

Dark-heaving)—boundless, endless, and sublime—  
The image of Eternity—the throne  
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime  
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone  
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone

BYRON.

XXXV.

Scene from Pizarro.

*Pizarro and Gomez.*

*Piz.* How now, Gomez, what bringest thou?

*Gom.* On yonder hill, among the palm-trees, we have surprised an old Peruvian. Escape by flight he could not, and we seized him unresisting.

*Piz.* Drag him before us. (*Gomez leads in Orozembo.*) What art thou, stranger?

*Oro.* First tell me who is the captain of this band of robbers?

*Piz.* Audacious! This insolence has sealed thy doom. Die thou shalt, gray-headed ruffian. But first confess what thou knowest.

*Oro.* I know that which thou hast just assured me of, that I shall die.

*Piz.* Less audacity might have preserved thy life.

*Oro.* My life is as a withered tree, not worth preserving.

*Piz.* Hear me, old man. Even now we march against the Peruvian army. We know there is a secret path that leads to your stronghold among the rocks. Guide us to that, and name thy reward. If wealth be thy wish—

*Oro.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Piz.* Dost thou despise my offer?

*Oro.* Yes, thee and thy offer! Wealth!— I have the wealth of two gallant sons. I have stored in heaven the riches which repay good actions here; and still my chiefest treasure do I wear about me.

*Piz.* What is that? Inform me.

*Oro.* I will, for thou canst never tear it from me. An unsullied conscience.

*Piz.* I believe there is no other Peruvian who dares speak as thou dost.

*Oro.* Would I could believe there is no other Spaniard who dares *act* as *thou* dost.

*Gom.* Obdurate pagan! how numerous is your army?



*Oro.* Count the leaves of the forest.

*Gom.* Which is the weakest part of your camp?

*Oro.* It is fortified on all sides by justice.

*Gom.* Where have you concealed your wives and children?

*Oro.* In the hearts of their husbands and fathers.

*Piz.* Knowest thou Alonzo?

*Oro.* Know him! Alonzo! Our nation's benefactor, the guardian angel of Peru!

*Piz.* By what has he merited that title?

*Oro.* By not resembling thee.

*Piz.* Who is this Rolla, joined with Alonzo in command?

*Oro.* I will answer that, for I love to speak the hero's name. Rolla, the kinsman of the king, is the idol of our army. In war a tiger, in peace a lamb. Cora was once betrothed to him, but finding she preferred Alonzo, he resigned his claim for Cora's happiness.

*Piz.* Romantic savage! I shall meet this Rolla soon.

*Oro.* Thou hadst better not; the terrors of his noble eye would strike thee dead.

*Gom.* Silence or tremble!

*Oro.* Beardless robber! I never yet have

learned to tremble before *man*—why before *thee*, thou *less* than man?

*Gom.* Another word, audacious heathen, and I strike!

*Oro.* Strike, Christian! then boast among thy fellows, "I too have murdered a Peruvian."

## SECOND SCENE.

*Sentinel, Rolla and Alonzo.*

[Enter Rolla, disguised as a Monk.]

*Rolla.* Inform me, friend, is Alonzo, the Peruvian, confined in this dungeon?

*Sent.* He is.

*Rolla.* I must speak with him.

*Sent.* You must not.

*Rolla.* He is my friend.

*Sent.* Not if he were your brother.

*Rolla.* What is to be his fate?

*Sent.* He dies at sunrise.

*Rolla.* Ha! then I am come in time—

*Sent.* Just to witness his death.

*Rolla.* (*advancing towards the door*). Soldier, I *must* speak with him.

*Sent.* (*pushing him back with his gun*). Back! back! it is impossible.



*Rolla.* I do entreat you but for one moment.

*Sent.* You entreat in vain: my orders are most strict.

*Rolla.* Look on this wedge of massy gold! look on these precious gems! In thy land they will be wealth for thee and thine, beyond thy hope or wish. Take them—they are thine; let me but pass one moment with Alonzo.

*Sent.* Away! Wouldst thou corrupt me? *Me,* an old Castilian!—I know my duty better.

*Rolla.* Soldier! hast thou a wife?

*Sent.* I have.

*Rolla.* Hast thou children?

*Sent.* Four—honest, lovely boys.

*Rolla.* Where didst thou leave them?

*Sent.* In my native village, in the very cot where I was born.

*Rolla.* Dost thou love thy wife and children?

*Sent.* Do I love them! God knows my heart;—I do.

*Rolla.* Soldier! Imagine thou wert doomed to die a cruel death in a strange land:—what would be thy last request?

*Sent.* That some of my comrades should carry my dying blessing to my wife and children.

*Rolla.* What if that comrade was at thy prison door, and should there be told, thy fellow-soldier dies at sunrise, yet thou shalt not for a moment see him, nor shalt thou bear his dying blessing to his poor children, or his wretched wife—what wouldst thou think of him who thus could drive thy comrade from the door?

*Sent.* How?

*Rolla.* Alonzo has a wife and child; and I am come but to receive for her, and for her poor babe, the last blessing of my friend.

*Sent.* Go in. (*Exit Sentinel.*)

*Rolla.* (*calls.*) Alonzo! Alonzo!

[Enter Alonzo, speaking as he comes in.]

*Alon.* How! is my hour elapsed? Well, I am ready.

*Rolla.* Alonzo!—know me!

*Alon.* Rolla! O *Rolla!* how didst thou pass the guard?

*Rolla.* There is not a moment to be lost in words. This disguise I tore from the dead body of a friar, as I passed our field of battle. It has gained me entrance to thy dungeon:—now take it thou, and fly!



*Alon.* And Rolla—

*Rolla.* Will remain here in thy place.

*Alon.* And *die* for me! *No!* rather eternal tortures rack me.

*Rolla.* I shall not die, Alonzo. It is *thy* life Pizarro seeks, not *Rolla's*; and thy arm may soon deliver me from prison. Or, should it be otherwise, I am as a blighted tree in the desert; nothing lives beneath my shelter. Thou art a husband and a father: the being of a lovely wife and helpless infant depend upon thy life. Go, go, Alonzo! not to save thyself, but Cora, and thy child.

*Alon.* Urge me not thus, my friend. I am prepared to die in peace.

*Rolla.* To die in peace! devoting her you have sworn to live for, to madness, misery, and death!

*Alon.* Merciful heavens!

*Rolla.* If thou art yet irresolute, Alonzo—now mark me well. Thou knowest that Rolla never pledged his word and shrunk from its fulfilment. Know then, if thou art proudly obstinate, thou shalt have the desperate triumph of seeing Rolla perish by thy side.

*Alon.* O Rollo! you distract me! Wear you the robe, and though dreadful the necessity,

we will strike down the guard, and force our passage.

*Rolla.* What, the *soldier* on duty here?

*Alon.* Yes, else seeing two, the alarm will be instant death.

*Rolla.* For my nation's safety, I would not harm him! That soldier, mark me, is a *man!* All are not men that wear the human form. He refused my *prayers*, refused my *gold*, denying to admit, till his own *feelings* bribed him. I will not risk a hair of that man's head, to save my heart-strings from consuming fire. But haste! A moment's further pause, and all is lost.

*Alon.* Rolla, I fear thy friendship drives me from honor and from right.

*Rolla.* Did Rolla ever counsel dishonor to his friend? (*Throwing the friar's garment over his shoulders.*) There!—conceal thy face. Now, God be with thee!

KOTZEBUE.

