

**EUPHEMIO OF
MESSINA:
A TRAGEDY**

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Euphemio of Messina: A Tragedy by Silvio Pellico

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SILVIO PELLICO

**EUPHEMIO OF
MESSINA:
A TRAGEDY**

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EUPHEMIO OF MESSINA;

A

TRAGEDY,

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

OF

SILVIO PELLICO.

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THE following Tragedy is founded upon events which occurred A. D. 825 or 830, during an irruption of the Saracens into Sicily. The chronicles of the times, both Christian and Moorish, agree in making mention of a Sicilian warrior, by name Euphemio, or Eutimio, who, in disgust at his countrymen for some imagined wrong endured at their hands, crossed into Africa, and conducted the Saracens thence in arms to the walls of his native city.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

THEODORE, *King of Sicily.*

LUDOVICA, *his daughter.*

EUPHEMIO, *formerly leader of the Sicilian, now of the Saracen army.*

ALMANZOR, *an officer of the Saracens, subordinate to Euphemio.*

SICILIAN SOLDIERS.

SARACEN SOLDIERS.

The SCENE is beneath the walls of Messina, and near the gates.

EUPHEMIO OF MESSINA.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE I.

THEODORE and the Sicilian soldiers rush tumultuously upon the scene, as flying from the battle, intercepted in their course by the multitude of enemies who throng from all sides.

SICILIANS.

The Saracens! The Saracens!

THEODORE.

Cursed day!

Another troop is pouring from the west!
Resistance is in vain! On every side
Hell seems to send her fresh battalions forth!
Back, wretched countrymen! back to the walls!
Haste to Messina and defend her!

SCENE II.

Enter a band of Saracens headed by ALMANZOR.

ALMANZOR, (*fighting with THEODORE.*)

Yield,

Yield up that sword!

EUPHEMIO OF MESSINA.

THEODORE.

Not yet!

(Fights courageously, but his followers are dispersed.)

Cowards! your leader

Do ye abandon thus?

ALMANZOR

*(disarms THEODORE, and stands over him
in a threatening attitude.)*

To the true God,

And to His Prophet, bend that haughty front,
Or die!

THEODORE.

The true God have I ever worshipped,
And boast myself a soldier of the cross!

ALMANZOR.

Die, then!

SCENE III.

*While ALMANZOR is about to slay his prisoner, enter
EUPHEMIO, followed by a number of Saracens.*

EUPHEMIO.

What dost thou? In an unarmed foeman's blood,
A Moslem may not stain his noble blade!*(ALMANZOR liberates THEODORE;—the latter and
EUPHEMIO stand gazing at each other.)*

EUPHEMIO.

Thou! Do I see aright?

THEODORE.

That voice!—

EUPHEMIO.

Oh, joy!

Yes! he alone of every living foe,
Deserves to die! the false and proud usurper
Of wronged Sicilia's throne,—the cruel parent,
Who gave his only child to lasting grief:—
He, who despised each right,—the accursed cause
Of all my woes,—he, on whose head alone,
The pain my parricidal arms have wrought,
Should fall!

THEODORE.

Thee, thee, upon thy native soil,
Do I behold the leader of the hosts
That come to war with Heaven?

EUPHEMIO.

In my first years
Of youthful daring, this ungrateful land,
Which now I come to fill with strife and blood,
I called my country. Then, by every tongue
My name was hailed, the pride of Sicily.
Ten times victorious did my arm avert
From your devoted necks the dreaded yoke
Of infamy and bondage; these same Moors,
Who now advance to humble and subdue you,
Four times I drove back to their ancient seas.
While Africa and Asia, knowing well
The sword which had repelled them, dared no more
Look with desire on these protected shores.
And when thou didst aspire to free this isle
From the Greek emperor's rule, who but Euphemio
Could have performed the work? The distant kingdoms