina threatens to commit suicide with a dagger. (Bodkin could also mean a pin-like instrument for doing up her hair, or a needle-like instrument for sewing or making holes in cloth.)

SABBATH: Alexina is bemoaning the fact that she has not been able to celebrate Sunday mass – thus each Sabbath is “unhallowed” by Catholic rite.

desert: In this context, desert means wild rather than arid.

hinds: Female deer.

hours: In 1813, Alexina simply sings, rather than finding someone else’s song to sing. The song itself has been revised: the second and third stanzas are in reverse order, and two additional stanzas have been added at the beginning.

no blessing at all: On 18 April 1791, after four years of popular abolition movements, William Wilberforce introduced in Parliament a motion to abolish the slave trade. The motion, despite being seconded by luminaries like opposition leader Charles James Fox and prime minister William Pitt, was rejected on 19 April by a vote of 163 to 88, to the shocked dismay of its supporters and a broader sense of moral chagrin for the nation. The reference to abolition is deleted in 1813.

freedom: “Freedom” here is transformed into sexual license. In 1813, the exchange between Azim and Mustapha has been deleted as part of the general removal of vulgar jokes.

country: Deriving largely from Puritan and Calvinist reform movements, English Dissenters included anyone who chose not to worship in the orthodox “Established Church,” the Church of England. Of course these references to chastity and love in terms of dissent and orthodoxy would have had especially ironic overtones addressed to a Catholic virgin by a Muslim eunuch.

Lauretta: In the 1813 edition, the Italian Lauretta has become the Georgian Zilia – nearly a Russian herself, in other words – and a considerably less vulgar figure.

to day: In 1813, the song has been broken into three stanzas, the first of which is far more pacifist in tone, applauding the “Return of Peace.”

Angrily: In 1813, additional dialogue has been added to this scene, including the following assertions by Zilia, assertions which articulate precisely the logic Mary Wollstonecraft attacked in Vindication of the Rights of Woman: “You are thinking now of your own power, when you should be sensible only of her’s! You are powerful, and she is pretty, your empire is less absolute than her’s.” Ibrahim eventually responds: “Why, under such a System, the Men must be the Slaves, and the empire of Love be transferred to the Women! – Away with every thing so exotic! I’ll waste no time in mean conquest over female Caprice – victory over the Enemy is alone worthy my Ambition!” – but Zilia persuades him that to “be heroic as a Conqueror – [he] must begin by being romantic in Love!” Ibrahim is finally persuaded to “participate[ ] in the chasten’d feelings and refined love of the rest of Europe,” a formulation which connects sentiment with Westernization.

Bashaw: Alternate spelling of Bassa.

slave: By being “interested for” Alexina – taking action on her behalf – Lauretta demonstrates her own unexpected sensibility.

attending: In 1813, the scene begins with a conversation between Zilia and Ibrahim, detailing the follies of both the West and the East. Zilia admits that Europe has its “full share of the Absurd”:

Priests they have, who are but Beaus! Senators, who are but Pages of the Court! And Soldiers, who study Finery more than the art of War! Amongst their Women – they have Grandmothers who bedeck themselves like their Grand-daughters, and Wives, who consume half their lives at their Toilettes, and yet are shocked – if accused of placing an ornament with a view to charm. Zilia’s complaints about Turkish manners, however, stress not folly but emptiness:

Your Men, in aping Dignity, fix their features in a maukish Gravity, and seem but Statues made to walk by mechanism! Ceremonious and uncommunicative, their want of Ideas they conceal in awful Silence. Never having known the advantages of elegant society, of Women they speak but as Slave-merchants. – Their ideas of the World they catch but from the Mariners who lie at anchor in the Ports, and have no Criterion for the abilities of a man – but
the number of dupes he has made! [...] The women's faces are pretty, but, they are without Expression. Their Forms are regular, but their Action conveys no Sentiment, and, ungifted with Taste, they study Dress only to bedizen themselves. Whilst, excluded from rational society with men, and unrespected by them, their Minds are uninformed, and their Manners ungraceful. In short, in the follies abroad there is a play of Mind that renders them interesting; your follies here — create but listlessness and Disgust.

30 ransom: According to the conventions of eighteenth-century warfare, captured military men of a certain degree of status could be ransomed: released after the payment of an agreed-upon sum of money. The higher a man's status, the higher the ransom required to buy his freedom. Muley cynically reads Orloff's refusal to identify himself as a strategic attempt to lower the financial cost of his capture, and thus undercuts Orloff's slightly overblown rhetoric before the latter is even allowed to speak.

31 Christian: Deleted 1813.

32 countrymen: A La Greque's obsequiousness starts with exaggeration but ends with irony: to many English spectators, French revolutionaries would have seemed as savage and rude as Turkish "infidels": both were seen as enemies of Christianity and orderly government.

33 there: In protesting the play's politics, audience members may have been responding to tone as much as to context. Contrast A La Greque's lightness of tone with the corresponding passage from Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France: "The king, to say no more of him, and this queen, and their infant [...] were then forced to abandon the sanctuary of the most splendid palace in the world, which they left swimming in blood, polluted by massacre, and strewed with scattered limbs and mutilated carcasses. [...] The royal captives [...] were slowly moved along amidst the horrid yells, and shrieking screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused shape of the vilest of women. After they had been made to taste, drop by drop, more than the bitterness of death, [...] they were [...] lodged in one of the old palaces of Paris, now converted into a Bastile for kings." [Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France. Ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (New York: Penguin, 1968), 164–5.]

34 Springing: "Ça ira" (literally, "it will go") was the cry of the French revolution. Mingling the revolutionary cry with a willingness to lick his new master's feet, A La Greque caricatures what the English of the 1790s saw as the extremes of French national character: servility and savagery.

35 milk: The end of the line, from "Bless you" on is missing from the Larpent edition.

In the 1813 edition, this line reads: "Chains! They wont weigh a rush with me! - ils sont toujours 'a la mode 'a Paris! I shall foot it to their clink, and feel myself at home again!" (266)

36 honour: In 1813 this conversation between the Bassa and Azim has been expanded, with Ibrahim now articulating Zilia's Western sentimental point of view while Azim still insists that "The laws of this mighty empire will pass away, if Soul and Mind be granted thus to Woman!" (Ibrahim's response, however, suggests a somewhat less sweeping change in government: "Am I to be opposed - retire Slave!") According to Leila Ahmed, there is "no record ... in the body of orthodox Muslim literature of the notion that women are animals or have no souls" yet, as Joyce Zonana has noted, many eighteenth-century English writers, Mary Wollstonecraft among them, assumed that "Mahometans" believe women lack souls. [Joyce Zonana, "The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structures of Jane Eyre" in Signs 1993 Spring 18 (3): 592–617.]

37 invention: Zilia's speech in 1813 concludes with a more serious intent: "Yes, yes, with these I'll weave a web which, whilst it fills these gloomy regions with merriment, shall preserve Alexina — and gain liberty for us all!"

38 Fatima: This scene was cut in 1813, except for Mustapha's reference to Ibrahim's approach.

39 rein: "Courser" was poetic language for a swift horse, a racing horse: Mustapha has been spurring the Bassa onwards instead of pulling back on the bit with a "check rein" to slow him down.

40 christian: "Wert thou not a Turk" [1813].

41 wine: Another theatrical commonplace: Muslim characters often draw attention to the fact that Christians drink alcoholic beverages. See for instance Elizabeth Inchbald's A Mogul Tale (1784).

42 Divan: The Ottoman Imperial Council, composed of state officials appointed by the sultan.

43 Sublime Porte: The residence of the grand vizier (a French translation of al-Bab al-Ali, literally, "the High Door"). References to the Sublime Porte would be roughly equivalent to the mention of 10 Downing Street or the White House today.
This is presumably one of the songs the critic “Aesopus” had in mind when he complained that “The songs are unconnected with the drama, and absurdly introduced for the amusement of a parcel of unfeeling eunuchs. The poetry of the songs […] has not a single recommendation – [they] are only admissible on a comparison with the music!” Yet the songs formed an important part of the mixed drama’s popular appeal.[Review in The Morning Post, and Daily Advertiser, no. 5808, Monday, December 5, 1791.]

Lud, lud!: Lord, lord!

Christian: “Frenchman” [1813]

suffer it: “I am not so entirely without Feeling as to suffer it!” [1813] Note the shift from Christianity to a broader sense of sentiment.

Scotland: Again, A La Greque reminds the audience of the French revolution and its abolition of aristocracy. The comparison of Russian boyard and Scottish laird implies the northern roughness or barbarity of both.

felucca: A kind of boat. Smaller feluccas both rowed and sailed: they might use as many as 20 banks of oars.

bolus: Phial: a small glass bottle, especially for liquid medicine; like a vial. Bolus: a larger than ordinary pill (often used contemptuously).

domine: From the Latin dominus: master.

distinction: In 1813, Orloff appeals to “Birth and Fortune” and Azim’s denial of difference at birth has been deleted. The effect is to make the play’s stance on class and politics more conservative.

haw:/ Haul.

enquiries: Paulina takes the eunuchs for men, and includes Mustapha in this mistake. He is too embarrassed to explain to her their castrated state: instead, he emphasizes the physical though not sexual threat they pose to the women of the harem. In 1813, this discussion has been cut.

ha, ha, ha, ha: Paulina’s response points out the inappropriateness of Alexina’s implied reproof: Paulina, delighted with her new dress and unworried about her presence in a seraglio, represents to Alexina a sexually fallen woman. But Paulina points out that Alexina is in the same position – only the latter’s mournfulness distinguishes the two women.

march: In 1813, Paulina has had only one lover, this soldier.

teize: Tease.

passion: This line, along with later references to the rights of women, links the play’s sentimental ideology to Mary Wollstonecraft’s rejection of purely decorative and domestic models of femininity – despite Cowley’s disavowal of Wollstonecraft’s politics.

alliance: “The Nine” are the Nine Muses: sister-goddesses, born to Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory), believed to inspire learning, poetry, and music.

you sweet tits you: Tit: a girl or young woman. Not a reference to breasts, though the word can suggest disapproval of a young woman of loose character. Here, the word is used affectionately, though A la Greque certainly has hopes of sexual permissiveness among the women of the seraglio.

gemman: Gentleman.

are ye: In 1813, only Zilia remains, and the conversation is more decorous.

pallet: A humble bed.

patience: In 1813, the rest of this speech is far more sentimental: “it is a humble Virtue, and not fit, it seems, for a Gentleman. Before I next see him, I’ll scale the wall again – for news for him about his Wife!”

pullets: Young chickens, A La Greque presents himself as a fox trying to steal one of the chickens guarded by the greedy “dog,” the Bassa.

master: A then-common British critique of governments seen as absolutist (especially “oriental” governments – Ottoman or Indian – but sometimes also the ancien regime of France): that power is abused without the knowledge of those ostensibly in control, and that fear is the only (ineffective) curb on corruption. In 1813, this line reads: “They talk of countries, where, what we have done, might be punished by the Sufferer – but we fear no punishment from any quarter but our Masters – and them we deceive!”

marchionesses: In 1813, Fatima’s lines here are still spoken by Zilia and the discussion of duchesses and marchionesses has been replaced by: “Do you think I am a man to betray Secrets? I am only come here to learn one.”
69 Bassa: In 1813, the seat is described as "a little Throne," enabling A La Greque to respond, "O then, it is just the Seat for a Frenchman to seize! Besides, I am here upon an important enquiry, and the Seat of State becomes it! Pray, have you one Alexina here, in her way from Russia? I came to enquire for a Friend of mine. – You lively little rogue (Laying hold of Zilia's hand) come here and sit down by me, you shall be my Bassa-ess, and tell me all about her." [1813]

70 every where: The 1813 text is more critical of the French: Azim's line reads "Frenchmen, there is no guarding against – at other's cost they make themselves free every where" and Lauretta's response, expanding the revolution to include the rights of women, has been cut.

71 Sits, on A La Greque: The more decorous 1813 text shows Zilia fending Azim off without ever sitting on A La Greque herself: "we have made this seat for the Bassa alone! It is not your turn to be throned yet Master Azim."

72 lovers: Deleted 1813, along with the second slave’s line. Fatima exits with the rest.

73 thirteenth: "second" [1813]

74 bird-lime: A sticky substance, spread on twigs, so that when birds land on the twigs, they are unable to take off again.

75 Cowley's note: "These lines were introduced by Mrs. Esten. – She sings them without instruments, and they are always followed by rapturous applause." The sung lines are replaced in 1813 by "Oh! ne'er till now this breast Love knew, / 'Tis you alone e'er stole my heart, / It now can beat alone for you! / 'Tis only now it feels Love's dart."

76 twigs: Another reference to bird-lime: Azim has been trying to trap Alexina with limed or sticky twigs, but has been entangled or stuck in his own trap.

77 sacred rites: In 1813, the earlier references to Paulina’s family have been cut, and the exchange among Ibrahim, Alexina, and Orloff sentimentalized as follows:

IBR. (TO ALEXINA). To such Charms I could not have been insensible, had I view’d them before Paulina had engrossed my Heart, and exalted me into the purer Lover of the realms around. – To-morrow you shall be escorted to your camp. My Paulina's Family too shall be discovered, and restored to their country with the means of future happiness. Whilst, to give that Dignity to love, without which it sinks into a degrading passion, I will restore the female captives to Liberty, and by solemn rites make this charmer mine.

ORL. Such a moment, Sir, is the Seal of Heaven on the purified Heart! Love has taught you to revere Marriage, and marriage will secure to you, in a unison of sentiment and mind, the pure felicity of which you have so long felt a want!

78 slave-driver: In 1813, the line is at once briefer and more conservative: "for fellow slaves, I perceive, we shall be no more – so here ends the Tyranny of Equality!" The two subsequent lines are also cut.

79 study them: In 1813, Ibrahim rather than Alexina is given the last word:

IBR. Charming magnanimity! which, flowing from the benevolent doctrines you are taught, shall make their unselfish principles my Study, whilst I, having gratefully learnt that to reign in the heart of one virtuous woman is alone the felicity of love, enjoy every happiness with my Paulina.

PAU. It is most grateful to my heart to see you thus happy! It shall be the study of my life to cause you continually to rejoice in the noble sentiments of this hour!

IBR. Orloff and Alexina! In your happiness too I participate – from the delightful sense of having been its cause! May the dangers risked but heighten the pleasure felt at escape and none regret the time devoted to – A Day in Turkey.

80 please: This epilogue celebrates the marriage of the Duke of York with Princess Frederika, oldest daughter of the King of Prussia. The couple were married in Berlin on 1 October 1791 and then traveled to England.

81 BURKE: Edmund Burke, member of Parliament and famous British statesman. Author of Reflections of the Revolution in France, which included a passionately sentimental description of Marie Antoinette, parts of which are quoted in the epilogue.