



REVENGE

ZANBA. GROAN ON AND WITH THE SOUND
REFRESH MY SOUL.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

PAINTED BY R. SMIRKE.

FORWARDED BY LONGMAN & CO

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ENGRAVED BY G. MORLEY

J.

THE
REVENGE;

A TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS;

By EDWARD YOUNG, LL. D.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,
COVENT GARDEN AND DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS
FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS
BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

REMARKS.

It is certain, that Dr. Young was no enthusiastic admirer of Shakspeare's "Othello"—To suppose he was, is to accuse him of high presumption in hoping to write a still better play. For that he could take the same subject, which an admired author had used with infinite success, and not hope to transcend him, agrees but ill with the ambition of any dramatist; much less with that of the aspiring Young.

"The Revenge" is so excellent a production, that the reader will forgive the author's attempt, and compassionate his failure. In one of his characters, indeed, he has surpassed the genius of Shakspeare—but immorally so—he has adorned malice and its kindred vices, with a sentiment appropriate to the rarest virtue—scrupulous regard for unblemished honour.

The high-sounding vengeance of Zanga charms every heart, whilst the malicious purposes of Iago fill every bosom with abhorrence.

Another advantage is given to Zanga in his guilt—the persons, whom he involves in utter ruin, claim far less sympathy than Shakspeare's Othello and Desdemona. Alonzo can excite no interest equal to the first, and Leonora sinks even beneath comparison before the last.

Dr. Johnson has said, that the inferior characters in the tragedy of "Othello" would make a very good play, were the three superior ones wholly omitted: and certainly Cassio, Roderigo, and Amelia are all excellent parts. But, should this method be pursued with the tragedy of "The Revenge," when the best were left out, what could be done with the remaining few? Isabella, in particular, is a tool of such insignificance in herself, that, till her importance as an instrument is testified, it seems degrading to the proud mind and acute understanding of the imperious Moor, to trust his perilous design to a woman's secrecy who gives no one proof to the audience of possessing selfrestraint peculiar from the rest of her sex, and powerful enough to keep silence.

Deservedly high as this tragedy must ever rank among English dramas, it is but seldom brought upon the stage, and then the actor who performs Zanga must be its sole support.—This character is of such magnitude, and so unprotected by those which surround him, that few performers will undertake to represent it: a less number still have succeeded in braving the danger. Mr. Kemble stands foremost among those, and draws some splendid audiences every year, merely to see *him*; though the intervals between his exits and entrances are sure to be passed in lassitude.

Dr. Young has the praise of being an original poet, but this work cannot be brought as a proof; for besides its resemblance to the "Othello" of Shakspeare, it is alleged he had also in his view the Abdelazer of

Mrs. Behn, upon which character Zanga is a grand improvement.

The originality of Young must be found in his "Night Thoughts." Those well known poems, that speak contemptuously of a world, which, if his most distinguished biographers can be relied upon, he loved as dearly as the gayest libertine.

It is a reflection more gloomy than the author's gloomiest composition, that Young was a man the very reverse of him, whom the reader of his "Night Thoughts" would suppose the writer to be.

Dr. Edward Young was the son of the Dean of Sarum, and born at Upham, near Winchester, in June 1681. He received his first education in that college; and at Oxford, took the degree of Doctor of Civil Law.

On quitting the university where he had given testimony of his poetic talents, Young was admitted into the family of Lord Exeter, and became the tutor of Lord Burleigh, with whom he was to travel, and receive as his recompense an annuity for life. But the witty and profligate Duke of Wharton, who at that time rioted in all the vices and follies of London, allured him by his friendship to yield up this honourable engagement, and be a partner with him in all his excesses.

This eminent poet can easier be forgiven his youthful attachment to the pleasures of the world, than his aged anxiety after its honours. When the Duke's protection ceased with his exile and death, Young took orders, as the only means of subsistence; and be-

came grave and political, as the only means of preferment. He preached excellent sermons on the duty of a christian, and wrote as excellent pamphlets to traduce his neighbour the Duke of Marlborough, when that neighbour was out of favour with the court.

He was fervent in public worship, both at church, and in the dedications he sent forth with his various works; wherein, he has praised man as he praised God: which gives rise to the suspicion, that he expected as valuable favours from the created, as from the Creator.

Dr. Young was married in 1732 to Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and the widow of Colonel Lee. About the year 1740, Lady Elizabeth died; and very shortly after, both a daughter she had by her first marriage, and that daughter's husband, (a son of Lord Palmerston) departed this life.—Melancholy events, which Young has lamented in strains of pious sorrow in his favourite work.

Notwithstanding his afflictions he survived these losses five and twenty years: then expired at the age of eighty-four, enjoying his perfect senses to the last moment—and to the last moment he refused to see his only child, a son, who for some youthful offence had been banished his house; and yet that repentant child sent earnest supplications for pardon, and admission to his father's presence.