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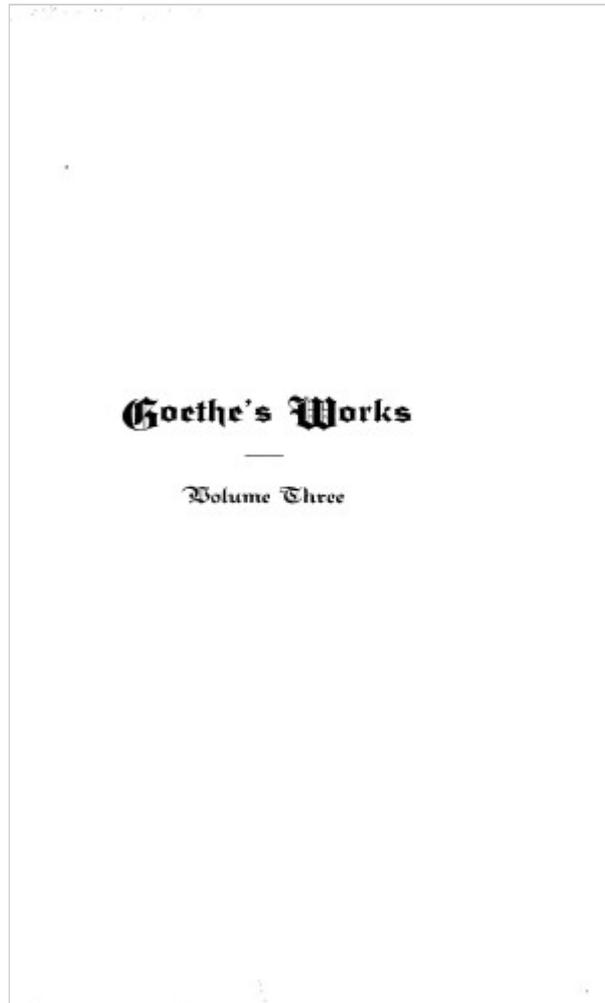
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Edition Used:

Goethe's Works, illustrated by the best German artists, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: G. Barrie, 1885). Vol. 3.

Author: [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#)

About This Title:

Volume 3 of a five volume collection of Goethe's works. This edition is sumptuously illustrated. Vol. 2 contains Goethe's plays.

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Fr. Pecht del.

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Goetz von Berlichingen

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Götz Von Berlichingen With The Iron Hand.

A Drama.



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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MAXIMILIAN,	<i>Emperor of Germany.</i>
GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN,	<i>a free knight of the empire.</i>
ELIZABETH,	<i>his wife.</i>
MARIA,	<i>his sister.</i>
CHARLES,	<i>his son—a boy.</i>
GEORGE,	<i>his page.</i>
BISHOP OF BAMBERG.	
ADELBERT VON WEISLINGEN,	<i>a free German knight of the empire.</i>
ADELAIDE VON WALLDORF,	<i>widow of the COUNT VON WALLDORF.</i>
LIEBTRAUT,	<i>a courtier of the Bishop's.</i>
ABBOT OF FULDA,	<i>residing at the Bishop's court.</i>
OLEARIUS,	<i>a doctor of laws.</i>
BROTHER MARTIN,	<i>a monk.</i>
HANS VON SELBITZ, }	
FRANZ VON SICKINGEN, }	<i>Free knights, in alliance with GOETZ.</i>
LERSE,	<i>a trooper.</i>
FRANCIS,	<i>esquire to WEISLINGEN.</i>
<i>Female Attendant on ADELAIDE.</i>	
<i>President,</i>	<i>Accuser and Avenger of the Secret Tribunal.</i>
METZLER, }	
SIEVERS, }	
LINK, }	<i>Leaders of the insurgent peasantry.</i>
KOHL, }	
WILD, }	
<i>Imperial Commissioners.</i>	
<i>Two Merchants of Nuremberg.</i>	
<i>Magistrates of Heilbronn.</i>	
MAXIMILIAN STUMF,	<i>a vassal of the Palsgrave.</i>
<i>An unknown.</i>	
<i>Bride's father, }</i>	
<i>Bride, }</i>	<i>Peasants.</i>
<i>Bridegroom, }</i>	
<i>Gypsy captain.</i>	
<i>Gypsy mother and women.</i>	
STICKS and WOLF,	<i>gypsies.</i>
<i>Imperial captain.</i>	
<i>Imperial officers.</i>	
<i>Innkeeper.</i>	
<i>Sentinel.</i>	
<i>Sergeant-at-arms.</i>	

*Imperial soldiers—Troopers belonging to Goetz, to Selbitz, to Sickingen and
to Weislingen—Peasants—Gypsies—Judges of the Secret
Tribunal—Gaolers—Courtiers, etc., etc., etc.*



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ACT I.



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SCENE I.—

An Inn At Schwarzenberg In Franconia.

[Metzler and Sievers, two Swabian Peasants, are seated at a table—At the fire, at some distance from them, two Troopers from Bamberg—The Innkeeper.]

SIEVERS.

Hänsel! Another cup of brandy—and Christian measure.

INNKEEPER.

Thou art a Never-enough.

METZLER.

(*Apart to Sievers.*) Repeat that again about Berlichingen.—The Bambergers there are so angry they are almost black in the face.

SIEVERS.

Bambergers!—What are they about here?

METZLER.

Weislingen has been two days up yonder at the castle with the Earl—they are his attendants—they came with him, I know not whence; they are waiting for him—he is going back to Bamberg.

SIEVERS.

Who is that Weislingen?

METZLER.

The Bishop of Bamberg's right hand! a powerful lord, who is lying in wait to play Goetz some trick.

SIEVERS.

He had better take care of himself.

METZLER.

(Aside.) Prithee go on! *(Aloud.)* How long is it since Goetz had a new dispute with the bishop? I thought all had been agreed and squared between them.

SIEVERS.

Ay! Agreement with priests!—When the bishop saw he could do no good, and always got the worst of it, he pulled in his horns, and made haste to patch up a truce—and honest Berlichingen yielded to an absurd extent, as he always does when he has the advantage.

METZLER.

God bless him! a worthy nobleman.

SIEVERS.

Only think! Was it not shameful? They fell upon a page of his, to his no small surprise; but they will soon be mauled for that.

METZLER.

How provoking that his last stroke should have missed. He must have been plaguily annoyed.

SIEVERS.

I don't think anything has vexed him so much for a long time. Look you, all had been calculated to a nicety; the time the bishop would come from the bath, with how many attendants, and which road; and had it not been betrayed by some traitor, Goetz would have blessed his bath for him, and rubbed him dry.

FIRST TROOPER.

What are you prating there about our bishop; do you want to pick a quarrel?

SIEVERS.

Mind your own affairs; you have nothing to do with our table.

SECOND TROOPER.

Who taught you to speak disrespectfully of our bishop?

SIEVERS.

Am I bound to answer *your* questions?—Look at the fool!

[*The first Trooper boxes his ears.*

METZLER.

Smash the rascal!

[*They attack each other.*

SECOND TROOPER.

(*To Metzler.*) Come on if you dare—

INNKEEPER.

(*Separating them.*) Will you be quiet? Zounds! Take yourself off if you have any scores to settle; in my house I will have order and decency. (*He pushes the Troopers out of doors.*)—And what are you about, you jackasses?

METZLER.

No bad names, Hänsel! or your sconce shall pay for it. Come, comrade, we'll go and thrash those blackguards.

Enter two of Berlichingen's Troopers.

FIRST TROOPER.

What's the matter?

SIEVERS.

Ah! Good-day, Peter!—Good-day, Veit!—Whence come you?

SECOND TROOPER.

Mind you don't let out whom we serve.

SIEVERS.

(*Whispering.*) Then your master Goetz isn't far off?

FIRST TROOPER.

Hold your tongue!—Have you had a quarrel?

SIEVERS.

You must have met the fellows without—they are Bambergers.

FIRST TROOPER.

What brings them here?

SIEVERS.

They escort Weislingen, who is up yonder at the castle with the Earl.

FIRST TROOPER.

Weislingen!

SECOND TROOPER.

(Aside to his companion.) Peter, that is grist to our mill. How long has he been here?

METZLER.

Two days—but he is off to-day, as I heard one of his fellows say.

FIRST TROOPER.

(Aside.) Did I not tell you he was here?—We might have waited yonder long enough.
Come, Veit—

SIEVERS.

Help us first to drub the Bambergers.

SECOND TROOPER.

There are already two of you—We must away—Farewell!

[Exeunt both Troopers.]

SIEVERS.

Scurvy dogs, these troopers!

They won't strike a blow without pay.

METZLER.

I could swear they have something in hand.—Whom do they serve?

SIEVERS.

I am not to tell—they serve Goetz.

METZLER.

So!—Well, now we'll cudgel those fellows outside. While I have a quarter-staff I care not for their spits.

SIEVERS.

If we durst but once serve the princes in the same manner, who drag our skins over our ears!

[Exeunt.

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SCENE II.—

A Cottage In A Thick Forest.

[Goetz von Berlichingendiscovered walking among the trees before the door.

GOETZ.

Where linger my servants?—I must walk up and down, or sleep will overcome me—five days and nights already on the watch. It is hardly earned, this bit of life and freedom. But when I have caught thee, Weislingen, I shall take my ease. (*Fills a glass of wine and drinks; looks at the flask.*)—Again empty.—George!—While this and my courage last, I can laugh at the ambition and chicanery of princes!—George!—You may send round your obsequious Weislingen to your uncles and cousins to calumniate my character—be it so—I am on the alert.—Thou hast escaped me, bishop; then thy dear Weislingen shall pay the score.—George!—Doesn't the boy hear?—George! George!

GEORGE.

(*Entering in the cuirass of a fullgrown man.*) Worshipful sir.

GOETZ.

What kept you? Were you asleep?—What in the devil's name means this masquerade?—Come hither; you don't look amiss. Be not ashamed, boy; you look bravely. Ah! if you could but fill it!—Is it Hans' cuirass?



GEORGE.

He wished to sleep a little, and unbuckled it.

GOETZ.

He takes things easier than his master.

GEORGE.

Do not be angry! I took it quietly away and put it on, then fetched my father's old sword from the wall, ran to the meadow, and drew it—

GOETZ.

And laid about you, no doubt?—Rare times for the brambles and thorns!—Is Hans asleep?

GEORGE.

He started up and cried out to me when you called—I was trying to unbuckle the cuirass when I heard you twice or thrice.

GOETZ.

Go take back his cuirass, and tell him to be ready with his horses.

GEORGE.

I have fed them well and they are ready bridled; you may mount when you will.

GOETZ.

Bring me a stoup of wine. Give Hans a glass too, and tell him to be on the alert—there is good cause; I expect the return of my scouts every moment.

GEORGE.

Ah! noble sir!

GOETZ.

What's the matter?

GEORGE.

May I not go with you?

GOETZ.

Another time, George! when we waylay merchants and seize their wagons—

GEORGE.

Another time!—You have said that so often.—Oh, this time, this time! I will only skulk behind; just keep on the lookout—I will gather up all the spent arrows for you.

GOETZ.

Next time, George!—You must first have a doublet, a steel cap and a lance.

GEORGE.

Take me with you now!—Had I been with you last time, you would not have lost your cross-bow.

GOETZ.

Do you know about that?

GEORGE.

You threw it at your antagonist's head; one of his followers picked it up, and off with it he went.—Don't I know about it?

GOETZ.

Did my people tell you?

GEORGE.

Oh, yes: and for that I whistle them all sorts of tunes while we dress the horses, and teach them merry songs, too.

GOETZ.

Thou art a brave boy.

GEORGE.

Take me with you to prove myself so.

GOETZ.

The next time, I promise you! You must not go to battle unarmed as you are. There is a time coming which will also require men. I tell thee, boy, it will be a dear time. Princes shall offer their treasures for a man whom they now hate. Go, George, give Hans his cuirass again, and bring me wine. (*Exit* George.) Where can my people be? It is incomprehensible!—A monk! What brings him here so late?

Enter Brother Martin.

GOETZ.

Good-evening, reverend father! Whence come you so late? Man of holy rest, thou shamest many knights.

MARTIN.

Thanks, noble sir! I am at present but an unworthy brother, if we come to titles. My cloister name is Augustin, but I like better to be called by my Christian name, Martin.

GOETZ.

You are tired, brother Martin, and doubtless thirsty.

Enter Georgewith wine.

GOETZ.

Here, in good time, comes wine!

MARTIN.

For me a draught of water. I dare not drink wine.

GOETZ.

Is it against your vow?

MARTIN.

Noble sir, to *drink* wine is not against my vow; but because *wine* is against my vow, therefore I drink it not.

GOETZ.

How am I to understand that?

MARTIN.

'Tis well for thee that thou dost not understand it. Eating and drinking nourish man's life.

GOETZ.

Well!

MARTIN.

When thou hast eaten and drunken, thou art as it were new born, stronger, bolder, fitter for action. Wine rejoices the heart of man, and joyousness is the mother of every virtue. When thou hast drunk wine thou art double what thou should'st be! twice as ingenious, twice as enterprising, and twice as active.

GOETZ.

As I drink it, what you say is true.

MARTIN.

'Tis when thus taken in moderation that I speak of it. But we—

[*Georgebrings water.*

GOETZ.

(*Aside to George.*) Go to the road which leads to Daxbach; lay thine ear close to the earth, and listen for the tread of horses. Return immediately.

MARTIN.

But we, on the other hand, when we have eaten and drunken, are the reverse of what we should be. Our sluggish digestion depresses our mental powers; and in the indulgence of luxurious ease, desires are generated which grow too strong for our weakness.

GOETZ.

One glass, brother Martin, will not disturb your sleep. You have travelled far to-day. (*Raises his glass.*) Here's to all fighting men!

MARTIN.

With all my heart! (*They ring their glasses.*) I cannot abide idle people—yet will I not say that all monks are idle; they do what they can: I am just come from St. Bede, where I slept last night. The prior took me into the garden; that is their hive. Excellent salad, cabbages in perfection, and such cauliflowers and artichokes as you will hardly find in Europe.

GOETZ.

So that is not the life for you?

[*Goes out and looks anxiously after the boy. Returns.*

MARTIN.

Would that God had made me a gardener, or day laborer, I might then have been happy! My convent is Erfurt in Saxony; my abbot loves me; he knows I cannot remain idle, and so he sends me round the country, wherever there is business to be done. I am on my way to the Bishop of Constance.

GOETZ.

Another glass. Good speed to you!

MARTIN.

The same to you.

GOETZ.

Why do you look at me so steadfastly, brother?

MARTIN.

I am in love with your armor.

GOETZ.

Would you like a suit? It is heavy and toilsome to the wearer.

MARTIN.

What is not toilsome in this world?—But to me nothing is so much so as to renounce my very nature! Poverty, chastity, obedience—three vows, each of which taken singly seems the most dreadful to humanity—so insupportable are they all;—and to spend a lifetime under this burthen, or to groan despairingly under the still heavier load of an evil conscience—ah! Sir Knight, what are the toils of your life compared to the sorrows of a state which, from a mistaken desire of drawing nearer to the Deity, condemns as crimes the best impulses of our nature, impulses by which we live, grow and prosper!

GOETZ.

Were your vow less sacred I would give you a suit of armor and a steed, and we would ride out together.

MARTIN.

Would to Heaven my shoulders had strength to bear armor, and my arm to unhorse an enemy!—Poor weak hand, accustomed from infancy to swing censers, to bear crosses and banners of peace, how could'st thou manage the lance and falchion? My voice, tuned only to Aves and Halleluiahs, would be a herald of my weakness to the enemy, while yours would overpower him; otherwise no vows should keep me from entering an order founded by the Creator himself.



GOETZ.

To your happy return.

[*Drinks.*

MARTIN.

I drink that only in compliment to you! A return to my prison must ever be unhappy. When you, Sir Knight, return to your castle, with the consciousness of your courage and strength, which no fatigue can overcome; when you, for the first time, after a long absence, stretch yourself unarmed upon your bed, secure from the attack of enemies, and resign yourself to a sleep sweeter than the draught after a long thirst—then can you speak of happiness.

GOETZ.

And accordingly it comes but seldom.

MARTIN.

(*With growing ardor.*) But when it does come, it is a foretaste of paradise. When you return home laden with the spoils of your enemies, and, remember, “such a one I struck from his horse ere he could discharge his piece—such another I overthrew, horse and man;” then you ride to your castle, and—

GOETZ.

And what?

MARTIN.

And your wife—(*Fills a glass.*) To her health! (*He wipes his eyes.*) You have one?

GOETZ.

A virtuous, noble wife!

MARTIN.

Happy the man who possesses a virtuous wife, his life is doubled. This blessing was denied me, yet was woman the glory or crown of creation.

GOETZ.

(*Aside.*) I grieve for him. The sense of his condition preys upon his heart.

Enter George, breathless.

GEORGE.

My lord, my lord, I hear horses in full gallop!—two of them—'tis they for certain.

GOETZ.

Bring out my steed; let Hans mount. Farewell, dear brother; God be with you. Be cheerful and patient. He will give you ample scope.

MARTIN.

Let me request your name.

GOETZ.

Pardon me—Farewell!

[Gives his left hand.

MARTIN.

Why do you give the left?—Am I unworthy of the knightly right hand?

GOETZ.

Were you the Emperor, you must be satisfied with this. My right hand, though not useless in combat, is unresponsive to the grasp of affection. It is one with its mailed gauntlet—You see, it is *iron!*

MARTIN.

Then art thou Goetz of Berlichingen. I thank thee, Heaven, who hast shown me the man whom princes hate, but to whom the oppressed throng! *(He takes his right hand.)* Withdraw not this hand: let me kiss it.

GOETZ.

You must not!

MARTIN.

Let me, let me—Thou hand, more worthy even than the saintly relic through which the most sacred blood has flowed! lifeless instrument, quickened by the noblest spirit's faith in God.

[Goetz *adjusts his helmet and takes his lance.*

MARTIN.

There was a monk among us about a year ago, who visited you when your hand was shot off at the siege of Landshut. He used to tell us what you suffered, and your grief at being disabled for your profession of arms; till you remembered having heard of one who had also lost a hand, and yet served long as a gallant knight—I shall never forget it.

Enter the two Troopers. They speak apart with Goetz.

MARTIN.

(*Continuing.*) I shall never forget his words uttered in the noblest, the most childlike trust in God: “If I had twelve hands, what would they avail me without thy grace? then may I with only one—”

GOETZ.

In the wood of Haslach then. (*Turns to Martin.*) Farewell, worthy brother!

[*Embraces him.*

MARTIN.

Forget me not, as I shall never forget thee!

[*Exeunt Goetz and his Troopers.*

MARTIN.

How my heart beat at the sight of him. He spoke not, yet my spirit recognized his. What rapture to behold a great man!

GEORGE.

Reverend sir, you will sleep here?

MARTIN.

Can I have a bed?

GEORGE.

No, sir! I know of beds only by hearsay; in our quarters there is nothing but straw.

MARTIN.

It will serve. What is thy name?

GEORGE.

George, reverend sir.

MARTIN.

George! Thou hast a gallant patron saint.

GEORGE.

They say he was a trooper; that is what I intend to be!

MARTIN.

Stop! (*Takes a picture from his breviary and gives it to him.*) There behold him—follow his example; be brave, and fear God.

[Exit into the cottage.]

GEORGE.

Ah! what a splendid gray horse! If I had but one like that—and the golden armor. There is an ugly dragon. At present I shoot nothing but sparrows. O St. George! make me but tall and strong; give me a lance, armor and such a horse, and then let the dragons come!

[Exit.]



Fr. Pecht del.

published by George Barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Elizabeth

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SCENE III.—

An Apartment In Jaxthausen, The Castle Of Goetz Von Berlichingen.



Elizabeth, Maria and Charles discovered.

CHARLES.

Pray now, dear aunt, tell me again that story about the good child; it is so pretty—

MARIA.

Do you tell it to me, little rogue! that I may see if you have paid attention.

CHARLES.

Wait then till I think.—“There was once upon—” Yes—“There was once upon a time a child, and his mother was sick; so the child went—”

MARIA.

No, no!—“Then his mother said, ‘Dear child—’ ”

CHARLES.

“ ‘I am sick—’ ”

MARIA.

“ ‘And cannot go out.’ ”

CHARLES.

“And gave him money and said, ‘Go and buy yourself a breakfast.’ There came a poor man—”

MARIA.

“The child went. There met him an old man who was—.” Now, Charles!

CHARLES.

“Who was—old—”

MARIA.

Of course. “Who was hardly able to walk, and said, ‘Dear child—’ ”

CHARLES.

“ ‘Give me something; I have eaten not a morsel yesterday or to-day.’ Then the child gave him the money—”

MARIA.

“That should have bought his breakfast.”

CHARLES.

“Then the old man said—”

MARIA.

“Then the old man took the child by the hand—”

CHARLES.

“By the hand, and said—and became a fine beautiful saint—and said—‘Dear child,—’ ”

MARIA.

“ ‘The holy Virgin rewards thee for thy benevolence through me: whatever sick person thou touchest—’ ”

CHARLES.

“ ‘With thy hand—.’ ” It was the right hand, I think.

MARIA.

Yes.

CHARLES.

“ ‘He will get well directly.’ ”

MARIA.

“Then the child ran home, and could not speak for joy—”

CHARLES.

“And fell upon his mother's neck and wept for joy.”

MARIA.

“Then the mother cried. ‘What is this?’ and became—” Now, Charles.

CHARLES.

“Became—became—”

MARIA.

You do not attend—“and became well. And the child cured kings and emperors, and became so rich that he built a great abbey.”

ELIZABETH.

I cannot understand why my husband stays. He has been away five days and nights, and he hoped to have finished his adventure so quickly.

MARIA.

I have long felt uneasy. Were I married to a man who continually incurred such danger, I should die within the first year.

ELIZABETH.

I thank God that he has made me of firmer stuff!

CHARLES.

But must my father ride out if it is so dangerous?

MARIA.

Such is his good pleasure.

ELIZABETH.

He must indeed, dear Charles!

CHARLES.

Why?

ELIZABETH.

Do you not remember the last time he rode out, when he brought you those nice things?

CHARLES.

Will he bring me anything now?

ELIZABETH.

I believe so. Listen: there was a tailor at Stutgard who was a capital archer, and had gained the prize at Cologne.

CHARLES.

Was it much?

ELIZABETH.

A hundred dollars; and afterwards they would not pay him.

MARIA.

That was naughty, eh, Charles?

CHARLES.

Naughty people!

ELIZABETH.

The tailor came to your father and begged him to get his money for him; then your father rode out and intercepted a party of merchants from Cologne, and kept them prisoners till they paid the money. Would you not have ridden out too?

CHARLES.

No; for one must go through a dark thick wood, where there are gypsies and witches—

ELIZABETH.

You're a fine fellow; afraid of witches!

MARIA.

Charles, it is far better to live at home in your castle like a quiet Christian knight. One may find opportunities enough of doing good on one's own lands. Even the worthiest knights do more harm than good in their excursions.

ELIZABETH.

Sister, you know not what you are saying.—God grant our boy may become braver as he grows up, and not take after that Weislingen, who has dealt so faithlessly with my husband.

MARIA.

We will not judge, Elizabeth.—My brother is highly incensed, and so are you; I am only a spectator in the matter, and can be more impartial.

ELIZABETH.

Weislingen cannot be defended.

MARIA.

What I have heard of him has interested me.—Even your husband relates many instances of his former goodness and affection.—How happy was their youth when they were both pages of honor to the margrave!

ELIZABETH.

That may be. But only tell me, how can a man ever have been good who lays snares for his best and truest friend? who has sold his services to the enemies of my husband; and who strives, by invidious misrepresentations, to poison the mind of our noble emperor, who is so gracious to us?

[*A horn is heard.*]

CHARLES.

Papa! papa! the warder sounds his horn! Joy! joy! Open the gate!

ELIZABETH.

There he comes with booty!

Enter Peter.

PETER.

We have fought—we have conquered!—God save you, noble ladies!

ELIZABETH.

Have you captured Weislingen?

PETER.

Himself, and three followers.

ELIZABETH.

How came you to stay so long?

PETER.

We lay in wait for him between Nuremberg and Bamberg, but he would not come, though we knew he had set out. At length we heard of his whereabouts; he had struck off sideways, and was staying quietly with the earl at Schwarzenberg.

ELIZABETH.

They would also fain make the earl my husband's enemy.

PETER.

I immediately told my master.—Up and away we rode into the forest of Haslach. And it was curious that while we were riding along that night, a shepherd was watching, and five wolves fell upon the flock and attacked them stoutly. Then my master laughed, and said, "Good luck to us all, dear comrades, both to you and us!" And the good omen overjoyed us. Just then Weislingen came riding towards us with four attendants—

MARIA.

How my heart beats!

PETER.

My comrade and I, as our master had commanded, threw ourselves suddenly on him, and clung to him as if we had grown together, so that he could not move, while my master and Hans fell upon the servants and overpowered them. They were all taken, except one who escaped.

ELIZABETH.

I am curious to see him. Will he arrive soon?

PETER.

They are riding through the valley, and will be here in a quarter of an hour.

MARIA.

He is no doubt cast down and dejected?

PETER.

He looks gloomy enough.

MARIA.

It will grieve me to see his distress!

ELIZABETH.

Oh, I must get food ready. You are no doubt all hungry?

PETER.

Hungry enough, in truth.

ELIZABETH.

(*To Maria.*) Take the cellar keys and bring the best wine. They have deserved it.

[*Exit Elizabeth.*]

CHARLES.

I'll go too, aunt.

MARIA.

Come then, boy.

[*Exeunt Charles and Maria.*]

PETER.

He'll never be his father, else he would have gone with me to the stable.

Enter Goetz. Weislingen, Hans and other Troopers.

GOETZ.

(Laying his helmet and sword on a table.) Unbuckle my armor, and give me my doublet. Ease will refresh me. Brother Martin, thou saidst truly. You have kept us long on the watch, Weislingen!

[Weislingen paces up and down in silence.]

GOETZ.

Be of good cheer! Come, unarm yourself! Where are your clothes? I hope nothing has been lost. *(To the attendants.)* Go, ask his servants; open the baggage and see that nothing is missing. Or I can lend you some of mine.



artist: a. wagner.

GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN. ACT I.

the capture of weislingen.

WEISLINGEN.

Let me remain as I am—it is all one.

GOETZ.

I can give you a handsome doublet, but it is only of linen; it has grown too tight for me. I wore it at the marriage of my Lord the Palsgrave, when your bishop was so incensed at me. About a fortnight before I had sunk two of his vessels upon the Main.—I was going upstairs in the Stag at Heidelberg, with Franz von Sickingen. Before you get quite to the top there is a landing-place with iron rails—there stood the bishop, and gave his hand to Franz as he passed, and to me also as I followed close behind him. I laughed in my sleeve, and went to the Landgrave of Hanau, who was always a kind friend to me, and said, “The bishop has given me his hand, but I’ll wager he did not know me.” The bishop heard me, for I was speaking loud on purpose. He came to us angrily, and said, “True, I gave thee my hand, because I knew thee not.” To which I answered, “I know that, my lord; and so here you have your shake of the hand back again!” The manikin grew red as a turkey-cock with spite, and

he ran up into the room and complained to the Palsgrave Lewis and the Prince of Nassau. We have laughed over the scene again and again.

WEISLINGEN.

I wish you would leave me to myself.

GOETZ.

Why so? I entreat you be of good cheer. You are my prisoner, but I will not abuse my power.

WEISLINGEN.

I have no fear of that. That is your duty as a knight.

GOETZ.

And you know how sacred it is to me.

WEISLINGEN.

I am your prisoner—the rest matters not.

GOETZ.

You should not say so. Had you been taken by a prince, fettered and cast into a dungeon, your gaoler directed to drive sleep from your eyes—

Enter Servants with clothes. Weislingen unarms himself. Enter Charles.

CHARLES.

Good-morrow, papa!

GOETZ.

(Kisses him.) Good-morrow, boy! How have you been this long time?

CHARLES.

Very well, father! Aunt says I am a good boy.

GOETZ.

Does she?

CHARLES.

Have you brought me anything?

GOETZ.

Nothing this time.

CHARLES.

I have learned a great deal.

GOETZ.

Ay!

CHARLES.

Shall I tell you about the good child?

GOETZ.

After dinner.

CHARLES.

I know something else, too.

GOETZ.

What may that be?

CHARLES.

“Jaxthausen is a village and castle on the Jaxt, which has appertained in property and heritage for two hundred years to the Lords of Berlichingen—”

GOETZ.

Do you know the Lord of Berlichingen? (*Charles stares at him. Aside.*) His learning is so abstruse that he does not know his own father. To whom does Jaxthausen belong?

CHARLES.

“Jaxthausen is a village and castle upon the Jaxt—”

GOETZ.

I did not ask that. I knew every path, pass and ford about the place before ever I knew the name of the village, castle or river.—Is your mother in the kitchen?

CHARLES.

Yes, papa! They are cooking a lamb and turnips.

GOETZ.

Do you know that too. Jack Turnspit?

CHARLES.

And my aunt is roasting an apple for me to eat after dinner—

GOETZ.

Can't you eat it raw?

CHARLES.

It tastes better roasted.

GOETZ.

You must have a titbit, must you?—Weislingen, I will be with you immediately. I must go and see my wife.—Come, Charles!

CHARLES.

Who is that man?

GOETZ.

Bid him welcome. Tell him to be merry.

CHARLES.

There's my hand for you, man! Be merry—for the dinner will soon be ready.

WEISLINGEN.

(Takes up the child and kisses him.) Happy boy! that knowest no worse evil than the delay of dinner. May you live to have much joy in your son, Berlichingen!

GOETZ.

Where there is most light the shades are deepest. Yet I should thank God for it. We'll see what they are about.

[Exit with Charles and Servants.]

WEISLINGEN.

Oh, that I could but wake and find this all a dream! In the power of Berlichingen!—from whom I had scarcely detached myself—whose remembrance I shunned like fire—whom I hoped to overpower! and he still the old true-hearted Goetz! Gracious God! what will be the end of it? O Adelbert! Led back to the very hall where we played as children; when thou didst love and prize him as thy soul! Who can know him and hate him? Alas! I am so thoroughly insignificant here. Happy days! ye are gone. There, in his chair by the chimney, sat old Berlichingen, while we played around him, and loved each other like cherubs! How anxious the bishop and all my friends will be! Well, the whole country will sympathize with my misfortune. But what avails it? Can they give me the peace after which I strive?

Re-enter Goetz with wine and goblets.

GOETZ.

We'll take a glass while dinner is preparing. Come, sit down—think yourself at home! Fancy you've come once more to see Goetz. It is long since we have sat and emptied a flagon together. *(Lifts his glass.)* Come: a light heart!

WEISLINGEN.

Those times are gone by.

GOETZ.

God forbid! To be sure, we shall hardly pass more pleasant days than those we spent together at the margrave's court, when we were inseparable night and day. I think with pleasure on my youth. Do you remember the scuffle I had with the Polander, whose pomaded and frizzled hair I chanced to rub with my sleeve?

WEISLINGEN.

It was at table; and he struck at you with a knife.

GOETZ.

I gave it him, however; and you had a quarrel upon that account with his comrades. We always stuck together like brave fellows, and were the admiration of every one.

(Raises his glass.) Castor and Pollux! It used to rejoice my heart when the margrave so called us.

WEISLINGEN.

The Bishop of Wurtzburg first gave us the name.

GOETZ.

That bishop was a learned man, and withal so kind and gentle. I shall remember as long as I live how he used to caress us, praise our friendship, and say, "Happy is the man who is his friend's twin-brother."

WEISLINGEN.

No more of that.

GOETZ.

Why not? I know nothing more delightful after fatigue than to talk over old times. Indeed, when I recall to mind how we bore good and bad fortune together, and were all in all to each other, and how I thought this was to continue forever. Was not that my sole comfort when my hand was shot away at Landshut, and you nursed and tended me like a brother? I hoped Adelbert would in future be my right hand. And now—

WEISLINGEN.

Alas!

GOETZ.

Hadst thou but listened to me when I begged thee to go with me to Brabant, all would have been well. But then that unhappy turn for court-dangling seized thee, and thy coquetting and flirting with the women. I always told thee, when thou would'st mix with these lounging, vain court sycophants, and entertain them with gossip about unlucky matches and seduced girls, scandal about absent friends, and all such trash as they take interest in—I always said, Adelbert, thou wilt become a rogue!

WEISLINGEN.

To what purpose is all this?

GOETZ.

Would to God I could forget it, or that it were otherwise! Art thou not free and nobly born as any in Germany; independent, subject to the emperor alone; and dost thou

crouch among vassals? What is the bishop to thee? Granted, he is thy neighbor, and can do thee a shrewd turn; hast thou not power and friends to requite him in kind? Art thou ignorant of the dignity of a free knight, who depends only upon God, the emperor, and himself, that thou degradest thyself to be the courtier of a stubborn, jealous priest?

WEISLINGEN.

Let me speak!

GOETZ.

What hast thou to say?

WEISLINGEN.

You look upon the princes as the wolf upon the shepherd. And can you blame them for defending their territories and property? Are they a moment secure from the unruly knights, who plunder their vassals even upon the highroads, and sack their castles and villages? Upon the other hand, our country's enemies threaten to overrun the lands of our beloved emperor, yet, while he needs the princes' assistance, they can scarce defend their own lives; is it not our good genius which at this moment leads them to devise means of procuring peace for Germany, of securing the administration of justice, and giving to great and small the blessings of quiet? And can you blame us, Berlichingen, for securing the protection of the powerful princes, our neighbors, whose assistance is at hand, rather than relying on that of the emperor, who is so far removed from us, and is hardly able to protect himself?

GOETZ.

Yes, yes, I understand you. Weislingen, were the princes as you paint them, we should all have what we want. Peace and quiet! No doubt! Every bird of prey naturally likes to eat its plunder undisturbed. The general weal! If they would but take the trouble to study that. And they trifle with the emperor shamefully. Every day some new tinker or other comes to give his opinion. The emperor means well, and would gladly put things to rights; but because he happens to understand a thing readily, and by a single word can put a thousand hands into motion, he thinks everything will be as speedily and as easily accomplished. Ordinance upon ordinance is promulgated, each nullifying the last, while the princes obey only those which serve their own interest, and prate of peace and security of the empire, while they are treading under foot their weaker neighbors. I will be sworn, many a one thanks God in his heart that the Turk keeps the emperor fully employed!



artist: a. wagner.

GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN. ACT I.

götz and his son charles.

WEISLINGEN.

You view things your own way.

GOETZ.

So does every one. The question is, which is the right way to view them? And your plans at least shun the day.

WEISLINGEN.

You may say what you will; I am your prisoner.

GOETZ.

If your conscience is free, so are you. How was it with the general tranquillity? I remember going as a boy of sixteen with the margrave to the Imperial Diet. What harangues the princes made! And the clergy were the most vociferous of all. Your bishop thundered into the emperor's ears his regard for justice, till one thought it had become part and parcel of his being. And now he has imprisoned a page of mine, at a time when our quarrels were all accommodated, and I had buried them in oblivion. Is not all settled between us? What does he want with the boy?

WEISLINGEN.

It was done without his knowledge.

GOETZ.

Then why does he not release him?

WEISLINGEN.

He did not conduct himself as he ought.

GOETZ.

Not conduct himself as he ought? By my honor he performed his duty, as surely as he has been imprisoned both with your knowledge and the bishop's! Do you think I am come into the world this very day, that I cannot see what all this means?

WEISLINGEN.

You are suspicious, and do us wrong.

GOETZ.

Weislingen, shall I deal openly with you? Inconsiderable as I am, I am a thorn in your side, and Selbitz and Sickingen are no less so, because we are firmly resolved to die sooner than to thank any one but God for the air we breathe, or pay homage to any one but the emperor. This is why they worry me in every possible way, blacken my character with the emperor, and among my friends and neighbors, and spy about for advantage over me. They would have me out of the way at any price; that was your reason for imprisoning the page whom you knew I had despatched for intelligence: and now you say he did not conduct himself as he should do, because he would not betray my secrets. And you, Weislingen, are their tool!

WEISLINGEN.

Berlichingen!

GOETZ.

Not a word more. I am an enemy to long explanations; they deceive either the maker or the hearer, and generally both.

Enter Charles.

CHARLES.

Dinner is ready, father!

GOETZ.

Good news! Come, I hope the company of my women folk will amuse you. You always liked the girls. Ay, ay, they can tell many pretty stories about you. Come!

[Exeunt.]



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SCENE IV.—

The Bishop Of Bamberg's Palace.



[*The Bishop, the Abbot of Fulda, Olearius, Liebtraut and Courtiers at table. The dessert and wine before them.*]

BISHOP.

Are there many of the German nobility studying at Bologna?

OLEARIUS.

Both nobles and citizens; and, I do not exaggerate in saying that they acquire the most brilliant reputation. It is a proverb in the university: "As studious as a German noble." For while the citizens display a laudable diligence, in order to compensate by learning for their want of birth, the nobles strive, with praiseworthy emulation, to enhance their ancestral dignity by superior attainments.

ABBOT.

Indeed!

LIEBTRAUT.

What may one not live to hear. We live and learn, as the proverb says. "As studious as a German noble." I never heard that before.

OLEARIUS.

Yes, they are the admiration of the whole university. Some of the oldest and most learned will soon be coming back with their doctor's degree. The emperor will doubtless be happy to intrust to them the highest offices.

BISHOP.

He cannot fail to do so.

ABBOT.

Do you know, for instance, a young man—a Hessian?—

OLEARIUS.

There are many Hessians with us.

ABBOT.

His name is—is—. Does nobody remember it? His mother was a Von—. Oh! his father had but one eye, and was a marshal—

LIEBTRAUT.

Von Wildenholz!

ABBOT.

Right. Von Wildenholz.

OLEARIUS.

I know him well. A young man of great abilities. He is particularly esteemed for his talent in disputation.

ABBOT.

He has that from his mother.

LIEBTRAUT.

Yes; but his father would never praise her for that quality.

BISHOP.

How call you the emperor who wrote your *Corpus Juris*?

OLEARIUS.

Justinian.

BISHOP.

A worthy prince:—here's to his memory!

OLEARIUS.

To his memory!

[They drink.

ABBOT.

That must be a fine book.

OLEARIUS.

It may be called a book of books; a digest of all laws; there you find the sentence ready for every case, and where the text is antiquated or obscure, the deficiency is supplied by notes, with which the most learned men have enriched this truly admirable work.

ABBOT.

A digest of all laws!—Indeed!—Then the ten commandments must be in it.

OLEARIUS.

Implicitè; not explicitè.

ABBOT.

That's what I mean; plainly set down, without any explication.

BISHOP.

But the best is, you tell us that a state can be maintained in the most perfect tranquillity and subordination by receiving and rightly following that statute-book.

OLEARIUS.

Doubtless.

BISHOP.

All doctors of laws!

[They drink.

OLEARIUS.

I'll tell them of this abroad. (*They drink.*) Would to Heaven that men thought thus in my country.

ABBOT.

Whence come you, most learned sir?

OLEARIUS.

From Frankfort, at your eminence's service!

BISHOP.

You gentlemen of the law, then, are not held in high estimation there?—How comes that?

OLEARIUS.

It is strange enough—when I last went there to collect my father's effects, the mob almost stoned me, when they heard I was a lawyer.

ABBOT.

God bless me!

OLEARIUS.

It is because their tribunal, which they hold in great respect, is composed of people totally ignorant of the Roman law. An intimate acquaintance with the internal condition of the town, and also of its foreign relations, acquired through age and experience, is deemed a sufficient qualification. They decide according to certain established edicts of their own, and some old customs recognized in the city and neighborhood.

ABBOT.

That's very right.

OLEARIUS.

But far from sufficient. The life of man is short, and in one generation cases of every description cannot occur; our statute-book is a collection of precedents, furnished by the experience of many centuries. Besides, the wills and opinions of men are variable; one man deems right to-day what another disapproves to-morrow; and confusion and

injustice are the inevitable results. Law determines absolutely, and its decrees are immutable.

ABBOT.

That's certainly better.

OLEARIUS.

But the common people won't acknowledge that; and, eager as they are after novelty, they hate any innovation in their laws which leads them out of the beaten track, be it ever so much for the better. They hate a jurist as if he were a cut-purse or a subverter of the state, and become furious if one attempts to settle among them.

LIEBTRAUT.

You come from Frankfort?—I know the place well—we tasted your good cheer at the emperor's coronation. You say your name is Olearius—I know no one in the town of your name.

OLEARIUS.

My father's name was Oilman; but after the example, and with the advice of many jurists, I have Latinized the name to Olearius for the decoration of the title-page of my legal treatises.

LIEBTRAUT.

You did well to translate yourself: a prophet is not honored in his own country—in your native guise you might have shared the same fate.

OLEARIUS.

That was not the reason.

LIEBTRAUT.

All things have two reasons.

ABBOT.

A prophet is not honored in his own country.

LIEBTRAUT.

But do you know why, most reverend sir?

ABBOT.

Because he was born and bred there.

LIEBTRAUT.

Well, that may be one reason. The other is, because, upon a nearer acquaintance with these gentlemen, the halo of glory and honor shed around them by the distant haze totally disappears; they are then seen to be nothing more than tiny rushlights!

OLEARIUS.

It seems you are placed here to tell pleasant truths.

LIEBTRAUT.

As I have wit enough to discover them, I do not lack courage to utter them.

OLEARIUS.

Yet you lack the art of applying them well.

LIEBTRAUT.

It is no matter where you place a cupping-glass provided it draws blood.

OLEARIUS.

Barbers are known by their dress, and no one takes offence at their scurvy jests. Let me advise you as a precaution to bear the badge of your order—a cap and bells!

LIEBTRAUT.

Where did you take your degree? I only ask, so that, should I ever take a fancy to a fool's cap, I could at once go to the right shop.

OLEARIUS.

You carry face enough.

LIEBTRAUT.

And you paunch.

[The Bishop and Abbot laugh.]

BISHOP.

Not so warm, gentlemen! Some other subject. At table all should be fair and quiet. Choose another subject, Liebtraut.

LIEBTRAUT.

Opposite Frankfort lies a village called Sachsenhausen—

OLEARIUS.

(*To the Bishop.*) What news of the Turkish expedition, your excellency?

BISHOP.

The emperor has most at heart, first of all to restore peace to the empire, put an end to feuds, and secure the strict administration of justice: then, according to report, he will go in person against the enemies of his country and of Christendom. At present internal dissensions give him enough to do; and the empire, despite half a hundred treaties of peace, is one scene of murder. Franconia, Swabia, the Upper Rhine and the surrounding countries are laid waste by presumptuous and reckless knights.—And here, at Bamberg, Sickingen, Selbitz with one leg, and Goetz with the iron hand, scoff at the imperial authority.

ABBOT.

If his majesty does not exert himself, these fellows will at last thrust us into sacks.

LIEBTRAUT.

He would be a sturdy fellow indeed who should thrust the wine-butt of Fulda into a sack!

BISHOP.

Goetz especially has been for many years my mortal foe, and annoys me beyond description. But it will not last long, I hope. The emperor holds his court at Augsburg. We have taken our measures, and cannot fail of success.—Doctor, do you know Adelbert von Weislingen?

OLEARIUS.

No, your eminence.

BISHOP.

If you stay till his arrival you will have the pleasure of seeing a most noble, accomplished and gallant knight.

OLEARIUS.

He must be an excellent man indeed to deserve such praises from such a mouth.

LIEBTRAUT.

And yet he was not bred at any university.

BISHOP.

We know that. (*The attendant sthrong to the window.*) What's the matter?

ATTENDANT.

Färber, Weislingen's servant, is riding in at the castle-gate.

BISHOP.

See what he brings. He most likely comes to announce his master.

[*Exit Liebtraut. They stand up and drink.*]

Liebtraut *re-enters*.

BISHOP.

What news?

LIEBTRAUT.

I wish another had to tell it—Weislingen is a prisoner.

BISHOP.

What?

LIEBTRAUT.

Berlichingen has seized him and three troopers near Haslach. One is escaped to tell you.

ABBOT.

A Job's messenger!

OLEARIUS.

I grieve from my heart.

BISHOP.

I will see the servant; bring him up—I will speak with him myself. Conduct him into my cabinet.

[*Exit* Bishop.

ABBOT.

(*Sitting down.*) Another draught, however.

[*The Servants fill round.*

OLEARIUS.

Will not your reverence take a turn in the garden? "Post cœnam stabis, seu passus mille meabis."

LIEBTRAUT.

In truth, sitting is unhealthy for you. You might get an apoplexy. (*The Abbot rises. Aside.*) Let me but once get him out of doors, I will give him exercise enough!

[*Exeunt.*



Fr. Pecht del

published by George Barrie

[*Editor: illegible text*]

Maria

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SCENE V.—

Jaxthausen.



Maria. Weislingen.

MARIA.

You love me, you say. I willingly believe it, and hope to be happy with you, and make you happy also.

WEISLINGEN.

I feel nothing but that I am entirely thine.

[Embraces her.

MARIA.

Softly!—I gave you one kiss for earnest, but you must not take possession of what is only yours conditionally.

WEISLINGEN.

You are too strict, Maria! Innocent love is pleasing in the sight of Heaven, instead of giving offence.

MARIA.

It may be so. But I think differently; for I have been taught that caresses are, like fetters, strong through their union, and that maidens, when they love, are weaker than Samson after the loss of his locks.

WEISLINGEN.

Who taught you so?

MARIA.

The abbess of my convent. Till my sixteenth year I was with her—and it is only with you that I enjoy happiness like that her company afforded me. She had loved, and could tell—she had a most affectionate heart. Oh! she was an excellent woman!

WEISLINGEN.

Then you resemble her. (*Takes her hand.*) What will become of me when I am compelled to leave you?

MARIA.

(*Withdrawing her hand.*) You will feel some regret, I hope, for I know what my feelings will be. But you must away!

WEISLINGEN.

I know it, dearest! and I will—for well I feel what happiness I shall purchase by this sacrifice! Now, blessed be your brother, and the day on which he rode out to capture me!

MARIA.

His heart was full of hope for you and himself. Farewell! he said, at his departure, I go to recover my friend.

WEISLINGEN.

That he has done. Would that I had studied the arrangement and security of my property, instead of neglecting it, and dallying at that worthless court!—then could'st thou have been instantly mine.

MARIA.

Even delay has its pleasures.

WEISLINGEN.

Say not so, Maria, else I shall fear that thy heart is less warm than mine. True, I deserve punishment, but what hopes will brighten every step of my journey! To be wholly thine, to live only for thee and thy circle of friends—far removed from the world, in the enjoyment of all the raptures which two hearts can mutually bestow. What is the favor of princes, what the applause of the universe, to such simple, yet unequalled felicity? Many have been my hopes and wishes; but this happiness surpasses them all.

*Enter*Goetz.

GOETZ.

Your page has returned. He can scarcely utter a word for hunger and fatigue. My wife has ordered him some refreshment. Thus much I have gathered: the bishop will not give up my page; imperial commissioners are to be appointed, and a day named upon which the matter may be adjusted. Be that as it may, Adelbert, you are free. Pledge me but your hand that you will for the future give neither open nor secret assistance to my enemies.

WEISLINGEN.

Here I grasp thy hand. From this moment be our friendship and confidence firm and unalterable as a primary law of nature! Let me take this hand also (*takes Maria's hand*), and with it the possession of this most noble lady.

GOETZ.

May I say yes for you?

MARIA.

(*Timidly.*) If—if it is your wish—

GOETZ.

Happily our wishes do not differ on this point. Thou need'st not blush—the glance of thine eye betrays thee. Well then, Weislingen, join hands, and I say *Amen!* My friend and brother! I thank thee, sister; thou canst do more than spin flax, for thou hast drawn a thread which can fetter this wandering bird of paradise. Yet you look not quite at your ease, Adelbert. What troubles you? *I* am perfectly happy! What I but hoped in a dream I now see with my eyes, and feel as though I were still dreaming. Now my dream is explained. I thought last night that, in token of reconciliation, I gave you this iron hand, and that you held it so fast that it broke away from my arm; I started, and awoke. Had I but dreamed a little longer I should have seen how you gave me a new living hand. You must away this instant, to put your castle and property in order. That cursed court has made you neglect both. I must call my wife.—Elizabeth!

MARIA.

How overjoyed my brother is!

WEISLINGEN.

Yet I am still more so.

GOETZ.

(To Maria.) You will have a pleasant residence.

MARIA.

Franconia is a fine country.

WEISLINGEN.

And I may venture to say that my castle lies in the most fertile and delicious part of it.

GOETZ.

That you may, and I can confirm it. Look you, here flows the Main, around a hill clothed with cornfields and vineyards, its top crowned with a Gothic castle; then the river makes a sharp turn, and glides round behind the rock on which the castle is built. The windows of the great hall look perpendicularly down upon the river, and command a prospect of many miles in extent.

Enter Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH.

What would'st thou?

GOETZ.

You too must give your hand, and say, God bless you! They are a pair.

ELIZABETH.

So soon?

GOETZ.

But not unexpectedly.

ELIZABETH.

May you ever adore her as ardently as while you sought her hand. And then, as your love, so be your happiness!

WEISLINGEN.

Amen! I seek no happiness but under this condition.

GOETZ.

The bridegroom, my love, must leave us for awhile; for this great change will involve many smaller ones. He must first withdraw himself from the bishop's court, in order that their friendship may gradually cool. Then he must rescue his property from the hands of selfish stewards, and—but come, sister; come, Elizabeth; let us leave him; his page has no doubt private messages for him.

WEISLINGEN.

Nothing but what you may hear.

GOETZ.

'Tis needless. Franconians and Swabians! Ye are now more closely united than ever. Now we shall be able to keep the princes in check.

*[Exeunt*Goetz, Elizabeth, Maria.

WEISLINGEN.

(Alone.) God in heaven! And canst Thou have reserved such happiness for one so unworthy? It is too much for my heart. How meanly I depended upon wretched fools, whom I thought I was governing, upon the smile of princes, upon the homage of those around me! Goetz, my faithful Goetz, thou hast restored me to myself, and thou, Maria, hast completed my reformation. I feel free, as if brought from a dungeon into the open air. Bamberg will I never see more—will snap all the shameful bonds that have held me beneath myself. My heart expands, and never more will I degrade myself by struggling for a greatness that is denied me. He alone is great and happy who fills his own station of independence, and has neither to command nor to obey.

*Enter*Francis.

FRANCIS.

God save you, noble sir! I bring you so many salutations that I know not where to begin. Bamberg, and ten miles round, cry with a thousand voices, God save you!

WEISLINGEN.

Welcome, Francis! Bring'st thou aught else?

FRANCIS.

You are held in such consideration at court that it cannot be expressed.

WEISLINGEN.

That will not last long.

FRANCIS.

As long as you live; and after your death it will shine with more lustre than the brazen characters on a monument. How they took your misfortune to heart!

WEISLINGEN.

And what said the bishop?

FRANCIS.

His eager curiosity poured out question upon question, without giving me time to answer. He knew of your accident already; for Färber, who escaped from Haslach, had brought him the tidings. But he wished to hear every particular. He asked so anxiously whether you were wounded. I told him you were whole, from the hair of your head to the nail of your little toe.

WEISLINGEN.

And what said he to the proposals?

FRANCIS.

He was ready at first to give up the page and a ransom to boot for your liberty. But when he heard you were to be dismissed without ransom, and merely to give your parole that the boy should be set free, he was for putting off Berlichingen with some pretence. He charged me with a thousand messages to you, more than I can ever utter. Oh, how he harangued! It was a long sermon upon the text, "I cannot live without Weislingen!"

WEISLINGEN.

He must learn to do so.

FRANCIS.

What mean you? He said, "Bid him hasten; all the court waits for him."

WEISLINGEN.

Let them wait on. I shall not go to court.

FRANCIS.

Not go to court! My gracious lord, how comes that? If you knew what I know; could you but dream what I have seen—

WEISLINGEN.

What ails thee?

FRANCIS.

The bare remembrance takes away my senses. Bamberg is no longer Bamberg. An angel of heaven, in semblance of woman, has taken up her abode there, and has made it a paradise.

WEISLINGEN.

Is that all?

FRANCIS.

May I become a shaven friar if the first glimpse of her does not drive you frantic!

WEISLINGEN.

Who is it, then?

FRANCIS.

Adelaide von Walldorf.

WEISLINGEN.

Indeed! I have heard much of her beauty.

FRANCIS.

Heard! You might as well say I have *seen* music. So far is the tongue from being able to rehearse the slightest particle of her beauty, that the very eye which beholds her cannot drink it all in.

WEISLINGEN.

You are mad.

FRANCIS.

That may well be. The last time I was in her company I had no more command over my senses than if I had been drunk, or, I may rather say, I felt like a glorified saint enjoying the angelic vision! All my senses exalted, more lively and more perfect than ever, yet not one at its owner's command.

WEISLINGEN.

That is strange!

FRANCIS.

As I took leave of the bishop, she sat by him; they were playing at chess. He was very gracious; gave me his hand to kiss, and said much, of which I heard not a syllable, for I was looking on his fair antagonist. Her eye was fixed upon the board, as if meditating a bold move.—A touch of subtle watchfulness around the mouth and cheek.—I could have wished to be the ivory king. The mixture of dignity and feeling on her brow—and the dazzling lustre of her face and neck, heightened by her raven tresses—

WEISLINGEN.

The theme has made you quite poetical.

FRANCIS.

I feel at this moment what constitutes poetic inspiration—a heart altogether wrapped in one idea. As the bishop ended, and I made my obeisance, she looked up and said, “Offer to your master the best wishes of an unknown. Tell him he must come soon. New friends await him; he must not despise them, though he is already so rich in old ones.” I would have answered, but the passage betwixt my heart and my tongue was closed, and I only bowed. I would have given all I had for permission to kiss but one of her fingers! As I stood thus, the bishop let fall a pawn, and in stooping to pick it up, I touched the hem of her garment. Transport thrilled through my limbs, and I scarce know how I left the room.

WEISLINGEN.

Is her husband at court?

FRANCIS.

She has been a widow these four months, and is residing at the court of Bamberg to divert her melancholy. You will see her; and to meet her glance is to bask in the sunshine of spring.

WEISLINGEN.

She would not make so strong an impression on me.

FRANCIS.

I hear you are as good as married.

WEISLINGEN.

Would I were really so! My gentle Maria will be the happiness of my life. The sweetness of her soul beams through her mild blue eyes, and, like an angel of innocence and love, she guides my heart to the paths of peace and felicity! Pack up, and then to my castle. I will not to Bamberg, though St. Bede came in person to fetch me.

[*Exit* Weislingen.

FRANCIS.

(*Alone.*) Not to Bamberg! Heavens forbid! But let me hope the best. Maria is beautiful and amiable, and a prisoner or an invalid might easily fall in love with her. Her eyes beam with compassion and melancholy sympathy; but in thine, Adelaide, is life, fire, spirit. I would . . . I am a fool; one glance from her has made me so. My master must to Bamberg, and I also, and either recover my senses or gaze them quite away.



Fr. Pecht del

published by george barrie

[*Editor: illegible text*]

Adelaide

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ACT II.



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SCENE I.—

Bamberg. A Hall.

[*The Bishop and Adelaide (playing at chess), Liebtraut (with a guitar), Ladies and Courtiers (standing in groups).*]

LIEBTRAUT.

(Plays and sings.)

Armed with quiver and bow,
With his torch all aglow,
Young Cupid comes winging his flight.
Courage glows in his eyes,
As adown from the skies,
He rushes, impatient for fight.
Up! up!
On! on!
Hark! the bright quiver rings!
Hark! the rustle of wings!
All hail to the delicate sprite!
They welcome the urchin;—
Ah, maidens, beware!
He finds every bosom
Unguarded and bare.
In the light of his flambeau
He kindles his darts;—
They fondle and hug him
And press to their hearts.

ADELAIDE.

Your thoughts are not in your game. Check to the king!

BISHOP.

There is still a way of escape.

ADELAIDE.

You will not be able to hold out long. Check to the king!

LIEBTRAUT.

Were I a great prince, I would not play at this game, and would forbid it at court and throughout the whole land.

ADELAIDE.

'Tis indeed a touchstone of the brain.

LIEBTRAUT.

Not on that account. I would rather hear a funeral bell, the cry of the ominous bird, the howling of that snarling watch-dog, conscience; rather would I hear these through the deepest sleep, than from bishops, knights and such beasts, the eternal—Check to the king!

BISHOP.

Into whose head could such an idea enter?

LIEBTRAUT.

A man's, for example, endowed with a weak body and a strong conscience, which, for the most part, indeed, accompany each other. Chess is called a royal game, and is said to have been invented for a king, who rewarded the inventor with a mine of wealth. If this be so, I can picture him to myself. He was a minor, either in understanding or in years, under the guardianship of his mother or his wife; had down upon his chin, and flaxen hair around his temples; was pliant as a willow-shoot, and liked to play at draughts with women, not from passion, God forbid! only for pastime. His tutor, too active for a scholar, too intractable for a man of the world, invented the game, *in usum Delphini*, that was so homogeneous with his majesty—and so on.

ADELAIDE.

Checkmate! You should fill up the chasms in our histories, Liebtraut.

[*They rise.*

LIEBTRAUT.

To supply those in our family registers would be more profitable. The merits of our ancestors being available for a common object with their portraits, namely, to cover the naked sides of our chambers and of our characters, one might turn such an occupation to good account.

BISHOP.

He will not come, you say!

ADELAIDE.

I beseech you, banish him from your thoughts.

BISHOP.

What can it mean?

LIEBTRAUT.

What! The reasons may be told over like the beads of a rosary. He has been seized with a fit of compunction, of which I could soon cure him.

BISHOP.

Do so; ride to him instantly.

LIEBTRAUT.

My commission—

BISHOP.

Shall be unlimited. Spare nothing to bring him back.

LIEBTRAUT.

May I venture to use your name, gracious lady?

ADELAIDE.

With discretion.

LIEBTRAUT.

That's a vague commission.

ADELAIDE.

Do you know so little of me, or are you so young as not to understand in what tone you should speak of me to Weislingen?

LIEBTRAUT.

In the tone of a fowler's whistle, I think.

ADELAIDE.

You will never be reasonable.

LIEBTRAUT.

Does one ever become so, gracious lady?

BISHOP.

Go! go! Take the best horse in my stable; choose your servants, and bring him hither.

LIEBTRAUT.

If I do not conjure him hither, say that an old woman who charms warts and freckles knows more of sympathy than I.

BISHOP.

Yet, what will it avail? Berlichingen has wholly gained him over. He will no sooner be here than he will wish to return.

LIEBTRAUT.

He will wish it, doubtless; but can he go? A prince's squeeze of the hand and the smiles of a beauty, from these no Weislingen can tear himself away. I have the honor to take my leave.

BISHOP.

A prosperous journey!

ADELAIDE.

Adieu!

[*Exit* Liebtraut.

BISHOP.

When he is once here, I must trust to you.

ADELAIDE.

Would you make me your lime-twig?

BISHOP.

By no means.

ADELAIDE.

Your call-bird then?

BISHOP.

No; that is Liebtraut's part. I beseech you do not refuse to do for me what no other
can.

ADELAIDE.

We shall see.

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE II.—

Jaxthausen. A Hall InGoetz'SCastle.

EnterGoetzandHans von Selbitz.

SELBITZ.

Every one will applaud you for declaring feud against the Nurembergers.

GOETZ.

It would have eaten my very heart away had I remained longer their debtor. It is clear that they betrayed my page to the Bambergers. They shall have cause to remember me.

SELBITZ.

They have an old grudge against you.

GOETZ.

And I against them. I am glad they have begun the fray.

SELBITZ.

These free towns have always taken part with the priests.

GOETZ.

They have good reason.

SELBITZ.

But we will cook their porridge for them!

GOETZ.

I reckon upon you. Would that the Burgomaster of Nuremberg, with his gold chain round his neck, fell in our way, we'd astonish him with all his cleverness.

SELBITZ.

I hear Weislingen is again on your side. Does he really join in our league?

GOETZ.

Not immediately. There are reasons which prevent his openly giving us assistance; but for the present it is quite enough that he is not against us. The priest without him is what the stole would be without the priest!

SELBITZ.

When do we set forward?

GOETZ.

To-morrow or next day. There are merchants of Bamberg and Nuremberg returning from the fair of Frankfort—we may strike a good blow.

SELBITZ.

Let us hope so!

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SCENE III.—

The Bishop's Palace At Bamberg.

Adelaide and her Waiting-Maid.

ADELAIDE.

He is here, sayest thou? I can scarcely believe it.

MAID.

Had I not seen him myself, I should have doubted it.

ADELAIDE.

The bishop should frame Liebtraut in gold for such a masterpiece of skill.

MAID.

I saw him as he was about to enter the palace. He was mounted on a gray charger. The horse started when he came on the bridge, and would not move forward. The populace thronged up the street to see him. They rejoiced at the delay of the unruly horse. He was greeted on all sides, and he thanked them gracefully all round. He sat the curvetting steed with an easy indifference, and by threats and soothing brought him to the gate, followed by Liebtraut and a few servants.

ADELAIDE.

What do you think of him?

MAID.

I never saw a man who pleased me so well. He is as like that portrait of the emperor as if he were his son (*pointing to a picture*). His nose is somewhat smaller, but just such gentle light-brown eyes, just such fine light hair, and such a figure! A half melancholy expression on his face; I know not how, but he pleased me so well.

ADELAIDE.

I am curious to see him.

MAID.

He would be the husband for you!

ADELAIDE.

Foolish girl!

MAID.

Children and fools—

Enter Liebtraut.

LIEBTRAUT.

Now, gracious lady, what do I deserve?

ADELAIDE.

Horns from your wife!—for judging from the present sample of your persuasive powers you have certainly endangered the honor of many a worthy family.

LIEBTRAUT.

Not so, be assured, gracious lady.

ADELAIDE.

How did you contrive to bring him?

LIEBTRAUT.

You know how they catch snipes, and why should I detail my little stratagems to you?—First, I pretended to have heard nothing, did not understand the reason of his behavior, and put him upon the disadvantage of telling me the whole story at length—then I saw the matter in quite a different light to what he did—could not find—could not see, and so forth—then I gossiped things great and small about Bamberg, and recalled to his memory certain old recollections; and when I had succeeded in occupying his imagination I knitted together many a broken association of ideas. He knew not what to say—felt a new attraction towards Bamberg—he would, and he would not. When I found him begin to waver, and saw him too much occupied with his own feelings to suspect my sincerity, I threw over his head a halter, woven of the three powerful cords, beauty, court-favor and flattery, and dragged him hither in triumph.

ADELAIDE.

What said you of me?

LIEBTRAUT.

The simple truth—that you were in perplexity about your estates, and had hoped as he had so much influence with the emperor all would be satisfactorily settled.

ADELAIDE.

'Tis well.

LIEBTRAUT.

The bishop will introduce him to you.

ADELAIDE.

I expect them. (*Exit* Liebtraut.) And with such feelings have I seldom expected a visitor.

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SCENE IV.—

The Spessart.

Enter Selbitz, Goetz and George in the armor and dress of a trooper.

GOETZ.

So thou didst not find him, George?

GEORGE.

He had ridden to Bamberg the day before with Liebtraut and two servants.

GOETZ.

I cannot understand what this means.

SELBITZ.

I see it well—your reconciliation was almost too speedy to be lasting—Liebtraut is a cunning fellow, and has no doubt inveigled him over.

GOETZ.

Think'st thou he will become a traitor?

SELBITZ.

The first step is taken.

GOETZ.

I will never believe it. Who knows what he may have to do at court—his affairs are still unarranged. Let us hope for the best.

SELBITZ.

Would to Heaven he may deserve of your good opinion, and may act for the best!

GOETZ.

A thought strikes me!—We will disguise George in the spoils of the Bamberg trooper, and furnish him with the password—he may then ride to Bamberg, and see how matters stand.

GEORGE.

I have long wished to do so.

GOETZ.

It is thy first expedition. Be careful, boy; I should be sorry if ill befell thee.

GEORGE.

Never fear. I care not how many of them crawl about me; I think no more of them than of rats and mice.

[Exeunt.]

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SCENE V.—

The Bishop's Palace. His Cabinet.

The Bishop and Weislingen.

BISHOP.

Then thou wilt stay no longer?

WEISLINGEN.

You would not have me break my oath.

BISHOP.

I could have wished thou hadst not sworn it. What evil spirit possessed thee? Could I not have procured thy release without that? Is my influence so small in the imperial court?

WEISLINGEN.

The thing is done—excuse it as you can.

BISHOP.

I cannot see that there was the least necessity for taking such a step. To renounce me? Were there not a thousand other ways of procuring thy freedom? Had we not his page? And would I not have given gold enough to boot, and thus satisfied Berlichingen? Our operations against him and his confederates could have gone on— But, alas! I do not reflect that I am talking to his friend, who has joined him against me, and can easily counterwork the mines he himself has dug.

WEISLINGEN.

My gracious lord—

BISHOP.

And yet—when I again look on thy face, again hear thy voice—it is impossible—impossible!

WEISLINGEN.

Farewell, good my lord!

BISHOP.

I give thee my blessing—formerly when we parted I was wont to say “Till we meet again!” Now Heaven grant we meet no more!

WEISLINGEN.

Things may alter.

BISHOP.

Perhaps I may live to see thee appear as an enemy before my walls, carrying havoc through the fertile plains which now owe their flourishing condition to thee.

WEISLINGEN.

Never, my gracious lord!

BISHOP.

You cannot say so. My temporal neighbors all have a grudge against me—but while thou wert mine— Go, Weislingen! I have no more to say. Thou hast undone much. Go—

WEISLINGEN.

I know not what to answer.

[Exit Bishop.

Enter Francis.

FRANCIS.

The Lady Adelaide expects you. She is not well, but she will not let you depart without bidding her adieu.

WEISLINGEN.

Come.

FRANCIS.

Do we go then for certain?

WEISLINGEN.

This very night.

FRANCIS.

I feel as if I were about to leave the world—

WEISLINGEN.

I too, and as if besides I knew not whither to go.

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SCENE VI.—

Adelaide's Apartment.

Adelaide and Waiting-Maid.

MAID.

You are pale, gracious lady!

ADELAIDE.

I love him not, yet I wish him to stay—for I am fond of his company, though I should dislike him for my husband.

MAID.

Does your ladyship think he will go?

ADELAIDE.

He is even now bidding the bishop farewell.

MAID.

He has yet a severe struggle to undergo.

ADELAIDE.

What meanest thou?

MAID.

Why do you ask, gracious lady? The barbed hook is in his heart—ere he tear it away he must bleed to death.

Enter Weislingen.

WEISLINGEN.

You are not well, gracious lady?

ADELAIDE.

That must be indifferent to you—you leave us, leave us forever: what matters it to you whether we live or die?

WEISLINGEN.

You do me injustice.

ADELAIDE.

I judge you as you appear.

WEISLINGEN.

Appearances are deceitful.

ADELAIDE.

Then you are a chameleon.

WEISLINGEN.

Could you but see my heart—

ADELAIDE.

I should see fine things there.

WEISLINGEN.

Undoubtedly!—You would find your own image—

ADELAIDE.

Thrust into some dark corner with the pictures of defunct ancestors! I beseech you, Weislingen, consider with whom you speak—false words are of value only when they serve to veil our actions—a discovered masquerader plays a pitiful part. You do not disown your deeds, yet your words belie them; what are we to think of you?

WEISLINGEN.

What you will—I am so agonized at reflecting on what I am, that I little reck for what I am taken.

ADELAIDE.

You came to say farewell.

WEISLINGEN.

Permit me to kiss your hand, and I will say adieu!— You remind me—I did not think—but I am troublesome—

ADELAIDE.

You misinterpret me. Since you will depart, I only wished to assist your resolution.

WEISLINGEN.

Oh, say rather, I must!—were I not compelled by my knightly word—my solemn engagement—

ADELAIDE.

Go to! Talk of that to maidens who read the tale of Theuerdanck, and wish that they had such a husband.—Knightly word!—Nonsense!

WEISLINGEN.

You do not think so?

ADELAIDE.

On my honor, you are dissembling. What have you promised? and to whom? You have pledged your alliance to a traitor to the emperor, at the very moment when he incurred the ban of the empire by taking you prisoner. Such an agreement is no more binding than an extorted, unjust oath. And do not our laws release you from such oaths? Go, tell that to children, who believe in Rübzahl. There is something behind all this.—To become an enemy of the empire—a disturber of public happiness and tranquillity, an enemy of the emperor, the associate of a robber!—Thou, Weislingen, with thy gentle soul!

WEISLINGEN.

Did you but know him!

ADELAIDE.

I would deal justly with Goetz. He has a lofty indomitable spirit, and woe to thee, therefore, Weislingen. Go, and persuade thyself thou art his companion. Go, and receive his commands. Thou art courteous, gentle—

WEISLINGEN.

And he too.

ADELAIDE.

But thou art yielding, and he is stubborn. Imperceptibly will he draw thee on. Thou wilt become the slave of a baron; thou that mightest command princes!—Yet it is cruel to make you discontented with your future position.

WEISLINGEN.

Did you but know what kindness he showed me.

ADELAIDE.

Kindness!—Do you make such a merit of that? It was his duty. And what would you have lost had he acted otherwise? I would rather he had done so. An overbearing man like—

WEISLINGEN.

You speak of your enemy.

ADELAIDE.

I speak for your freedom; yet I know not why I should take so much interest in it. Farewell!

WEISLINGEN.

Permit me, but a moment.

[Takes her hand. A pause.]

ADELAIDE.

Have you aught to say?

WEISLINGEN.

I must hence.

ADELAIDE.

Then go.

WEISLINGEN.

Gracious lady, I cannot.

ADELAIDE.

You must.

WEISLINGEN.

And is this your parting look?

ADELAIDE.

Go, I am unwell, very inopportunely.

WEISLINGEN.

Look not on me thus!

ADELAIDE.

Wilt thou be our enemy, and yet have us smile upon thee? Go!

WEISLINGEN.

Adelaide!

ADELAIDE.

I hate thee!

Enter Francis.

FRANCIS.

Noble sir, the bishop inquires for you.

ADELAIDE.

Go! go!

FRANCIS.

He begs you to come instantly.

ADELAIDE.

Go! go!

WEISLINGEN.

I do not say adieu: I shall see you again.

[Exeunt Weislingen and Francis.]

ADELAIDE.

Thou wilt see me again? We must provide for that. Margaret, when he comes, refuse him admittance. Say I am ill, have a headache, am asleep, anything. If this does not detain him, nothing will.

[Exeunt.]

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SCENE VII.—

An Ante-room.



Weislingen *and* Francis.

WEISLINGEN.

She will not see me!

FRANCIS.

Night draws on; shall we saddle?

WEISLINGEN.

She will not see me!

FRANCIS.

Shall I order the horses?

WEISLINGEN.

It is too late; we stay here.

FRANCIS.

God be praised.

[Exit.

WEISLINGEN.

(Alone.) Thou stayest! Be on thy guard—the temptation is great. My horse started at the castle gate. My good angel stood before him, he knew the danger that awaited me. Yet it would be wrong to leave in confusion the various affairs entrusted to me by the bishop, without at least so arranging them that my successor may be able to continue where I left off. That I can do without breach of faith to Berlichingen, and when it is done no one shall detain me. Yet it would have been better that I had never come. But I will away—to-morrow—or next day:—’tis decided!

[*Exit.*

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SCENE VIII.—

The Spessart.

Enter Goetz, Selbitz *and* George.

SELBITZ.

You see it has turned out as I prophesied.

GOETZ.

No, no, no.

GEORGE.

I tell you the truth, believe me. I did as you commanded, took the dress and password of the Bamberg trooper, and escorted some peasants of the Lower Rhine, who paid my expenses for my convoy.

SELBITZ.

In that disguise? It might have cost thee dear.

GEORGE.

So I begin to think, now that it's over. A trooper who thinks of danger beforehand will never do anything great. I got safely to Bamberg, and in the very first inn I heard them tell how the bishop and Weislingen were reconciled, and how Weislingen was to marry the widow of Von Walldorf.

GOETZ.

Mere gossip!



GEORGE.

I saw him as he led her to table. She is lovely, by my faith, most lovely! We all bowed—she thanked us all. He nodded, and seemed highly pleased. They passed on, and everybody murmured, “What a handsome pair!”

GOETZ.

That may be.

GEORGE.

Listen further. The next day as he went to mass, I watched my opportunity; he was attended only by his squire; I stood at the steps, and whispered to him as he passed, "A few words from your friend Berlichingen." He started—I marked the confession of guilt in his face. He had scarcely the heart to look at me—me, a poor trooper's boy!

SELBITZ.

His evil conscience degrades him more than thy condition does thee.

GEORGE.

"Art thou of Bamberg?" said he. "The Knight of Berlichingen greets you," said I, "and I am to inquire—" "Come to my apartment to-morrow morning," quoth he, "and we will speak further."

GOETZ.

And you went?

GEORGE.

Yes, certainly, I went, and waited in his ante-chamber a long, long time—and his pages, in their silken doublets, stared at me from head to foot. Stare on, thought I. At length I was admitted. He seemed angry. But what cared I? I gave my message. He began blustering like a coward who wants to look brave. He wondered that you should take him to task through a trooper's boy. That angered me. "There are but two sorts of people," said I, "true men and scoundrels, and I serve Goetz of Berlichingen." Then he began to talk all manner of nonsense, which all tended to one point, namely, that you had hurried him into an agreement, that he owed you no allegiance, and would have nothing to do with you.

GOETZ.

Hadst thou that from his own mouth?

GEORGE.

That, and yet more. He threatened me—

GOETZ.

It is enough. He is lost forever. Faith and confidence, again have ye deceived me.
Poor Maria! how am I to break this to you?

SELBITZ.

I would rather lose my other leg than be such a rascal.

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SCENE IX.—

Hall In The Bishop's Palace At Bamberg.

Adelaide and Weislingen discovered.

ADELAIDE.

Time begins to hang insupportably heavy here. I dare not speak seriously, and I am ashamed to trifle with you. Ennui, thou art worse than a slow fever.

WEISLINGEN.

Are you tired of me already?

ADELAIDE.

Not so much of you as of your society. I would you had gone when you wished, and that we had not detained you.

WEISLINGEN.

Such is woman's favor! At first she fosters with maternal warmth our dearest hopes; and then, like an inconstant hen, she forsakes the nest, and abandons the infant brood to death and decay.

ADELAIDE.

Yes, you may rail at women. The reckless gambler tears and curses the harmless cards which have been the instruments of his loss. But let me tell you something about *men*. What are you that talk about fickleness? You that are seldom even what you would wish to be, never what you should be. Princes in holiday garb! the envy of the vulgar. Oh, what would a tailor's wife not give for a necklace of the pearls on the skirt of your robe, which you kick back contemptuously with your heels.

WEISLINGEN.

You are severe.

ADELAIDE.

It is but the antistrophe to your song. Ere I knew you, Weislingen, I felt like the tailor's wife. Hundred-tongued rumor, to speak without metaphor, had so extolled

you, in quack-doctor fashion, that I was tempted to wish—Oh, that I could but see this quintessence of manhood, this phoenix, Weislingen! My wish was granted.

WEISLINGEN.

And the phoenix turned out a dunghill cock.

ADELAIDE.

No, Weislingen, I took an interest in you.

WEISLINGEN.

So it appeared.

ADELAIDE.

So it *was*—for you really surpassed your reputation. The multitude prize only the reflection of worth. For my part, I do not care to scrutinize the character of those whom I esteem; so we lived on for some time. I felt there was a deficiency in you, but knew not what I missed; at length my eyes were opened—I saw instead of the energetic being who gave impulse to the affairs of a kingdom, and was ever alive to the voice of fame—who was wont to pile princely project on project, till, like the mountains of the Titans, they reached the clouds—instead of all this, I saw a man as querulous as a love-sick poet, as melancholy as a slighted damsel, and more indolent than an old bachelor. I first ascribed it to your misfortune which still lay at your heart, and excused you as well as I could; but now that it daily becomes worse, you must really forgive me if I withdraw my favor from you. You possess it unjustly: I bestowed it for life on a hero who cannot transfer it to you.

WEISLINGEN.

Dismiss me, then.

ADELAIDE.

Not till all chance of recovery is lost. Solitude is fatal in your distemper. Alas! poor man! you are as dejected as one whose first love has proved false, and therefore I won't give you up. Give me your hand, and pardon what affection has urged me to say.

WEISLINGEN.

Could'st thou but love me, could'st thou but return the fervor of my passion with the least glow of sympathy.—Adelaide, thy reproaches are most unjust. Could'st thou but guess the hundredth part of my sufferings, thou would'st not have tortured me so unmercifully with encouragement, indifference and contempt. You smile. To be

reconciled to myself after the step I have taken must be the work of more than one day. How can I plot against the man who has been so recently and so vividly restored to my affection?

ADELAIDE.

Strange being! Can you love him whom you envy? It is like sending provisions to an enemy.

WEISLINGEN.

I well know that here there must be no dallying. He is aware that I am again Weislingen; and he will watch his advantage over us. Besides, Adelaide, we are not so sluggish as you think. Our troopers are reinforced and watchful, our schemes are proceeding, and the Diet of Augsburg will, I hope, soon bring them to a favorable issue.

ADELAIDE.

You go there?

WEISLINGEN.

If I could carry a glimpse of hope with me.

[Kisses her hand.

ADELAIDE.

O ye infidels! Always signs and wonders required. Go, Weislingen, and accomplish the work! The interest of the bishop, yours and mine, are all so linked together, that were it only for policy's sake—

WEISLINGEN.

You jest.

ADELAIDE.

I do not jest. The haughty duke has seized my property. Goetz will not be slow to ravage yours; and if we do not hold together, as our enemies do, and gain over the emperor to our side, we are lost.

WEISLINGEN.

I fear nothing. Most of the princes think with us. The emperor needs assistance against the Turks, and it is therefore just that he should help us in his turn. What

rapture for me to rescue your fortune from rapacious enemies; to crush the mutinous
chivalry of Swabia; to restore peace to the bishopric, and then—

ADELAIDE.

One day brings on another, and fate is mistress of the future.

WEISLINGEN.

But we must lend our endeavors.

ADELAIDE.

We do so.

WEISLINGEN.

But seriously.

ADELAIDE.

Well, then, seriously. Do but go—

WEISLINGEN.

Enchantress!

[Exeunt.

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SCENE X—

An Inn.

The Bridal of a Peasant.

[*The Bride's Father, Bride, Bridegroom and other Country-folks, Goetz of Berlichingen and Hans of Selbitz all discovered at table. Troopers and Peasants attend.*

GOETZ.

It was the best way thus to settle your lawsuit by a merry bridal.

BRIDE'S FATHER.

Better than ever I could have dreamed of, noble sir—to spend my days in quiet with my neighbor, and have a daughter provided for to boot.

BRIDEGROOM.

And I to get the bone of contention and a pretty wife into the bargain! Ay, the prettiest in the whole village. Would to Heaven you had consented sooner.

GOETZ.

How long have you been at law?

BRIDE'S FATHER.

About eight years. I would rather have the fever for twice that time than go through with it again from the beginning. For these periwigged gentry never give a decision till you tear it out of their very hearts; and, after all, what do you get for your pains? The devil fly away with the assessor Sapupi for a damned swarthy Italian!

BRIDEGROOM.

Yes, he's a pretty fellow; I was before him twice.

BRIDE'S FATHER.

And I thrice; and look ye, gentlemen, we got a judgment at last, which set forth that he was as much in the right as I, and I as much as he; so there we stood like a couple of fools, till a good Providence put it into my head to give him my daughter, and the ground besides.

GOETZ.

(Drinks.) To your better understanding for the future.

BRIDE'S FATHER.

With all my heart! But come what may, I'll never go to law again as long as I live. What a mint of money it costs! For every bow made to you by a procurator, you must come down with your dollars.

SELBITZ.

But there are annual imperial visitations.

BRIDE'S FATHER.

I have never heard of them. Many an extra dollar have they contrived to squeeze out of me. The expenses are horrible.

GOETZ.

How mean you?

BRIDE'S FATHER.

Why, look you, these gentlemen of the law are always holding out their hands. The assessor alone, God forgive him, eased me of eighteen golden guilders.

BRIDEGROOM.

Who?

BRIDE'S FATHER.

Why, who else but Sapupi?

GOETZ.

That is infamous.

BRIDE'S FATHER.

Yes, he asked twenty; and there I had to pay them in the great hall of his fine country-house. I thought my heart would burst with anguish. For look you, my lord, I am well enough off with my house and little farm, but how could I raise the ready cash? I stood there, God knows how it was with me. I had not a single farthing to carry me on

my journey. At last I took courage and told him my case: when he saw I was desperate, he flung me back a couple of guilders, and sent me about my business.

BRIDEGROOM.

Impossible! Sapupi?

BRIDE'S FATHER.

Ay, he himself!—What do you stare at?

BRIDEGROOM.

Devil take the rascal! He took fifteen guilders from me too?

BRIDE'S FATHER.

The deuce he did!

SELBITZ.

They call us robbers, Goetz!

BRIDE'S FATHER.

Bribed on both sides!

That's why the judgment fell out so queer.

Oh, the scoundrel!

GOETZ.

You must not let this pass unnoticed.

BRIDE'S FATHER.

What can we do?

GOETZ.

Why—go to Spire where there is an imperial visitation: make your complaint; they must inquire into it, and help you to your own again.

BRIDEGROOM.

Does your honor think we shall succeed?

GOETZ.

If I might take him in hand, I could promise it you.

SELBITZ.

The sum is worth an attempt.

GOETZ.

Ay; many a day have I ridden out for the fourth part of it.

BRIDE'S FATHER.

(*To* Bridegroom.) What think'st thou?

BRIDEGROOM.

We'll try, come what may.

Enter George.

GEORGE.

The Nurembergers have set out.

GOETZ.

Whereabouts are they?

GEORGE.

If we ride off quietly we shall just catch them in the wood betwixt Berheim and Mühlbach.

SELBITZ.

Excellent!

GOETZ.

Well, my children, God bless you, and help every man to his own!

BRIDE'S FATHER.

Thanks, gallant sir! Will you not stay to supper?

GOETZ.

I cannot. Adieu!

[*Exeunt* Goetz, Selbitz and Troopers



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ACT III.



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SCENE I.—

A Garden At Augsburg.

Enter two Merchants of Nuremberg.

FIRST MERCHANT.

We'll stand here, for the emperor must pass this way. He is just coming up the long avenue.

SECOND MERCHANT.

Who is that with him?

FIRST MERCHANT.

Adelbert of Weislingen.

SECOND MERCHANT.

The bishop's friend. That's lucky!

FIRST MERCHANT.

We'll throw ourselves at his feet.

SECOND MERCHANT.

See! they come.

Enter the Emperor and Weislingen.

FIRST MERCHANT.

He looks displeased.

EMPEROR.

I am disheartened, Weislingen. When I review my past life, I am ready to despair. So many half—ay, and wholly ruined undertakings—and all because the pettiest feudatory of the empire thinks more of gratifying his own whims than of seconding my endeavors.

[*The Merchants throw themselves at his feet.*

FIRST MERCHANT.

Most mighty! Most gracious!

EMPEROR.

Who are ye? What seek ye?

FIRST MERCHANT.

Poor merchants of Nuremberg, your majesty's devoted servants, who implore your aid. Goetz von Berlichingen and Hans von Selbitz fell upon thirty of us as we journeyed from the fair of Frankfort, under an escort from Bamberg; they overpowered and plundered us. We implore your imperial assistance to obtain redress, else we are all ruined men, and shall be compelled to beg our bread.

EMPEROR.

Good heavens! What is this? The one has but one hand, the other but one leg; if they both had two hands and two legs what would you do then?

FIRST MERCHANT.

We most humbly beseech your majesty to cast a look of compassion upon our unfortunate condition.

EMPEROR.

How is this?—If a merchant loses a bag of pepper, all Germany is to rise in arms; but when business is to be done, in which the imperial majesty and the empire are interested, should it concern dukedoms, principalities, or kingdoms, there is no bringing you together.

WEISLINGEN.

You come at an unseasonable time. Go, and stay at Augsburg for a few days.

MERCHANTS.

We make our most humble obeisance.

[*Exeunt Merchants.*

EMPEROR.

Again new disturbances; they multiply like the hydra's heads!

WEISLINGEN.

And can only be extirpated with fire and sword.

EMPEROR.

Do you think so?

WEISLINGEN.

Nothing seems to me more advisable, could your majesty and the princes but accommodate your other unimportant disputes. It is not the body of the state that complains of this malady — Franconia and Swabia alone glow with the embers of civil discord; and even there many of the nobles and free barons long for quiet. Could we but crush Sickingen, Selbitz—and—and—and Berlichingen, the others would fall asunder; for it is the spirit of these knights which quickens the turbulent multitude.

EMPEROR.

Fain would I spare them; they are noble and hardy. Should I be engaged in war, they would follow me to the field.

WEISLINGEN.

It is to be wished they had at all times known their duty; moreover it would be dangerous to reward their mutinous bravery by offices of trust. For it is exactly this imperial mercy and forgiveness which they have hitherto so grievously abused, and upon which the hope and confidence of their league rest, and this spirit cannot be quelled till we have wholly destroyed their power in the eyes of the world, and taken from them all hope of ever recovering their lost influence.

EMPEROR.

You advise severe measures, then?

WEISLINGEN.

I see no other means of quelling the spirit of insurrection which has seized upon whole provinces. Do we not already hear the bitterest complaints from the nobles, that their vassals and serfs rebel against them, question their authority, and threaten to curtail their hereditary prerogatives? A proceeding which would involve the most fearful consequences.

EMPEROR.

This were a fair occasion for proceeding against Berlichingen and Selbitz; but I will not have them personally injured. Could they be taken prisoners, they should swear to renounce their feuds, and to remain in their own castles and territories upon their knightly parole. At the next session of the Diet we will propose this plan.

WEISLINGEN.

A general exclamation of joyful assent will spare your majesty the trouble of particular detail.

[Exeunt.

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SCENE II.—

Jaxthausen.

Enter Goetz and Franz von Sickingen.

SICKINGEN.

Yes, my friend, I come to beg the heart and hand of your noble sister.

GOETZ.

I would you had come sooner. Weislingen, during his imprisonment, obtained her affections, proposed for her, and I gave my consent. I let the bird loose, and he now despises the benevolent hand that fed him in his distress. He flutters about to seek his food, God knows upon what hedge.

SICKINGEN.

Is this so?

GOETZ.

Even as I tell you.

SICKINGEN.

He has broken a double bond. 'Tis well for you that you were not more closely allied with the traitor.

GOETZ.

The poor maiden passes her life in lamentation and prayer.

SICKINGEN.

I will comfort her.

GOETZ.

What! Could you make up your mind to marry a forsaken—

SICKINGEN.

It is to the honor of you both to have been deceived by him. Should the poor girl be caged in a cloister because the first man who gained her love proved a villain? Not so; I insist on it. She shall be mistress of my castles!

GOETZ.

I tell you he was not indifferent to her.

SICKINGEN.

Do you think I cannot efface the recollection of such a wretch? Let us go to her.

[*Exeunt.*



Fr. Pecht del

published by George Barrie

[*Editor: illegible text*]

Franz von Sickingen

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SCENE III.—

The Camp Of The Party Sent To Execute The Imperial Mandate.

Imperial Captain and Officers discovered.

CAPTAIN.

We must be cautious, and spare our people as much as possible. Besides, we have strict orders to overpower and take him alive. It will be difficult to obey; for who will engage with him hand to hand?

FIRST OFFICER.

'Tis true. And he will fight like a wild boar. Besides, he has never in his whole life injured any of us, so each will be glad to leave to the other the honor of risking life and limb to please the emperor.

SECOND OFFICER.

'Twere shame to us should we not take him. Had I him once by the ears, he should not easily escape.

FIRST OFFICER.

Don't seize him with your teeth, however, he might chance to run away with your jaw-bone. My good young sir, such men are not taken like a runaway thief.

SECOND OFFICER.

We shall see.

CAPTAIN.

By this time he must have had our summons. We must not delay. I mean to despatch a troop to watch his motions.

SECOND OFFICER.

Let me lead it.

CAPTAIN.

You are unacquainted with the country.

SECOND OFFICER.

I have a servant who was born and bred here.

CAPTAIN.

That will do.

[Exeunt.]

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SCENE IV.—

Jaxthausen.

SICKINGEN.

(Alone.) All goes as I wish! She was somewhat startled at my proposal, and looked at me from head to foot; I'll wager she was comparing me with her gallant. Thank Heaven I can stand the scrutiny! She answered little and confusedly. So much the better! Let it work for a time. A proposal of marriage does not come amiss after such a cruel disappointment.

Enter Goetz.

SICKINGEN.

What news, brother?

GOETZ.

They have laid me under the ban.

SICKINGEN.

How?

GOETZ.

There, read the edifying epistle. The emperor has issued an edict against me, which gives my body for food to the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air.

SICKINGEN.

They shall first furnish them with a dinner themselves. I am here in the very nick of time.

GOETZ.

No, Sickingen, you must leave me. Your great undertakings might be ruined should you become the enemy of the emperor at so unseasonable a time. Besides, you can be of more use to me by remaining neutral. The worst that can happen is my being made prisoner; and then your good word with the emperor, who esteems you, may rescue me from the misfortune into which your untimely assistance would irremediably plunge us both. To what purpose should you do otherwise? These troops are marching

against me; and if they knew we were united, their numbers would only be increased, and our position would consequently be no better. The emperor is at the fountain-head; and I should be utterly ruined were it as easy to inspire soldiers with courage as to collect them into a body.

SICKINGEN.

But I can privately reinforce you with a score of troopers.

GOETZ.

Good. I have already sent George to Selbitz, and to my people in the neighborhood. My dear brother, when my forces are collected, they will be such a troop as few princes can bring together.

SICKINGEN.

It will be small against the multitude.

GOETZ.

One wolf is too many for a whole flock of sheep.

SICKINGEN.

But if they have a good shepherd?

GOETZ.

Never fear! They are all hirelings; and then even the best knight can do but little if he cannot act as he pleases. It happened once that, to oblige the palsgrave, I went to serve against Conrad Schotten: they then presented me with a paper of instructions from the chancery, which set forth—Thus and thus must you proceed. I threw down the paper before the magistrates, and told them I could not act according to it; that something might happen unprovided for in my instructions, and that I must use my own eyes and judge what was best to be done.

SICKINGEN.

Good luck, brother! I will hence, and send thee what men I can collect in haste.

GOETZ.

Come first to the women. I left them together. I would you had her consent before you depart! Then send me the troopers, and come back in private to carry away my Maria; for my castle, I fear, will shortly be no abode for women.

SICKINGEN.

We will hope for the best.

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE V.—

Bamberg. Adelaide's Chamber.

Adelaide and Francis.

ADELAIDE.

They have already set out to enforce the ban against both?

FRANCIS.

Yes; and my master has the happiness of marching against your enemies. I would gladly have gone also, however rejoiced I always am at being despatched to you. But I will away instantly, and soon return with good news; my master has allowed me to do so.

ADELAIDE.

How is he?

FRANCIS.

He is well, and commanded me to kiss your hand.

ADELAIDE.

There!—Thy lips glow.

FRANCIS.

(Aside, pressing his breast.) Here glows something yet more fiery. *(Aloud.)* Gracious lady, your servants are the most fortunate of beings!

ADELAIDE.

Who goes against Berlichingen?

FRANCIS.

The Baron von Sirau. Farewell! Dearest, most gracious lady, I must away. Forget me not!

ADELAIDE.

Thou must first take some rest and refreshment.

FRANCIS.

I need none, for I have seen you! I am neither weary nor hungry.

ADELAIDE.

I know thy fidelity.

FRANCIS.

Ah, gracious lady!

ADELAIDE.

You can never hold out; you *must* repose and refresh yourself.

FRANCIS.

You are too kind to a poor youth.

[*Exit.*

ADELAIDE.

The tears stood in his eyes. I love him from my heart. Never did man attach himself to me with such warmth of affection.

[*Exit.*

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SCENE VI.—

Jaxthausen.

Goetz and George.

GEORGE.

He wants to speak with you in person. I do not know him—he is a tall, well-made man, with keen dark eyes.

GOETZ.

Admit him.

[*Exit* George.

Enter Lerse.

GOETZ.

God save you! What bring you?

LERSE.

Myself: not much, but such as it is, it is at your service.

GOETZ.

You are welcome, doubly welcome! A brave man, and at a time when, far from expecting new friends. I was in hourly fear of losing the old. Your name?

LERSE.

Franz Lerse.

GOETZ.

I thank you, Franz, for making me acquainted with a brave man!

LERSE.

I made you acquainted with me once before, but then you did not thank me for my pains.

GOETZ.

I have no recollection of you.

LERSE.

I should be sorry if you had. Do you recollect when, to please the palsgrave, you rode against Conrad Schotten, and went through Hassfurt on an All-hallow eve?

GOETZ.

I remember it well.

LERSE.

And twenty-five troopers encountered you in a village by the way?

GOETZ.

Exactly. I at first took them for only twelve. I divided my party, which amounted to but sixteen, and halted in the village behind the barn, intending to let them ride by. Then I thought of falling upon them in the rear, as I had concerted with the other troop.

LERSE.

We saw you, however, and stationed ourselves on a height above the village. You drew up beneath the hill and halted. When we perceived that you did not intend to come up to us we rode down to you.

GOETZ.

And then I saw for the first time that I had thrust my hand into the fire. Five-and-twenty against eight is no jesting business. Everard Truchsess killed one of my followers, for which I knocked him off his horse. Had they all behaved like him and one other trooper, it would have been all over with me and my little band.

LERSE.

And that trooper—

GOETZ.

Was as gallant a fellow as I ever saw. He attacked me fiercely; and when I thought I had given him enough and was engaged elsewhere, he was upon me again, and laid on like a fury: he cut quite through my armor, and wounded me in the arm.

LERSE.

Have you forgiven him?

GOETZ.

He pleased me only too well.

LERSE.

I hope then you have cause to be contented with me, since the proof of my valor was on your own person.

GOETZ.

Art thou he? O welcome! welcome! Canst thou boast, Maximilian, that amongst thy followers thou hast gained one after this fashion?

LERSE.

I wonder you did not sooner hit upon me.

GOETZ.

How could I think that the man would engage in my service who did his best to overpower me?

LERSE.

Even so, my lord. From my youth upwards I have served as a trooper, and have had a tussle with many a knight. I was overjoyed when we met you; for I had heard of your prowess, and wished to know you. You saw I gave way, and that it was not from cowardice, for I returned to the charge. In short, I learned to know you, and from that hour I resolved to enter your service.

GOETZ.

How long wilt thou engage with me?

LERSE.

For a year, without pay.

GOETZ.

No; thou shalt have as the others; nay more, as befits him who gave me so much work at Remlin.

Enter George.

GEORGE.

Hans of Selbitz greets you. To-morrow he will be here with fifty men.

GOETZ.

'Tis well.

GEORGE.

There is a troop of Imperialists riding down the hill, doubtless to reconnoitre.

GOETZ.

How many?

GEORGE.

About fifty.

GOETZ.

Only fifty! Come, Lerse, we'll have a slash at them, so that when Selbitz comes he may find some work done to his hand.

LERSE.

'Twill be capital practice.

GOETZ.

To horse!

[Exeunt.

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SCENE VII.—

A Wood On The Borders Of A Morass.



Two Imperialist Troopers meeting

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

What dost thou here?

SECOND IMPERIALIST.

I have leave of absence for ten minutes. Ever since our quarters were beat up last night I have had such violent attacks that I can't sit on horseback for two minutes together.

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

Is the party far advanced?

SECOND IMPERIALIST.

About three miles into the wood

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

Then why are you playing truant here?

SECOND IMPERIALIST.

Prithee, betray me not. I am going to the next village to see if I cannot get some warm bandages to relieve my complaint. But whence comest thou?

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

I am bringing our officer some wine and meat from the nearest village.

SECOND IMPERIALIST.

So, so! he stuffs himself under our very noses, and we must starve; a fine example!

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

Come back with me, rascal!

SECOND IMPERIALIST.

Call me a fool, if I do! There are plenty in our troop who would gladly fast, to be as far away as I am.

[Tramping of horses heard.

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

Hear'st thou?—Horses!

SECOND IMPERIALIST.

Oh dear! oh dear!

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

I'll get up into this tree.

SECOND IMPERIALIST.

And I'll hide among the rushes.

[They hide themselves.

Enter on horseback, Goetz. Lerse. George and Troopers, all completely armed

GOETZ.

Away into the wood, by the ditch on the left,—then we have them in the rear.

[They gallop off.

FIRST IMPERIALIST.

(Descending) This is a bad business—Michael!—He answers not—Michael, they are gone! *(Goes towards the marsh.)* Alas, he is sunk!—Michael!—He hears me not: he is suffocated.—Poor coward, art thou done for?—We are slain.—Enemies! Enemies on all sides!

Re-enter Goetz and George on horseback.

GOETZ.

Yield thee, fellow, or thou diest!

IMPERIALIST.

Spare my life!

GOETZ.

Thy sword!—George, lead him to the other prisoners whom Lerse is guarding yonder in the wood.—I must pursue their fugitive leader.

[Exit.

IMPERIALIST.

What has become of the knight, our officer?

GEORGE.

My master struck him head over heels from his horse, so that his plume stuck in the mire. His troopers got him up, and off they were as if the devil were behind them.

[Exeunt.

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SCENE VIII.—

Camp Of The Imperialists.

Captain and First Officer.

FIRST OFFICER.

They fly from afar towards the camp.

CAPTAIN.

He is most likely hard at their heels. Draw out fifty as far as the mill; if he follows up the pursuit too far you may perhaps entrap him.

[*Exit Officer.*

The Second Officer is borne in.

CAPTAIN.

How now, my young sir—have you got a cracked headpiece?

OFFICER.

A plague upon you! The stoutest helmet went to shivers like glass. The demon!—he ran upon me as if he would strike me into the earth!

CAPTAIN.

Thank God that you have escaped with your life.

OFFICER.

There is little left to be thankful for; two of my ribs are broken—where's the surgeon?

[*He is carried off.*

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SCENE IX.—

Jaxthausen.

Enter Goetz and Selbitz.

GOETZ.

And what say you to the ban, Selbitz?

SELBITZ.

'Tis a trick of Weislingen's.

GOETZ.

Do you think so?

SELBITZ.

I do not think—I know it.

GOETZ.

How so?

SELBITZ.

He was at the Diet, I tell thee, and near the emperor's person.

GOETZ.

Well then, we shall frustrate another of his schemes.

SELBITZ.

I hope so.

GOETZ.

We will away, and course these hares.

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SCENE X.—

The Imperial Camp.

Captain. Officers *and* Followers.

CAPTAIN.

We shall gain nothing at this work, sirs! He beats one troop after another; and whoever escapes death or captivity would rather fly to Turkey than return to the camp. Thus our force diminishes daily. We must attack him once for all, and in earnest. I will go myself, and he shall find with whom he has to deal.

OFFICER.

We are all content; but he is so well acquainted with the country, and knows every path and ravine so thoroughly, that he will be as difficult to find as a rat in a barn.

CAPTAIN.

I warrant you we'll ferret him out. On towards Jaxthausen! Whether he like it or not, he must come to defend his castle.

OFFICER.

Shall our whole force march?

CAPTAIN.

Yes, certainly—do you know that a hundred of us are melted away already?

OFFICER.

Then let us away with speed, before the whole snowball dissolves; for this is warm work, and we stand here like butter in the sunshine.

[Exeunt—a march sounded.]

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SCENE XI.—

Mountains And A Wood.



Goetz, Selbitz and Troopers.

GOETZ.

They are coming in full force. It was high time that Sickingen's troopers joined us.

SELBITZ.

We will divide our party—I will take the left hand by the hill.

GOETZ.

Good—and do thou, Lerse, lead fifty men straight through the wood on the right. They are coming across the heath—I will draw up opposite to them. George, stay by me—when you see them attack me, then fall upon their flank: we'll beat the knaves into a mummy—they little think we can face them.

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE XII.—

***A Heath—On One Side An Eminence, With A Ruined Tower,
On The Other The Forest.***

Enter marching, the Captain of the Imperialists with Officers and his Squadron. Drums and standards.

CAPTAIN.

He halts upon the heath! that's too impudent. He shall smart for it—what! not fear the torrent that threatens to overwhelm him!

OFFICER.

I had rather you did not head the troops; he looks as if he meant to plant the first that comes upon him in the mire with his head downmost. Prithee, ride in the rear.

CAPTAIN.

Not so.

OFFICER.

I entreat you. You are the knot which unites this bundle of hazel-twigs; loose it, and he will break them separately like so many reeds.

CAPTAIN.

Sound, trumpeter—and let us blow him to hell!

[A charge sounded. Exeunt in full career.]

Selbitz, with his Troopers, comes from behind the hill, galloping.

SELBITZ.

Follow me! They shall wish that they could multiply their hands.

[They gallop across the stage, et exeunt.]

Loud alarm—Lerse and his party sally from the wood.

LERSE.

Ho! to the rescue! Goetz is almost surrounded.—Gallant Selbitz, thou hast cut thy way—we will sow the heath with these thistle heads.

[Gallop off.]

A loud alarm, with shouting and firing for some minutes. Selbitz is borne in wounded by two Troopers.

SELBITZ.

Leave me here, and hasten to Goetz.

FIRST TROOPER.

Let us stay, sir—you need our aid.

SELBITZ.

Get one of you on the watchtower, and tell me how it goes.

FIRST TROOPER.

How shall I get up?

SECOND TROOPER.

Mount upon my shoulders—you can then reach the ruined part, and thence scramble up to the opening.

[First Trooper gets up into the tower.]

FIRST TROOPER.

Alas, sir!

SELBITZ.

What seest thou?

FIRST TROOPER.

Your troopers fly towards the hill.

SELBITZ.

Rascally cowards! I would that they stood their ground, and I had a ball through my head! Ride, one of you, full speed! Curse and thunder them back to the field! Seest thou Goetz!

[*Exit* Second Trooper.

TROOPER.

I see his three black feathers floating in the midst of the wavy tumult.

SELBITZ.

Swim, brave swimmer! I lie here.

TROOPER.

A white plume—whose is that?

SELBITZ.

The captain's.

TROOPER.

Goetz gallops upon him—crash! Down he goes!

SELBITZ.

The captain?

TROOPER.

Yes, sir.

SELBITZ.

Hurrah! hurrah!

TROOPER.

Alas! alas! I see Goetz no more.

SELBITZ.

Then die, Selbitz!

TROOPER.

A dreadful tumult where he stood—George's blue plume vanishes too.

SELBITZ.

Come down! Dost thou not see Lerse?

TROOPER.

No. Everything is in confusion.

SELBITZ.

No more. Come down.—How do Sickingen's men bear themselves?

TROOPER.

Well—one of them flies to the wood—another—another—a whole troop. Goetz is lost!

SELBITZ.

Come down.

TROOPER.

I cannot.—Hurrah! hurrah! I see Goetz, I see George.

SELBITZ.

On horseback?

TROOPER.

Ay, ay, high on horseback! Victory! victory!—they fly.

SELBITZ.

The Imperialists?

TROOPER.

Yes, standard and all, Goetz behind them. They disperse,—Goetz reaches the ensign—he seizes the standard; he halts. A handful of men rally round him. My comrade reaches him—they come this way.

Enter Goetz, George, Lerse *and* Troopers, *on horseback*.

SELBITZ.

Joy to thee, Goetz! Victory! victory!

GOETZ.

(Dismounting.) Dearly, dearly bought. Thou art wounded, Selbitz!

SELBITZ.

But thou dost live and hast conquered! I have done little; and my dogs of troopers!
How hast thou come off?

GOETZ.

For the present, well! And here I thank George, and thee, Lerse, for my life. I unhorsed the captain, they stabbed my horse, and pressed me hard. George cut his way to me, and sprang off his horse. I threw myself like lightning upon it, and he appeared suddenly like a thunderbolt upon another, How camest thou by thy steed?

GEORGE.

A fellow struck at you from behind: as he raised his cuirass in the act, I stabbed him with my dagger. Down he came; and so I rid you of an enemy, and helped myself to a horse.

GOETZ.

There we held together till Francis here came to our help; and thereupon we mowed our way out.



artist: a. wagner.

GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN. ACT III.

gotz von berlichingen and selbitz.

LERSE.

The hounds whom I led were to have mowed their way in, till our scythes met, but they fled like Imperialists.

GOETZ.

Friend and foe all fled, except this little band who protected my rear. I had enough to do with the fellows in front, but the fall of their captain dismayed them; they wavered, and fled. I have their banner, and a few prisoners.

SELBITZ.

The captain has escaped you?

GOETZ.

They rescued him in the scuffle. Come, lads, come, Selbitz —Make a litter of lances and boughs: thou canst not mount a horse, come to my castle. They are scattered, but we are very few; and I know not what troops they may have in reserve. I will be your host, my friends. Wine will taste well after such an action.

[Exeunt, carrying Selbitz.]

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SCENE XIII.—

The Camp.

The Captain and Imperialists.

CAPTAIN.

I could kill you all with my own hand.—What! to turn tail! He had not a handful of men left. To give way before one man! No one will believe it but those who wish to make a jest of us. Ride round the country, you, and you, and you: collect our scattered soldiers, or cut them down wherever you find them. We must grind these notches out of our blades, even should we spoil our swords in the operation.

[Exeunt.]

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SCENE XIV.—

Jaxthausen.

Goetz, LerseandGeorge.

GOETZ.

We must not lose a moment. My poor fellows, I dare allow you no rest. Gallop round and strive to enlist troopers, appoint them to assemble at Weilern, where they will be most secure. Should we delay a moment, they will be before the castle.—(*ExeuntLerseandGeorge*)—I must send out a scout. This begins to grow warm.—If we had but brave foemen to deal with! But these fellows are only formidable through their number.

[*Exit.*

EnterSickingenandMaria.

MARIA.

I beseech thee, dear Sickingen, do not leave my brother! His horsemen, your own, and those of Selbitz, all are scattered; he is alone. Selbitz has been carried home to his castle wounded. I fear the worst.

SICKINGEN.

Be comforted, I will not leave him.

EnterGoetz.

GOETZ.

Come to the chapel; the priest waits; in a few minutes you shall be united.

SICKINGEN.

Let me remain with you.

GOETZ.

You must come now to the chapel.

SICKINGEN.

Willingly!—and then—

GOETZ.

Then you go your way.

SICKINGEN.

Goetz!

GOETZ.

Will you not to the chapel?

SICKINGEN.

Come, come!

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE XV.—

Camp.

Captain *and* Officers.

CAPTAIN.

How many are we in all?

OFFICER.

A hundred and fifty—

CAPTAIN.

Out of four hundred.—That is bad. Set out for Jaxthausen at once, before he collects his forces and attacks us on the way.

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SCENE XVI.—

Jaxthausen.

Goetz, Elizabeth, MariaandSickingen.

GOETZ.

God bless you, give you happy days, and keep those for your children which he denies to you!

ELIZABETH.

And may they be virtuous as you—then let come what will.

SICKINGEN.

I thank you.—And you, my Maria! As I led you to the altar, so shall you lead me to happiness.

MARIA.

Our pilgrimage will be together towards that distant and promised land.

GOETZ.

A prosperous journey.

MARIA.

That was not what I meant.—We do not leave you.

GOETZ.

You must, sister.

MARIA.

You are very harsh, brother.

GOETZ.

And you more affectionate than prudent.

Enter George.

GEORGE.

(Aside to Goetz.) I can collect no troopers. One was inclined to come, but he changed his mind and refused.

GOETZ.

(To George.) 'Tis well, George. Fortune begins to look coldly on me. I foreboded it, however. *(Aloud.)* Sickingen, I entreat you, depart this very evening. Persuade Maria.—You are her husband—let her feel it.—When women come across our undertakings, our enemies are more secure in the open field, than they would else be in their castles.

Enter a Trooper.

TROOPER.

(Aside to Goetz.) The Imperial squadron is in full and rapid march hither.

GOETZ.

I have roused them with stripes of the rod! How many are they?

TROOPER.

About two hundred.—They can scarcely be six miles from us.

GOETZ.

Have they passed the river yet?

TROOPER.

No, my lord.

GOETZ.

Had I but fifty men, they should not cross it. Hast thou seen Lerse?

TROOPER.

No, my lord.

GOETZ.

Tell all to hold themselves ready.—We must part, dear friends. Weep on, my gentle Maria; many a moment of happiness is yet in store for thee. It is better thou should'st weep on thy wedding-day than that present joy should be the forerunner of future misery.—Farewell, Maria!—Farewell, brother!

MARIA.

I cannot leave you, sister. Dear brother, let us stay. Dost thou value my husband so little as to refuse his help in thy extremity?

GOETZ.

Yes—it is gone far with me. Perhaps my fall is near. You are but beginning life, and should separate your lot from mine. I have ordered your horses to be saddled: you must away instantly.

MARIA.

Brother! brother!

ELIZABETH.

(To Sickingen.) Yield to his wishes. Speak to her.

SICKINGEN.

Dear Maria! we must go.

MARIA.

Thou too? My heart will break!

GOETZ.

Then stay. In a few hours my castle will be surrounded.

MARIA.

(Weeping bitterly.) Alas! alas!

GOETZ.

We will defend ourselves as long as we can.

MARIA.

Mother of God, have mercy upon us!

GOETZ.

And at last we must die or surrender. Thy tears will then have involved thy noble husband in the same misfortune with me.

MARIA.

Thou torturest me!

GOETZ.

Remain! remain! We shall be taken together! Sickingen, thou wilt fall into the pit with me, out of which I had hoped thou should'st have helped me.

MARIA.

We will away.—Sister—sister!

GOETZ.

Place her in safety, and then think of me.

SICKINGEN.

Never will I repose a night by her side till I know thou art out of danger.

GOETZ.

Sister! dear sister!

[Kisses her.

SICKINGEN.

Away! away!

GOETZ.

Yet one moment! I shall see you again. Be comforted, we shall meet again. (*Exeunt Sickingen and Maria.*) I urged her to depart—yet when she leaves me what would I not give to detain her! Elizabeth, thou stayest with me.

ELIZABETH.

Till death!

[*Exit.*

GOETZ.

Whom God loves, to him may He give such a wife.

Enter George.

GEORGE.

They are near! I saw them from the tower. The sun is rising, and I perceived their lances glitter. I cared no more for them than a cat would for a whole army of mice. 'Tis true *we* play the mice at present.

GOETZ.

Look to the fastenings of the gates; barricade them with beams and stones. (*Exit* George.) We'll exercise their patience, and they may chew away their valor in biting their nails. (*A trumpet from without. Goetz goes to the window.*) Aha! Here comes a red-coated rascal to ask me whether I will be a scoundrel! What says he? (*The voice of the Herald is heard indistinctly, as from a distance. Goetz mutters to himself.*) A rope for thy throat! (*Voice again.*) "Offended majesty!"—Some priest has drawn up that proclamation. (*Voice concludes, and Goetz answers from the window.*) Surrender—surrender at discretion. With whom speak you? Am I a robber? Tell your captain, that for the emperor I entertain, as I have ever done, all due respect; but as for him, he may—

[*Shuts the window with violence.*

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SCENE XVII.—

The Kitchen.

Elizabeth *preparing food. Enter Goetz.*

GOETZ.

You have hard work, my poor wife!

ELIZABETH.

Would it might last! But you can hardly hold out long.

GOETZ.

We have not had time to provide ourselves.

ELIZABETH.

And so many people as you have been wont to entertain. The wine is well-nigh finished.

GOETZ.

If we can but hold out a certain time, they must propose a capitulation. We are doing them some damage, I promise you. They shoot the whole day, and only wound our walls and break our windows. Larse is a gallant fellow. He slips about with his gun: if a rogue comes too nigh—Pop! there he lies!

[Firing.



Enter Trooper.

TROOPER.

We want live coals, gracious lady!

GOETZ.

For what?

TROOPER.

Our bullets are spent; we must cast some new ones.

GOETZ.

How goes it with the powder?

TROOPER.

There is as yet no want: we save our fire.

[Firing at intervals. Exeunt Goetz and Elizabeth.]

Enter Lersewith a bullet-mould. Servants with coals.

LERSE.

Set them down, and then go and see for lead about the house; meanwhile I will make shift with this. *(Goes to the window, and takes out the leaden frames.)* Everything must be turned to account. So it is in this world—no one knows what a thing may come to: the glazier who made these frames little thought that the lead here was to give one of his grandsons his last headache; and the father that begot me little knew whether the fowls of heaven or the worms of the earth would pick my bones.

Enter Georgewith a leaden spout.

GEORGE.

Here's lead for thee! If you hit with only half of it, not one will return to tell his majesty. "Thy servants have sped ill!"

LERSE.

(Cutting it down.) A famous piece!

GEORGE.

The rain must seek some other way. I'm not afraid of it—a brave trooper and a smart shower will always find their road.

[They cast balls.]

LERSE.

Hold the ladle. *(Goes to the window.)* Yonder is a fellow creeping about with his rifle; he thinks our fire is spent. He shall have a bullet warm from the pan.

[He loads his rifle.

GEORGE.

(Puts down the mould.) Let me see.

LERSE.

(Fires.) There lies the game!

GEORGE.

He fired at me as I stepped out on the roof to get the lead. He killed a pigeon that sat near me; it fell into the spout. I thanked him for my dinner, and went back with the double booty.

[They cast balls.

LERSE.

Now let us load, and go through the castle to earn our dinner.



*Enter*Goetz.

GOETZ.

Stay, Lerse, I must speak with thee. I will not keep thee, George, from the sport.

*[Exit*George.

GOETZ.

They offer terms.

LERSE.

I will go and hear what they have to say.

GOETZ.

They will require me to enter myself into ward in some town on my knightly parole.

LERSE.

That won't do. Suppose they allow us free liberty of departure? for we can expect no relief from Sickingen. We will bury all the valuables where no divining-rod shall find them; leave them the bare walls, and come out with flying colors.

GOETZ.

They will not permit us.

LERSE.

It is worth the asking. We will demand a safe-conduct, and I will sally out.

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SCENE XVIII.—

A Hall.

Goetz, Elizabeth, George and Troopers at table.

GOETZ.

Danger unites us, my friends! Be of good cheer; don't forget the bottle! The flask is empty. Come, another, dear wife! (Elizabeth shakes her head.) Is there no more?

ELIZABETH.

(*Aside.*) Only one, which I have set apart for you.

GOETZ.

Not so, my love! Bring it out; they need strengthening more than I, for it is my quarrel.

ELIZABETH.

Fetch it from the cupboard.

GOETZ.

It is the last, and I feel as if we need not spare it. It is long since I have been so merry. (*They fill.*) To the health of the emperor!

ALL.

Long live the emperor!

GOETZ.

Be it our last word when we die! I love him, for our fate is similar; but I am happier than he. To please the princes, he must direct his imperial squadrons against mice, while the rats gnaw his possessions.—I know he often wishes himself dead, rather than to be any longer the soul of such a crippled body. (*They fill.*) It will just go once more round. And when our blood runs low, like this flask—when we pour out its last ebbing drop (*empties the wine drop by drop into his goblet*)—what then shall be our cry?

GEORGE.

Freedom forever!

GOETZ.

Freedom forever!

ALL.

Freedom forever!

GOETZ.

And if that survive us we can die happy; for our spirits shall see our children's children and their emperor happy! Did the servants of princes show the same filial attachment to their masters as you to me—did their masters serve the emperor as I would serve him—

GEORGE.

Things would be widely different.

GOETZ.

Not so much so as it would appear. Have I not known worthy men among the princes? And can the race be extinct? Men, happy in their own minds and in their subjects, who could bear a free, noble brother in their neighborhood without harboring either fear or envy; whose hearts expanded when they saw their table surrounded by their free equals, and who did not think the knights unfit companions till they had degraded themselves by courtly homage.

GEORGE.

Have you known such princes?

GOETZ.

Ay, truly. As long as I live I shall recollect how the Landgrave of Hanau made a grand hunting-party, and the princes and free feudatories dined under the open heaven, and the country-people all thronged to see them; it was no selfish masquerade instituted for his own private pleasure or vanity. To see the great round-headed peasant lads and the pretty brown girls, the sturdy hinds, and the venerable old men, a crowd of happy faces, all as merry as if they rejoiced in the splendor of their master, which he shared with them under God's free sky!

GEORGE.

He must have been as good a master as you.

GOETZ.

And may we not hope that many such will rule together some future day, to whom reverence to the emperor, peace and friendship with their neighbors, and the love of their vassals, shall be the best and dearest family treasure handed down to their children's children? Every one will then keep and improve his own, instead of reckoning nothing as gain that is not stolen from his neighbors.

GEORGE.

And should we have no more forays?

GOETZ.

Would to God there were no restless spirits in all Germany!—we should still have enough to do! We would clear the mountains of wolves, and bring our peaceable laborious neighbor a dish of game from the wood, and eat it together. Were that not full employment, we would join our brethren, and, like cherubims with flaming swords, defend the frontiers of the empire against those wolves the Turks, and those foxes the French, and guard for our beloved emperor both extremities of his extensive empire. That would be a life, George! To risk one's head for the safety of all Germany. (*Georgesprings up.*) Whither away?

GEORGE.

Alas! I forgot we were besieged—besieged by the very emperor; and before we can expose our lives in his defence, we must risk them for our liberty.

GOETZ.

Be of good cheer.

Enter LERSE.

LERSE.

Freedom! freedom! The cowardly poltroons—the hesitating, irresolute asses! You are to depart with men, weapons, horses and armor; provisions you are to leave behind.

GOETZ.

They will hardly find enough to exercise their jaws.

LERSE.

(Aside to Goetz.) Have you hidden the plate and money?

GOETZ.

No! Wife, go with Lerse; he has something to tell thee.

[Exeunt.]

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SCENE XIX.—

The Court Of The Castle.

George. *(In the stable. Sings.)*

An urchin once, as I have heard,
Ha! ha!
Had caught and caged a little bird,
Sa! sa!
Ha! ha!
Sa! sa!
He viewed the prize with heart elate,
Ha! ha!
Thrust in his hand—ah, treacherous fate!
Sa! sa!
Ha! ha!
Sa! sa!
Away the titmouse wing'd its flight,
Ha! ha!
And laugh'd to scorn the silly wight,
Sa! sa!
Ha! ha!
Sa! sa!

Enter Goetz.

GOETZ.

How goes it?

GEORGE.

(Brings out his horse.) All saddled!

GOETZ.

Thou art quick.

GEORGE.

As the bird escaped from the cage.

Enter all the besieged.

GOETZ.

Have you all your rifles? Not yet! Go, take the best from the armory, 'tis all one; we'll
ride on in advance.

GEORGE.

(Sings.)

Ha! ha!

Sa! sa!

Ha! ha!

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SCENE XX.

The Armory.

Two Troopers choosing guns.

FIRST TROOPER.

I'll have this one.

SECOND TROOPER.

And I this—but yonder's a better.

FIRST TROOPER.

Never mind—make haste.

[Tumult and firing without.

SECOND TROOPER.

Hark!

FIRST TROOPER.

(Springs to the window.) Good heavens, they are murdering our master! He is unhorsed! George is down!

SECOND TROOPER.

How shall we get off? Over the wall by the walnut tree, and into the field.

[Exit.

FIRST TROOPER.

Lerse keeps his ground; I will to him. If they die, I will not survive them.

[Exit.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.—

An Inn In The City Of Heilbronn



Goetz. *(Solus.)*

GOETZ.

I am like the evil spirit whom the capuchin conjured into a sack. I fret and labor but all in vain. The perjured villains! *(Enter Elizabeth.)* What news, Elizabeth, of my dear, my trusty followers?

ELIZABETH.

Nothing certain: some are slain, some are prisoners; no one could or would tell me further particulars.

GOETZ.

Is this the reward of fidelity, of filial obedience?—"That it may be well with thee, and that thy days may be long in the land!"

ELIZABETH.

Dear husband, murmur not against our Heavenly Father. They have their reward. It was born with them—a noble and generous heart. Even in the dungeon they are free. Pay attention to the imperial commissioners; their heavy gold chains become them—

GOETZ.

As a necklace becomes a sow! I should like to see George and Lerse in fetters!

ELIZABETH.

It were a sight to make angels weep.

GOETZ.

I would not weep—I would clench my teeth, and gnaw my lip in fury. What! in fetters! Had ye but loved me less, dear lads! I could never look at them enough—What! to break their word pledged in the name of the emperor!

ELIZABETH.

Put away these thoughts. Reflect; you must appear before the council—you are in no mood to meet them, and I fear the worst.

GOETZ.

What harm can they do me?

ELIZABETH.

Here comes the sergeant.

GOETZ.

What! the ass of justice that carries the sacks to the mill and the dung to the field?
What now?

Enter Sergeant.

SERGEANT.

The lords commissioners are at the council-house, and require your presence.

GOETZ.

I come.

SERGEANT.

I am to escort you.

GOETZ.

Too much honor.

ELIZABETH.

Be but cool.

GOETZ.

Fear nothing.

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE II.—

The Council-House At Heilbronn.

The Imperial Commissioners seated at a table. The Captain and the Magistrates of the city attending.

MAGISTRATE.

In pursuance of your order we have collected the stoutest and most determined of our citizens. They are at hand, in order, at a nod from you, to seize Berlichingen.

COMMISSIONER.

We shall have much pleasure in communicating to his imperial majesty the zeal with which you have obeyed his illustrious commands.—Are they artisans?

MAGISTRATE.

Smiths, coopers and carpenters, men with hands hardened by labor; and resolute here.

[Points to his breast.

COMMISSIONER.

'Tis well.

Enter Sergeant.

SERGEANT.

Goetz von Berlichingen waits without.

COMMISSIONER.

Admit him.

Enter Goetz.

GOETZ.

God save you, sirs! What would you with me?

COMMISSIONER.

First, that you consider where you are; and in whose presence.

GOETZ.

By my faith, I know you right well, sirs.

COMMISSIONER.

You acknowledge allegiance.

GOETZ.

With all my heart.

COMMISSIONER.

Be seated.

[Points to a stool.

GOETZ.

What, down there? I'd rather stand. That stool smells so of poor sinners, as indeed does the whole apartment.

COMMISSIONER.

Stand, then.

GOETZ.

To business, if you please.

COMMISSIONER.

We shall proceed in due order.

GOETZ.

I am glad to hear it. Would you had always done so.

COMMISSIONER.

You know how you fell into our hands, and are a prisoner at discretion.

GOETZ.

What will you give me to forget it?

COMMISSIONER.

Could I give you modesty, I should better your affairs.

GOETZ.

Better my affairs! could you but do that? To repair is more difficult than to destroy.

SECRETARY.

Shall I put all this on record?

COMMISSIONER.

Only what is to the purpose.

GOETZ.

As far as I'm concerned you may print every word of it.

COMMISSIONER.

You fell into the power of the emperor whose paternal goodness got the better of his justice, and, instead of throwing you into a dungeon, ordered you to repair to his beloved city of Heilbronn. You gave your knightly parole to appear, and await the termination in all humility.

GOETZ.

Well; I am here, and await it.

COMMISSIONER.

And we are here to intimate to you his imperial majesty's mercy and clemency. He is pleased to forgive your rebellion, to release you from the ban and all well-merited punishment; provided you do, with becoming humility, receive his bounty, and subscribe to the articles which shall be read unto you.

GOETZ.

I am his majesty's faithful servant, as ever. One word ere you proceed. My people—where are they? What will be done with them?



artist: a. wagner.

GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN. ACT IV.

the attempted arrest of götz.

COMMISSIONER.

That concerns you not.

GOETZ.

So may the emperor turn his face from you in the hour of your need. They were my comrades, and are so now. What have you done with them?

COMMISSIONER.

We are not bound to account to you.

GOETZ.

Ah! I forgot that you are not even pledged to perform what you have promised, much less—

COMMISSIONER.

Our business is to lay the articles before you. Submit yourself to the emperor, and you may find a way to petition for the life and freedom of your comrades.

GOETZ.

Your paper.

COMMISSIONER.

Secretary, read it.

SECRETARY.

(Reads.) "I, Goetz of Berlichingen, make public acknowledgment, by these presents, that I, having lately risen in rebellion against the emperor and empire—"

GOETZ.

'Tis false! I am no rebel, I have committed no offence against the emperor, and with the empire I have no concern.

COMMISSIONER.

Be silent, and hear further.

GOETZ.

I will hear no further. Let any one arise and bear witness. Have I ever taken one step against the emperor, or against the House of Austria? Has not the whole tenor of my conduct proved that I feel better than any one else what all Germany owes to its head; and especially what the free knights and feudatories owe to their liege lord the emperor? I should be a villain could I be induced to subscribe that paper.

COMMISSIONER.

Yet we have strict orders to try and persuade you by fair means, or, in case of your refusal, to throw you into prison.

GOETZ.

Into prison!—Me?

COMMISSIONER.

Where you may expect your fate from the hands of justice, since you will not take it from those of mercy.

GOETZ.

To prison! You abuse the imperial power! To prison! That was not the emperor's command. What, ye traitors, to dig a pit for me, and hang out your oath, your knightly honor as the bait? To promise me permission to ward myself on parole, and then again to break your treaty!

COMMISSIONER.

We owe no faith to robbers.

GOETZ.

Wert thou not the representative of my sovereign, whom I respect even in the vilest counterfeit, thou should'st swallow that word, or choke upon it. I was engaged in an honorable feud. Thou mightest thank God, and magnify thyself before the world, hadst thou ever done as gallant a deed as that with which I now stand charged. (*The Commissioner makes a sign to the Magistrate of Heilbronn, who rings a bell.*) Not for the sake of paltry gain, not to wrest followers or lands from the weak and the defenceless, have I sallied forth. To rescue my page and defend my own person—see ye any rebellion in that? The emperor and his magnates, reposing on their pillows, would never have felt our need. I have, God be praised, one hand left, and I have done well to use it.

Enter a party of Artisans armed with halberds and swords.

GOETZ.

What means this?

COMMISSIONER.

You will not listen.—Seize him!

GOETZ.

Let none come near me who is not a very Hungarian ox. One salutation from my iron fist shall cure him of headache, toothache and every other ache under the wide heaven! (*They rush upon him. He strikes one down; and snatches a sword from another. They stand aloof.*) Come on! come on! I should like to become acquainted with the bravest among you.

COMMISSIONER.

Surrender!

GOETZ.

With a sword in my hand! Know ye not that it depends but upon myself to make way through all these hares and gain the open field? But I will teach you how a man should keep his word. Promise me but free ward, and I will give up my sword, and am again your prisoner.

COMMISSIONER.

How! Would you treat with the emperor, sword in hand?

GOETZ.

God forbid!—only with you and your worthy fraternity! You may go home, good people; you are only losing your time, and here there is nothing to be got but bruises.

COMMISSIONER.

Seize him! What! does not your love for the emperor supply you with courage?

GOETZ.

No more than the emperor supplies them with plaster for the wounds their courage would earn them.

Enter Sergeant hastily.

OFFICER.

The warder has just discovered from the castle-tower a troop of more than two hundred horsemen hastening towards the town. Unperceived by us, they have pressed forward from behind the hill, and threaten our walls

COMMISSIONER.

Alas! alas! What can this mean?



A Soldier enters.

SOLDIER.

Francis of Sickingen waits at the drawbridge, and informs you that he has heard how perfidiously you have broken your word to his brother-in-law, and how the Council of Heilbronn have aided and abetted in the treason. He is now come to insist upon justice, and if refused it, threatens, within an hour, to fire the four quarters of your town, and abandon it to be plundered by his vassals.

GOETZ.

My gallant brother!

COMMISSIONER.

Withdraw, Goetz. (*Exit Goetz.*) What is to be done?

MAGISTRATE.

Have compassion upon us and our town! Sickingen is inexorable in his wrath; he will keep his word.

COMMISSIONER.

Shall we forget what is due to ourselves and the emperor?

CAPTAIN.

If we had but men to enforce it; but situated as we are, a show of resistance would only make matters worse. It is better for us to yield.

MAGISTRATE.

Let us apply to Goetz to put in a good word for us. I feel as though I saw the town already in flames.

COMMISSIONER.

Let Goetz approach.

Enter Goetz.

GOETZ.

What now?

COMMISSIONER.

Thou wilt do well to dissuade thy brother-in-law from his rebellious interference. Instead of rescuing thee, he will only plunge thee deeper in destruction, and become the companion of thy fall!

GOETZ.

(Sees Elizabeth at the door, and speaks to her aside.) Go; tell him instantly to break in and force his way hither, but to spare the town. As for these rascals, if they offer any resistance, let him use force. I care not if I lose my life, provided they are all knocked on the head at the same time.

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SCENE III.—

***A Large Hall In The Council-House, Beset
BySickingen'STroops.***

EnterSickingenandGoetz.

GOETZ.

That was help from heaven. How camest thou so opportunely and unexpectedly, brother?

SICKINGEN.

Without witchcraft. I had despatched two or three messengers to learn how it fared with thee; when I beard of the perjury of these fellows I set out instantly, and now we have them safe.

GOETZ.

I ask nothing but knightly ward upon my parole.

SICKINGEN.

You are too noble. Not even to avail yourself of the advantage which the honest man has over the perjurer! They are in the wrong, and we will not give them cushions to sit upon. They have shamefully abused the imperial authority, and, if I know anything of the emperor, you might safely insist upon more favorable terms. You ask too little.

GOETZ.

I have ever been content with little.

SICKINGEN.

And therefore that little has always been denied thee. My proposal is, that they shall release your servants, and permit you all to return to your castle on parole—you can promise not to leave it till the emperor's pleasure be known. You will be safer there than here.

GOETZ.

They will say my property is escheated to the emperor.

SICKINGEN.

Then we will answer thou canst dwell there, and keep it for his service till he restores it to thee again. Let them wriggle like eels in the net, they shall not escape us! They may talk of the imperial dignity—of their commission. We will not mind that. I know the emperor, and have some influence with him. He has ever wished to have thee in his service. You will not be long in your castle without being summoned to serve him.

GOETZ.

God grant it, ere I forget the use of arms!

SICKINGEN.

Valor can never be forgotten, as it can never be learned. Fear nothing! When thy affairs are settled, I will repair to court, where my enterprises begin to ripen. Good fortune seems to smile on them. I want only to sound the emperor's mind. The towns of Triers and Pfalz as soon expect that the sky should fall, as that I shall come down upon their heads. But I will come like a hailstorm! and if I am successful, thou shalt soon be brother to an elector. I had hoped for thy assistance in this undertaking.

GOETZ.

(Looks at his hand.) Oh! that explains the dream I had the night before I promised Maria to Weislingen. I thought he vowed eternal fidelity, and held my iron hand so fast that it loosened from the arm. Alas! I am at this moment more defenceless than when it was shot away. Weislingen! Weislingen!

SICKINGEN.

Forget the traitor! We will thwart his plans, and undermine his authority, till shame and remorse shall gnaw him to death. I see, I see the downfall of our enemies.—Goetz—only half a year more!

GOETZ.

Thy soul soars high! I know not why, but for some time past no fair prospects have dawned upon me. I have been ere now in sore distress—I have been a prisoner before—but never did I experience such a depression.

SICKINGEN.

Fortune gives courage. Come, let us to the bigwigs. They have had time enough to deliberate, let us take the trouble upon ourselves.

[Exeunt.]

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SCENE IV.—

The Castle Of Adelaide. Augsburg.

Adelaide and Weislingen discovered.

ADELAIDE.

This is detestable.

WEISLINGEN.

I have gnashed my teeth. So good a plan—so well followed out—and after all to leave him in possession of his castle! That cursed Sickingen!

ADELAIDE.

The council should not have consented.

WEISLINGEN.

They were in the net. What else could they do? Sickingen threatened them with fire and sword, —the haughty, vindictive man! I hate him! His power waxes like a mountain torrent—let it but gain a few brooks, and others come pouring to its aid.

ADELAIDE.

Have they no emperor?

WEISLINGEN.

My dear wife, he waxes old and feeble; he is only the shadow of what he was. When he heard what had been done, and I and the other counsellors murmured indignantly: “Let them alone!” said he; “I can spare my old Goetz his little fortress, and if he remains quiet there, what have you to say against him?” We spoke of the welfare of the state. “Oh,” said he, “that I had always had counsellors who would have urged my restless spirit to consult more the happiness of individuals?”

ADELAIDE.

He has lost the spirit of a prince!

WEISLINGEN.

We inveighed against Sickingen!—"He is my faithful servant," said he; "and if he has not acted by my express order, he has performed what I wished better than my plenipotentiaries, and I can ratify what he has done as well after as before."

ADELAIDE.

'Tis enough to drive one mad.

WEISLINGEN.

Yet I have not given up all hope. Goetz is on parole to remain quiet in his castle. 'Tis impossible for him to keep his promise, and we shall soon have some new cause of complaint.

ADELAIDE.

That is the more likely, as we may hope that the old emperor will soon leave the world, and Charles, his gallant successor, will display a more princely mind.

WEISLINGEN.

Charles! He is neither chosen nor crowned.

ADELAIDE.

Who does not expect and hope for that event?

WEISLINGEN.

You have a great idea of his abilities; one might almost think you looked on him with partial eyes.

ADELAIDE.

You insult me, Weislingen. For what do you take me?

WEISLINGEN.

I do not mean to offend; but I cannot be silent upon the subject. Charles' marked attentions to you disquiet me.

ADELAIDE.

And do I receive them as—

WEISLINGEN.

You are a woman; and no woman hates those who pay their court to her.

ADELAIDE.

This from you?

WEISLINGEN.

It cuts me to the heart—the dreadful thought—Adelaide.

ADELAIDE.

Can I not cure thee of this folly?

WEISLINGEN.

If thou would'st; thou canst leave the court.

ADELAIDE.

But upon what pretence? Art thou not here? Must I leave you and all my friends, to shut myself up with the owls in your solitary castle? No, Weislingen, that will never do; be at rest, thou knowest I love thee.

WEISLINGEN.

That is my anchor so long as the cable holds.

[*Exit.*

ADELAIDE.

Ah! It is come to this? This was yet wanting. The projects of my bosom are too great to brook the interruption. Charles—the great, the gallant Charles—the future emperor—shall he be the only man unrewarded by my favor? Think not, Weislingen, to hinder me—else shalt thou to earth; my way lies over thee!

Enter Francis with a letter.

FRANCIS.

Here, gracious lady.

ADELAIDE.

Hadst thou it from Charles' own hand?

FRANCIS.

Yes.

ADELAIDE.

What ails thee? Thou look'st so mournful!

FRANCIS.

It is your pleasure that I should pine away, and waste my fairest years in agonizing despair.

ADELAIDE.

(Aside.) I pity him; and how little would it cost me to make him happy. *(Aloud.)* Be of good courage, youth! I know thy love and fidelity, and will not be ungrateful.

FRANCIS.

(With stifled breath.) If thou wert capable of ingratitude, I could not survive it. There boils not a drop of blood in my veins but what is thine own—I have not a single feeling but to love and to serve thee!

ADELAIDE.

Dear Francis!

FRANCIS.

You flatter me. *(Bursts into tears.)* Does my attachment deserve only to be a stepping stool to another—to see all your thoughts fixed upon Charles?

ADELAIDE.

You know not what you wish, and still less what you say.

FRANCIS.

(Stamping with vexation and rage.) No more will I be your slave, your go-between!

ADELAIDE.

Francis, you forget yourself.

FRANCIS.

To sacrifice my beloved master and myself—

ADELAIDE.

Out of my sight!

FRANCIS.

Gracious lady!

ADELAIDE.

Go, betray to thy beloved master the secret of my soul! Fool that I was to take thee for what thou art not.

FRANCIS.

Dear lady! you know how I love you.

ADELAIDE.

And thou, who wast my friend—so near my heart—go, betray me.

FRANCIS.

Rather would I tear my heart from my breast! Forgive me, gentle lady! my heart is too full, my senses desert me.

ADELAIDE.

Thou dear, affectionate boy! *(She takes him by both hands, draws him towards her and kisses him. He throws himself weeping upon her neck.)* Leave me!

FRANCIS.

(His voice choked by tears.) Heavens!

ADELAIDE.

Leave me! The walls are traitors. Leave me! *(Breaks from him.)* Be but steady in fidelity and love, and the fairest reward is thine.

[Exit.

FRANCIS.

The fairest reward! let me but live till that moment—I could murder my father, were
he an obstacle to my happiness!

[Exit.

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SCENE V.—

Jaxthausen.

Goetz seated at a table with writing materials. Elizabeth beside him with her work.

GOETZ.

This idle life does not suit me. My confinement becomes more irksome every day; I would I could sleep, or persuade myself that quiet is agreeable.

ELIZABETH.

Continue writing the account of thy deeds which thou hast commenced. Give into the hands of thy friends evidence to put thine enemies to shame; make a noble posterity acquainted with thy real character.

GOETZ.

Alas! writing is but busy idleness; it wearies me. While I am writing what I have done, I lament the misspent time in which I might do more.

ELIZABETH.

(Takes the writing.) Be not impatient. Thou hast come to thy first imprisonment at Heilbronn.

GOETZ.

That was always an unlucky place to me.

ELIZABETH.

(Reads.) “There were even some of the confederates who told me that I had acted foolishly in appearing before my bitterest enemies, who, as I might suspect, would not deal justly with me.” And what didst thou answer? Write on.

GOETZ.

I said, “Have I not often risked life and limb for the welfare and property of others, and shall I not do so for the honor of my knightly word?”

ELIZABETH.

Thus does fame speak of thee.

GOETZ.

They shall not rob me of my honor. They have taken all else from me—property—liberty—everything.

ELIZABETH.

I happened once to stand in an inn near the Lords of Miltenberg and Singlingen, who knew me not. Then I was joyful as at the birth of my first-born; for they extolled thee to each other, and said,—He is the mirror of knighthood, noble and merciful in prosperity, dauntless and true in misfortune.

GOETZ.

Let them show me the man to whom I have broken my word. Heaven knows, my ambition has ever been to labor for my neighbor more than for myself, and to acquire the fame of a gallant and irreproachable knight, rather than principalities or power; and, God be praised! I have gained the meed of my labor.

Enter George and Lerse with game.

GOETZ.

Good luck to my gallant huntsmen!

GEORGE.

Such have we become from gallant troopers. Boots can easily be cut down into buskins.

LERSE.

The chase is always something—'tis a kind of war.

GEORGE.

Yes; if we were not always crossed by these imperial gamekeepers. Don't you recollect, my lord, how you prophesied we should become huntsmen when the world was turned topsy-turvy? We are become so now without waiting for that.

GOETZ.

'Tis all the same, we are pushed out of our sphere.

GEORGE.

These are wonderful times! For eight days a dreadful comet has been seen—all Germany fears that it portends the death of the emperor, who is very ill.

GOETZ.

Very ill! Then our career draws to a close.

LERSE.

And in the neighborhood there are terrible commotions; the peasants have made a formidable insurrection.

GOETZ.

Where?

LERSE.

In the heart of Swabia; they are plundering, burning and slaying. I fear they will sack the whole country.

GEORGE.

It is a horrible warfare! They have already risen in a hundred places, and daily increase in number. A hurricane too has lately torn up the whole forests; and in the place where the insurrection began, two fiery swords have been seen in the sky crossing each other.

GOETZ.

Then some of my poor friends and neighbors no doubt suffer innocently.

GEORGE.

Alas! that we are pent up thus!

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ACT V.



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SCENE I.—

A Village Plundered By The Insurgent Peasantry. Shrieks And Tumult.

Women, Old Men and Children fly across the Stage.

OLD MAN.

Away! away! let us fly from the murdering dogs.

WOMAN.

Sacred heaven! How blood-red is the sky! how blood-red the setting sun!

ANOTHER.

That must be fire.

A THIRD.

My husband! my husband!

OLD MAN.

Away! away! To the wood!

[Exeunt.

Enter Link and Insurgents.

LINK.

Whoever opposes you, down with him! The village is ours. Let none of the booty be injured, none be left behind. Plunder clean and quickly. We must soon set fire—

Enter Metzler, coming down the hill.

METZLER.

How do things go with you, Link?



artist: a. wagner.

GÖTZ VON BERLICHINGEN. ACT V.

the insurgents and gÖtz

LINK.

Merrily enough, as you see; you are just in time for the fun.—Whence come you?

METZLER.

From Weinsberg. There was a jubilee.

LINK.

How so?

METZLER.

We stabbed them all, in such heaps it was a joy to see it!

LINK.

All whom?

METZLER.

Dietrich von Weiler led up the dance. The fool! We were all raging around the church steeple. He looked out and wished to treat with us.—Baf! A ball through his head! Up we rushed like a tempest, and the fellow soon made his exit by the window.

LINK.

Huzza!

METZLER.

(*To the Peasants.*) Ye dogs, must I find you legs? How they gape and loiter, the asses!

LINK.

Set fire! Let them roast in the flames! forward! Push on, ye dolts.

METZLER.

Then we brought out Helfenstein, Eltershofen, thirteen of the nobility—eighty in all. They were led out on the plain before Heilbronn. What a shouting and jubilee among our lads as the long row of miserable sinners passed by! they stared at each other, and, heaven and earth! we surrounded them before they were aware, and then despatched them all with our pikes.

LINK.

Why was I not there?

METZLER.

Never in all my life did I see such fun.

LINK.

On! on! Bring all out!

PEASANT.

All's clear.

LINK.

Then fire the village at the four corners.

METZLER.

'Twill make a fine bonfire! Hadst thou but seen how the fellows tumbled over one another, and croaked like frogs! It warmed my heart like a cup of brandy. One Rexinger was there, a fellow, with a white plume and flaxen locks, who, when he went out hunting, used to drive us before him like dogs, and with dogs. I had not caught sight of him all the while, when suddenly his fool's visage looked me full in the face. Push! went the spear between his ribs, and there he lay stretched on all-fours above his companions. The fellows lay kicking in a heap like the hares that used to be driven together at their grand hunting parties.

LINK.

It smokes finely already!

METZLER.

Yonder it burns! Come, let us with the booty to the main body.

LINK.

Where do they halt?

METZLER.

Between this and Heilbronn. They wish to choose a captain whom every one will respect, for we are after all only their equals; they feel this, and turn restive.

LINK.

Whom do they propose?

METZLER.

Maximilian Stumpf, or Goetz von Berlichingen.

LINK.

That would be well. 'Twould give the thing credit should Goetz accept it. He has ever been held a worthy independent knight. Away, away! We march towards Heilbronn! Pass the word.

METZLER.

The fire will light us a good part of the way. Hast thou seen the great comet?

LINK.

Yes. It is a dreadful ghastly sign! As we march by night we can see it well. It rises about one o'clock.

METZLER.

And is visible but for an hour and a quarter, like an arm brandishing a sword, and bloody red!

LINK.

Didst thou mark the three stars at the sword's hilt and point?

METZLER.

And the broad haze-colored stripe illuminated by a thousand streamers like lances,
and between them little swords.

LINK.

I shuddered with horror. The sky was pale red streaked with ruddy flames, and among
them grisly figures with shaggy hair and beards.

METZLER.

Did you see them too? And how they all swam about as though in a sea of blood, and
struggled in confusion, enough to turn one's brain.

LINK.

Away! away!

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE II.—

Open Country. In The Distance Two Villages And An Abbey Are Burning.

Kohl, Wild, Maximilian. Stumpf. *Insurgents.*

STUMPF.

You cannot ask me to be your leader; it were bad for you and for me: I am a vassal of the palsgrave, and how shall I make war against my liege lord? Besides, you would always suspect I did not act from my heart.

KOHL.

We knew well thou would'st make some excuse.

Enter George, Lerse and Goetz.

GOETZ.

What would you with me?

KOHL.

You must be our captain.

GOETZ.

How can I break my knightly word to the emperor. I am under the ban: I cannot quit my territory.

WILD.

That's no excuse.

GOETZ.

And were I free, and you wanted to deal with the lords and nobles as you did at Weinsberg, laying waste the country round with fire and sword, and should wish me to be an abettor of your shameless, barbarous doings, rather than be your captain, you should slay me like a mad dog!

KOHL.

What has been done cannot be undone.

STUMF.

That was just the misfortune, that they had no leader whom they honored, and who could bridle their fury. I beseech thee, Goetz, accept the office! The princes will be grateful; all Germany will thank thee. It will be for the weal and prosperity of all. The country and its inhabitants will be preserved.

GOETZ.

Why dost not thou accept it?

STUMF.

I have given them reasons for my refusal.

KOHL.

We have no time to waste in useless speeches. Once for all! Goetz, be our chief, or look to thy castle and thy head! Take two hours to consider of it. Guard him!

GOETZ.

To what purpose? I am as resolved now as I shall ever be. Why have ye risen up in arms? If to recover your rights and freedom, why do you plunder and lay waste the land? Will you abstain from such evil doings, and act as true men who know what they want? Then will I be your chief for eight days, and help you in your lawful and orderly demands.

WILD.

What has been done was done in the first heat, and thy interference is not needed to prevent it for the future.

KOHL.

Thou must engage with us at least for a quarter of a year.

STUMF.

Say four weeks, that will satisfy both parties.

GOETZ.

Then be it so.

KOHL.

Your hand!

GOETZ.

But you must promise to send the treaty you have made with me in writing to all your troops, and to punish severely those who infringe it.

WILD.

Well, it shall be done.

GOETZ.

Then I bind myself to you for four weeks.

STUMF.

Good fortune to you! In whatever thou doest, spare our noble lord the palsgrave.

KOHL.

(Aside.) See that none speak to him without our knowledge.

GOETZ.

Lerse, go to my wife. Protect her; you shall soon have news of me.

[Exeunt Goetz, Stumpf, George, Lerse and some Peasants.

Enter Metzler, Link and their followers.

METZLER.

Who talks of a treaty? What's the use of a treaty?

LINK.

It is shameful to make any such bargain.

KOHL.

We know as well what we want as you; and we may do or let alone what we please.

WILD.

This raging, and burning, and murdering must have an end some day or other; and by renouncing it just now, we gain a brave leader.

METZLER.

How? An end? Thou traitor! why are we here but to avenge ourselves on our enemies, and enrich ourselves at their expense? Some prince's slave has been tampering with thee.

KOHL.

Come, Wild, he is like a brute-beast.

[Exeunt Wild and Kohl.

METZLER.

Ay, go your way; no band will stick by you. The villains! Link, we'll set on the others to burn Miltenberg yonder; and if they begin a quarrel about the treaty, we'll cut off the heads of those that made it.

LINK.

We have still the greater body of peasants on our side.

[Exeunt with Insurgents.

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SCENE III.—

A Hill And Prospect Of The Country. In The Flat Scene A Mill. A Body Of Horsemen.

Weislingen comes out of the Mill, followed by Francis and a Courier.

WEISLINGEN.

My horse! Have you announced it to the other nobles?

COURIER.

At least seven standards will meet you in the wood behind Miltenberg. The peasants are marching in that direction. Couriers are despatched on all sides; the entire confederacy will soon be assembled. Our plan cannot fail; and they say there is dissension among them.

WEISLINGEN.

So much the better. Francis!

FRANCIS.

Gracious sir!

WEISLINGEN.

Discharge thine errand punctually. I bind it upon thy soul. Give her the letter. She shall from the court to my castle instantly. Thou must see her depart, and bring me notice of it.

FRANCIS.

Your commands shall be obeyed.

WEISLINGEN.

Tell her she *shall* go. (*To the Courier.*) Lead us by the nearest and best road.

COURIER.

We must go round; all the rivers are swollen with the late heavy rains.

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SCENE IV.—

Jaxthausen.

Elizabeth and Lerse.

LERSE.

Gracious lady, be comforted!

ELIZABETH.

Alas! Lerse, the tears stood in his eyes when he took leave of me. It is dreadful, dreadful!

LERSE.

He will return.

ELIZABETH.

It is not that. When he went forth to gain honorable victories, never did grief sit heavy at my heart. I then rejoiced in the prospect of his return, which I now dread.

LERSE.

So noble a man.

ELIZABETH.

Call him not so. There lies the new misery. The miscreants! they threatened to murder his family and burn his castle. Should he return, gloomy, most gloomy shall I see his brow. His enemies will forge scandalous accusations against him, which he will be unable to refute.

LERSE.

He will and can.

ELIZABETH.

He has broken his parole—canst thou deny that?

LERSE.

No! he was constrained; what reason is there to condemn him?

ELIZABETH.

Malice seeks not reasons, but pretexts. He has become an ally of rebels, malefactors and murderers: he has become their chief. Say No to that.

LERSE.

Cease to torment yourself and me. Have they not solemnly sworn to abjure all such doings as those at Weinsberg? Did I not myself hear them say, in remorse, that, had not that been done already, it never should have been done? Must not the princes and nobles return him their best thanks for having undertaken the dangerous office of leading these unruly people, in order to restrain their rage, and to save so many lives and possessions?

ELIZABETH.

Thou art an affectionate advocate. Should they take him prisoner, deal with him as with a rebel, and bring his gray hairs— Lerse, I should go mad!

LERSE.

Send sleep to refresh her body, dear Father of mankind, if Thou deniest comfort to her soul!

ELIZABETH.

George has promised to bring news, but he will not be allowed to do so. They are worse than prisoners. Well I know they are watched like enemies.—The gallant boy! he would not leave his master.

LERSE.

The very heart within me bled as I left him.—Had you not needed my help, all the terrors of grisly death should not have separated us.

ELIZABETH.

I know not where Sickingen is.—Could I but send a message to Maria!

LERSE.

Write, then. I will take care that she receives it.

[*Exit.*

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SCENE V.—

A Village.

Enter Goetz and George.

GOETZ.

To horse, George! Quick! I see Miltenberg in flames.—Is it thus they keep the treaty?—Ride to them, tell them my purpose.—The murderous incendiaries—I renounce them.—Let them make a thieving gypsy their captain, not me!—Quick, George! (*Exit George.*) Would that I were a thousand miles hence, at the bottom of the deepest dungeon in Turkey!—Could I but come off with honor from them! I have thwarted them every day, and told them the bitterest truths, in the hope they might weary of me and let me go.

Enter an Unknown.

UNKNOWN.

God save you, gallant sir!

GOETZ.

I thank you! What is your errand? Your name?

UNKNOWN.

My name does not concern my business. I come to tell you that your life is in danger. The insurgent leaders are weary of hearing from you such harsh language, and are resolved to rid themselves of you. Speak them fair, or endeavor to escape from them; and God be with you!

[*Exit.*

GOETZ.

To quit life in this fashion, Goetz, to end thus? But be it so. My death will be the clearest proof to the world that I have had nothing in common with the miscreants.

Enter Insurgents.

FIRST INSURGENT.

Captain, they are prisoners, they are slain!

GOETZ.

Who?

SECOND INSURGENT.

Those who burned Miltenberg; a troop of confederate cavalry suddenly charged upon them from behind the hill.

GOETZ.

They have their reward. O George! George! They have taken him prisoner with the caitiffs.—My George! my George!

Enter Insurgents in confusion.

LINK.

Up, sir captain, up!—There is no time to lose—the enemy is at hand, and in force.

GOETZ.

Who burned Miltenberg?

METZLER.

If you mean to pick a quarrel, we'll soon show you how we'll end it.

KOHL.

Look to your own safety and ours.—Up!

GOETZ.

(*To Metzler.*) Darest thou threaten me, thou scoundrel?—Thinkest thou to awe me, because thy garments are stained with the Count of Helfenstein's blood?

METZLER.

Berlichingen!

GOETZ.

Thou mayest call me by my name, and my children will not be ashamed to hear it.

METZLER.

Out upon thee, coward!—Prince's slave!

[*Goetz strikes him down.—The others interpose.*

KOHL.

Ye are mad!—The enemy are breaking in on all sides, and you quarrel!

LINK.

Away! away! [*Cries and tumult.—The Insurgents fly across the stage.*

Enter Weislingen and Troopers.

WEISLINGEN.

Pursue! pursue! they fly!—Stop neither for darkness nor rain.—I hear Goetz is among them; look that he escape you not. Our friends say he is sorely wounded.

(*Exeunt Troopers.*) And when I have caught thee—it will be merciful secretly to execute the sentence of death in prison. Thus he perishes from the memory of man, and then, foolish heart, thou mayest beat more freely.

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SCENE VI.—

The Front Of A Gypsy-hut In A Wild Forest.—Night.—A Fire Before The Hut, At Which Are Seated The Mother Of The Gypsies And A Girl.

MOTHER.

Throw some fresh straw upon the thatch, daughter: there'll be heavy rain again to-night.

Enter a Gypsy-Boy.

BOY.

A dormouse, mother! and look! two field-mice!

MOTHER.

I'll skin them and roast them for thee, and thou shalt have a cap of their skins. Thou bleedest!

BOY.

Dormouse bit me.

MOTHER.

Fetch some dead wood, that the fire may burn bright when thy father comes: he will be wet through and through.

Another Gypsy-Woman with a child at her back.

FIRST WOMAN.

Hast thou had good luck?

SECOND WOMAN.

Ill enough. The whole country is in an uproar; one's life is not safe a moment. Two villages are in a blaze.

FIRST WOMAN.

Is it fire that glares so yonder? I have been watching it long. One is so accustomed now to fiery signs in the heavens.

The Captain of the Gypsies enters with three of his gang.

CAPTAIN.

Heard ye the wild huntsman?

FIRST WOMAN.

He is passing over us now.

CAPTAIN.

How the hounds give tongue! Wow! wow!

SECOND MAN.

How the whips crack!

THIRD MAN.

And the huntsmen cheer them.—Hallo—ho!

MOTHER.

'Tis the devil's chase.

CAPTAIN.

We have been fishing in troubled waters. The peasants rob each other; there's no harm in our helping them.

SECOND WOMAN.

What hast thou got, Wolf?

WOLF.

A hare and a capon, a spit, a bundle of linen, three spoons and a bridle.

STICKS.

I have a blanket and a pair of boots, also a flint and tinder-box.

MOTHER.

All wet as mire; I'll dry them, give them here!

[Tramping without.

CAPTAIN.

Hark!—A horse! Go see who it is.

Enter Goetz on horseback.

GOETZ.

I thank thee, God! I see fire—they are gypsies.—My wounds bleed sorely—my foes
are close behind me!—Great God, this is a fearful end!

CAPTAIN.

Is it in peace thou comest?

GOETZ.

I crave help from you—my wounds exhaust me—assist me to dismount!

CAPTAIN.

Help him!—A gallant warrior in look and speech.

WOLF.

(Aside.) 'Tis Goetz von Berlichingen!

CAPTAIN.

Welcome! welcome!—All that we have is yours.

GOETZ.

Thanks, thanks!

CAPTAIN.

Come to my hut!

[Exeunt to the hut.

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SCENE VII.—

Inside The Hut.



Captain, Gypsies and Goetz.

CAPTAIN.

Call our mother—tell her to bring bloodwort and bandages. (*Goetz unarms himself.*)
Here is my holiday doublet.

GOETZ.

God reward you!

[*The Mother binds his wounds.*]

CAPTAIN.

I rejoice that you are come.

GOETZ.

Do you know me?

CAPTAIN.

Who does not know you, Goetz? Our lives and heart's blood are yours.

Enter Sticks.

STICKS.

Horsemen are coming through the wood. They are confederates.

CAPTAIN.

Your pursuers! They shall not harm you. Away, Sticks, call the others: we know the passes better than they. We shall shoot them ere they are aware of us.

[Exeunt Captain and Men-Gypsies with their guns.

GOETZ.

(Alone.) O Emperor! Emperor! Robbers protect thy children. *(A sharp firing.)* The wild foresters! Steady and true!

Enter Women.

WOMEN.

Flee! flee! The enemy has overpowered us.

GOETZ.

Where is my horse?

WOMEN.

Here!

GOETZ.

(Girds on his sword and mounts without his armor.) For the last time shall you feel my arm. I am not so weak yet.

[Exit.—Tumult.

WOMEN.

He gallops to join our party.

[Firing.

Enter Wolf.

WOLF.

Away! Away! All is lost.—The captain is shot!—Goetz a prisoner.

[The Women scream and fly into the wood.

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SCENE VIII.—

Adelaide's *Bedchamber*.

Enter Adelaide with a letter.

ADELAIDE.

He or I! The tyrant—to threaten me! We will anticipate him. Who glides through the ante-chamber? (*A low knock at the door.*) Who is there?

FRANCIS.

(In a low voice.) Open, gracious lady!

ADELAIDE.

Francis! He well deserves that I should admit him.

[Opens the door.

FRANCIS.

(Throws himself on her neck.) My dear, my gracious lady!

ADELAIDE.

What audacity! If any one should hear you?

FRANCIS.

Oh—all—all are asleep.

ADELAIDE.

What would'st thou?

FRANCIS.

I cannot rest. The threats of my master.—your fate,—my heart.

ADELAIDE.

He was incensed against me when you parted from him?

FRANCIS.

He was as I have never seen him.—To my castle, said he, she must—she *shall* go.

ADELAIDE.

And shall we obey?

FRANCIS.

I know not, dear lady!

ADELAIDE.

Thou foolish, infatuated boy! Thou dost not see where this will end. Here he knows I am in safety. He has long had designs on my freedom, and therefore wishes to get me to his castle—there he will have power to use me as his hate shall dictate.

FRANCIS.

He shall not!

ADELAIDE.

Wilt thou prevent him?

FRANCIS.

He shall not!

ADELAIDE.

I foresee the whole misery of my fate. He will tear me forcibly from his castle to immure me in a cloister.

FRANCIS.

Hell and damnation!

ADELAIDE.

Wilt thou rescue me?

FRANCIS.

Anything! Everything!

ADELAIDE.

(Throws herself weeping upon his neck.) Francis! O save me!

FRANCIS.

He shall fall. I will plant my foot upon his neck.

ADELAIDE.

No violence! You shall carry a submissive letter to him announcing obedience—then give him this vial in his wine.

FRANCIS.

Give it me! Thou shalt be free!

ADELAIDE.

Free!—And then no more shalt thou need to come to my chamber trembling and in fear. No more shall I need anxiously to say, “Away, Francis! the morning dawns.”

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SCENE IX.—

Street Before The Prison At Heilbronn.

Elizabeth and Lerse.

LERSE.

Heaven relieve your distress, gracious lady! Maria is come.

ELIZABETH.

God be praised! Lerse, we have sunk into dreadful misery. My worst forebodings are realized! A prisoner—thrown as an assassin and malefactor into the deepest dungeon.

LERSE.

I know all.

ELIZABETH.

Thou knowest nothing. Our distress is too—too great! His age, his wounds, a slow fever—and, more than all, the despondency of his mind to think that this should be his end.

LERSE.

Ay, and that Weislingen should be commissioner!

ELIZABETH.

Weislingen?

LERSE.

They have acted with unheard-of severity. Metzler has been burned alive—hundreds of his associates broken upon the wheel, beheaded, quartered and impaled. All the country round looks like a slaughter-house, where human flesh is cheap.

ELIZABETH.

Weislingen commissioner! O Heaven! a ray of hope! Maria shall go to him: he cannot refuse her. He had ever a compassionate heart, and when he sees her whom he once loved so much, whom he has made so miserable—where is she?

LERSE.

Still at the inn.

ELIZABETH.

Take me to her. She must away instantly. I fear the worst.

[Exeunt.]

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SCENE X.—

An Apartment In Weislingen's Castle.



WEISLINGEN.

(Alone.) I am so ill, so weak—all my bones are hollow—this wretched fever has consumed their very marrow. No rest, no sleep, by day or night! and when I slumber, such fearful dreams! Last night methought I met Goetz in the forest. He drew his sword, and defied me to combat. I grasped mine, but my hand failed me. He darted on me a look of contempt, sheathed his weapon, and passed on. He is a prisoner; yet I tremble to think of him. Miserable man! Thine own voice has condemned him; yet thou tremblest like a malefactor at his very shadow. And shall he die? Goetz! Goetz! we mortals are not our own masters. Fiends have empire over us, and shape our actions after their own hellish will, to goad us to perdition. *(Sits down.)* Weak! Weak! Why are my nails so blue? A cold, clammy, wasting sweat drenches every limb. Everything swims before my eyes. Could I but sleep! Alas!

Enter Maria.

WEISLINGEN.

Mother of God! Leave me in peace—leave me in peace! This spectre was yet wanting. Maria is dead, and she appears to the traitor. Leave me, blessed spirit! I am wretched enough.

MARIA.

Weislingen, I am no spirit. I am Maria.

WEISLINGEN.

It is her voice!

MARIA.

I came to beg my brother's life of thee. He is guiltless, however culpable he may appear.

WEISLINGEN.

Hush! Maria—angel of heaven as thou art, thou bringest with thee the torments of hell! Speak no more!

MARIA.

And must my brother die? Weislingen, it is horrible that I should have to tell thee he is guiltless; that I should be compelled to come as a suppliant to restrain thee from a most fearful murder. Thy soul to its inmost depths is possessed by evil powers. Can this be Adelbert?

WEISLINGEN.

Thou seest—the consuming breath of the grave hath swept over me—my strength sinks in death—I die in misery, and thou comest to drive me to despair. Could I but tell thee all, thy bitterest hate would melt to sorrow and compassion. O Maria! Maria!

MARIA.

Weislingen, my brother is pining in a dungeon—the anguish of his wounds—his age—Oh, hadst thou the heart to bring his gray hairs— Weislingen, we should despair.

WEISLINGEN.

Enough!—

[Rings a hand-bell.

Enter Francis, in great agitation.

FRANCIS.

Gracious sir.

WEISLINGEN.

Those papers, Francis. *(He gives them. Weislingen tears open a packet and shows Maria a paper.)* Here is thy brother's death-warrant signed!

MARIA.

God in heaven!

WEISLINGEN.

And thus I tear it. He shall live! But can I restore what I have destroyed? Weep not so,
Francis! Dear youth, my wretchedness lies deeply at thy heart.

[Francis *throws himself at his feet, and clasps his knees.*

MARIA.

(*Apart.*) He is ill—very ill. The sight of him rends my heart. I loved him! And now
that I again approach him, I feel how dearly—

WEISLINGEN.

Francis, arise and cease to weep—I may recover! While there is life there is hope.

FRANCIS.

You cannot! You must die!

WEISLINGEN.

Must?

FRANCIS.

(*Beside himself.*) Poison! poison!—from your wife! I—I gave it.

[*Rushes out.*

WEISLINGEN.

Follow him, Maria—he is desperate.

[*Exit Maria.*

Poison from my wife! Alas! alas! I feel it. Torture and death!

MARIA.

(*Within.*) Help! help!

WEISLINGEN.

(*Attempts in vain to rise.*) God! I cannot.

MARIA.

(Re-entering.) He is gone! He threw himself desperately from a window of the hall into the river.

WEISLINGEN.

It is well with him!—Thy brother is out of danger! The other commissioners, especially Seckendorf, are his friends. They will readily allow him to ward himself upon his knightly word. Farewell, Maria! Now go.

MARIA.

I will stay with thee—thou poor forsaken one!

WEISLINGEN.

Poor and forsaken indeed! O God, Thou art a terrible avenger! My wife!

MARIA.

Remove from thee that thought. Turn thy soul to the throne of mercy.

WEISLINGEN.

Go, thou gentle spirit! leave me to my misery! Horrible! Even thy presence, Maria, even the attendance of my only comforter, is agony.

MARIA.

(Aside.) Strengthen me, Heaven! My soul droops with his.

WEISLINGEN.

Alas! alas! Poison from my wife! My Francis seduced by the wretch! She waits—listens to every horse's hoof for the messenger who brings her the news of my death. And thou too, Maria, wherefore art thou come to awaken every slumbering recollection of my sins? Leave me, leave me that I may die!

MARIA.

Let me stay! Thou art alone: think I am thy nurse. Forget all. May God forgive thee as freely as I do!

WEISLINGEN.

Thou spirit of love! pray for me! pray for me! My heart is seared.

MARIA.

There is forgiveness for thee.—Thou art exhausted.

WEISLINGEN.

I die! I die! and yet I cannot die. In the fearful contest between life and death lie the torments of hell.

MARIA.

Heavenly Father, have compassion upon him. Grant him but one token of Thy love, that his heart may be opened to comfort, and his soul to the hope of eternal life, even in the agony of death!

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SCENE XI.—

A Narrow Vault Dimly Illuminated. The Judges Of The Secret Tribunal Discovered Seated, All Muffled In Black Cloaks.

ELDEST JUDGE.

Judges of the Secret Tribunal, sworn by the cord and the steel to be inflexible in justice, to judge in secret, and to avenge in secret, like the Deity! Are your hands clean and your hearts pure? Raise them to heaven and cry,—Woe upon evil-doers!

ALL.

Woe! woe!

ELDEST JUDGE.

Crier, begin the diet of judgment.

CRIER.

I cry, I cry for accusation against evil-doers! He whose heart is pure, whose hands are clean to swear by the cord and the steel, let him lift up his voice and call upon the steel and the cord for vengeance! vengeance! vengeance!

ACCUSER.

(Comes forward.) My heart is pure from misdeed, and my hands are clean from innocent blood: God pardon my sins of thought, and prevent their execution. I raise my hand on high, and cry for vengeance! vengeance! vengeance!

ELDEST JUDGE.

Vengeance upon whom?

ACCUSER.

I call upon the cord and the steel for vengeance against Adelaide of Weislingen. She has committed adultery and murder. She has poisoned her husband by the hands of his servant—the servant hath slain himself—the husband is dead.

ELDEST JUDGE.

Dost thou swear by the God of truth, that thy accusation is true?

ACCUSER.

I swear!

ELDEST JUDGE.

Dost thou invoke upon thine own head the punishment of murder and adultery, should thy accusation be found false?

ACCUSER.

On my head be it.

ELDEST JUDGE.

Your voices?

[They converse a few minutes in whispers.]

ACCUSER.

Judges of the Secret Tribunal, what is your sentence upon Adelaide of Weislingen, accused of murder and adultery?

ELDEST JUDGE.

She shall die!—she shall die a bitter and twofold death! By the double doom of the steel and the cord shall she expiate the double crime. Raise your hands to heaven and cry, Woe, woe upon her! Be she delivered into the hands of the avenger.

ALL.

Woe! woe!

ELDEST JUDGE.

Woe! Avenger, come forth.

[A man advances.]

Here, take thou the cord and the steel! Within eight days shalt thou blot her out from before the face of heaven: wheresoever thou findest her, down with her into the dust. Judges, ye that judge in secret and avenge in secret like the Deity, keep your hearts from wickedness, and your hands from innocent blood!

[The Scene closes.]

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SCENE XII.—

The Court Of An Inn.

LerseandMaria.

MARIA.

The horses have rested long enough: we will away, Lerse.

LERSE.

Stay till to-morrow; this is a dreadful night.

MARIA.

Lerse, I cannot rest till I have seen my brother. Let us away: the weather is clearing up—we may expect a fair morning.

LERSE.

Be it as you will.

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SCENE XIII.—

The Prison At Heilbronn.

Goetz and Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH.

I entreat thee, dear husband, speak to me. Thy silence alarms me; thy spirit consumes thee, pent up within thy breast. Come, let me see thy wounds; they mend daily. In this desponding melancholy I know thee no longer!

GOETZ.

Seekest thou Goetz? He is long since gone! Piece by piece have they robbed me of all I held dear—my hand, my property, my freedom, my good name! My life! of what value is it to me? What news of George? Is Lerse gone to seek him?



ELIZABETH.

He is, my love! Be of good cheer; things may yet take a favorable turn.

GOETZ.

He whom God hath stricken lifts himself up no more! I best know the load I have to bear.—To misfortune I am inured.—But now it is not Weislingen alone, not the peasants alone, not the death of the emperor, nor my wounds—it is the whole united—. My hour is come! I had hoped it should have been like my life. But His will be done!

ELIZABETH.

Wilt thou not eat something?

GOETZ.

Nothing, my love! See how the sun shines yonder!

ELIZABETH.

It is a fine spring day!

GOETZ.

My love, wilt thou ask the keeper's permission for me to walk in his little garden for half an hour, that I may look upon the clear face of heaven, the pure air, and the blessed sun?

ELIZABETH.

I will—and he will readily grant it.

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SCENE The Last.—

The Prison Garden.

LerseandMaria.

MARIA.

Go in, and see how it stands with them.

[*Exit*Lerse.

*Enter*ElizabethandKeeper.

ELIZABETH.

(*To the*Keeper.) God reward your kindness and attention to my husband!

(*Exit*Keeper.) Maria, how hast thou sped?

MARIA.

My brother is safe! But my heart is torn asunder. Weislingen is dead! poisoned by his wife. My husband is in danger—the princes are becoming too powerful for him: they say he is surrounded and besieged.

ELIZABETH.

Believe not the rumor; and let not Goetz hear it.

MARIA.

How is it with him?

ELIZABETH.

I feared he would not survive till thy return: the hand of the Lord is heavy on him.
And George is dead!

MARIA.

George! The gallant boy!

ELIZABETH.

When the miscreants were burning Miltenberg his master sent him to check their villany. A body of cavalry charged upon them: had they all behaved as George, they must all have had as clear a conscience. Many were killed, and George among them; he died the death of a warrior.

MARIA.

Does Goetz know it?

ELIZABETH.

We conceal it from him. He questions me ten times a day concerning him, and sends me as often to see what is become of him. I fear to give his heart this last wound.

MARIA.

O God! what are the hopes of this world?

Enter Goetz, Lerse and Keeper.

GOETZ.

Almighty God! how lovely it is beneath Thy heaven! How free! The trees put forth their buds, and all the world awakes to hope.—Farewell, my children! my roots are cut away, my strength totters to the grave.

ELIZABETH.

Shall I not send Lerse to the convent for thy son, that thou may'st once more see and bless him?

GOETZ.

Let him be; he needs not my blessing, he is holier than I.—Upon our wedding-day, Elizabeth, could I have thought I should die thus!—My old father blessed us, and prayed for a succession of noble and gallant sons—God, Thou hast not heard him. I am the last.—Lerse, thy countenance cheers me in the hour of death more than in our most daring fights: then, my spirit encouraged all of you; now, thine supports me.—Oh, that I could but once more see George, and sun myself in his look! You turn away and weep. He is dead? George is dead? Then die, Goetz! Thou hast outlived thyself, outlived the noblest of thy servants.—How died he? Alas! they took him among the incendiaries, and he has been executed?

ELIZABETH.

No! he was slain at Miltenberg! while fighting like a lion for his freedom.

GOETZ.

God be praised! He was the kindest youth under the sun, and one of the bravest.—Now release my soul. My poor wife! I leave thee in a wicked world. Lerse, forsake her not! Look your hearts more carefully than your doors. The age of fraud is at hand, treachery will reign unchecked. The worthless will gain the ascendancy by cunning, and the noble will fall into their net. Maria, may God restore thy husband to thee! may he not fall the deeper for having risen so high! Selbitz is dead, and the good emperor, and my George—give me a draught of water!— Heavenly air! Freedom! freedom!

[He dies.

ELIZABETH.

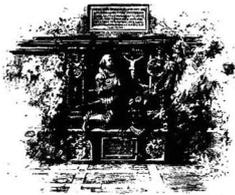
Freedom is above! above—with thee! The world is a prison-house.

MARIA.

Noble man! Woe to this age that rejected thee!

LERSE.

And woe to the future, that shall misjudge thee.



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IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

A DRAMA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

IPHIGENIA

THOAS, *King of the Taurians*

ORESTES

PYLADES

ARKAS.



Fr. Pecht del.

published by george barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Iphigenia

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ACT I.



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SCENE I.—

A Grove Before The Temple Of Diana.

IPHIGENIA.

Beneath your leafy gloom, ye waving boughs
Of this old, shady, consecrated grove,
As in the goddess' silent sanctuary,
With the same shuddering feeling forth I step,
As when I trod it first, nor ever here
Doth my unquiet spirit feel at home.
Long as a higher will, to which I bow,
Hath kept me here conceal'd, still, as at first,
I feel myself a stranger. For the sea
Doth sever me, alas! from those I love,
And day by day upon the shore I stand,
The land of Hellas seeking with my soul;
But to my sighs, the hollow-sounding waves
Bring, save their own hoarse murmurs, no reply.
Alas for him! who friendless and alone,
Remote from parents and from brethren dwells;
From him grief snatches every coming joy
Ere it doth reach his lip. His yearning thoughts
Throng back forever to his father's halls,
Where first to him the radiant sun unclosed

The gates of heav'n; where closer, day by day,
Brothers and sisters, leagued in pastime sweet,
Around each other twin'd love's tender bonds.
I will not reckon with the gods; yet truly
Deserving of lament is woman's lot.
Man rules alike at home and in the field,
Nor is in foreign climes without resource;
Him conquest crowneth, him possession gladdens,
And him an honorable death awaits.
How circumscrib'd is woman's destiny!
Obedience to a harsh, imperious lord,
Her duty, and her comfort; sad her fate,
Whom hostile fortune drives to lands remote!
Thus Thoas holds me here, a noble man
Bound with a heavy though a sacred chain.
Oh, how it shames me, goddess, to confess
That with repugnance I perform these rites
For thee, divine protectress! unto whom
I would in freedom dedicate my life.
In thee, Diana, I have always hoped,
And still I hope in thee, who didst infold
Within the holy shelter of thine arm
The outcast daughter of the mighty king.
Daughter of Jove! hast thou from ruin'd Troy
Led back in triumph to his native land

The mighty man, whom thou didst sore afflict,
His daughter's life in sacrifice demanding,—
Hast thou for him, the godlike Agamemnon,
Who to thine altar led his darling child,
Preserv'd his wife, Electra, and his son,
His dearest treasures?—then at length restore
Thy suppliant also to her friends and home,
And save her, as thou once from death didst save,
So now, from living here, a second death.

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SCENE II.

Iphigenia, Arkas.

ARKAS.

The king hath sent me hither, bade me greet
With hail and fair salute, Diana's priestess.
For new and wondrous conquest, this the day,
When to her goddess Tauris renders thanks.
I hasten on before the king and host,
Himself to herald, and its near approach.

IPHIGENIA.

We are prepar'd to give them worthy greeting;
Our goddess doth behold with gracious eye
The welcome sacrifice from Thoas' hand.

ARKAS.

Would that I also found the priestess' eye,
Much honor'd, much rever'd one, found thine eye,
O consecrated maid, more calm, more bright,
To all a happy omen! Still doth grief,
With gloom mysterious, shroud thy inner mind;
Vainly, through many a tedious year we wait
For one confiding utterance from thy breast.
Long as I've known thee in this holy place,
That look of thine hath ever made me shudder;

And, as with iron bands, thy soul remains
Lock'd in the deep recesses of thy breast.

IPHIGENIA.

As doth become the exile and the orphan.

ARKAS.

Dost thou then here seem exil'd and an orphan?

IPHIGENIA.

Can foreign scenes our fatherland replace?

ARKAS.

Thy fatherland is foreign now to thee.

IPHIGENIA.

Hence is it that my bleeding heart ne'er heals.
In early youth, when first my soul, in love,
Held father, mother, brethren fondly twin'd,
A group of tender germs, in union sweet,
We sprang in beauty from the parent stem,
And heavenward grew; alas, a foreign curse
Then seized and sever'd me from those I lov'd,
And wrench'd with iron grasp the beauteous bands.
It vanish'd then, the fairest charm of youth,
The simple gladness of life's early dawn;
Though sav'd, I was a shadow of myself,
And life's fresh joyance blooms in me no more.

ARKAS.

If thou wilt ever call thyself unblest'd,
I must accuse thee of ingratitude.

IPHIGENIA.

Thanks have you ever.

ARKAS.

Not the honest thanks
Which prompt the heart to offices of love;
The joyous glance, revealing to the host
A grateful spirit, with its lot content.
When thee a deep mysterious destiny
Brought to this sacred fane, long years ago,
To greet thee, as a treasure sent from heaven,
With reverence and affection, Thoas came.
Benign and friendly was this shore to thee,
To every stranger else with horror fraught,
For, till thy coming, none e'er trod our realm
But fell, according to an ancient rite,
A bloody victim at Diana's shrine.

IPHIGENIA.

Freely to breathe alone is not to live.
Say, is it life, within this holy fane,
Like a poor ghost around its sepulchre,
To linger out my days? Or call you that
A life of conscious happiness and joy,

When every hour, dream'd listlessly away,
Still leadeth onward to those gloomy days,
Which the sad troop of the departed spend
In self-forgetfulness on Lethe's shore?
A useless life is but an early death;
This woman's destiny hath still been mine.

ARKAS.

I can forgive, though I must needs deplore,
The noble pride which underrates itself;
It robs thee of the happiness of life.
But hast thou, since thy coming here, done naught?
Who hath the monarch's gloomy temper cheer'd?
Who hath with gentle eloquence annull'd,
From year to year, the usage of our sires,
By which, a victim at Diana's shrine,
Each stranger perish'd, thus from certain death
Sending so oft the rescued captive home?
Hath not Diana, harboring no revenge
For this suspension of her bloody rites,
In richest measure heard thy gentle prayer?
On joyous pinions o'er the advancing host,
Doth not triumphant conquest proudly soar?
And feels not every one a happier lot,
Since Thoas, who so long hath guided us
With wisdom and with valor, sway'd by thee,

The joy of mild benignity approves,
Which leads him to relax the rigid claims
Of mute submission? Call thyself useless! Thou,
When from thy being o'er a thousand hearts
A healing balsam flows? when to a race,
To whom a god consign'd thee, thou dost prove
A fountain of perpetual happiness,
And from this dire inhospitable coast,
Dost to the stranger grant a safe return?

IPHIGENIA.

The little done doth vanish to the mind,
Which forward sees how much remains to do.

ARKAS.

Him dost thou praise, who underrates his deeds?

IPHIGENIA.

Who weigheth his own deeds is justly blam'd.

ARKAS.

He too, real worth too proudly who condemns,
As who, too vainly, spurious worth o'errateth.

Trust me, and heed the counsel of a man



artist: Ferd. keller.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS. ACT I, SCENE II.

iphigenia.

With honest zeal devoted to thy service:

When Thoas comes to-day to speak with thee,

Lend to his purposed words a gracious ear.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy well-intention'd counsel troubles me:

His offer I have ever sought to shun.

ARKAS.

Thy duty and thy interest calmly weigh.

Si'thence King Thoas lost his son and heir,

Among his followers he trusts but few,

And trusts those few no more as formerly.

With jealous eye he views each noble's son

As the successor of his realm, he dreads

A solitary, helpless age—perchance

Sudden rebellion and untimely death.

A Scythian studies not the rules of speech,

And least of all the king. He who is used

To act and to command, knows not the art,

From far, with subtle tact, to guide discourse

Through many windings to its destin'd goal.

Thwart not his purpose by a cold refusal.

By an intended misconception. Meet,

With gracious mien, half-way the royal wish.

IPHIGENIA.

Shall I then speed the doom that threatens me?

ARKAS.

His gracious offer canst thou call a threat?

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis the most terrible of all to me.

ARKAS.

For his affection grant him confidence.

IPHIGENIA.

If he will first redeem my soul from fear.

ARKAS.

Why dost thou hide from him thy origin?

IPHIGENIA.

A priestess secrecy doth well become.

ARKAS.

Naught to a monarch should a secret be;

And, though he doth not seek to fathom thine,

His noble nature feels, ay, deeply feels,

That thou with care dost hide thyself from him.

IPHIGENIA.

Ill-will and anger harbors he against me?

ARKAS.

Almost it seems so. True, he speaks not of thee,

But casual words have taught me that the wish

Thee to possess hath firmly seiz'd his soul;
Oh, leave him not a prey unto himself,
Lest his displeasure, rip'ning in his breast,
Should work thee woe, so with repentance thou
Too late my faithful counsel shalt recall.

IPHIGENIA.

How! doth the monarch purpose what no man
Of noble mind, who loves his honest name,
Whose bosom reverence for the gods restrains,
Would ever think of? Will he force employ
To drag me from the altar to his bed?
Then will I call the gods, and chiefly thee,
Diana, goddess resolute, to aid me;
Thyself a virgin, wilt a virgin shield,
And to thy priestess gladly render aid.

ARKAS.

Be tranquil! Passion and youth's fiery blood
Impel not Thoas rashly to commit
A deed so lawless. In his present mood,
I fear from him another harsh resolve,
Which (for his soul is steadfast and unmov'd)
He then will execute without delay.
Therefore I pray thee, canst thou grant no more.
At least be grateful—give thy confidence.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, tell me what is further known to thee.

ARKAS.

Learn it from him. I see the king approach;
Him thou dost honor, thine own heart enjoins
To meet him kindly and with confidence.
A man of noble mind may oft be led
By woman's gentle word.

IPHIGENIA.

(Alone.) How to observe
His faithful counsel see I not in sooth.
But willingly the duty I perform
Of giving thanks for benefits receiv'd,
And much I wish that to the king my lips
With truth could utter what would please his ear.

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SCENE III.

Iphigenia. Thoas.

IPHIGENIA.

Her royal gifts the goddess shower on thee,
Imparting conquest, wealth and high renown.
Dominion, and the welfare of thy house,
With the fulfilment of each pious wish.
That thou, whose sway for multitudes provides,
Thyself may'st be supreme in happiness!

THOAS.

Contented were I with my people's praise;
My conquests others more than I enjoy.
Oh! be he king or subject, he's most bless'd,
Whose happiness is centred in his home.
My deep affliction thou didst share with me
What time, in war's encounter, the fell sword
Tore from my side my last, my dearest son;
So long as fierce revenge possess'd my heart,
I did not feel my dwelling's dreary void;
But now, returning home, my rage appeas'd,
Their kingdom wasted, and my son aveng'd,
I find there nothing left to comfort me.
The glad obedience I was wont to see

Kindling in every eye, is smother'd now
In discontent and gloom; each, pondering, weighs
The changes which a future day may bring,
And serves the childless king, because he must.
To-day I come within this sacred fane,
Which I have often enter'd to implore
And thank the gods for conquest. In my breast
I bear an old and fondly-cherish'd wish,
To which methinks thou canst not be a stranger;
I hope, a blessing to myself and realm,
To lead thee to my dwelling as my bride.

IPHIGENIA.

Too great thine offer, king, to one unknown;
Abash'd the fugitive before thee stands,
Who on this shore sought only what thou gavest,
Safety and peace.

THOAS.

Thus still to shroud thyself
From me, as from the lowest, in the veil
Of mystery which wrapp'd thy coming here,
Would in no country be deem'd just or right.
Strangers this shore appall'd; 'twas so ordain'd,
Alike by law and stern necessity.
From thee alone—a kindly-welcom'd guest,
Who hast enjoy'd each hallow'd privilege.

And spent thy days in freedom unrestrain'd—

From thee I hop'd that confidence to gain

Which every faithful host may justly claim.

IPHIGENIA.

If I conceal'd, O king, my name, my race,

It was embarrassment, and not mistrust.

For didst thou know who stands before thee now.

And what accursed head thine arm protects,

Strange horror would possess thy mighty heart;

And, far from wishing me to share thy throne,

Thou, ere the time appointed, from thy realm

Would'st banish me; would'st thrust me forth, perchance

Before a glad reunion with my friends

And period to my wand'rings is ordain'd,

To meet that sorrow, which in every clime,

With cold, inhospitable, fearful hand,

Awaits the outcast, exil'd from his home.

THOAS.

Whate'er respecting thee the gods decree.

Whate'er their doom for thee and for thy house,

Since thou hast dwelt amongst us, and enjoy'd

The privilege the pious stranger claims,

To me hath fail'd no blessing sent from heaven;

And to persuade me, that protecting thee

I shield a guilty head, were hard indeed.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy bounty, not the guest, draws blessings down.

THOAS.

The kindness shown the wicked is not bless'd.

End then thy silence, priestess; not unjust

Is he who doth demand it. In my hands

The goddess placed thee; thou hast been to me

As sacred as to her, and her behest

Shall for the future also be my law:

If thou canst hope in safety to return

Back to thy kindred, I renounce my claims:

But is thy homeward path forever closed—

Or doth thy race in hopeless exile rove,

Or lie extinguish'd by some mighty woe—

Then may I claim thee by more laws than one.

Speak openly, thou know'st I keep my word.

IPHIGENIA.

Its ancient bands reluctantly my tongue

Doth loose, a long-hid secret to divulge;

For once imparted, it resumes no more

The safe asylum of the inmost heart,

But thenceforth, as the powers above decree,

Doth work its ministry of weal or woe,

Attend! I issue from the Titan's race.

THOAS.

A word momentous calmly hast thou spoken.
Him nam'st thou ancestor whom all the world
Knows as a sometime favorite of the gods?
Is it that Tantalus, whom Jove himself
Drew to his council and his social board?
On whose experienc'd words, with wisdom fraught,
As on the language of an oracle,
E'en gods delighted hung?

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis even he;
But the immortal gods with mortal men
Should not, on equal terms, hold intercourse;
For all too feeble is the human race,
Not to grow dizzy on unwonted heights,
Ignoble was he not, and no betrayer;
To be the Thunderer's slave, he was too great;
To be his friend and comrade,—but a man.
His crime was human, and their doom severe;
For poets sing, that treachery and pride
Did from Jove's table hurl him headlong down
To grovel in the depths of Tartarus.
Alas, and his whole race must bear their hate.

THOAS.

Bear they their own guilt, or their ancestor's?

IPHIGENIA.

The Titan's mighty breast and nervous frame
Was his descendants' certain heritage;
But round their brow Jove forg'd a band of brass.
Wisdom and patience, prudence and restraint,
He from their gloomy, fearful eye conceal'd;
In them each passion grew to savage rage,
And headlong rush'd with violence uncheck'd.
Already Pelops, Tantalus' lov'd son,
Mighty of will, obtain'd his beauteous bride,
Hippodamia, child of Ænomans,
Through treachery and murder; she ere long,
To glad her consort's heart, bore him two sons,
Thyest and Atreus. They with envy mark'd
The ever-growing love their father bore
To his first-born, sprung from another union.
Hate leagued the pair, and secretly they wrought,
In fratricide, the first dread crime. The sire
Hippodamia held as murderess,
With savage rage he claim'd from her his son,
And she in terror did destroy herself—

THOAS.

Thou'rt silent? Pause not in thy narrative;
Repent not of thy confidence—say on!

IPHIGENIA.

How bless'd is he who his progenitors
With pride remembers, to the listener tells
The story of their greatness, of their deeds,
And, silently rejoicing, sees himself
The latest link of this illustrious chain!
For seldom does the self-same stock produce
The monster and the demigod: a line
Or good or evil ushers in, at last,
The glory or the terror of the world.—
After the death of Pelops, his two sons
Rul'd o'er the city with divided sway.
But such an union could not long endure.
His brother's honor first Thyestes wounds.
In vengeance Atreus drove him from the realm,
Thyestes, planning horrors, long before
Had stealthily procur'd his brother's son,
Whom he in secret nurtur'd as his own.
Revenge and fury in his breast he pour'd,
Then to the royal city sent him forth,
That in his uncle he might slay his sire.
The meditated murder was disclos'd,
And by the king most cruelly aveng'd,
Who slaughter'd, as he thought, his brother's son.
Too late he learn'd whose dying tortures met

His drunken gaze; and seeking to assuage
The insatiate vengeance that possess'd his soul,
He plann'd a deed unheard of. He assum'd
A friendly tone, seem'd reconcil'd, pleas'd,
And lur'd his brother, with his children twain,
Back to his kingdom; these he seiz'd and slew;
Then plac'd the loathsome and abhorrent food
At his first meal before the unconscious sire.
And when Thyestes had his hunger still'd
With his own flesh, a sadness seiz'd his soul;
He for his children ask'd,—their steps, their voice
Fancied he heard already at the door;
And Atreus, grinning with malicious joy,
Threw in the members of the slaughter'd boys.
Shudd'ring, O king, thou dost avert thy face:
So did the sun his radiant visage hide,
And swerve his chariot from the eternal path.
These, monarch, are thy priestess' ancestors,
And many a dreadiul fate of mortal doom,
And many a deed of the bewilder'd brain,
Dark night doth cover with her sable wing,
Or shroud in gloomy twilight.

THOAS.

Hidden there

Let them abide. A truce to horror now,

And tell me by what miracle thou sprangest
From race so savage.

IPHIGENIA.

Atreus' eldest son
Was Agamemnon; he, O king, my sire:
But I may say with truth, that, from a child,
In him the model of a perfect man
I witness'd ever. Clytemnestra bore
To him, myself, the firstling of their love,
Electra then. Peaceful the monarch rul'd,
And to the house of Tantalus was given
A long-withheld repose. A son alone
Was wanting to complete my parents' bliss;
Scarce was this wish fulfill'd, and young Orestes,
The household's darling, with his sisters grew,
When new misfortunes vex'd our ancient house.
To you hath come the rumor of the war,
Which, to avenge the fairest woman's wrongs,
The force united of the Grecian kings
Round Ilion's walls encamp'd. Whether the town
Was humbled, and achiev'd their great revenge,
I have not heard. My father led the host.
In Aulis vainly for a favoring gale
They waited; for, enrag'd against their chief.
Diana stay'd their progress, and requir'd,

Through Chalcas' voice, the monarch's eldest daughter.

They lur'd me with my mother to the camp,

They dragg'd me to the altar, and this head

There to the goddess doom'd.—She was pleas'd;

She did not wish my blood, and shrouded me

In a protecting cloud; within this temple

I first awaken'd from the dream of death;

Yes, I myself am she, Iphigenia,

Grandchild of Atreus, Agamemnon's child,

Diana's priestess, I who speak with thee.

THOAS.

I yield no higher honor or regard

To the king's daughter than the maid unknown;

Once more my first proposal I repeat:

Come follow me, and share what I possess.

IPHIGENIA.

How dare I venture such a step, O king?

Hath not the goddess who protected me

Alone a right to my devoted head?

'Twas she who chose for me this sanctuary,



Where she perchance reserves me for my sire,

By my apparent death enough chastis'd,

To be the joy and solace of his age.

Perchance my glad return is near; and how,
If I, unmindful of her purposes,
Had here attach'd myself against her will?
I ask'd a signal, did she wish my stay.

THOAS.

The signal is that still thou tarriest here.
Seek not evasively such vain pretexts.
Not many words are needed to refuse,
The *no* alone is heard by the refus'd.

IPHIGENIA.

Mine are not words meant only to deceive;
I have to thee my inmost heart reveal'd.
And doth no inward voice suggest to thee,
How I with yearning soul must pine to see
My father, mother and my long-lost home?
Oh, let thy vessels bear me thither, king?
That in the ancient halls, where sorrow still
In accents low doth fondly breathe my name,
Joy, as in welcome of a new-born child,
May round the columns twine the fairest wreath.
New life thou would'st to me and mine impart.

THOAS.

Then go! Obey the promptings of thy heart;
And to the voice of reason and good counsel
Close thou thine ear. Be quite the woman; give

To every wish the rein, that bridleless
May seize on thee, and whirl thee here and there.
When burns the fire of passion in her breast,
No sacred tie withholds her from the wretch
Who would allure her to forsake for him
A husband's or a father's guardian arms;
Extinct within her heart its fiery glow;
The golden tongue of eloquence in vain
With words of truth and power assails her ear

IPHIGENIA.

Remember now, O king, thy noble words!
My trust and candor wilt thou thus repay?
Thou seem'st, methinks, prepar'd to hear the truth.

THOAS.

For this unlook'd-for answer not prepar'd.
Yet 'twas to be expected; knew I not
That with a woman I had now to deal?

IPHIGENIA.

Upbraid not thus, O king, our feeble sex!
Though not in dignity to match with yours,
The weapons woman wields are not ignoble.
And trust me, Thoas, in thy happiness
I have a deeper insight than thyself.
Thou thinkest, ignorant alike of both,
A closer union would augment our bliss;

Inspir'd with confidence and honest zeal
Thou strongly urgest me to yield consent;
And here I thank the gods, who give me strength
To shun a doom unratified by them.

THOAS.

'Tis not a god, 'tis thine own heart that speaks.

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis through the heart alone they speak to us.

THOAS.

To hear them have I not an equal right?

IPHIGENIA.

The raging tempest drowns the still small voice.

THOAS.

This voice no doubt the priestess hears alone.

IPHIGENIA.

Before all others should the prince attend it.

THOAS.

Thy sacred office, and ancestral right
To Jove's own table, place thee with the gods
In closer union than an earth-born savage.

IPHIGENIA.

Thus must I now the confidence atone
Thyself didst wring from me!

THOAS.

I am a man.

And better 'tis we end this conference

Hear then my last resolve. Be priestess still

Of the great goddess who selected thee;

And may she pardon me, that I from her,

Unjustly and with secret self-reproach,

Her ancient sacrifice so long withheld.

From olden time no stranger near'd our shore

But fell a victim at her sacred shrine.

But thou, with kind affection (which at times

Seem'd like a gentle daughter's tender love.

At times assum'd to my enraptur'd heart

The modest inclination of a bride),

Didst so enthrall me, as with magic bonds,

That I forgot my duty. Thou didst rock

My senses in a dream: I did not hear

My people's murmurs: now they cry aloud.

Ascribing my poor son's untimely death

To this my guilt. No longer for thy sake

Will I oppose the wishes of the crowd,

Who urgently demand the sacrifice

IPHIGENIA.

For mine own sake I ne'er desir'd it from thee.

Who to the gods ascribe a thirst for blood

Do misconceive their nature, and impute
To them their own inhuman dark desires.
Did not Diana snatch me from the priest.
Holding my service dearer than my death?

THOAS.

'Tis not for us, on reason's shifting grounds.
Lightly to guide and construe rites divine.
Perform thy duty: I'll accomplish mine.
Two strangers, whom in caverns of the shore
We found conceal'd, and whose arrival here
Bodes to my realm no good, are in my power.
With them thy goddess may once more resume
Her ancient, pious, long-suspended rites!
I send them here.—thy duty not unknown
[Exit.

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SCENE IV.

IPHIGENIA.

(Alone.) Gracious protectress! thou hast clouds

To shelter innocence distress'd.

And from the arms of iron fate

Gently to waft her o'er the sea,

O'er the wide earth's remotest realms,

Where'er it seemeth good to thee.

Wise art thou,—thine all-seeing eye

The future and the past surveys;

Thy glance doth o'er thy children rest,

E'en as thy light, the life of night,

Keeps o'er the earth its silent watch.

O Goddess! keep my hands from blood!

Blessing it never brings, and peace;

And still in evil hours the form

Of the chance-murder'd man appears

To fill the unwilling murderer's soul

With horrible and gloomy fears.

For fondly the Immortals view

Man's widely-scatter'd, simple race;

And the poor mortal's transient life

Gladly prolong, that he may lift

Awhile to their eternal heavens

His sympathetic joyous gaze.



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ACT II.



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SCENE I.

Orestes, Pylades.

ORESTES.

It is the path of death that now we tread:
At every step my soul grows more serene
When I implor'd Apollo to remove
The grisly band of Furies from my side,
He seem'd, with hope-inspiring, godlike words,
To promise aid and safety in the fane
Of his lov'd sister, who o'er Tauris rules.
Thus the prophetic word fulfils itself,
That with my life shall terminate my woe.
How easy 'tis for me, whose heart is crush'd,
Whose sense is deaden'd by a hand divine,
Thus to renounce the beauteous light of day!
And must the son of Atreus not entwine
The wreath of conquest round his dying brow—
Must I, as my forefathers, as my sire,
Bleed like a victim,—an ignoble death—
So be it! Better at the altar here,
Than in a nook obscure, where kindred hands
Have spread assassination's wily net.
Yield me this brief repose, infernal Powers!
Ye who, like loosen'd hounds, still scent the blood

Which, trickling from my feet, betrays my path,

Leave me! ere long I come to you below.

Nor you, nor I, should view the light of day,

The soft green carpet of the beauteous earth

Is no arena for unhallow'd fiends

Below I seek you, where an equal fate

Binds all in murky, never-ending night.

Thee only, thee, my Pylades, my friend,

The guiltless partner of my crime and curse,

Thee am I loath, before thy time, to take

To yonder cheerless shore! Thy life or death

Alone awakens in me hope or fear

PYLADES.

Like thee, Orestes, I am not prepar'd

Downwards to wander to yon realm of shade.

I purpose still, through the entangled paths,

Which seem as they would lead to blackest night,

Again to wind our upward way to life

Of death I think not: I observe and mark

Whether the gods may not perchance present

Means and fit moment for a joyful flight,

Dreaded or not, the stroke of death must come:

And though the priestess stood with hand uprais'd,

Prepar'd to cut our consecrated looks

Our safety still should be my only thought;

Uplift thy soul above this weak despair;
Desponding doubts but hasten on our peril.
Apollo pledg'd to us his sacred word.
That in his sister's holy fane for thee
Were comfort, aid and glad return prepar'd.
The words of Heaven are not equivocal,
As in despair the poor oppress'd one thinks.

ORESTES.

The mystic web of life my mother cast
Around my infant head, and so I grew
An image of my sire; and my mute look
Was aye a bitter and a keen reproof
To her and base Ægisthus. Oh, how oft,
When silently within our gloomy hall
Electra sat, and mus'd beside the fire,
Have I with anguish'd spirit climb'd her knee,
And watch'd her bitter tears with sad amaze!
Then would she tell me of our noble sire:
How much I long'd to see him—be with him!
Myself at Troy one moment fondly wish'd,
My sire's return, the next. The day arriv'd—

PYLADES.

Oh, of that awful hour let fiends of hell
Hold nightly converse! Of a time more fair
May the remembrance animate our hearts

To fresh heroic deeds. The gods require
On this wide earth the service of the good
To work their pleasure. Still they count on thee:
For in thy father's train they sent thee not,
When he to Orcus went unwilling down.

ORESTES.

Would I had seiz'd the border of his robe,
And follow'd him!

PYLADES.

They kindly car'd for me
Who held thee here; for hadst thou ceas'd to live,
I know not what had then become of me;
Since I with thee, and for thy sake alone,
Have from my childhood liv'd, and wish to live.

ORESTES.

Remind me not of those delightsome days,
When me thy home a safe asylum gave;
With fond solicitude thy noble sire
The half-nipp'd, tender flow'ret gently rear'd:
While thou, a friend and playmate always gay,
Like to a light and brilliant butterfly
Around a dusky flower, didst day by day
Around me with new life thy gambols urge,
And breathe thy joyous spirit in my soul,
Until, my cares forgetting, I with thee

Was lur'd to snatch the eager joys of youth.

PYLADES.

My very life began when thee I lov'd.

ORESTES.

Say, then thy woes began, and thou speak'st truly.

This is the sharpest sorrow of my lot,
That, like a plague-infected wretch, I bear
Death and destruction hid within my breast;
That, where I tread, e'en on the healthiest spot,
Ere long the blooming faces round betray
The anguish'd features of a ling'ring death.

PYLADES.

Were thy breath venom, I had been the first
To die that death, Orestes. Am I not,
As ever, full of courage and of joy?
And love and courage are the spirit's wings
Wafting to noble actions.

ORESTES.

Noble actions?
Time was, when fancy painted such before us!
When oft, the game pursuing, on we roam'd
O'er hill and valley; hoping that ere long,
Like our great ancestors in heart and hand,
With club and weapon arm'd, we so might track
The robber to his den, or monster huge.

And then at twilight, by the boundless sea,
Peaceful we sat, reclin'd against each other,
The waves came dancing to our very feet,
And all before us lay the wide, wide world;
Then on a sudden one would seize his sword,
And future deeds shone round us like the stars,
Which gemm'd in countless throngs the vault of night.

PYLADES.

Endless, my friend, the projects which the soul
Burns to accomplish. We would every deed
At once perform as grandly as it shows
After long ages, when from land to land
The poet's swelling song hath roll'd it on.
It sounds so lovely what our fathers did,
When, in the silent evening shade reclin'd,
We drink it in with music's melting tones;
And what we do is, as their deeds to them,
Toilsome and incomplete!
Thus we pursue what always flies before;
We disregard the path in which we tread,
Scarce see around the footsteps of our sires,
Or heed the trace of their career on earth.
We ever hasten on to chase their shades,
Which, godlike, at a distance far remote,
On golden clouds, the mountain summits crown.

The man I prize not who esteems himself
Just as the people's breath may chance to raise him.
But thou, Orestes, to the gods give thanks,
That they through thee have early done so much.

ORESTES.

When they ordain a man to noble deeds,
To shield from dire calamity his friends,
Extend his empire, or protect its bounds,
Or put to flight its ancient enemies,
Let him be grateful! For to him a god
Imparts the first, the sweetest joy of life.
Me have they doom'd to be a slaughterer,
To be an honor'd mother's murderer,



artist: a. schmitz.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS. ACT II, SCENE I.

orestes and pylades.

And shamefully a deed of shame avenging,
Me through their own decree they have o'er-whelm'd.
Trust me, the race of Tantalus is doom'd;
And I, his last descendant, may not perish,
Or crown'd with honor or unstain'd by crime.

PYLADES.

The gods avenge not on the son the deeds

Done by the father. Each, or good or bad,
Of his own actions reaps the due reward.
The parents' blessing, not their curse, descends.

ORESTES.

Methinks their blessing did not lead us here.

PYLADES.

It was at least the mighty gods' decree.

ORESTES.

Then is it their decree which doth destroy us.

PYLADES.

Perform what they command, and wait the event.

Do thou Apollo's sister bear from hence,
That they at Delphi may united dwell,
There by a noble-thoughted race rever'd;
Thee, for this deed, the lofty pair will view
With gracious eye, and from the hateful grasp
Of the infernal Powers will rescue thee.

E'en now none dares intrude within this grove.

ORESTES.

So shall I die at least a peaceful death.

PYLADES.

Far other are my thoughts, and not unskill'd
Have I the future and the past combin'd
In quiet meditation. Long, perchance,

Hath ripen'd in the counsel of the gods
The great event. Diana yearns to leave
The savage coast of these barbarians,
Foul with their sacrifice of human blood.
We were selected for the high emprise;
To us it is assign'd, and strangely thus
We are conducted to the threshold here.

ORESTES.

My friend, with wondrous skill thou link'st thy wish
With the predestin'd purpose of the gods.

PYLADES.

Of what avail is prudence, if it fail
Heedful to mark the purposes of Heaven?
A noble man, who much hath sinn'd, some god
Doth summon to a dangerous enterprise.
Which to achieve appears impossible.
The hero conquers, and atoning serves
Mortals and gods, who thenceforth honor him.

ORESTES.

Am I foredoom'd to action and to life.
Would that a god from my distemper'd brain
Might chase this dizzy fever, which impels
My restless steps along a slipp'ry path.
Stain'd with a mother's blood, to direful death;
And pitying, dry the fountain, whence the blood,

Forever spouting from a mother's wounds,

Eternally defiles me!

PYLADES.

Wait in peace!

Thou dost increase the evil, and dost take

The office of the Furies on thyself.

Let me contrive,—be still! And when at length

The time for action claims our powers combin'd.

Then will I summon thee, and on we'll stride,

With cautions boldness to achieve the event.

ORESTES.

I hear Ulysses speak.

PYLADES.

Nay, mock me not!

Each must select the hero after whom

To climb the steep and difficult ascent

Of high Olymps, And to me it seems

That him nor stratagem nor art defiles

Who consecrates himself to noble deeds

ORESTES.

I most esteem the brave and upright man.

PYLADES.

And therefore have I not despis'd thy counsel.

One step's already taken. From our guards

E'en now I this intelligence have gain'd
A strange and godlike woman holds in check
The execution of that bloody law:
Incense and prayer and an unsulded heart.
These are the gifts she offers to the gods.
Rumor' extols her highly: it is thought
That from the race of Amazon she springs.
And hither fled some great calamity

ORESTES.

Her gentle sway, it seems, lost all its power
When hither came the culprit, whom the curse,
Like murky night, envelops and pursues
Our doom to seal, the pious thirst for blood
The ancient cruel rite again unchains:
The monarch's savage will decrees our death:
A woman cannot save when he condemns.

PYLADES.

That 'tis a woman is a ground for hope!
A man, the very best, with cruelty
At length may so familiarize his mind.
His character through custom so transform,
That he shall come to make himself a law
Of what at first his very soul abhorr'd
But woman doth retam the stamp of mind
She first assum'd. On her we may depend

In good or evil with more certainty.

She comes; leave us alone I dare not tell

At once our names, not unreserv'd confide

Our fortunes to her. Now retire awhile.

And ere she speaks with thee we'll meet again.

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SCENE II.

Iphigenia, Pylades.

IPHIGENIA.

Whence art thou? Stranger, speak! To me thy bearing

Stamps thee of Grecian, not of Scythian race.

[She unbinds his chains.]

The freedom that I give is dangerous;

The gods avert the doom that threatens you!

PYLADES.

Delicious music! dearly welcome tones

Of our own language in a foreign land!

With joy my captive eye once more beholds

The azure mountains of my native coast.

Oh, let this joy that I too am a Greek

Convince thee, priestess! How I need thine aid,

A moment I forget, my spirit rapt

In contemplation of so fair a vision.

If fate's dread mandate doth not seal thy lips,

From which of our illustrious races say,

Dost thou thy godlike origin derive?

IPHIGENIA.

The priestess whom the goddess hath, herself

Selected and ordain'd doth speak with thee,

Let that suffice: but tell me, who art thou,

And what unblest'd o'erruling destiny

Hath hither led thee with thy friend?

PYLADES.

The woe,

Whose hateful presence ever dogs our steps,

I can with ease relate. Oh, would that thou

Could'st with like case, divine one, shed on us

One ray of cheering hope! We are from Crete,

Adrastus' sons, and I, the youngest born,

Nam'd Cephalus; my eldest brother, he,

Laodamas. Between us stood a youth

Savage and wild, who sever'd e'en in sport

The joy and concord of our early youth.

Long as our father led his powers at Troy,

Passive our mother's mandate we obey'd;

But when, enrich'd with booty, he return'd,

And shortly after died, a contest fierce.

Both for the kingdom and their father's wealth,

His children parted. I the eldest join'd;

He slew our brother; and the Furies hence

For kindred murder dog his restless steps.

But to this savage shore the Delphian god

Hath sent us, cheer'd by hope. He bade us wait

Within his sister's consecrated fane

The blessed hand of aid. Captives we are,
And, hither brought, before thee now we stand
Ordain'd for sacrifice. My tale is told.

IPHIGENIA.

Fell Troy! Dear man, assure me of its fall.

PYLADES.

Prostrate it lies. Oh, unto us insure
Deliverance. The promis'd aid of Heaven
More swiftly bring. Take pity on my brother.
Oh, say to him a kind, a gracious word!
But spare him when thou speakest; earnestly
This I implore: for all too easily
Through joy and sorrow and through memory
Torn and distracted is his inmost being.
A feverish madness oft doth seize on him,
Yielding his spirit, beautiful and free,
A prey to furies.

IPHIGENIA.

Great as is thy woe,
Forget it, I conjure thee, for a while,
Till I am satisfied.

PYLADES.

The stately town,
Which ten long years withstood the Grecian host,
Now lies in ruins, ne'er to rise again;

Yet many a hero's grave will oft recall
Our sad remembrance to that barbarous shore.

There lie Achilles and his noble friend.

IPHIGENIA.

So are ye godlike forms reduc'd to dust!

PYLADES.

Nor Palamede nor Ajax e'er again

The daylight of their native land beheld.

IPHIGENIA.

He speaks not of my father, doth not name

Him with the fallen. He may yet survive!

I may behold him! Still hope on, fond heart!

PYLADES.

Yet happy are the thousands who receiv'd

Their bitter death-blow from a hostile hand!

For terror wild, and end most tragical,

Some hostile, angry deity prepar'd,

Instead of triumph, for the home-returning.

Do human voices never reach this shore?

Far as their sound extends they bear the fame

Of deeds unparallel'd. And is the woe

Which fills Mycene's halls with ceaseless sighs

To thee a secret still?—And know'st thou not

That Clytemnestra, with Ægisthus' aid,

Her royal consort artfully ensnar'd,

And murder'd on the day of his return?—
The monarch's house thou honorest! I perceive
Thy breast with tidings vainly doth contend
Fraught with such monstrous and unlook'd-for woe.
Art thou the daughter of a friend? art born
Within the circuit of Mycene's walls?
Conceal it not, nor call me to account
That here the horrid crime I first announce.

IPHIGENIA.

Proceed, and tell me how the deed was done.

PYLADES.

The day of his return, as from the bath
Arose the monarch, tranquil and refresh'd,
His robe demanding from his consort's hand;
A tangl'd garment, complicate with folds,
She o'er his shoulders flung and noble head;
And when, as from a net, he vainly strove
To extricate himself, the traitor, base
Ægisthus, smote him, and envelop'd thus
Great Agamemnon sought the shades below.

IPHIGENIA.

And what reward receiv'd the base accomplice?

PYLADES.

A queen and kingdom he possess'd already.

IPHIGENIA.

Base passion prompted then the deed of shame?

PYLADES.

And feelings, cherish'd long, of deep revenge.

IPHIGENIA.

How had the monarch injur'd Clytemnestra?

PYLADES.

By such a dreadful deed, that if on earth

Aught could exculpate murder, it were this.

To Aulis he allur'd her, when the fleet

With unpropitious winds the goddess stay'd;

And there, a victim at Diana's shrine,

The monarch, for the welfare of the Greeks,

Her eldest daughter doomed, Iphigenia.

And this, so rumor saith, within her heart

Planted such deep abhorrence that forthwith

She to Ægisthus hath resign'd herself,

And round her husband flung the web of death.

IPHIGENIA.

(Verling herself.) It is enough! Thou wilt again behold me.

PYLADES.

(Alone.) The fortune of this royal house, it seems.

Doth move her deeply. Whosoe'er she be.

She must herself have known the monarch well;

For our good fortune, from a noble house,
She hath been sold to bondage. Peace, my heart!
And let us steer our course with prudent zeal
Toward the star of hope which gleams upon us.



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ACT III.



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SCENE I.

Iphigenia, Orestes.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy man, I only loose thy bonds
In token of a still severer doom.
The freedom which the sanctuary imparts,
Like the last life-gleam o'er the dying face,
But heralds death. I cannot, dare not say
Your doom is hopeless; for, with murderous hand,
Could I inflict the fatal blow myself?
And while I here am priestess of Diana,
None, be he who he may, dare touch your heads.
But the incens'd king, should I refuse
Compliance with the rites himself enjoin'd,
Will choose another virgin from my train
As my successor. Then, alas! with naught,
Save ardent wishes, can I succor you.
Much honored countrymen! The humblest slave.
Who had but near'd our sacred household hearth.
Is dearly welcome in a foreign land;
How with proportion'd joy and blessing, then,
Shall I receive the man who doth recall
The image of the heroes, whom I learn'd
To honor from my parents, and who cheers

My inmost heart with flatt'ring gleams of hope!

ORESTES.

Does prudent forethought prompt thee to conceal

Thy name and race? or may I hope to know

Who, like a heavenly vision, meets me thus?

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, thou shalt know me. Now conclude the tale

Of which thy brother only told me half:

Relate their end, who coming home from Troy,

On their own threshold met a doom severe

And most unlook'd for. Young I was in sooth

When first conducted to this foreign shore,

Yet well I recollect the timid glance

Of wonder and amazement which I cast

On those heroic forms. When they went forth

It seem'd as though Olympus had sent down

The glorious figures of a bygone world,

To frighten Ilion; and above them all,

Great Agamemnon tower'd pre-eminent!

Oh, tell me! Fell the hero in his home,

Through Clytemnestra's and Ægisthus' wiles?

ORESTES.

He fell!

IPHIGENIA.

Unbless'd Mycene! Thus the sons

Of Tantalus, with barbarous hands, have sown



Fr. Pecht del.

published by George Barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Orestes

Curse upon curse; and, as the shaken weed
Scatters around a thousand poison-seeds,
So they assassins ceaseless generate,
Their children's children ruthless to destroy,—
Now tell the remnant of thy brother's tale,
Which horror darkly hid from me before.
How did the last descendant of the race,—
The gentle child, to whom the Gods assign'd
The office of avenger,—how did he
Escape that day of blood? Did equal fate
Around Orestes throw Avernus' net?
Say, was he sav'd? and is he still alive?
And lives Electra, too?

ORESTES.

They both survive.

IPHIGENIA.

Golden Apollo, lend thy choicest beams!

Lay them an offering at the throne of Jove!

For I am poor and dumb.

ORESTES.

If social bonds

Or ties more close connect thee with this house,

As this thy rapturous joy betrayeth to me,

Oh, then rein in thy heart and hold it fast!

For insupportable the sudden plunge

From happiness to sorrow's gloomy depth.

Thou knowest only Agamemnon's death.

IPHIGENIA.

And is not this intelligence enough?

ORESTES.

Half of the horror only hast thou heard.

IPHIGENIA.

What should I fear? Orestes, Electra live.

ORESTES.

And fearest thou for Clytemnestra naught?

IPHIGENIA.

Her, neither hope nor fear have power to save.

ORESTES.

She to the land of hope hath bid farewell.

IPHIGENIA.

Did her repentant hand shed her own blood?

ORESTES.

Not so; yet her own blood inflicted death.

IPHIGENIA.

More plainly speak, nor leave me in suspense.

Uncertainty around my anxious head

Her dusky, thousand-folded pinion waves.

ORESTES.

Have then the powers above selected me

To be the herald of a dreadful deed,

Which in the drear and soundless realms of night

I fain would hide forever? 'Gainst my will

Thy gentle voice constrains me; it demands,

And shall receive, a tale of direst woe.

Electra, on the day when fell her sire,

Her brother from impending doom conceal'd;

Him Strophius, his father's relative,

Receiv'd with kindest care, and rear'd him up

With his own son, nam'd Pylades, who soon

Around the stranger twin'd love's fairest bonds.

And as they grew, within their inmost souls

There sprang the burning longing to revenge

The monarch's death. Unlook'd for, and disguis'd,

They reach Mycene, feigning to have brought

The mournful tidings of Orestes' death,

Together with his ashes. Them the queen

Gladly receives. Within the house they enter;
Orestes to Electra shows himself:
She fans the fires of vengeance into flame,
Which in the sacred presence of a mother
Had burn'd more dimly. Silently she leads
Her brother to the spot where fell their sire:
Where lurid blood-marks, on the oft-wash'd floor,
With pailid streaks, anticipate revenge.
With fiery eloquence she pictur'd forth
Each circumstance of that atrocious deed,—
Her own oppress'd and miserable lite.
The prosperous traitor's insolent demeanor,
The perils threat'ning Agamemnon's race
From her who had become their stepmother.—
Then in his hand the ancient dagger thrust,
Which often in the house of Tantalus
With savage fury rag'd,—and by her son
Was Clytemnestra slain.

IPHIGENIA.

Immortal powers!
Whose pure and bless'd existence glides away
'Mid ever shifting clouds, me have ye kept
So many years secluded from the world,
Retain'd me near yourselves, consign'd to me
The childlike task to feed the sacred fire,

And taught my spirit, like the hallow'd flame,
With never-clouded brightness to aspire
To your pure mansions,—but at length to feel
With keener woe the horror of my house?
Oh, tell me of the poor unfortunate!
Speak of Orestes!

ORESTES.

Oh, could I speak to tell thee of his death!
Forth from the slain ones spouting blood arose
His mother's ghost;
And to the ancient daughters of the night
Cries,—“Let him not escape,—the matricide!
Pursue the victim, dedicate to you!”
They hear, and glare around with hollow eyes,
Like greedy eagles. In their murky dens
They stir themselves, and from the corners creep
Their comrades, dire Remorse and pallid Fear;
Before them fumes a mist of Acheron:
Perplexingly around the murderer's brow
The eternal contemplation of the past
Rolls in its cloudy circles. Once again
The grisly band, commission'd to destroy,
Pollute earth's beautiful and heaven-sown fields,
From which an ancient curse had banish'd them.
Their rapid feet the fugitive pursue;

They only pause to start a wilder fear.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy one! thy lot resembles his;

Thou feel'st what he, poor fugitive, must suffer.

ORESTES.

What say'st thou? why presume my fate like his?

IPHIGENIA.

A brother's murder weighs upon thy soul;

Thy younger brother told the mournful tale.

ORESTES.

I cannot suffer that thy noble soul

Should by a word of falsehood be deceiv'd.

In cunning rich and practis'd in deceit

A web ensnaring let the stranger weave

To snare the stranger's feet; between us twain

Be truth!

I am Orestes! and this guilty head

Is stooping to the tomb, and covets death;

It will be welcome now in any shape.

Whoe'er thou art, for thee and for my friend

I wish deliverance;—I desire it not.

Thou seem'st to linger here against thy will;

Contrive some means of flight, and leave me here:

My lifeless corpse hurl'd headlong from the rock,

My blood shall mingle with the dashing waves,

And bring a curse upon this barbarous shore!

Return together home to lovely Greece,

With joy a new existence to commence.

[*Orestesretires.*

IPHIGENIA.

At length Fulfilment, fairest child of Jove,

Thou dost descend upon me from on high!

How vast thine image! scarce my straining eye

Can reach thy hands, which, fill'd with golden fruit

And wreaths of blessing, from Olympus' height

Show treasures down. As by his bounteous gifts

We recognize the monarch (for what seems

To thousands opulence, is naught to him).

So you, ye heavenly Powers, are also known

By bounty long withheld, and wisely plann'd.

Ye only know what things are good for us;

Ye view the future's wide-extended realm,

While from our eye a dim or starry veil

The prospect shrouds. Calmly ye hear our prayers,

When we like children sue for greater speed.

Not immature ye pluck heaven's golden fruit;

And woe to him, who with impatient hand,

His date of joy forestalling, gathers death.

Let not this long-awaited happiness,

Which yet my heart hath scarcely realiz'd,

Like to the shadow of departed friends,
Glide vainly by with triple sorrow fraught!

ORESTES.

(Returning.) Dost thou for Pylades and for thyself
Implore the gods, blend not my name with yours;
Thou wilt not save the wretch whom thou would'st join,
But will participate his curse and woe.

IPHIGENIA.

My destiny is firmly bound to thine.

ORESTES.

No, say not so: alone and unattended
Let me descend to Hades. Though thou should'st
In thine own veil enwrap the guilty one,
Thou could'st not shroud him from his wakeful foes;
And e'en thy sacred presence, heavenly maid,
But driveth them aside and scares them not.
With brazen impious feet they dare not tread
Within the precincts of this sacred grove:
Yet in the distance, ever and anon,
I hear their horrid laughter, like the howl
Of famish'd wolves, beneath the tree wherein
The traveller hides. Without, encamp'd they lie,
And should I quit this consecrated grove,
Shaking their serpent locks, they would arise,
And, raising clouds of dust on every side,

Ceaseless pursue their miserable prey.

IPHIGENIA.

Orestes, canst thou hear a friendly word?

ORESTES.

Reserve it for one favored by the gods.

IPHIGENIA.

To thee they give anew the light of hope.

ORESTES.

Through clouds and smoke I see the feeble gleam
Of the death-stream which lights me down to hell.

IPHIGENIA.

Hast thou one sister only, thy Electra?

ORESTES.

I knew but one: yet her kind destiny,
Which seem'd to us so terrible, betimes
Remov'd an elder sister from the woe
Which o'er the house of Pelops aye impends.
Oh, cease thy questions, nor thus league thyself
With the Erinnys; still they blow away,
With fiendish joy, the ashes from my soul,
Lest the last embers of the fiery brand,
The fatal heritage of Pelops' house,
Should there be quenched. Must then the fire for aye,
Deliberately kindled and supplied

With hellish sulphur, sear my tortur'd soul?

IPHIGENIA.

I scatter fragrant incense in the flame.

Oh, let the pure, the gentle breath of love,

Low murmuring, cool thy bosom's fiery glow.

Orestes, fondly lov'd,—canst thou not hear me?

Hath the terrific Furies' grisly band

Dried up the blood of life within thy veins?

Creeps there, as from the Gorgon's direful head,

A petrifying charm through all thy limbs?

With hollow accents from a mother's blood,

If voices call thee to the shades below,

May not a sister's word with blessing rife

Call from Olympus' height help-rendering gods?

ORESTES.

She calls! she calls!—Dost thou desire my doom?

Is there a Fury shrouded in thy form?

Who art thou, that thy voice thus horribly

Can harrow up my bosom's inmost depths?

IPHIGENIA.

Thine inmost heart reveals it. I am she,—

Iphigenia,—look on me, Orestes!

ORESTES.

Thou!

IPHIGENIA.

My own brother!

ORESTES.

Hence, away, begone!

I counsel thee, touch not these fatal locks!

As from Creusa's bridal robe, from me

An inextinguishable fire is kindled.

Leave me! Like Hercules, a death of shame,

Unworthy wretch, lock'd in myself, I'll die!

IPHIGENIA.

Thou shalt not perish! Would that I might hear

One quiet word from thee! dispel my doubts,

Make sure the bliss I have implor'd so long.

A wheel of joy and sorrow in my heart

Ceaseless revolves. I from a man unknown

With horror turn; but with resistless might

My inmost heart impels me to my brother.

ORESTES.

Is this Lyæus' temple? Doth the glow

Of holy rage unbridled thus possess

The sacred priestess?

IPHIGENIA.

Hear me! oh, look up!

See how my heart, which hath been clos'd so long,

Doth open to the bliss of seeing thee,

The dearest treasure that the world contains,—
Of falling on thy neck, and folding thee
Within my longing arms, which have till now
Met the embraces of the empty wind.
Do not repulse me,—the eternal spring,
Whose crystal waters from Parnassus flow,
Bounds not more gayly on from rock to rock,
Down to the golden vale, than from my heart
The waters of affection freely gush,
And round me form a circling sea of bliss.
Orestes! O my brother!

ORESTES.

Lovely nymph!
Nor thy caresses, nor thyself I trust;
Diana claims attendants more severe,
And doth avenge her desecrated fane.
Remove thy circling arm! Wilt thou indeed
Safety and love upon a youth bestow,
And fondly tender him earth's fairest joy?
Unto my friend, more worthy than myself,
Impart thy favors; 'mong yon rocks he roves,
Go, seek him; guide him hence, and heed not me.

IPHIGENIA.

Brother, command thyself, and better know
Thy sister, newly found! Misconstrue not

Her pure and heavenly rapture, blaming it
As lustful heat unbridled. O ye gods,
Remove delusion from his rigid gaze,
Lest that this moment, fraught with bliss supreme,
Should make us trebly wretched! She is here,
Thine own, thy long-lost sister! From the altar
The goddess rescu'd me, and plac'd me here,
Secure within her consecrated fane—
A captive thou, prepar'd for sacrifice,
And findest here a sister in the priestess.

ORESTES.

Unblessed one! So may the radiant sun
The final horror of our house behold!
Is not Electra here? That she with us
May also perish, nor her life prolong
For heavier destiny and direr woe,
'Tis well,—I follow, priestess! Fratricide
Is an old custom of our ancient house;
And you, ye gods, I thank, that ye resolve
Childless to root me hence. Thee let me counsel
To view too fondly neither sun nor stars,
Come, follow to the gloomy realms below!
As dragons, gender'd in the sulphur pool,
Swallow each other with voracious rage,
So our accursed race destroys itself

Childless and guiltless come below with me!
There's pity in thy look! oh, gaze not so,—
'Twas with such looks that Clytemnestra sought
An entrance to her son Orestes' heart,
And yet his uprais'd arm her bosom pierc'd



His mother fell!—Appear, indignant shade!
Within the circle step, ye fiends of hell,
Be present at the welcome spectacle,
The last, most horrible that ye prepare!
Nor hate, nor vengeance whets the poniard now;
A loving sister is constrain'd to deal
The fatal blow. Weep not! Thou hast no guilt.
From earliest infancy I naught have lov'd,
As thee I could have lov'd, my sister. Come,
The weapon raise, spare not, this bosom rend,
And make an outlet for its boiling streams!

[He sinks exhausted.]

IPHIGENIA.

Alone I cannot bear this bliss and woe.
Where art thou, Pylades? Thine aid I need.
[Iphigenia retires.]

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SCENE II.

ORESTES.

(Recovering from his swoon and standing up.) Give yet another! reach from Lethe's stream

The last reviving draught of cool refreshment!

Soon shall its waters in my bosom still

Life's fitful fever; and my spirit then

Adown oblivion's stream shall glide to you,

Ye spirits shrouded in eternal mist,

With tranquil pleasure in your deep repose

A weary son of earth may lave his soul!—

What whisp'ring sounds pervade the dreary grove?

What hollow murmurs haunt its twilight gloom?

They gather round to view the stranger guest!

Who are you troop in high communion met,

Like an assembled family of princes?

They mingle peacefully, of every age,

Of either sex: godlike, of kindred mould,

Appear the gliding figures. Yes, 'tis they,

The fathers of my race! With Atreus,

In friendly converse glides Thyestes' shade,

And children playfully around them sport.

Is there no enmity among you now?

And is revenge extinguish'd with the sun?

So am I also welcome, and may hope
To mingle in your solemn company.
Welcome, my sires! Orestes bids you hail!
The seed that ye have sow'd, that hath he reap'd.
Laden with curses he descends to you.
But burdens here are lighter far to bear.
Receive him, oh, receive him in your circle!
Thee, Atreus, I revere, and thee, Thyestes:
Here all are free from enmity and hate.—
Show me my father, whom I only once
In life beheld.—Art thou my father, thou.
My mother leading thus familiarly?
Dares Clytemnestra reach her hand to thee?
Then may Orestes also draw near her.
And say, Behold thy son!—My ancestors,
Behold your son, and bid him welcome here.
Among the sons of ancient Tantalus,
A kind salute on earth was murder's watchword,
And all their joys commence beyond the grave.
Ye welcome me! Ye bid me join your circle!
Oh, lead me to my honor'd ancestor!
Where is our aged sire? Let me behold
The dear, the venerable head of him
Who with the immortal gods in council sat.
Ye seem to shudder and to turn away!

What may this mean? Suffers the godlike man?

Alas! the mighty gods, with ruthless hate,

To his heroic breast, with brazen chains,

Have cruel pangs indissolubly bound.

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SCENE III.

Orestes, Iphigenia, Pylades.

ORESTES.

How! Are ye come already here below?

Welcome, my sister! Still Electra fails;

Oh, that some kindly god, with gentle arrow,

Her too, full speedily, would downward send!

Thee, hapless friend, I must compassionate!

Come with me! Come! To Pluto's gloomy throne,

There to salute our hosts like stranger guests.

IPHIGENIA.

Celestial pair, who from the realms above

By night and day shed down the beauteous light

To cheer mankind, but who may not illumine

Departed spirits, save a mortal pair!

A brother's and a sister's anguish pity!

For thou, Diana, lov'st thy gentle brother

Beyond what earth and heaven can offer thee;

And dost, with quiet yearning, ever turn

Thy virgin face to his eternal light.

Let not my only brother, found so late,

Rave in the darkness of insanity!

And is thy will, when thou didst here conceal me,

At length fulfill'd,—would'st thou to me through him,
To him through me, thy gracious aid extend,—
Oh, free him from the fetters of this curse,
Lest vainly pass the precious hours of safety.

PYLADES.

Dost thou not know us, and this sacred grove,
And this bless'd light, which shines not on the dead?
Dost thou not feel thy sister and thy friend,
Who hold thee living in their firm embrace?
Us firmly grasp; we are not empty shades,
Mark well my words! Collect thy scatter'd thoughts!
Attend! Each moment is of priceless worth.
And our return hangs on a slender thread,
Which, as it seems, some gracious fate doth spin.

ORESTES.

(*To Iphigenia.*) My sister, let me for the first time taste.
With open heart, pure joy within thine arms!
Ye gods, who charge the heavy clouds with dread.
And sternly gracious send the long-sought rain
With thunder and the rush of mighty winds,
A horrid deluge on the trembling earth;



Yet dissipate at length man's dread suspense,
Exchanging timid wonder's anxious gaze

For grateful looks and joyous songs of praise,
When in each sparkling drop which gems the leaves,
Apollo, thousand-fold, reflects his beam,
And Iris colors with a magic hand
The dusty texture of the parting clouds;
Oh, let me also in my sister's arms,
And on the bosom of my friend, enjoy
With grateful thanks the bliss ye now bestow;
My heart assures me that your curses cease.
The dread Eumenides at length retire,
The brazen gates of Tartarus I hear
Behind them closing with a thunderous clang.
A quick'ning odor from the earth ascends,
Inviting me to chase, upon its plains,
The joys of life and deeds of high emprise.

PYLADES.

Lose not the moments which are limited!
The favoring gale, which swells our parting sail,
Must to Olympus waft our perfect joy.
Quick counsel and resolve the time demands.

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ACT IV.



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SCENE I.

IPHIGENIA.

When the Powers on high decree
For a feeble child of earth
Dire perplexity and woe,
And his spirit doom to pass
With tumult wild from joy to grief,
And back again from grief to joy,
In fearful alternation;
They in mercy then provide,
In the precincts of his home,
Or upon the distant shore,
That to him may never fail
Ready help in hours of need,
A tranquil, faithful friend.
Oh, bless, ye heavenly powers, our Pylades,
And whatsoever he may undertake!
He is in fight the vigorous arm of youth,
And his the thoughtful eye of age in counsel;
For tranquil is his soul; he guardeth there
Of calm a sacred and exhaustless dower,
And from its depths, in rich supply, outpours
Comfort and counsel for the sore distress'd.
He tore me from my brother, upon whom,

With fond amaze, I gaz'd and gaz'd again;
I could not realize my happiness,
Nor loose him from my arms, and heeded not
The danger's near approach that threatens us.
To execute their project of escape.
They hasten to the sea, where in a bay
Their comrades in the vessel he conceal'd
Waiting a signal. Me they have supplied
With artful answers, should the monarch send
To urge the sacrifice. Alas! I see
I must consent to follow like a child,
I have not learn'd deception, not the art
To gain with crafty wiles my purposes.
Detested falsehood! it doth not relieve
The breast like words of truth: it comforts not,
But is a torment in the forger's heart,
And, like an arrow which a god directs.
Flies back and wounds the archer. Through my heart
One fear doth chase another: perhaps with rage,
Again on the unconsecrated shore,
The Furies' grisly band my brother seize
Perchance they are surpris'd! Methinks I hear
The tread of armed men. A messenger
Is coming from the king, with hasty steps.
How throbs my heart, how troubled is my soul,

Now that I gaze upon the face of one,
Whom with a word untrue I must encounter!

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SCENE II.

Iphigenia, Arkas.

ARKAS.

Priestess, with speed conclude the sacrifice!

Impatiently the king and people wait.

IPHIGENIA.

I had perform'd my duty and thy will,

Had not an unforeseen impediment

The execution of my purpose thwarted.

ARKAS.

What is it that obstructs the king's commands?

IPHIGENIA.

Chance, which from mortals will not brook control.

ARKAS.

Possess me with the reason, that with speed

I may inform the king, who hath decreed

The death of both.

IPHIGENIA.

The gods have not decreed it.

The elder of these men doth bear the guilt

Of kindred murder; on his steps attend

The dread Erinnys. In the inner fane

They seiz'd upon their prey, polluting thus

The holy sanctuary. I hasten now,
Together with my virgin-train, to bathe
The goddess' image in the sea, and there
With solemn rites its purity restore.
Let none presume our silent march to follow!

ARKAS.

This hindrance to the monarch I'll announce:
Commence not thou the rite till he permit.

IPHIGENIA.

The priestess interferes alone in this.

ARKAS.

An incident so strange the king should know.

IPHIGENIA.

Here, nor his counsel nor command avails.

ARKAS.

Oft are the great consulted out of form.

IPHIGENIA.

Do not insist on what I must refuse.

ARKAS.

A needful and a just demand refuse not.

IPHIGENIA.

I yield, if thou delay not.

ARKAS.

I with speed

Will bear these tidings to the camp, and soon
Acquaint thee, priestess, with the king's reply.
There is a message I would gladly bear him;
'Twould quickly banish all perplexity:
Thou didst not heed thy faithful friend's advice.

IPHIGENIA.

I willingly have done whate'er I could.

ARKAS.

E'en now 'tis not too late to change thy purpose.

IPHIGENIA.

To do so is, alas, beyond our power.

ARKAS.

What thou would'st shun, thou deem'st impossible.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy wish doth make thee deem it possible.

ARKAS.

Wilt thou so calmly venture everything?

IPHIGENIA.

My fate I have committed to the gods.

ARKAS.

The gods are wont to save by human means.

IPHIGENIA.

By their appointment everything is done.

ARKAS.

Believe me, all doth now depend on thee.
The irritated temper of the king
Alone condemns these men to bitter death.
The soldiers from the cruel sacrifice
And bloody service long have been disus'd;
Nay, many, whom their adverse fortunes cast
In foreign regions, there themselves have felt
How godlike to the exil'd wanderer
The friendly countenance of man appears.
Do not deprive us of thy gentle aid!
With case thou canst thy sacred task fulfil;
For nowhere doth benignity, which comes
In human form from heaven, so quickly gain
An empire o'er the heart, as where a race,
Gloomy and savage, full of life and power,
Without external guidance, and oppress'd
With vague forebodings, bear life's heavy load.

IPHIGENIA.

Shake not my spirit, which thou canst not bend
According to thy will.

ARKAS.

While there is time,
Nor labor nor persuasion shall be spar'd.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy labor but occasions pain to me;
Both are in vain; therefore, I pray, depart.

ARKAS.

I summon pain to aid me, 'tis a friend
Who counsels wisely.

IPHIGENIA.

Though it shakes my soul.
It doth not banish thence my strong repugnance.

ARKAS.

Can then a gentle soul repugnance feel
For benefits bestow'd by one so noble?

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, when the donor, for those benefits,
Instead of gratitude, demands myself.

ARKAS.

Who no affection feels doth never want
Excuses. To the king I will relate
What hath befallen. Oh, that in thy soul
Thou would'st revolve his noble conduct to thee
Since thy arrival to the present day!

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SCENE III.

IPHIGENIA.

(Alone.) These words at an unseasonable hour
Produce a strong revulsion in my breast;
I am alarm'd!—For as the rushing tide
In rapid currents eddies o'er the rocks
Which lie among the sand upon the shore,
E'en so a stream of joy o'erwhelm'd my soul.
I grasp'd what had appear'd impossible.
It was as though another gentle cloud
Around me lay, to raise me from the earth,
And rock my spirit in the same sweet sleep
Which the kind goddess shed around my brow,
What time her circling arm from danger snatch'd me.
My brother forcibly engross'd my heart;
I listen'd only to his friend's advice;
My soul rush'd eagerly to rescue them,
And as the mariner with joy surveys
The less'ning breakers of a desert isle,
So Tauris lay behind me. But the voice
Of faithful Arkas wakes me from my dream,
Reminding me that those whom I forsake
Are also men. Deceit doth now become
Doubly detested. O my soul, be still!

Beginn'st thou now to tremble and to doubt?

Thy lonely shelter on the firm-set earth

Must thou abandon? and, embark'd once more,

At random drift upon tumultuous waves,

A stranger to thyself and to the world?

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SCENE IV.

Iphigenia, Pylades.

PYLADES.

Where is she? that my words with speed may tell

The joyful tidings of our near escape!

IPHIGENIA.

Opress'd with gloomy care, I much require

The certain comfort thou dost promise me.

PYLADES.

Thy brother is restor'd! The rocky paths

Of this unconsecrated shore we trod

In friendly converse, while behind us lay,

Unmark'd by us, the consecrated grove;

And ever with increasing glory shone

The fire of youth around his noble brow.

Courage and hope his glowing eye inspir'd:

And his exultant heart resign'd itself

To the delight, the joy, of rescuing

Thee, his deliverer, also me, his friend.

IPHIGENIA.

The gods shower blessings on thee, Pylades!

And from those lips which breathe such welcome news,

Be the sad note of anguish never heard!

PYLADES.

I bring yet more,—for Fortune, like a prince,

Comes not alone, but well accompanied.

Our friends and comrades we have also found.

Within a bay they had conceal'd the ship,

And mournful sat expectant. They beheld

Thy brother, and a joyous shout uprais'd.

Imploring him to haste the parting hour.

Each hand impatient long'd to grasp the oar,

While from the shore a gently murmuring breeze,

Perceiv'd by all, unfurl'd its wing auspicious.

Let us then hasten; guide me to the fane,

That I may tread the sanctuary, and win

With sacred awe the goal of our desires.

I can unaided on my shoulder bear

The goddess' image: how I long to feel

The precious burden!

[While speaking the last words, he approaches the Temple, without perceiving that he is not followed by Iphigenia: at length he turns round.]

Why thus lingering stand?

Why art thou silent? wherefore thus confus'd?

Doth some new obstacle oppose our bliss?

Inform me, hast thou to the king announc'd

The prudent message we agreed upon?

IPHIGENIA.

I have, dear Pylades; yet wilt thou chide.

Thy very aspect is a mute reproach.

The royal messenger arriv'd, and I,

According to thy counsel, fram'd my speech.

He seem'd surpris'd, and urgently besought

That to the monarch I should first announce

The rite unusual, and attend his will.

I now await the messenger's return.

PYLADES.

Danger again doth hover o'er our heads!

Alas! Why hast thou fail'd to shroud thyself

Within the veil of sacerdotal rites?

IPHIGENIA.

I never have employ'd them as a veil.

PYLADES.

Pure soul! thy scruples will destroy alike

Thyself and us. Why did I not foresee

Such an emergency, and tutor thee

This counsel also wisely to elude?

IPHIGENIA.

Chide only me, for mine alone the blame.

Yet other answer could I not return

To him, who strongly and with reason urg'd

What my own heart acknowledg'd to be right.

PYLADES.

The danger thickens; but let us be firm,
Nor with incautious haste betray ourselves;
Calmly await the messenger's return,
And then stand fast, whatever his reply:
For the appointment of such sacred rites
Doth to the priestess, not the king belong.
Should he demand the stranger to behold,
Who is by madness heavily oppress'd,
Evasively pretend that in the fane,
Well guarded, thou retainest him and me.
Thus you secure us time to fly with speed,
Bearing the sacred treasure from this race,
Unworthy its possession. Phœbus sends
Auspicious omens, and fulfils his word,
Ere we the first conditions have perform'd.
Free is Orestes, from the curse absolv'd!
Oh, with the freed one, to the rocky isle
Where dwells the god, waft us, propitious gales.
Thence to Mycene, that she may revive;
That from the ashes of the extinguish'd hearth,
The household gods may joyously arise,
And beauteous fire illumine their abode!
Thy hand from golden censers first shall strew
The fragrant incense. O'er that threshold thou

Shalt life and blessing once again dispense,
The curse atone, and all thy kindred grace
With the fresh bloom of renovated life.

IPHIGENIA.

As doth the flower revolve to meet the sun,
Once more my spirit to sweet comfort turns,
Struck by thy words' invigorating ray.
How dear the counsel of a present friend.
Lacking whose godlike power, the lonely one
In silence droops! for, lock'd within his breast,
Slowly are ripen'd purpose and resolve,
Which friendship's genial warmth had soon matur'd.

PYLADES.

Farewell! I haste to reassure our friends,
Who anxiously await us: then with speed
I will return, and, hid within the brake,
Attend thy signal.—Wherefore, all at once,
Doth anxious thought o'ercloud thy brow serene?

IPHIGENIA.

Forgive me! As light clouds athwart the sun,
So cares and fears float darkling o'er my soul.

PYLADES.

Oh, banish fear! With danger it hath form'd
A close alliance,—they are constant friends.

IPHIGENIA.

It is an honest scruple which forbids
That I should cunningly deceive the king,
And plunder him who was my second father.

PYLADES.

Him thou dost fly who would have slain thy brother.

IPHIGENIA.

To me, at least, he hath been ever kind.

PYLADES.

What Fate commands is not ingratitude.

IPHIGENIA.

Alas! it still remains ingratitude!

Necessity alone can justify it.

PYLADES.

Thee, before gods and men, it justifies.

IPHIGENIA.

But my own heart is still unsatisfied.

PYLADES.

Scruples too rigid are a cloak for pride.

IPHIGENIA.

I cannot argue, I can only feel.

PYLADES.

Conscious of right, thou should'st respect thyself.

IPHIGENIA.

Then only doth the heart know perfect ease

When not a stain pollutes it.

PYLADES.

In this fane

Pure hast thou kept thy heart. Life teaches us

To be less strict with others and ourselves;

Thou'lt learn the lesson too. So wonderful

Is human nature, and its varied ties

Are so involv'd and complicate, that none

May hope to keep his inmost spirit pure,

And walk without perplexity through life.

Nor are we call'd upon to judge ourselves;

With circumspection to pursue his path

Is the immediate duty of a man;

For seldom can he rightly estimate

Or his past conduct or his present deeds.

IPHIGENIA.

Almost thou dost persuade me to consent.

PYLADES.

Needs there persuasion when no choice is granted?

To save thyself, thy brother, and a friend,

One path presents itself, and canst thou ask

If we shall follow it?

IPHIGENIA.

Still let me pause,

For such injustice thou could'st not thyself

Calmly return for benefits receiv'd.



PYLADES.

If we should perish, bitter self-reproach,

Forerunner of despair, will be thy portion.

It seems thou art not used to suffer much,

When, to escape so great calamity,

Thou canst refuse to utter one false word.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, that I bore within a manly heart!

Which, when it hath conceiv'd a bold resolve,

'Gainst every other voice doth close itself.

PYLADES.

In vain thou dost refuse; with iron hand

Necessity commands; her stern decree

Is law supreme, to which the gods themselves

Must yield submission. In dread silence rules

The uncounsell'd sister of eternal fate.

What she appoints thee to endure,—endure;

What to perform,—perform. The rest thou knowest.

Ere long I will return, and then receive

The seal of safety from thy sacred hand.

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SCENE V.

IPHIGENIA.

(Alone.) I must obey him, for I see my friends
Beset with peril. Yet my own sad fate
Doth with increasing anguish move my heart.
May I no longer feed the silent hope
Which in my solitude I fondly cherish'd?
Shall the dire curse eternally endure?
And shall our fated race ne'er rise again
With blessings crown'd?—All mortal things decay!
The noblest powers, the purest joys of life
At length subside: then wherefore not the curse?
And have I vainly hop'd that, guarded here,
Secluded from the fortunes of my race,
I, with pure heart and hands, some future day
Might cleanse the deep defilement of our house?
Scarce was my brother in my circling arms
From raging madness suddenly restor'd,
Scarce had the ship, long pray'd for, near'd the strand,
Once more to waft me to my native shores
When unrelenting Fate, with iron hand,
A double crime enjoins; commanding me
To steal the image, sacred and rever'd,
Confided to my care, and him deceive

To whom I owe my life and destiny.
Let not abhorrence spring within my heart!
Nor the old Titan's hate, toward you, ye gods,
Infix its vulture talons in my breast!
Save me and save your image in my soul!
An ancient song comes back upon mine ear—
I had forgotten it, and willingly—
The Parcae's song, which horribly they sang,
What time, hurl'd headlong from his golden seat,
Fell Tantalus. They with their noble friend
Keen anguish suffer'd; savage was their breast
And horrible their song. In days gone by,
When we were children, oft our ancient nurse
Would sing it to us, and I mark'd it well.

Oh, fear the immortals,
Ye children of men!
Eternal dominion
They hold in their hands,
And o'er their wide empire
Wield absolute sway.
Whom they have exalted
Let him fear them most!
Around golden tables,
On cliffs and clouds resting
The seats are prepar'd.
If contest ariseth;
The guests are hurl'd headlong
Disgrac'd and dishonor'd,
To gloomy abysses,
And fetter'd in darkness,
Await with vain longing,
A juster decree.
But in feasts everlasting,
Around the gold tables
Still dwell the immortals.

From mountain to mountain
They stride; while ascending
From fathomless chasms,
The breath of the Titans,
Half-stifled with anguish,
Like volumes of incense
Fumes up to the skies.
From races ill-fated,
Their aspect joy bringing,
Oft turn the celestials,
And shun in the children
To gaze on the features
Once lov'd and still speaking
Of their mighty sire.
So chanted the Parcæ;
The banish'd one hearkens
The song, the hoar captive
Immur'd in his dungeon,
His children's doom ponders,
And boweth his head.

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ACT V.



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SCENE I.

Thoas, Arkas.

ARKAS.

I own I am perplex'd, and scarcely know
'Gainst whom to point the shaft of my suspicion,
Whether the priestess aids the captives' flight,
Or they themselves clandestinely contrive it.
'Tis rumor'd that the ship which brought them here
Is lurking somewhere in a bay conceal'd.
This stranger's madness, these new lustral rites,
The specious pretext for delay, excite
Mistrust, and call aloud for vigilance.

THOAS.

Summon the priestess to attend me here!
Then go with speed, and strictly search the shore,
From yonder headland to Diana's grove:
Forbear to violate its sacred depths,
A watchful ambush set, attack and seize,
According to your wont, whome'er ye find.

[*Arkasretires.*

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SCENE II.

THOAS.

(Alone.) Fierce anger rages in my riven breast.

First against her, whom I esteem'd so pure;

Then 'gainst myself, whose foolish lenity

Hath fashion'd her for treason. Man is soon

Inur'd to slavery, and quickly learns

Submission, when of freedom quite depriv'd.

If she had fallen in the savage hands

Of my rude sires, and had their holy rage

Forborne to slay her, grateful for her life.

She would have recogniz'd her destiny.

Have shed before the shrine the stranger's blood,

And duty nam'd what was necessity.

Now my forbearance in her breast allures

Audacious wishes. Vainly I had hop'd

To bind her to me; rather she contrives

To shape an independent destiny.

She won my heart through flattery; and now

That I oppose her, seeks to gain her ends

By fraud and cunning, and my kindness deems

A worthless and prescriptive property.

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SCENE III.

Iphigenia, Thoas.

IPHIGENIA.

Me hast thou summon'd? wherefore art thou here?

THOAS.

Wherefore delay the sacrifice? inform me.

IPHIGENIA.

I have acquainted Arkas with the reasons.

THOAS.

From thee I wish to hear them more at large.

IPHIGENIA.

The goddess for reflection grants thee time.

THOAS.

To thee this time seems also opportune.

IPHIGENIA.

If to this cruel deed thy heart is steel'd,

Thou should'st not come! A king who meditates

A deed inhuman, may find slaves enow,

Willing for hire to bear one half the curse,

And leave the monarch's presence undefil'd.

Enrapt in gloomy clouds he forges death;

Flaming destruction then his ministers

Hurl down upon his wretched victim's head;

While he abideth high above the storm,
Calm and untroubled, an impassive god.

THOAS.

A wild song, priestess, issued from thy lips.

IPHIGENIA.

No priestess, king! but Agamemnon's daughter;
While yet unknown, thou didst respect my words:
A princess now,—and think'st thou to command me?
From youth I have been tutor'd to obey—
My parents first, and then the deity;
And thus obeying, ever hath my soul
Known sweetest freedom. But nor then nor now
Have I been taught compliance with the voice
And savage mandates of a man.

THOAS.

Not I,
An ancient law doth thy obedience claim.

IPHIGENIA.

Our passions eagerly catch hold of laws
Which they can wield as weapons. But to me
Another law, one far more ancient, speaks
And doth command me to withstand thee, king!
That law declaring sacred every stranger.

THOAS.

These men, methinks, lie very near thy heart,
When sympathy with them can lead thee thus
To violate discretion's primal law,
That those in power should never be provok'd.

IPHIGENIA.

Speaking or silent, thou canst always know
What is, and ever must be, in my heart.
Doth not remembrance of a common doom,
To soft compassion melt the hardest heart?
How much more mine! in them I see myself.
I trembling kneel'd before the altar once,
And solemnly the shade of early death
Environ'd me. Aloft the knife was rais'd
To pierce my bosom, throbbing with warm life;
A dizzy horror overwhelm'd my soul;
My eyes grew dim;—I found myself in safety.
Are we not bound to render the distress'd
The gracious kindness from the gods receiv'd?
Thou know'st we are, and yet wilt thou compel me?

THOAS.

Obey thine office, priestess, not the king.

IPHIGENIA.

Cease! nor thus seek to cloak the savage force
Which triumphs o'er a woman's feebleness.

Though woman, I am born as free as man.
Did Agamemnon's son before thee stand,
And thou requiredst what became him not,
His arm and trusty weapon would defend
His bosom's freedom. I have only words;
But it becomes a noble-minded man
To treat with due respect the words of woman.

THOAS.

I more respect them than a brother's sword.

IPHIGENIA.

Uncertain ever is the chance of arms;
No prudent warrior doth despise his foe;
Nor yet defenceless 'gainst severity
Hath nature left the weak; she gives him craft
And wily cunning; artful he delays,
Evades, eludes, and finally escapes.
Such arms are justified by violence.

THOAS.

But circumspection countervails deceit.

IPHIGENIA.

Which a pure spirit doth abhor to use.

THOAS.

Do not incautiously condemn thyself.

IPHIGENIA.

Oh, could'st thou see the struggle of my soul,
Courageously to ward the first attack
Of an unhappy doom which threatens me:
Do I then stand before thee weaponless?
Prayer, lovely prayer, fair branch in woman's hand,
More potent far than instruments of war,



artist: a. schmitz.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS. ACT V, SCENE III.

thoas and iphigenia.

Thou dost thrust back. What now remains for me
Wherewith my inborn freedom to defend?
Must I implore a miracle from heaven?
Is there no power within my spirit's depths?

THOAS.

Extravagant thy interest in the fate
Of these two strangers. Tell me who they are
For whom thy heart is thus so deeply mov'd.

IPHIGENIA.

They are—they seem at least—I think them Greeks.

THOAS.

Thy countrymen; no doubt they have renew'd

The pleasing picture of return.

IPHIGENIA.

(After a pause.) Doth man

Lay undisputed claim to noble deeds?

Doth he alone to his heroic breast

Clasp the impossible? What call we great?

What deeds, though oft narrated, still uplift

With shuddering horror the narrator's soul,

But those which, with improbable success,

The valiant have attempted? Shall the man

Who all alone steals on his foes by night,

And raging like an unexpected fire,

Destroys the slumbering host, and press'd at length

By rous'd opponents on his foemen's steeds,

Retreats with booty—be alone extoll'd?

Or he who, scorning safety, boldly roams

Through woods and dreary wilds, to scour the land

Of thieves and robbers? Is naught left for us?

Must gentle woman quite forego her nature,

Force against force employ,—like Amazons,

Usurp the sword from man, and bloodily

Revenge oppression? In my heart I feel

The stirrings of a noble enterprise;

But if I fail—severe reproach, alas!

And bitter misery will be my doom.

Thus on my knees I supplicate the gods!
Oh, are ye truthful, as men say ye are,
Now prove it by your countenance and aid;
Honor the truth in me! Attend, O king!
A secret plot deceitfully is laid;
Touching the captives thou dost ask in vain;
They have departed hence and seek their friends,
Who, with the ship, await them on the shore.
The eldest,—whom dire madness lately seiz'd,
And hath abandon'd now,—he is Orestes,
My brother, and the other Pylades,
His early friend and faithful confidant.
From Delphi, Phœbus sent them to this shore
With a divine command to steal away
The image of Diana, and to him
Bear back the sister thither, and for this
He promis'd to the blood-stain'd matricide,
The Fury-haunted son, deliverance.
I have surrender'd now into thy hands
The remnants of the house of Tantalus.
Destroy us—if thou canst.

THOAS.

And dost thou think
That the uncultur'd Scythian will attend
The voice of truth and of humanity

Which Atreus, the Greek, heard not?

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis heard

By every one, born 'neath whatever clime,
Within whose bosom flows the stream of life,
Pure and unhinder'd.—What thy thought? O king,
What silent purpose broods in thy deep soul?
Is it destruction? Let me perish first!
For now, deliv'rance hopeless, I perceive
The dreadful peril into which I have
With rash precipitancy plung'd my friends.
Alas! I soon shall see them bound before me!
How to my brother shall I say farewell?
I, the unhappy author of his death.
Ne'er can I gaze again in his dear eyes!

THOAS.

The traitors have contriv'd a cunning web,
And cast it round thee, who, secluded long,
Giv'st willing credence to thine own desires.

IPHIGENIA.

No, no! I'd pledge my life these men are true.
And should'st thou find them otherwise, O king,
Then let them perish both, and cast me forth,
That on some rock-girt island's dreary shore
I may atone my folly. Are they true,

And is this man indeed my dear Orestes,
My brother, long implor'd.—release us both,
And o'er us stretch the kind protecting arm
Which long hath shelter'd me. My noble sire
Fell through his consort's guilt,—she by her son;
On him alone the hope of Atreus' race
Doth now repose. Oh, with pure heart, pure hand,
Let me depart to purify our house.
Yes, thou wilt keep thy promise; thou didst swear,
That were a safe return provided me,
I should be free to go. The hour is come.
A king doth never grant like common men,
Merely to gain a respite from petition;
Nor promise what he hopes will ne'er be claim'd.
Then first he feels his dignity supreme
When he can make the long-expecting happy.

THOAS.

As fire opposes water, and doth seek
With hissing rage to overcome its foe,
So doth my anger strive against thy words.

IPHIGENIA.

Let mercy, like the consecrated flame
Of silent sacrifice, encircled round
With songs of gratitude, and joy, and praise,
Above the tumult gently rise to heaven.

THOAS.

How often hath this voice assuag'd my soul?

IPHIGENIA.

Extend thy hand to me in sign of peace.

THOAS.

Large thy demand within so short a time.

IPHIGENIA.

Beneficence doth no reflection need.

THOAS.

'Tis needed oft, for evil springs from good.

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis doubt which good doth oft to evil turn.

Consider not; act as thy feelings prompt thee.

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SCENE IV.

Orestes(*armed*), Iphigenia, Thoas.

ORESTES.

(Addressing his followers.)

Redouble your exertions! hold them back!

Few moments will suffice; maintain your ground,

And keep a passage open to the ship

For me and for my sister.

(To Iphigenia, without perceiving Thoas.)

Come with speed!

We are betray'd—brief time remains for flight.

[He perceives the king.]

THOAS.

(Laying his hand on his sword.)

None in my presence with impunity

His naked weapon wears.

IPHIGENIA.

Do not profane

Diana's sanctuary with rage and blood.

Command your people to forbear awhile,

And listen to the priestess, to the sister.

ORESTES.

Say, who is he that threatens us?

IPHIGENIA.

In him

Revere the king, who was my second father.

Forgive me, brother, that my childlike heart

Hath plac'd our fate thus wholly in his hands.

I have betray'd your meditated flight,

And thus from treachery redeem'd my soul.

ORESTES.

Will he permit our peaceable return?

IPHIGENIA.

Thy gleaming sword forbids me to reply.

ORESTES.

(Sheathing his sword.)

Then speak! thou seest I listen to thy words.

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SCENE V.

Orestes, Iphigenia, Thoas.

Enter Pylades, soon after him Arkas, both with drawn swords.

PYLADES.

Do not delay! our friends are putting forth
Their final strength, and, yielding step by step.
Are slowly driven backward to the sea.—
A conference of princes find I here?
Is this the sacred person of the king?

ARKAS.

Calmly, as doth become thee, thou dost stand,
O king, surrounded by thine enemies.
Soon their temerity shall be chastis'd;
Their yielding followers fly,—their ship is ours;
Speak but the word and it is wrapt in flames.

THOAS.

Go, and command my people to forbear!
Let none annoy the foe while we confer.

[Arkas retires.]

ORESTES.

I willingly consent. Go, Pylades!
Collect the remnant of our friends, and wait
The appointed issue of our enterprise.

[Pylades*retires.*

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SCENE VI.

Iphigenia, Thoas, Orestes.

IPHIGENIA.

Relieve my cares ere ye begin to speak.

I fear contention if thou wilt not hear

The voice of equity, O king,—if thou

Wilt not, my brother, curb thy headstrong youth.

THOAS.

I, as becomes the elder, check my rage.

Now answer me: how dost thou prove thyself

The priestess' brother, Agamemnon's son?

ORESTES.

Behold the sword with which the hero slew

The valiant Trojans. From his murderer

I took the weapon, and implor'd the gods

To grant me Agamemnon's mighty arm,

Success and valor, with a death more noble.

Select one of the leaders of thy host,

And place the best as my opponent here.

Where'er on earth the sons of heroes dwell,

This boon is to the stranger ne'er refus'd.

THOAS.

This privilege hath ancient custom here

To strangers ne'er accorded.

ORESTES.

Then from us

Commence the novel custom! A whole race

In imitation soon will consecrate

Its monarch's noble action into law.

Nor let me only for our liberty,—

Let me, a stranger, for all strangers fight.

If I should fall, my doom be also theirs;

But if kind Fortune crown me with success,

Let none e'er tread this shore and fail to meet

The beaming eye of sympathy and love,

Or unconsol'd depart!



artist: a. schmitz.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS. ACT V, SCENE VI.

iphigenia between the greeks and scythians.

THOAS.

Thou dost not seem

Unworthy of thy boasted ancestry.

Great is the number of the valiant men

Who wait upon me; but I will myself,

Although advanc'd in years, oppose the foe,

And am prepar'd to try the chance of arms.

IPHIGENIA.

No, no! such bloody proofs are not requir'd.

Unhand thy weapon, king! my lot consider;

Rash combat oft immortalizes man;

If he should fall, he is renown'd in song;

But after ages reckon not the tears

Which ceaseless the forsaken woman sheds;

And poets tell not of the thousand nights

Consum'd in weeping, and the dreary days,

Wherein her anguish'd soul, a prey to grief,

Doth vainly yearn to call her lov'd one back.

Fear warn'd me to beware lest robbers' wiles

Might lure me from this sanctuary, and then

Betray me into bondage. Anxiously

I question'd them, each circumstance explor'd,

Demanded proofs, now is my heart assur'd.

See here, the mark on his right hand impress'd

As of three stars, which on his natal day

Were by the priest declar'd to indicate

Some dreadful deed therewith to be perform'd.

And then this scar, which doth his eyebrow cleave,

Redoubles my conviction. When a child,

Electra, rash and inconsiderate,

Such was her nature, loos'd him from her arms;

He fell against a tripos. Oh, 'tis he!—

Shall I adduce the likeness to his sire,

Or the deep rapture of my inmost heart,

In further token of assurance, king?

THOAS.

E'en though thy words had banish'd every doubt,

And I had curb'd the anger in my breast,

Still must our arms decide. I see no peace.

Their purpose, as thou didst thyself confess,

Was to deprive me of Diana's image.

And think ye I will look contented on?

The Greeks are wont to cast a longing eye

Upon the treasures of barbarians,

A golden fleece, good steeds, or daughters fair;

But force and guile not always have avail'd

To lead them, with their booty, safely home.

ORESTES.

The image shall not be a cause of strife!

We now perceive the error which the God,

Our journey here commanding, like a veil,

Threw o'er our minds. His counsel I implor'd,

To free me from the Furies' grisly band.

He answer'd, "Back to Greece the sister bring,

Who in the sanctuary on Tauris' shore

Unwillingly abides; so ends the curse!"

To Phœbus' sister we applied the words,
And he referr'd to thee! The bonds severe,
Which held thee from us, holy one, are rent,
And thou art ours once more. At thy bless'd touch,
I felt myself restor'd. Within thine arms.
Madness once more around me coil'd its folds,
Crushing the marrow in my frame, and then
Forever, like a serpent, fled to hell.
Through thee, the daylight gladdens me anew.
The counsel of the goddess now shines forth
In all its beauty and beneficence.
Like to a sacred image, unto which
An oracle immutably hath bound
A city's welfare, thee she bore away,
Protectress of our house, and guarded here
Within this holy stillness, to become
A blessing to thy brother and thy race.
Now when each passage to escape seems clos'd,
And safety hopeless, thou dost give us all.
O king, incline thine heart to thoughts of peace!
Let her fulfil her mission, and complete
The consecration of our father's house,
Me to their purified abode restore,
And place upon my brow the ancient crown!
Requite the blessing which her presence brought thee,

And let me now my nearer right enjoy!
Cunning and force, the proudest boast of man,
Fade in the lustre of her perfect truth;
Nor unrequited will a noble mind
Leave confidence, so childlike and so pure.

IPHIGENIA.

Think on thy promise; let thy heart be mov'd
By what a true and honest tongue hath spoken!
Look on us, king! an opportunity
For such a noble deed not oft occurs.
Refuse thou canst not,—give thy quick consent.

THOAS.

Then go!

IPHIGENIA.

Not so, my king! I cannot part
Without thy blessing, or in anger from thee,
Banish us not! the sacred right of guests
Still let us claim: so not eternally
Shall we be sever'd. Honor'd and belov'd



As mine own father was, art thou by me:
And this impression in my soul abides,
Let but the least among thy people bring
Back to mine ear the tones I heard from thee,

Or should I on the humblest see thy garb,
I will with joy receive him as a god,
Prepare his couch myself, beside our hearth
Invite him to a seat, and only ask
Touching thy fate and thee. Oh, may the gods
To thee the merited reward impart
Of all thy kindness and benignity!
Farewell! Oh, turn thou not away, but give
One kindly word of parting in return!
So shall the wind more gently swell our sails,
And from our eyes with soften'd anguish flow
The tears of separation. Fare thee well!
And graciously extend to me thy hand,
In pledge of ancient friendship.

THOAS.

(Extending his hand.) Fare thee well!

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Torquato Tasso

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALPHONSO II., *Duke of Ferrara.*
LEONORA D'ESTE, *Sister to the Duke.*
LEONORA SANVITALE, *Countess of Scandiano.*
TORQUATO TASSO.
ANTONIO Moniecatino.. *Secretary of State.*



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ACT I.



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SCENE I.

***A Garden Adorned With Busts Of The Epic Poets. To The
Right A Bust Of Virgil: To The Left, One Of Ariosto.***

Princess and Leonora, habited as shepherdesses

PRINCESS.

Smiling thou dost survey me, Leonora.

And with a smile thou dost survey thyself.

What is it? Let a friend partake thy thought!

Thou seemest pensive, yet thou seemest pleas'd.

LEONORA.

Yes, I am pleas'd, my princess, to behold

Us twain in rural fashion thus attir'd.

Two happy shepherd-maidens we appear.

And like the happy we are both employ'd.

Garlands we wreath; this one, so gay with flowers,

Beneath my hand in varied beauty grows:

Thou hast with higher taste and larger heart

The slender phant laurel made thy choice.

PRINCESS.

The laurel wreath, which aimlessly I twin'd,

Hath found at once a not unworthy head;

I place it gratefully on Virgil's brow.

[She crowns the bust of Virgil.]

LEONORA.

With my full joyous wreath the lofty brow

Of Master Ludovico, thus I crown—

[She crowns the bust of Ariosto.

Let him whose sportive sashes never fade.

Receive his tribute from the early spring

PRINCESS.

My brother is most kind to bring us here

In this sweet season to our rural haunts:

Here, by the hour, in freedom unrestrain'd.

We may dream back the poet's golden age.

I love this Belriguardo; in my youth

Full many a jovous day I linger'd here,

And this bright sunshine, and this verdant green,

Bring back the feelings of that bygone time.

LEONORA.

Yes, a new world surrounds us! Grateful now

The cooling shelter of these evergreens.

The tuneful murmur of this gurgling spring

Once more revives us. In the morning wind

The tender branches waver to and fro.

The flowers look upwards from their lowly beds.

And smile upon us with their childlike eyes.

The gardener, fearless grown, removes the roof

That screen'd his citron and his orange trees,

The azure dome of heaven above us rests:

And, in the far horizon, from the hills

The snow in balmy vapor melts away.

PRINCESS.

Most welcome were to me the genial spring,

Did it not lead my friend away from me.

LEONORA.

My princess, in these sweet and tranquil hours,

Remind me not how soon I must depart.

PRINCESS.

Yon mighty city will restore to thee,

In double measure, what thou leavest here.

LEONORA.

The voice of duty and the voice of love

Both call me to my lord, forsaken long;

I bring to him his son, who rapidly

Hath grown in stature and matur'd in mind

Since last they met,—I share his father's joy.

Florence is great and noble, but the worth

Of all her treasur'd riches doth not reach

The prouder jewels that Ferrara boasts.

That city to her people owes her power;

Ferrara grew to greatness through her princes.

PRINCESS.

More through the noble men whom chance led here,
And who in sweet communion here remain'd.

LEONORA.

Chance doth again disperse what chance collects;

A noble nature can alone attract

The noble, and retain them, as ye do.

Around thy brother, and around thyself,

Assemble spirits worthy of you both,

And ye are worthy of your noble sires.

Here the fair light of science and free thought

Was kindled first, while o'er the darken'd world

Still hung barbarian gloom. E'en when a child,

The names resounded loudly in mine ear,

Of Hercules and Hippolyte of Este.

My father oft with Florence and with Rome

Extoll'd Ferrara! Oft in youthful dream

Hither I fondly turn'd; now am I here.

Here was Petrarca kindly entertain'd,

And Ariosto found his models here.

Italia boasts no great, no mighty name,

This princely mansion hath not call'd its guest.

In fostering genius we enrich ourselves:

Dost thou present her with a friendly gift,

One far more beautiful she leaves with thee.

The ground is hallow'd where the good man treads;

When centuries have roll'd, his sons shall hear

The deathless echo of his words and deeds.

PRINCESS.

Yes, if those sons have feelings quick as thine;

This happiness full oft I envy thee.

LEONORA.

Which purely and serenely thou, my friend,

As few beside thee, dost thyself enjoy.

When my full heart impels me to express

Promptly and freely what I keenly feel,

Thou feel'st the while more deeply, and—art silent.

Delusive splendor doth not dazzle thee,

Nor wit beguile; and flattery strives in vain

With fawning artifice to win thine ear;

Firm is thy temper, and correct thy taste,

Thy judgment just, and, truly great thyself,

With greatness thou dost ever sympathize.

PRINCESS.

Thou should'st not to this highest flattery

The garment of confiding friendship lend.

LEONORA.

Friendship is just; she only estimates

The full extent and measure of thy worth.

Let me ascribe to opportunity,

To fortune too, her portion in thy culture,
Still in the end thou hast it, it is thine,
And all extol thy sister and thyself
Before the noblest women of the age.

PRINCESS.

That can but little move me, Leonora,
When I reflect how poor at best we are,
To others more indebted than ourselves.
My knowledge of the ancient languages,
And of the treasures by the past bequeath'd.
I owe my mother, who, in varied lore
And mental power, her daughters far excell'd.
Might either claim comparison with her,
'Tis undeniably Lucretia's right.
Besides, what nature and what chance bestow'd
As property or rank I ne'er esteem'd.
'Tis pleasure to me when the wise converse,
That I their scope and meaning comprehend;
Whether they judge a man of bygone times
And weigh his actions, or of science treat,
Which, when extended and applied to life,
At once exalts and benefits mankind.
Where'er the converse of such men may lead,
I follow gladly, for with ease I follow.
Well pleas'd the strife of argument I hear,

When, round the powers that sway the human breast,
Waking alternately delight and fear,
With grace the lip of eloquence doth play:
And listen gladly when the princely thirst
Of fame, of wide dominion, forms the theme.
When of an able man, the thought profound,
Develop'd skilfully with subtle tact,
Doth not perplex and dazzle, but instruct.

LEONORA.

And then, this grave and serious converse o'er,
Our ear and inner mind with tranquil joy
Upon the poet's tuneful verse repose,
Who through the medium of harmonious sounds
Infuses sweet emotions in the soul.
Thy lofty spirit grasps a wide domain;
Content am I to linger in the isle
Of poesy, her laurel groves among.

PRINCESS.

In this fair land, I'm told, the myrtle blooms
In richer beauty than all other trees;
Here, too, the Muses wander, yet we seek
A friend and playmate 'mong their tuneful choir
Less often than we seek to meet the bard,
Who seems to shun us, nay, appears to flee,
In quest of something that we know not of,

And which perchance is to himself unknown.
How charming were it, if in happy hour
Encountering us, he should with ecstasy
In our fair selves the treasure recognize,
Which in the world he long had sought in vain!

LEONORA.

To your light raillery I must submit;
So light its touch it passeth harmless by.
I honor all men after their desert,
And am in truth toward Tasso only just.
His eye scarce lingers on this earthly scene,
To nature's harmony his ear is tun'd.
What history offers, and what life presents,
His bosom promptly and with joy receives,
The widely scatter'd is by him combin'd,
And his quick feeling animates the dead.
Oft he ennobles what we count for naught;
What others treasure is by him despis'd.
Thus moving in his own enchanted sphere,
The wondrous man doth still allure us on
To wander with him and partake his joy;
Though seeming to approach us, he remains
Remote as ever, and perchance his eye,
Resting on us, sees spirits in our place.

PRINCESS.

Thou hast with taste and truth portray'd the bard,
Who hovers in the shadowy realm of dreams.
And yet reality, it seems to me,
Hath also power to lure him and enchain.
In the sweet sonnets, scatter'd here and there,
With which we sometimes find our trees adorn'd,
Creating like the golden fruit of old
A new Hesperia, perceiv'st thou not
The gentle tokens of a genuine love?

LEONORA.

In these fair leaves I also take delight.
With all his rich diversity of thought
He glorifies one form in all his strains.
Now he exalts her to the starry heavens
In radiant glory, and before that form
Bows down, like angels in the realms above.
Then stealing after her through silent fields,
He garlands in his wreath each beauteous flower;
And should the form he worships disappear,
Hallows the path her gentle foot hath trod.
Thus like the nightingale, conceal'd in shade,
From his love-laden breast he fills the air
And neighboring thickets with melodious plaints:
His blissful sadness and his tuneful grief

Charm every ear, enrapture every heart—

PRINCESS.

And Leonora is the favor'd name

Selected for the object of his strains.

LEONORA.

Thy name it is, my princess, as 'tis mine.

It would displease me were it otherwise.

Now I rejoice that under this disguise

He can conceal his sentiment for thee,

And am no less contented with the thought

That this sweet name should also picture me.

Here is no question of an ardent love,

Seeking possession, and with jealous care

Screening its object from another's gaze.

While he enraptur'd contemplates thy worth,

He in my lighter nature may rejoice.

He loves not us,—forgive me what I say,—

His lov'd ideal from the spheres he brings,

And doth invest it with the name we bear;

His feeling we participate; we seem

To love the man, yet only love in him

The highest object that can claim our love.

PRINCESS.

In this deep science thou art deeply vers'd,

My Leonora, and thy words in truth

Play on my ear, yet scarcely reach my soul.

LEONORA.

Thou Plato's pupil! and not comprehend
What a mere novice dares to prattle to thee?
It must be then that I have widely err'd;
Yet well I know I do not wholly err.
For love doth in this graceful school appear
No longer as the spoil'd and wayward child;
He is the youth whom Psyche hath espous'd:
Who sits in council with the assembled gods,
He hath relinquish'd passion's fickle sway,
He clings no longer with delusion sweet
To outward form and beauty, to atone
For brief excitement by disgust and hate.

PRINCESS.

Here comes my brother! let us not betray
Whither our converse hath conducted us;
Else we shall have his raillery to bear.
As in our dress he found a theme for jest.

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SCENE II.

Princess, Leonora, Alphonso.

ALPHONSO.

Tasso I seek, whom nowhere I can find;
And even here, with you, I meet him not.
Can you inform me where he hides himself?

PRINCESS.

I have scarce seen him for the last two days.

ALPHONSO.

'Tis his habitual failing that he seeks
Seclusion rather than society.
I can forgive him when the motley crowd
Thus studiously he shuns, and loves to hold
Free converse with himself in solitude;
Yet can I not approve that he should thus
Also the circle of his friends avoid.

LEONORA.

If I mistake not, thou wilt soon, O prince,
Convert this censure into joyful praise.
To-day I saw him from afar; he held
A book and scroll, in which at times he wrote,
And then resum'd his walk, then wrote again.
A passing word, which yesterday he spoke,

Seem'd to announce to me his work complete;
His sole anxiety is now to add
A finish'd beauty to minuter parts,
That to your grace, to whom he owes so much,
A worthy offering he at length may bring.

ALPHONSO.

A welcome, when he brings it, shall be his,
And long immunity from all restraint.
Great, in proportion to the lively joy
And interest which his noble work inspires,
Is my impatience at its long delay.
After each slow advance he leaves his task;
He ever changeth, and can ne'er conclude,
Till baffled hope is weary; for we see
Reluctantly postpon'd to times remote
A pleasure we had fondly deem'd so near.

PRINCESS.

I rather praise the modesty, the care
With which thus, step by step, he nears the goal.
His aim is not to string amusing tales,
Or weave harmonious numbers, which at length,
Like words delusive, die upon the ear.
His numerous rhymes he labors to combine
Into one beautiful, poetic whole;
And he whose soul this lofty aim inspires,

Must pay devoted homage to the Muse.

Disturb him not, my brother, time alone

Is not the measure of a noble work;

And, is the coming age to share our joy,

We of the present must forget ourselves.

ALPHONSO.

Let us, dear sister, work together here!

As for our mutual good we oft have done.

Am I too eager—thou must then restrain;

Art thou too gentle—I will urge him on.

Then we perchance shall see him at the goal,

Where to behold him we have wish'd in vain.

His fatherland, the world, shall then admire

And view with wonder his completed work.

I shall receive my portion of the fame,

And Tasso will be usher'd into life.

In a contracted sphere, a noble man

Cannot develop all his mental powers.

On him his country and the world must work.

He must endure both censure and applause,

Must be compell'd to estimate aright

Himself and others. Solitude no more

Lulls him delusively with flattering dreams.

Opponents will not, friendship dare not, spare:

Then in the strife the youth puts forth his powers,

Knows what he is, and feels himself a man.

LEONORA.

Thus will he, prince, owe everything to thee,

Who hast already done so much for him.

Talents are nurtur'd best in solitude,—

A character on life's tempestuous sea.

Oh, that according to thy rules he would

Model his temper as he forms his taste,

Cease to avoid mankind, nor in his breast

Nurture suspicion into fear and hate!

ALPHONSO.

He only fears mankind who knows them not,

And he will soon misjudge them who avoids.

This is his case, and so by slow degrees

His noble mind is trammell'd and perplex'd.

Thus to secure my favor he betrays,

At times, unseemly ardor; against some

Who, I am well assur'd, are not his foes,

He cherishes suspicion; if by chance

A letter go astray, a hireling leave

His service, or a paper be mislaid,

He sees deception, treachery and fraud,

Working insidiously to sap his peace.

PRINCESS.

Let us, beloved brother, not forget

That his own nature none can lay aside.
And should a friend, who with us journeyeth,
Injure by chance his foot, we would in sooth
Rather relax our speed, and lend our hand
Gently to aid the sufferer on his way.

ALPHONSO.

Better it were to remedy his pain,
With the physician's aid attempt a cure,
Then with our heal'd and renovated friend
A new career of life with joy pursue.



And yet, dear friends, I hope that I may ne'er
The censure of the cruel leech incur.
I do my utmost to impress his mind
With feelings of security and trust.
Oft purposely in presence of the crowd,
With marks of favor I distinguish him.
Should he complain of aught, I sift it well,
As lately when his chamber he suppos'd
Had been invaded; then, should naught appear,
I calmly show him how I view the affair.
And, as we ought to practise every grace—
With Tasso, seeing he deserves it well,
I practise patience; you I'm sure will aid.

I now have brought, you to your rural haunts,
And must myself at eve return to town.
For a few moments you will see Antonio;
He calls here for me on his way from Rome.
We have important business to discuss,
Resolves to frame, and letters to indite,
All which compels me to return to town.

PRINCESS.

Wilt thou permit that we return with thee?

ALPHONSO.

Nay, rather linger here in Belriguardo,
Or go together to Consandoli;
Enjoy these lovely days as fancy prompts.

PRINCESS.

Thou canst not stay with us? Not here arrange
All these affairs as well as in the town?

LEONORA.

So soon, thou takest hence Antonio, too,
Who hath so much to tell us touching Rome.

ALPHONSO.

It may not be, ye children; but with him
So soon as possible will I return:
Then shall he tell you all ye wish to hear,
And ye shall help me to reward the man

Who, in my cause, hath labor'd with such zeal.
And when we shall once more have talk'd our fill,
Hither the crowd may come, that mirth and joy
May in our gardens revel, that for me,
As is but meet, some fair one in the shade
May, if I seek her, gladly meet me there.

LEONORA.

And we meanwhile will kindly shut our eyes.

ALPHONSO.

Ye know that I can be forbearing too.

PRINCESS.

(Turned towards the scene.)

I long have notic'd Tasso: hitherward
Slowly he bends his footsteps; suddenly,
As if irresolute, he standeth still;
Anon, with greater speed he draweth near,
Then lingers once again.

ALPHONSO.

Disturb him not,
Nor when the poet dreams and versifies
Intrude upon his musings,—let him roam.

LEONORA.

No, he has seen us, and he comes this way.

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SCENE III.

Princess, Leonora, Alphonso, Tasso *with a volume bound in parchment.*

TASSO.

Slowly I come to bring my work to thee,
And yet I linger ere presenting it.
Although apparently it seem complete,
Too well I know it is unfinish'd still.
But if I cherish'd once an anxious fear
Lest I should bring thee an imperfect work,
A new solicitude constrains me now:
I would not seem ungrateful, nor appear
Unduly anxious; and, as to his friends,
A man can say but simply, "Here I am!"
That they, with kind forbearance, may rejoice.
So I can only say, "Receive my work!"

[He presents the volume.]

ALPHONSO.

Thou hast surpris'd me, Tasso, with thy gift.
And made this lovely day a festival.
I hold it then at length within my hands,
And in a certain sense can call it mine.
Long have I wish'd that thou could'st thus resolve,
And say at length "'Tis finish'd! here it is."

TASSO.

Are you contented? then it is complete:

For it belongs to you in every sense.

Were I to contemplate the pains bestow'd

Or dwell upon the written character.

I might, perchance, exclaim. "This work is mine."

But when I mark what 'tis that to my song

Its inner worth and dignity imparts,

I humbly feel I owe it all to you.

If Nature from her liberal stores on me

The genial gift of poesy bestow'd,

Capricious Fortune, with malignant power,

Had thrust me from her; though this beauteous world

With all its varied splendor lur'd the boy,

Too early was his youthful eye bedimm'd

By his lov'd parents' undeserv'd distress.

Forth from my lips when I essay'd to sing,

There ever flow'd a melancholy song,

And I accompanied, with plaintive tones,

My father's sorrow and my mother's grief.

'Twas thou alone, who from this narrow sphere

Rais'd me to glorious liberty, reliev'd

From each depressing care my youthful mind,

And gave me freedom, in whose genial air

My spirit could unfold in harmony;

Then whatsoe'er the merit of the work,
Thine be the praise, for it belongs to thee.

ALPHONSO.

A second time thou dost deserve applause,
And honorest modestly thyself and us.

TASSO.

Fain would I say how sensibly I feel
That what I bring is all deriv'd from thee!
The inexperience'd youth—could he produce
The poem from his own unfurnish'd mind?
Could he invent the conduct of the war,
The gallant bearing and the martial skill
Which every hero on the field display'd,
The leader's prudence, and his followers' zeal,
How vigilance the arts of cunning foil'd,—
Hadst thou not, valiant prince, infus'd it all,
As if my guardian genius thou hadst been,
Through a mere mortal, deigning to reveal
His nature high and inaccessible?

PRINCESS.

Enjoy the work in which we all rejoice!

ALPHONSO.

Enjoy the approbation of the good!

LEONORA.

Rejoice too in thy universal fame!

TASSO.

This single moment is enough for me.

Of you alone I thought while I compos'd:

You to delight was still my highest wish,

You to enrapture was my final aim.

Who doth not in his friends behold the world,

Deserves not that of him the world should hear.

Here is my fatherland, and here the sphere

In which my spirit fondly loves to dwell:

Here I attend and value every hint;

Here speak experience, knowledge and true taste;

Here stand the present and the future age.

With shy reserve the artist shuns the crowd,—

Its judgment but perplexes. Those alone

With minds like yours can understand and feel.

And such alone should censure and reward!

ALPHONSO.

If thus the present and the future age

We represent, it is not meet that we

Receive the poet's song unrecompens'd.

The laurel wreath, fit chaplet for the bard,

Which e'en the hero, who requires his verse



artist: herm. schneider.

TORQUATO TASSO. ACT I, SCENE III.

the princess crowning tasso.

Sees without envy round his temples twin'd,

Adorns, thou seest, thy predecessor's brow.

[Pointing to the bust of Virgil.]

Hath chance, hath some kind genius twin'd the wreath,

And brought it hither? Not in vain it thus

Presents itself: Virgil I hear exclaim,

“Wherefore confer this honor on the dead?

They in their lifetime had reward and joy;

Do ye indeed revere the bards of old?

Then to the living bard accord his due.

My marble statue hath been amply crown'd,

And the green laurel branch belongs to life.”

[Alphonsomakes a sign to his sister; she takes the crown from the bust of Virgil, and approaches Tasso:he steps back.]

LEONORA.

Thou dost refuse? Seest thou what hand the wreath,

The fair, the never-fading wreath, presents?

TASSO.

Oh, let me pause; I scarce can comprehend

How after such an hour I still can live.

ALPHONSO.

Live in enjoyment of the high reward,
From which thy inexperience shrinks with fear.

PRINCESS.

(Raising the crown.) Thou dost afford me, Tasso, the rare joy
Of giving silent utterance to my thought.

TASSO.

The beautiful burden from thy honor'd hands.
On my weak head, thus kneeling, I receive.
[He kneels down; the Princess places the crown upon his head.]

LEONORA.

(Applauding.) Long live the poet, for the first time crown'd!
How well the crown adorns the modest man!
[Tasso rises.]

ALPHONSO.

It is an emblem only of that crown
Which shall adorn thee on the capitol.

PRINCESS.

There louder voices will salute thine ear;
Friendship with lower tones rewards thee here.

TASSO.

Take it—oh, take it quickly from my brow!
Pray thee remove it! It doth scorch my locks;

And like a sunbeam, that with fervid heat
Falls on my forehead, burneth in my brain
The power of thought; while fever's fiery glow
Impels my blood. Forgive! it is too much.

LEONORA.

This garland rather doth protect the head
Of him who treads the burning realm of fame.
And with its grateful shelter cools his brow.

TASSO.

I am not worthy to receive its shade,
Which only round the hero's brow should wave.
Ye gods, exalt it high among the clouds.
To float in glory inaccessible.
That, through eternity, my life may be
An endless striving to attain this goal!

ALPHONSO.

He who in youth acquires life's noblest gifts,
Learns early to esteem their priceless worth;
He who in youth enjoys, resigneth not
Without reluctance what he once possess'd;
And he who would possess, must still be arm'd.

TASSO.

And who would arm himself, within his breast
A power must feel, that ne'er forsaketh him
Ah, it forsakes me now! In happiness

The inborn power subsides which tutor'd me
To meet injustice with becoming pride,
And steadfastly to face adversity.
Hath the delight, the rapture of this hour.
Dissolv'd the strength and marrow in my limbs?
My knees sink feebly! yet, a second time,
Thou seest me, princess, here before thee bow'd.
Grant my petition, and remove the crown.
That, as awaken'd from a blissful dream.
A new and fresh existence I may feel.

PRINCESS.

If thou with quiet modesty canst wear
The glorious talent from the gods receiv'd,
Learn also now the laurel wreath to wear,
The fairest gift that friendship can bestow,
The brow it once hath worthly adorn'd,
It shall encircle through eternity.

TASSO.

Oh, let me then asham'd from hence retire!
Let me in deepest shades my joy conceal,
As there my sorrow I was wont to shroud
There will I range alone: no eye will there
Remind me of a bliss so undeserv'd.
And if perchance I should behold a youth
In the clear mirror of a crystal spring.

Who, in the imag'd heaven, 'midst rocks and trees.

Absorb'd in thought appears, his brow adorn'd

With glory's garland: there, methinks, I see

Elysium mirror'd in the magic flood.

I pause and calmly ask. Who may this be?

What youth of bygone times, so fairly crown'd?

Whence can I learn his name? his high desert?

I linger long, and musing fondly think:

Oh, might there come another, and yet more

To join with him in friendly intercourse!

Oh, could I see assembled round this spring

The bards, the heroes of the olden time!

Could I behold them still united here

As they in life were ever firmly bound!

As with mysterious power the magnet binds

Iron with iron, so do kindred aims

Unite the souls of heroes and of bards.

Himself forgetting, Homer spent his life

In contemplation of two mighty men;

And Alexander in the Elysian fields

Doth Homer and Achilles haste to seek.

Oh, would that I were present to behold

Those mighty spirits in communion met.

LEONORA.

Awake! awake! let us not feel that thou

The present quite forgettest in the past.

TASSO.

It is the present that inspireth me;

Absent I seem alone, I am entranc'd!

PRINCESS.

When thou dost speak with spirits, I rejoice

The voice is human, and I gladly hear.

[A Page steps to the Prince.]

ALPHONSO.

He is arriv'd! and in a happy hour;

Antonio! Bring him hither;—here he comes!

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SCENE IV.

Princess, Leonora, Alphonso, Tasso, Antonio.

ALPHONSO.

Thou'rt doubly welcome! thou who bring'st at once
Thyself and welcome tidings.

PRINCESS.

Welcome here!

ANTONIO.

Scarce dare I venture to express the joy
Which in your presence quickens me anew.
In your society I find restor'd
What I have miss'd so long. You seem content
With what I have accomplish'd, what achiev'd;
So am I recompens'd for every care,
For many days impatiently endur'd,
And many others wasted purposely.
At length our wish is gain'd,—the strife is o'er.

LEONORA.

I also greet thee, though in sooth displeas'd;
Thou dost arrive when I must hence depart.

ANTONIO.

As if to mar my perfect happiness,
One lovely part forthwith thou takest hence.

TASSO.

My greetings too! I also shall rejoice
In converse with the much experience'd man.

ANTONIO.

Thou'lt find me true, whenever thou wilt deign
To glance awhile from thy world into mine.

ALPHONSO.

Though thou by letter hast announc'd to me
The progress and the issue of our cause,
Full many questions I have yet to ask
Touching the course thou hast pursu'd therein.
In that strange region a well-measur'd step
Alone conducts us to our destin'd goal.
Who doth his sovereign's interest purely seek,
In Rome a hard position must maintain;
For Rome gives nothing, while she grasps at all;
Let him who thither goes some boon to claim,
Go well provided, and esteem himself
Most happy, if e'en then he gaineth aught.

ANTONIO.

'Tis neither my demeanor nor my art
By which thy will hath been accomplish'd, prince.
For where the skill which at the Vatican
Would not be over-master'd? Much conspir'd
Which I could use in furth'rance of our cause.

Pope Gregory salutes and blesses thee.

That aged man, that sovereign most august,
Who on his brow the load of empire bears,
Recalls the time when he embrac'd thee last
With pleasure. He who can distinguish men
Knows and extols thee highly. For thy sake
He hath done much.

ALPHONSO.

So far as 'tis sincere,
His good opinion cannot but rejoice me.
But well thou knowest, from the Vatican
The pope sees empires dwindled at his feet;
Princes and men must needs seem small indeed.
Confess what was it most assisted thee.

ANTONIO.

Good! if thou will'st: the pope's exalted mind.
To him the small seems small, the great seems great.
That he may wield the empire of the world,
He to his neighbor yields with kind goodwill.
The strip of land, which he resigns to thee,
He knoweth, like thy friendship, well to prize.



Italia must be tranquil, friends alone
Will he behold around him, peace must reign

Upon his borders, that of Christendom

The might which he so potently directs

May smite at once the Heretic and Turk.

PRINCESS.

And is it known what men he most esteems,

And who approach him confidentially?

ANTONIO.

The experienc'd man alone can win his ear,

The active man his favor and esteem.

He, who from early youth has serv'd the state,

Commands it now, ruling those very courts

Which, in his office of ambassador,

He had observ'd and guided years before.

The world lies spread before his searching gaze,

Clear as the interests of his own domain.

In action we must yield him our applause,

And mark with joy, when time unfolds the plans

Which his deep forethought fashion'd long before.

There is no fairer prospect in the world

Than to behold a prince who wisely rules;

A realm where every one obeys with pride,

Where each imagines that he serves himself,

Because 'tis justice only that commands.

LEONORA.

How ardently I long to view that realm!

ALPHONSO.

Doubtless that thou may'st play thy part therein;

For Leonora never could remain

A mere spectator: meet it were, fair friend,

If now and then we let your gentle hands

Join in the mighty game—Say, is't not so?

LEONORA.

(*To Alphonso.*) Thou would'st provoke me,—thou shalt not succeed.

ALPHONSO.

I am already deeply in thy debt.

LEONORA.

Good; then to-day I will remain in thine!

Forgive, and do not interrupt me now.

(*To Antonio.*)

Say, hath he for his relatives done much?

ANTONIO.

No more nor less than equity allows.

The potentate, who doth neglect his friends,

Is even by the people justly blam'd.

With wise discretion Gregory employs

His friends as trusty servants of the state,

And thus fulfils at once two kindred claims.

TASSO.

Doth science, do the liberal arts enjoy

His fostering care? and doth he emulate

The glorious princes of the olden time?

ANTONIO.

He honors science when it is of use,—

Teaching to govern states, to know mankind;

He prizes art when it embellishes,—

When it exalts and beautifies his Rome,

Erecting palaces and temples there,

Which rank among the marvels of this earth.

Within his sphere of influence he admits

Naught inefficient, and alone esteems

The active cause and instrument of good.

ALPHONSO.

Thou thinkest, then, that we may soon conclude

The whole affair? that no impediments

Will finally be scatter'd in our way?

ANTONIO.

Unless I greatly err, 'twill but require

A few brief letters and thy signature

To bring this contest to a final close.

ALPHONSO.

This day with justice then I may proclaim

A season of prosperity and joy.

My frontiers are enlarg'd and made secure;

Thou hast accomplish'd all without the sword,

And hence deservest well a civic crown.
Our ladies on some beauteous morn shall twine
A wreath of oak to bind around thy brow.
Meanwhile our poet hath enrich'd us too;
He, by his conquest of Jerusalem,
Hath put our modern Christendom to shame.
With joyous spirit and unwearied zeal,
A high and distant goal he had attain'd;
For his achievement thou behold'st him crown'd.

ANTONIO.

Thou solvest an enigma. Two crown'd heads
I saw with wonder on arriving here.

TASSO.

While thou dost gaze upon my happiness,
With the same glance, oh, could'st thou view my heart,
And witness there my deep humility!

ANTONIO.

How lavishly Alphonso can reward
I long have known; thou only provest now
What all enjoy who come within its sphere.

PRINCESS.

When thou shalt see the work he hath achiev'd,
Thou wilt esteem us moderate and just.
The first, the silent, witnesses are we,
Of praises, which the world and future years

In tenfold measure will accord to him.

ANTONIO.

Through you his fame is certain. Who so bold

To entertain a doubt when you commend?

But tell me, who on Ariosto's brow

Hath plac'd this wreath?

LEONORA.

This hand.

ANTONIO.

It hath done well.

It more becomes him than a laurel crown.

As o'er her fruitful bosom Nature throws

Her variegated robe of beauteous green,

So he enshrouds in Fable's flowery garb,

Whatever can conspire to render man

Worthy of love and honor. Power and taste.

Experience, understanding, and content,

And a pure feeling for the good and true,

Pervade the spirit of his every song,

And there appear in person, to repose

'Neath blossoming trees, besprinkled by the snow

Of lightly-falling flowers, their heads entwin'd

With rosy garlands, while the sportive Loves

With frolic humor weave their magic spells.

A copious fountain, gurgling near, displays

Strange variegated fish, and all the air
Is vocal with the song of wondrous birds;
Strange cattle pasture in the bowers and glades;
Half hid in verdure, Folly slyly lurks:
At times, resounding from a golden cloud.
The voice of Wisdom utters lofty truth,
While Madness, from a wild harmonious lute,
Scatters forth bursts of fitful harmony,
Yet all the while the justest measure holds.
He who aspires to emulate this man,
E'en for his boldness well deserves a crown.
Forgive me if I feel myself inspir'd,
Like one entranc'd forget both time and place,
And fail to weigh my words; for all these crowns,
These poets, and the festival attire
Of these fair ladies, have transported me
Out of myself into a foreign land.

PRINCESS.

Who thus can prize one species of desert,
Will not misjudge another. Thou to us
Some future day shalt show in Tasso's song
What we can feel, and thou canst comprehend.

ALPHONSO.

Come now, Antonio! many things remain
Whereof I am desirous to inquire.

Then till the setting of the sun thou shalt

Attend the ladies. Follow me. Farewell!

[Antonio follows the Prince. Tasso the ladies.]



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ACT II.



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SCENE I.—

A Room.

Princess, Tasso.

TASSO.

I with uncertain footsteps follow thee.

O princess; there arise within my soul

Thoughts without rule and measure. Solitude

Appears to beckon me; complaisantly

She whispers: "Hither come, I will allay,

Within thy breast, the newly-waken'd doubt."

Yet catch I but a glimpse of thee, or takes

My listening ear one utterance from thy lip,

At once a new-born day around me shines,

And all the fetters vanish from my soul.

To thee I freely will confess, the man

Who unexpectedly appear'd among us

Hath rudely wak'd me from a beauteous dream;

So strangely have his nature and his words

Affected me, that more than ever now

A want of inward harmony I feel,

And a distracting conflict with myself.

PRINCESS.

'Tis not to be expected that a friend,

Who long hath sojourn'd in a foreign land,
Should in the moment of his first return
The tone of former times at once resume;
He in his inner mind is still unchang'd,
And a few days of intercourse will tune
The jarring strings, until they blend once more
In perfect harmony. When he shall know
The greatness of the work thou hast achiev'd
Believe me, he will place thee by the bard,
Whom as a giant now he sets before thee.

TASSO.

My princess, Ariosto's praise from him
Has more delighted than offended me.
Consoling 'tis to know the man renown'd,
Whom as our model we have plac'd before us;
An inward voice then whispers to the heart
"Canst thou obtain a portion of his worth,
A portion of his fame is also thine."
No, that which hath most deeply mov'd my heart,
Which even now completely fills my soul,
Was the majestic picture of that world,
Which, with its living, restless, mighty forms
Around one great and prudent man revolves.
And runs with measur'd steps the destin'd course
Prescrib'd beforehand by the demigod.

I listen'd eagerly, and heard with joy
The wise discourse of the experienc'd man;
But ah! the more I heard, the more I felt
Mine own unworthiness, and fear'd that I
Like empty sound, might dissipate in air,
Or vanish like an echo or a dream.

PRINCESS.

And yet erewhile thou didst so truly feel
How bard and hero for each other live,
How bard and hero to each other tend,



Fr. Pecht del.

published by George Barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Leonora D'Este

And toward each other know no envious thought.
Noble in truth are deeds deserving fame,
But it is also noble to transmit
The lofty grandeur of heroic deeds,
Through worthy song, to our posterity.
Be satisfied to contemplate in peace,
From a small, shelt'ring state, as from the shore,
The wild and stormy current of the world.

TASSO.

Was it not here, amaz'd, I first beheld
The high reward on valiant deeds bestow'd?
An inexperience'd youth I here arriv'd,
When festival on festival conspir'd
To render this the centre of renown.
Oh, what a scene Ferrara then display'd!
The wide arena, where in all its pomp
Accomplish'd valor should its skill display,
Was bounded by a circle, whose high worth
The sun might seek to parallel in vain.
The fairest women sat assembled there,
And men the most distinguish'd of the age.
Amaz'd the eye ran o'er the noble throng;
Proudly I cried, "And 'tis our Fatherland,
That small, sea-girded land, hath sent them here.
They constitute the noblest court that e'er
On honor, worth, or virtue, judgment pass'd.
Survey them singly, thou wilt not find one
Of whom his neighbor needs to feel ashamed!"
And then the lists were open'd, chargers pranc'd,
Esquires press'd forward, helmets brightly gleam'd,
The trumpet sounded, shivering lances split,
The din of clanging helm and shield was heard,
And for a moment eddying dust conceal'd

The victor's honor and the vanquish'd's shame.

Oh, let me draw a curtain o'er the scene,

The all too brilliant spectacle conceal,

That in this tranquil hour I may not feel

Too painfully mine own unworthiness!

PRINCESS.

If that bright circle and those noble deeds

Arous'd thee then to enterprise and toil,

I could the while, young friend, have tutor'd thee

In the still lesson of calm sufferance.

The brilliant festival thou dost extol,

Which then and since a hundred voices prais'd,

I did not witness. In a lonely spot,

So tranquil that unbroken on the ear

Joy's lightest echo faintly died away,

A prey to pain and melancholy thoughts,

I was compell'd to pass the tedious hours.

Before me hover'd on extended wing

Death's awful form, concealing from my view

The prospect of this ever-changing world.

Slowly it disappear'd, and I beheld,

As through a veil, the varied hues of life,

Pleasing but indistinct: while living forms

Began once more to flicker through the gloom.

Still feeble, and supported by my women,

For the first time my silent room I left,
When hither, full of happiness and life,
Thee leading by the hand, Lucretta came.
A stranger then, thou, Tasso, wast the first
To welcome me on my return to life.

Much then I hop'd for both of us, and hope
Hath not, methinks, deceiv'd us hitherto.

TASSO.

Stunn'd by the tumult, dazzled by the glare,
Impetuous passions stirring in my breast,
I by thy sister's side pursu'd my way
In silence through the stately corridors,
Then in the chamber enter'd, where ere long
Thou didst appear supported by thy women.

Oh, what a moment! Princess, pardon me!

As in the presence of a deity

The victim of enchantment feels with joy
His frenzied spirit from delusion freed,
So was my soul from every phantasy,
From every passion, every false desire
Restor'd at once by one calm glance of thine.

And if, before, my inexperience'd mind

Had lost itself in infinite desires,

I then, with shame, first turn'd my gaze within,

And recogniz'd the truly valuable.

Thus on the wide sea-shore we seek in vain

The pearl, reposing in its silent shell.

PRINCESS.

'Twas the commencement of a happy time.

And had Urbino's duke not led away

My sister from us, many years had pass'd

For us is calm, unclouded happiness

But now, alas! we miss her all too much.

Miss her free spirit, buoyancy and ire.

And the rich war of the accomplish'd woman.

TASSO.

Too well I know since she departed hence

None hath been able to supply to thee

The pure enjoyment which her presence gave.

Alas, how often hath it griev'd my soul!

How often have I in the silent grove

Pour'd forth my lamentation! How! I cried.

Is it her sister's right and joy alone

To be a treasure to the dear one's heart?

Does then no other soul respond to hers,

No other heart her confidence deserve?

Are soul and wit extinguish'd? and should one,

How great soe'er her worth, engross her love?

Forgive me, princess! Often I have wish'd

I could be something to thee,—little, perhaps,

But something; not with words alone, with deeds

I wish'd to be so, and in life to prove

How I had worshipp'd thee in solitude,

But I could ne'er succeed, and but too oft

In error wounded thee, offending one

By thee protected, or perplexing more

What thou didst wish to solve, and thus, alas!

E'en in the moment when I fondly strove

To draw more near thee, felt more distant still.

PRINCESS.

Thy wish I never have misconstru'd, Tasso;

How thou dost prejudice thyself I know;

Unlike my sister, who possess'd the art

Of living happily with every one,

After so many years, thou art in sooth

Thyself well nigh unfriended.

TASSO.

Censure me!

But after say, where shall I find the man,

The woman where, to whom as unto thee

I freely can unbosom every thought?

PRINCESS.

Thou should'st in my brother more confide.

TASSO.

He is my Prince!—Yet do not hence suppose

That freedom's lawless impulse swells my breast.

Man is not born for freedom, and to serve

A prince deserving honor and esteem

Is a pure pleasure to a noble mind.

He is my sovereign, of that great word

I deeply feel the full significance.

I must be silent when he speaks, and learn

To do what he commandeth, though perchance

My heart and understanding both rebel.

PRINCESS.

That with my brother never can befall.

And in Antonio, who is now return'd,

Thou wilt possess another prudent friend.

TASSO.

I hop'd it once, now almost I despair.

His converse how instructive, and his words

How useful in a thousand instances!

For he possesses, I may truly say.

All that in me is wanting. But, alas!

When round his cradle all the gods assembled

To bring their gifts, the Graces were not there;

And he who lacks what these fair powers impart,

May much possess, may much communicate,

But on his bosom we can ne'er repose.

PRINCESS.

But we can trust in him, and that is much.
Thou should'st not, Tasso, in one man expect
All qualities combin'd; Antonio
What he hath promis'd surely will perform.
If he have once declar'd himself thy friend,
He'll care for thee, where thou dost fail thyself
Ye must be friends! I cherish the fond hope
Ere long this gracious work to consummate.
Only oppose me not, as is thy wont.
Then, Leonora long hath sojourn'd here,
Who is at once refin'd and elegant;
Her easy manners banish all restraint,
Yet thou hast ne'er approach'd her as she wish'd.

TASSO.

To thee I hearken'd, or believe me, princess,
I should have rather shunn'd her than approach'd,
Though she appear so kind, I know not why,
I can but rarely feel at ease with her;
E'en when her purpose is to aid her friends,
They feel the purpose, and are thence constrain'd.

PRINCESS.

Upon this pathway, Tasso, nevermore
Will glad companionship be ours! This track
Leadeth us on through solitary groves

And silent vales to wander; more and more
The spirit is untun'd, and fondly strives
The golden age, that from the outer world
For aye hath vanish'd, to restore within,
How vain soever the attempt may prove.

TASSO.

Oh, what a word, my princess, hast thou spoken!
The golden age, ah, whither is it flown,
For which in secret every heart repines?
When o'er the yet unsubjugged earth
Men roam'd, like herds, in joyous liberty;
When on the flowery lawn an ancient tree
Lent to the shepherd and the shepherdess
Its grateful shadow, and the leafy grove
Its tender branches lovingly entwined
Around confiding love; when still and clear,
O'er sands forever pure, the pearly stream
The nymph's fair form encircled; when the snake
Glided innoxious through the verdant grass,
And the bold youth pursued the daring faun;
When every bird winging the limpid air,
And every living thing o'er hill and dale
Proclaim'd to man,—What pleases is allow'd.

PRINCESS.

My friend, the golden age hath pass'd away;

Only the good have power to bring it back;
Shall I confess to thee my secret thought?
The golden age, wherewith the bard is wont
Our spirits to beguile, that lovely prime,
Existed in the past no more than now;
And did it e'er exist, believe me, Tasso,
As then it was, it now may be restor'd.
Still meet congenial spirits, and enhance
Each other's pleasure in this beauteous world;
But in the motto change one single word,
And say, my friend:—What's fitting is allow'd.

TASSO.

Would that of good and noble men were form'd
A great tribunal, to decide for all
What is befitting! then no more would each
Esteem that right which benefits himself.
The man of power acts ever as he lists,
And whatsoe'er he doth is fitting deem'd.

PRINCESS.

Would'st thou define exactly what is fitting,
Thou should'st apply, methinks, to noble women;
For them it most behoveth that in life
Naught should be done unseemly or unfit;
Propriety encircles with a wall
The tender, weak, and vulnerable sex.

Where moral order reigneth, women reign,
They only are despis'd where rudeness triumphs;
And would'st thou touching either sex inquire,
'Tis order woman seeketh; freedom, man.

TASSO.

Thou thinkest us unfeeling, wild and rude?

PRINCESS.

Not so! but ye with violence pursue
A multitude of objects far remote.
Ye venture for eternity to act,
While we, with views more narrow, on this earth
Seek only one possession, well content
If that with constancy remain our own.
For we, alas! are of no heart secure,
Whate'er the ardor of its first devotion.
Beauty is transient, which alone ye seem
To hold in honor; what beside remains
No longer charms,—what doth not charm is dead.
If among men there were who knew to prize
The heart of woman, who could recognize
What treasures of fidelity and love
Are garner'd safely in a woman's breast
If the remembrance of bright single hours
Could vividly abide within your souls;
If your so searching glance could pierce the veil

Which age and wasting sickness o'er us fling;
If the possession which should satisfy
Waken'd no restless cravings in your hearts:
Then were our happy days indeed arriv'd,
We then should celebrate our golden age.

TASSO.

Thy words, my princess, in my breast awake
An old anxiety half lull'd to sleep.

PRINCESS.

What mean'st thou, Tasso? Freely speak with me.

TASSO.

I oft before have heard, and recently
Again it hath been rumor'd,—had I not
Been told, I might have known it,—princes strive
To win thy hand. What we must needs expect
We view with dread, nay, almost with despair.
Thou wilt forsake us,—it is natural:
Yet how we shall endure it, know I not.

PRINCESS.

Be for the present moment unconcern'd!
Almost, I might say, unconcern'd forever.
I am contented still to tarry here,
Nor know I any tie to lure me hence.
And if thou would'st indeed detain me, Tasso,
Live peaceably with all, so shalt thou lead

A happy life thyself, and I through thee.

TASSO.

Teach me to do whate'er is possible!

My life itself is consecrate to thee.

When to extol thee and to give thee thanks

My heart unfolded, I experienc'd first

The purest happiness that man can feel.

My soul's ideal I first found in thee.

As destiny supreme is rais'd above

The wile and counsel of the wisest men,

So tower the gods of earth o'er common mortals.

The rolling surge which we behold with dread

Doth all unheeded murmur at their feet

Lake gentle billows; they hear not the storm

Which blusters round us, scarcely heed our prayers,

And treat us as we helpless children treat.

Letting us fill the air with sighs and plaints.

Thou hast, divine one! often borne with me,

And like the radiant sun, thy pitying glance

Hath from mine eyelid dried the dew of sorrow.

PRINCESS.

'Tis only just that women cordially

Should meet the poet, whose heroic song

In strains so varied glorifies the sex.

Tender or valiant, thou hast ever known

To represent them amiable and noble;
And if Armida is deserving hate,
Her love and beauty reconcile us to her.

TASSO.

Whatever in my song doth reach the heart
And find an echo there, I owe to one,
And one alone! No image undefin'd
Hover'd before my soul, approaching now
In radiant glory, to retire again.
I have myself, with mine own eyes, beheld
The type of every virtue, every grace;
What I have copied thence will aye endure;
The heroic love of Tancred to Clorinda,
Erminia's silent and unnotic'd truth,
Sophronia's greatness and Olinda's woe;
These are not shadows by illusion bred;
I know they are eternal, for they are.
And what is more deserving to survive,
And silently to work for centuries,
Than the confession of a noble love
Confided modestly to gentle song?

PRINCESS.

And shall I name to thee another charm
Which, all unconsciously, this song may claim?
It doth allure us still to listen to it:

We listen, and we think we understand;
We understand, and yet we censure not,
So with thy song, thou winnest us at last.

TASSO.

Oh, what a heaven thou dost open to me,
My princess! if this radiance blinds me not,
I see unhop'd-for and eternal bliss
Descending gloriously on golden beams.

PRINCESS.

No further, Tasso! many things there are
That we may hope to win with violence;
While others only can become our own
Through moderation and wise self-restraint.
Such, it is said, is virtue, such is love,
Which is allied to her. Think well of this!



artist: herm. schneider.

TORQUATO TASSO. ACT II, SCENE I.

the princess and tasso.

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SCENE II.

TASSO.

And art thou then allow'd to raise thine eyes?
Around thee dar'st thou gaze? Thou art alone!
O'erheard these pillars what the princess spake?
And hast thou witnesses, dumb witnesses
Of thine exalted happiness to fear?
The sun arises of a new life-day,
Whose splendor dims the light of former days.
The goddess, downward stooping, swiftly bears
Aloft the mortal. What a wide expanse
Is to mine eye discover'd, what a realm!
How richly recompens'd my burning wish!
In dreams the highest happiness seem'd near,
This happiness surpasses all my dreams.
The man born blind conceiveth as he may
Of light and color; when upon his eye
The daylight pours, he hails a new-born sense.
Full of vague hope and courage, drunk with joy,
Reeling I tread this path. Thou giv'st me much;
Thou givest lavishly, as earth and heaven,
With bounteous hand, dispense their costly gifts,
Demanding in return what such a boon
Alone empowers thee to demand from me.

I must be moderate, I must forbear,
And thus deserve thy cherish'd confidence,
What have I ever done that she should choose me?
What can I do to merit her regard?
Her very confidence doth prove thy worth.
Yes, princess, to thine every word and look,
Be my whole soul forever consecrate!
Ask what thou wilt, for I am wholly thine!
To distant regions let her send me forth
In quest of toil, and danger, and renown;
Or in the grove, present the golden lyre,
Devoting me to quiet and her praise.
Hers am I, me possessing, she shall mould!
For her my heart hath garner'd every treasure.
Oh, had some heavenly power bestow'd on me
An organ thousandfold, I scarcely then
Could utter forth my speechless reverence.
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lip,
The sweetest that e'er sipp'd the vernal honey,
I covet now. No! Tasso shall henceforth
Wander no more forlorn, 'mong trees, 'mong men,
Lonely and weak, oppress'd with gloomy care!
He is no more alone, he is with thee.
Oh, would that visibly the noblest deed
Were present here before me, circled round

With grisly danger! Onward I would rush,
And with a joyous spirit risk the life
Now from her hand receiv'd—the choicest men
As comrades I would hail, a noble band,
To execute her will and high behest,
And consummate what seem'd impossible.
Rash mortal! wherefore did thy lip not hide
What thou didst feel, till thou could'st lay thyself
Worthy, and ever worthier, at her feet?
Such was thy purpose, such thy prudent wish!
Yet be it so! 'Tis sweeter to receive,
Free, and unmerited, so fair a boon,
Than, with self-flatt'ry, dream one might perchance
Successfully have claim'd it. Gaze with joy!
So vast, so boundless, all before thee lies!
And youth, with hope inspir'd, allures thee on
Towards the future's unknown, sunny realms!
My bosom, heave! propitious seasons smile
Once more with genial influence on this plant!
It springeth heavenward, and shooteth out
A thousand branches that unfold in bloom.
Oh, may it bring forth fruit,—ambrosial fruit!
And may a hand belov'd the golden spoil
Cull from its verdant and luxuriant boughs!

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SCENE III.

Tasso, Antonio.

TASSO.

Gladly I welcome thee, it seems indeed
As though I saw thee for the first time now!
Ne'er was arrival more auspicious. Welcome!
I know thee now, and all thy varied worth.
Promptly I offer thee my heart and hand.
And trust that thou wilt not despise my love.

ANTONIO.

Freely thou offerest a precious gift;
Its worth I duly estimate, and hence
Would pause awhile before accepting it.
I know not yet if I can render thee
A full equivalent. Not willingly
Would I o'erhasty or unthankful seem;
Let then my sober caution serve for both.

TASSO.

What man would censure caution? Every step
Of life doth prove that 'tis most requisite;
Yet nobler is it, when the soul reveals,
Where we, with prudent foresight, may dispense.

ANTONIO.

The heart of each be here his oracle,
Since each his error must himself atone.

TASSO.

So let it be! My duty I've perform'd.
It is the princess' wish we should be friends,
Her words I honor'd and thy friendship sought.
I wish'd not to hold back, Antonio,
But I will never be importunate.
Time and more near acquaintance may induce thee
To give a warmer welcome to the gift,
Which now thou dost reject, almost with scorn.

ANTONIO.

Oft is the moderate man nam'd cold by those
Who think themselves more warm than other men,
Because a transient glow comes over them.

TASSO.

Thou blamest what I blame,—what I avoid.
Young as I am I ever must prefer
Unshaken constancy to vehemence.

ANTONIO.

Most wisely said! Keep ever in this mind.

TASSO.

Thou'rt authoriz'd to counsel and to warn,

For, like a faithful, time-approved friend,
Experience holds her station at thy side.
But trust me, sir, the meditative heart
Attends the warning of each day and hour,
And practises in secret every virtue,
Which in thy rigor thou would'st teach anew.

ANTONIO.

'Twere well to be thus occupied with self,
If it were only profitable too.
His inmost nature no man learns to know
By introspection; still he rates himself,
Sometimes too low, but oft, alas! too high.
Self-knowledge comes from knowing other men;
'Tis life reveals to each his genuine worth.

TASSO.

I listen with applause and reverence.

ANTONIO.

Yet to my words I know thou dost attach
A meaning wholly foreign to my thought.

TASSO.

Proceeding thus, we ne'er shall draw more near.
It is not prudent, 'tis not well, to meet
With purpos'd misconception any man,
Let him be who he may! The princess' word
I scarcely needed;—I have read thy soul:

Good thou dost purpose and accomplish too.
Thine own immediate fate concerns thee not;
Thou think'st of others, others thou dost aid,
And on life's sea, vex'd by each passing gale,
Thou hold'st a heart unmov'd. I view thee thus;
What then were I, did I not draw tow'rds thee?
Did I not even keenly seek a share
Of the lock'd treasure which thy bosom guards?
Open thine heart to me, thou'lt not repent;
Know me, and I sure am thou'lt be my friend:
Of such a friend I long have felt the need.
My inexperience, my ungovern'd youth
Cause me no shame; for still around my brow
The future's golden clouds in brightness rest.
Oh! to thy bosom take me, noble man;
Into the wise, the temperate use of life
Initiate my rash, my unfledg'd youth.

ANTONIO.

Thou in a single moment would'st demand
What time and circumspection only yield.

TASSO.

In one brief moment love has power to give
What anxious toil wins not in lengthen'd years.
I do not ask it from thee, I demand.
I summon thee in Virtue's sacred name,

For she is zealous to unite the good;
And shall I name to thee another name?
The princess, she doth wish it.—Leonora.
Me she would lead to thee, and thee to me.
Oh, let us meet her wish with kindred hearts!
United let us to the goddess haste,
To offer her our service, our whole souls,
Leagu'd to achieve for her the noblest aims.
Yet once again!—Here is my hand! Give thine!
I do entreat, hold thyself back no longer,
O noble man, and grudge me not the joy.
The good man's fairest joy, without reserve,
Freely to yield himself to nobler men!

ANTONIO.

Thou goest with full sail! It would appear
Thou'rt wont to conquer, everywhere to find
The pathways spacious and the portals wide.
I grudge thee not or merit or success,—
Only I see indeed, too plainly see,
We from each other stand too far apart.

TASSO.

It may be so in years and timetried worth;—
In courage and good-will I yield to none.

ANTONIO.

Good-will doth oft prove deedless; courage still

Pictures the goal less distant than it is.

His brow alone is crown'd who reaches it,

And oft a worthier must forego the crown.

Yet wreaths there are of very different fashion:

Light, worthless wreaths, which, idly strolling on,

The loiterer oft without the toil obtains.



TASSO.

What a divinity to one accords,

And from another sternly doth withhold,

Is not obtain'd by each man as he lists.

ANTONIO.

To Fortune before other gods ascribe it;

I'll hear thee gladly, for her choice is blind.

TASSO.

Impartial Justice also wears a band,

And to each bright illusion shuts her eyes.

ANTONIO.

Fortune 'tis for the fortunate to praise!

Let him ascribe to her a hundred eyes

To scan desert,—stern judgment, and wise choice.

Call her Minerva, call her what he will,

He holds as just reward her golden gifts,

Chance ornament as symbol of desert.

TASSO.

Thou need'st not speak more plainly. 'Tis enough!
Deeply I see into thine inmost heart,
And know thee now for life. Oh, would that so
My princess knew thee also! Lavish not
The arrows of thine eyes and of thy tongue!
In vain thou aimest at the fadeless wreath
Entwin'd around my brow. First be so great
As not to envy me the laurel wreath!
And then perchance thou may'st dispute the prize.
I deem it sacred, yea, the highest good;
Yet only show me him, who hath attain'd
That after which I strive; show me the hero,
Of whom on history's ample page I read;
The poet place before me, who himself
With Homer or with Virgil may compare;
Ay, what is more, let me behold the man
Who hath deserv'd threefold this recompense,
And yet can wear the laurel round his brow
With modesty thrice greater than my own.—
Then at the feet of the divinity
Who thus endow'd me, thou should'st see me kneel,
Nor would I stand erect, till from my brow,
She had to his the ornament transferi'd.

ANTONIO.

Till then thou'rt doubtless worthy of the crown.

TASSO.

Let me be justly weigh'd: I shun it not:

But your contempt I never have deserv'd.

The wreath consider'd by my prince my due.

Which for my brow my princess' hand entwin'd,

None shall dispute with me, and none asperse!

ANTONIO.

This haughty tone, methinks, becomes thee not,

Nor this rash glow, unseemly in this place.

TASSO.

The tone thou takest here becomes me too.

Say, from these precincts is the truth exil'd?

Within the palace is free thought imprison'd?

Here must the noble spirit be oppress'd?

This is nobility's appropriate seat,

The soul's nobility! and may she not

In presence of earth's mighty ones rejoice?

She may and shall. Nobles draw near the prince

In virtue of the rank their sires bequeath'd;

Why should not genius then, which partial Nature

Grants, like a glorious ancestry, to few?

Here littleness alone should feel confus'd,

And envy shun to manifest its shame:

As no insidious spider should attach

Its noisome fabric to these marble walls.

ANTONIO.

Thyself dost show that my contempt is just!

The impetuous youth, forsooth, would seize by force

The confidence and friendship of the man!

Rude as thou art, dost think thyself of worth?

TASSO.

I'd rather be what thou esteemest rude,

Than what I must myself esteem ignoble.

ANTONIO.

Thou'rt still so young that wholesome chastisement

May tutor thee to hold a better course.

TASSO.

Not young enough to bow to idols down,

Yet old enough to conquer scorn with scorn.

ANTONIO.

From contests of the lip and of the lyre,

A conquering hero, thou may'st issue forth.

TASSO.

It were presumptuous to extol my arm;

As yet 'tis deedless; still I'll trust to it.

ANTONIO.

Thou trustest to forbearance, which too long

Hath spoil'd thee in thine insolent career.

TASSO.

That I am grown to manhood, now I feel:
It would have been the farthest from my wish
To try with thee the doubtful game of arms:
But thou dost stir the inward fire; my blood,
My inmost marrow boils; the fierce desire
Of vengeance seethes and foams within my breast.
Art thou the man thou boast'st thyself,—then stand.

ANTONIO.

Thou know'st as little who, as where thou art,

TASSO.

No fane so sacred as to shield contempt.



Thou dost blaspheme, thou dost profane this spot,
Not I, who fairest offerings,—confidence,
Respect and love, for thine acceptance brought.
Thy spirit desecrates this paradise;
And thy injurious words this sacred hall;
Not the indignant heaving of my breast,
Which boils to wipe away the slightest stain.

ANTONIO.

What a high spirit in a narrow breast!

TASSO.

Here there is space to vent the bosom's rage.

ANTONIO.

The rabble also vent their rage in words.

TASSO.

Art thou of noble blood as I am, draw!

ANTONIO.

I am, but I remember where I stand.

TASSO.

Come then below, where weapons may avail.

ANTONIO.

Thou should'st not challenge, therefore I'll not follow.

TASSO.

To cowards welcome such impediments.

ANTONIO.

The coward only threats where he's secure.

TASSO.

With joy would I relinquish this defence.

ANTONIO.

Degrade thyself: degrade the place thou canst not.

TASSO.

The place forgive me that I suffer'd it!

[He draws his sword.]

Or draw or follow, if, as now I hate,

I'm not to scorn thee to eternity!

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SCENE IV.

Tasso, Antonio, Alphonso.

ALPHONSO.

In what unlook'd-for strife I find you both?

ANTONIO.

Calm and unmov'd, O prince, thou find'st me here,
Before a man whom passion's rage hath seiz'd.

TASSO.

As a divinity I worship thee
That thus thou tam'st me with one warning look.

ALPHONSO.

Relate, Antonio, Tasso, tell me straight;—
Say, why doth discord thus invade my house?
How hath it seiz'd you both, and hurried you
Confus'd and reeling from the beaten track
Of decency and law? I stand amaz'd.

TASSO.

I feel it, thou dost know nor him, nor me.
This man, reputed temperate and wise,
Hath tow'rds me, like a rude, ill-manner'd churl,
Behav'd himself with spiteful insolence.
I sought him trustfully, he thrust me back;
With constancy I press'd myself on him,

And still, with growing bitterness imbu'd,
He rested not till he had turn'd to gall
My blood's pure current. Pardon! Thou, my prince,
Hast found me here, possess'd with furious rage.
If guilty, to this man the guilt is due;
With violence he fann'd the fiery glow
Which, seizing me, hath injur'd both of us.

ANTONIO.

Poetic frenzy hurried him away!
Thou hast, O prince, address'd thyself to me,
Hast question'd me: be it to me allow'd
After this rapid orator to speak.

TASSO.

Oh, yes, repeat again each several word;
And if before this judge thou canst recall
Each syllable, each look,—then dare to do so!
Disgrace thyself a second time, and bear
Witness against thyself! I'll not disown
A single pulse-throb, nor a single breath.

ANTONIO.

If thou hast somewhat more to say, proceed;
If not, forbear, and interrupt me not.
Whether at first his fiery youth or I
Began this quarrel, whether he or I
Must bear the blame, is a wide question, prince,

Which stands apart, and need not be discuss'd.

TASSO.

How so? The primal question seems to me,
Which of the two is right and which is wrong.

ANTONIO.

Not so precisely, as the ungovern'd mind
Might first suppose.

ALPHONSO.

Antonio!

ANTONIO.

Gracious prince!

Thy hint I honor; but let him forbear:

When I have spoken he may then proceed:

Thy voice must then decide. I've but to say,

I can no longer with this man contend:

Can nor accuse him, nor defend myself,

Nor give the satisfaction he desires;

For as he stands, he is no longer free.

There hangeth over him a heavy law,

Which, at the most, thy favor may relax.

Here hath he dar'd to threat, to challenge me,

Scarce in thy presence, sheath'd his naked sword;



And if between us, prince, thou hadst not stopp'd,

Obnoxious to reproof I now had stood,
Before thy sight, the partner of his fault.

ALPHONSO.

(*To Tasso.*) Thou hast not acted well.

TASSO.

Mine own heart, prince,
And surely thine, doth speak me wholly free.
Yes, true it is, I threaten'd, challeng'd, drew;
But how maliciously his guileful tongue,
With words well chosen, pierc'd me to the quick;
How sharp and rapidly his biting tooth
The subtle venom in my blood infus'd;
How more and more the fever he inflam'd—
Thou thinkest not! cold and unmov'd himself,
He to the highest pitch excited me.
Thou know'st him not, and thou wilt never know him!
Warmly I tender'd him the fairest friendship;
Down at my feet he flung the proffer'd gift;
And had my spirit not with anger glow'd,
Of thy fair service and thy princely grace
I were for aye unworthy. If the law
I have forgotten, and this place, forgive!
The spot exists not where I dare be base,
Nor yet where I debasement dare endure.
But if this heart in any place be false,

Or to itself or thee,—condemn, reject,—
And let me ne'er again behold thy face.

ANTONIO.

How easily the youth bears heavy loads,
And shaketh misdemeanors off like dust!
It were indeed a marvel, knew I not
Of magic poesy the wondrous power,
Which loveth still with the impossible
In frolic mood to sport. I almost doubt
Whether to thee, and to thy ministers,
This deed will seem so insignificant.
For Majesty extends its shield o'er all
Who draw near its inviolate abode,
And bow before it as a deity;
As at the altar's consecrated foot,
So on its sacred threshold rage subsides;
No sword there gleams, no threat'ning word resounds.
E'en injur'd innocence seeks no revenge.
The common earth affordeth ample scope
For bitter hate, and rage implacable.
There will no coward threat, no true man flee;
Thy ancestors, on sure foundations bas'd
These walls, fit shelter for their dignity;
And, with wise forecast, hedg'd the palace round
With fearful penalties. Of all transgressors,

Exile, confinement, death, the certain doom.

Respect of persons was not, nor did mercy

The arm of justice venture to restrain.

The boldest culprit felt himself o'eraw'd.

And now, after a lengthen'd reign of peace,

We must behold unlicens'd rage invade

The realm of sacred order. Judge, O prince,

And punish! for unguarded by the law,

Unshielded by his sov'reign, who will dare

To keep the narrow path that duty bounds.

ALPHONSO.

More than your words, or aught that ye could say,

My own impartial feelings let me heed.

If that your duty ye had both fulfill'd,

I should not have this judgment to pronounce;

For here the right and wrong are near allied.

If that Antonio hath offended thee,

Due satisfaction he must doubtless give,

In such a sort as thou shalt chose to ask.

I gladly would be chosen arbiter.

(To Tasso.)

Meanwhile thy misdemeanor subjects thee

To brief confinement. Tasso. I forgive thee,

And therefore, for thy sake, relax the law.

Now leave us, and within thy chamber bide,

Thyself thy sole companion, thy sole guard.

TASSO.

Is this, then, thy judicial sentence, prince?

ANTONIO.

Discern'st thou not a father's lenity?

TASSO.

(*To Antonio.*) With thee, henceforth, I have no more to say.

(*To Alphonso.*)

Thine earnest word, O prince, delivers me,

A freeman, to captivity. So be it!

Thou deem'st it right. Thy sacred word I hear

And counsel silence to mine inmost heart.

It seems so strange, so strange,—myself and thee,

This sacred spot, I scarce can recognize.

Yet him I know full well.—Oh, there is much

I might and ought to say, yet I submit.

My lips are mute. Was it indeed a crime?

At least, they treat me as a criminal.

Howe'er my heart rebel, I'm captive now.

ALPHONSO.

Thou tak'st it, Tasso, more to heart than I.

TASSO.

To me it still is inconceivable;

And yet not so, I am no child. Methinks

I should be able to unravel it.

A sudden light breaks in upon my soul;—

As suddenly it leaves me in the dark:—

I only hear my sentence and submit.

These are, indeed, superfluous, idle words!

Henceforth inure thy spirit to obey.

Weak mortal! To forget where thou didst stand!

Thou didst forget how high the abode of gods,

And now art stagger'd by the sudden fall.

Promptly obey, for it becomes a man

Each painful duty to perform with joy.

Take back the sword thou gavest me, what time

The cardinal I follow'd into France.

Though not with glory, not with shame I word it.—

No, not to-day. The bright auspicious gift,

With heart sore troubled, I relinquish now.

ALPHONSO.

Thou know'st not, Tasso. how I feel towards thee.

TASSO.

My lot is to obey, and not to think!

And destiny, alas! demands from me

Renunciation of this precious gift

Ill doth a crown become a captive's brow.

I from my head myself remove the wreath

Which seem'd accorded for eternity.

Too early was the dearest bliss bestow'd,
And is, alas, as if I had been boastful,
Too early taken away.
Thou takest back what none beside could take,
And what no God a second time accords,
We mortals are most wonderfully tried;
We could not bear it, were we not endow'd,
By Nature, with a kindly levity,
Calmly necessity doth tutor us
With priceless treasures lavishly to sport;
Our hands we open of our own free will—
The prize escapes us, ne'er to be recall'd.
A tear doth mingle with this parting kiss,
Devoting thee to mutability!
This tender sign of weakness may be pardon'd!
Who would not weep when what was deem'd immortal
Yields to destruction's power! Now to this sword
(Alas, it won thee not!) ally thyself,
And round it twin'd, as on a hero's bier
Reposing, mark the grave where buried lie
My short-liv'd happiness, my wither'd hopes!
Here at thy feet, O prince, I lay them down;
For who is justly arm'd if thou art wroth?
Who justly crown'd, on whom thy brow is bent?
I go a captive, and await my doom.

[*Exit.*

[*On a sign from the Prince, a page raises the sword and wreath and bears them away.*

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SCENE V.

Alphonso, Antonio.

ANTONIO.

Whither doth frenzied fancy lead the boy?
And in what colors doth he picture forth
His high desert and glorious destiny?
Rash, in experienc'd, youth esteems itself
A chosen instrument, and arrogates
Unbounded license. He has been chastis'd,
And chastisement is profit to the boy.
For which the man will render cordial thanks.

ALPHONSO.

He is chastis'd too painfully I fear.

ANTONIO.

Art thou dispos'd to practise lenity,
Restore to him his liberty, O prince,
And then the sword may arbitrate our strife.

ALPHONSO.

So be it, if the public voice demands.
But tell me, how didst thou provoke his ire?

ANTONIO.

In sooth, I scarce can say how it befell.
As man, I may perchance have wounded him;

As nobleman, I gave him no offence.

And in the very tempest of his rage

No word unseemly hath escap'd this lip.

ALPHONSO.

Of such a sort your quarrel seem'd to me;

And your own word confirms me in my thought.

When men dispute we justly may esteem

The wiser the offender. Thou with Tasso

Should'st not contend, but rather guide his steps;

It would become thee more. 'Tis not too late

The sword's decision is not call'd for here.

So long as I am bless'd with peace abroad,

So long would I enjoy it in my house.

Restore tranquillity, thou canst with ease.

Leonora Sanvitale may at first

Attempt to soothe him with her honey'd lip;

Then go thou to him; in my name restore

His liberty; with true and noble words

Endeavor to obtain his confidence.

Accomplish this with all the speed thou canst;

As a kind friend and father speak with him.

Peace I would know restor'd ere I depart;

All if thou wilt—is possible to thee.

We gladly will remain another hour,

Then leave it to the ladies' gentle tact

To consummate the work commenc'd by thee.

So when we come again, the last faint trace

Of this rash quarrel will be quite effac'd.

It seems thy talents will not rust, Antonio!

Scarcely hast thou concluded one affair,

And on thy first return thou seek'st another.

In this new mission may success be thine!

ANTONIO.

I am asham'd; my error in thy words,

As in the clearest mirror, I discern!

How easy to obey a noble prince

Who doth convince us while he doth command!



Fr. Pecht del.

published by george barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Leonora Sanvitale

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ACT III.



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SCENE I.

PRINCESS.

(Alone.) Where tarries Leonora? Anxious fear,
Augmenting every moment, agitates
My inmost heart. Scarce know I what befell;
Which party is to blame I scarcely know.
Oh, that she would return! I would not yet
Speak with my brother, with Antonio,
Till I am more compos'd, till I have heard
How matters stand, and what may be the issue.

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SCENE II.

Princess, Leonora.

PRINCESS.

What tidings, Leonora? Tell me all:

How stands it with our friends? Say, what befell?

LEONORA.

More than I knew before I have not learn'd.

Contention rose between them; Tasso drew;

Thy brother parted them: yet it would seem

That it was Tasso who began the fray.

Antonio is at large, and with his prince

Converses freely. Tasso, in his chamber,

Abides meanwhile, a captive and alone.

PRINCESS.

Doubtless Antonio irritated him,

And met with cold disdain the high-ton'd youth.

LEONORA.

I do believe it, when he join'd us first

A cloud already brooded o'er his brow.

PRINCESS.

Alas, that we so often disregard

The pure and silent warnings of the heart!

Softly a God doth whisper in our breast,

Softly, yet audibly, doth counsel us,
Both what we ought to seek and what to shun
This morn Antonio hath appear'd to me
E'en more abrupt than ever—more reserv'd.
When at his side I saw our youthful bard,
My spirit warn'd me. Only mark of each
The outward aspect—countenance and tone,
Look, gesture, bearing! Everything oppos'd;
Affection they can never interchange.
Yet Hope persuaded me, the flatterer:
They both are sensible, she fondly urg'd,
Both noble, gently nurtur'd, and thy friends.
What bond more sure than that which links the good?
I urg'd the youth; with what devoted zeal,
How ardently he gave himself to me!
Would I had spoken to Antonio then!
But I delay'd: so recent his return,
That I felt shy, at once and urgently,
To recommend the youth to his regard;
On custom I relied and courtesy,
And on the common usage of the world,
E'en between foes which smoothly intervenes.
I dreaded not from the experienc'd man
The rash impetuosity of youth.
The ill seem'd distant; now, alas, 'tis here!

Oh, give me counsel! What is to be done?

LEONORA.

Thy words, my princess, show that thou dost feel

How hard it is to counsel. 'Tis not here

Between congenial minds a misconception;

A word, if needful an appeal to arms,

Peace in such case might happily restore.

Two men they are, who therefore are oppos'd,

I've felt it long, because by Nature cast

In moulds so opposite that she the twain

Could never weld into a single man.

And were they to consult their common weal,

A league of closest friendship they would form,

Then as one man their path they would pursue,

With power, and joy and happiness through life.

I hop'd it once, I now perceive in vain.

To-day's contention, whatsoe'er the cause,

Might be appeas'd, but this assures us not,

Or for the morrow, or for future time.

Methinks 'twere best that Tasso for awhile

Should journey hence. To Rome he might repair.

To Florence also bend forthwith his course;

A few weeks later I should meet him there,

And as a friend could work upon his mind;

Thou couldest here meanwhile Antonio,

Who has become almost a stranger to us,
Once more within thy friendly circle bring;
And thus benignant time, that grants so much,
Might grant, perchance, what seems impossible.

PRINCESS.

A happiness will thus, my friend, be thine,
Which I must needs forego. Say, is that right?

LEONORA.

Thou only would'st forego what thou thyself,
As things at present stand, could'st not enjoy.

PRINCESS.

So calmly shall I banish hence a friend?

LEONORA.

Rather retain whom thou dost seem to banish.

PRINCESS.

The duke will ne'er consent to part with him.

LEONORA.

When he shall see as we do, he will yield.

PRINCESS.

'Tis painful in one's friend to doom oneself.

LEONORA.

Yet with thy friend thou'lt also save thyself.

PRINCESS.

I cannot give my voice that this shall be.

LEONORA.

An evil still more grievous than expect.

PRINCESS.

Thou giv'st me pain,—uncertain thy success.

LEONORA.

Ere long we shall discover who doth err.

PRINCESS.

Well, if it needs must be so, say no more.

LEONORA.

He conquers grief who firmly can resolve.

PRINCESS.

Resolv'd I am not; nathless let it be,

If he for long doth not absent himself.

And let us, Leonora, care for him,

That he may never be oppress'd by want,

But that the duke, e'en in a distant land,

May graciously assign him maintenance.

Speak with Antonio: with my brother he

Can much accomplish, and will not remember

The recent strife against our friend or us.

LEONORA.

Princess, a word from thee would more avail.

PRINCESS.

I cannot, well thou knowest, Leonora,

Solicit favors for myself and friends,
As my dear sister of Urbino can.
A calm, secluded life I'm fain to lead,
And from my brother gratefully accept
Whate'er his princely bounty freely grants.
For this reluctance once I blam'd myself;
I've conquer'd now, and blame myself no more.
A friend full oft would censure me, and say,
Unselfish art thou, and unselfishness
Is good, but thou dost carry it so far,
That even the requirements of a friend
Thou canst not rightly feel. I let it pass,
And even this reproach must also bear.
It doth the more rejoice me that I now
Can be in truth of service to our friend;
My mother's heritage descends to me,
And to his need I'll gladly minister.

LEONORA.

Princess, I too can show myself his friend.
In truth he is no thrifty manager;
My skilful aid shall help him where he fails.

PRINCESS.

Well, take him then,—if part with him I must,
To thee before all others be he given:
I now perceive, it will be better so.

This sorrow also must my spirit hail
As good and wholesome? Such my doom from youth;
I am inur'd to it. But half we feel
Renunciation of a precious joy,
When we have deem'd its tenure insecure.

LEONORA.

Happy according to thy high desert
I hope to see thee.

PRINCESS.

Leonora! Happy?
Who then is happy?—So indeed I might
Esteem my brother, for his constant mind
Still with unswerving temper meets his fate;
Yet even he ne'er reap'd as he deserv'd.
My sister of Urbino, is she happy?
With beauty gifted and a noble heart!
Childless she's doom'd to live; her younger lord
Values her highly and upbraids her not;
But happiness is stranger to their home.
Of what avail our mother's prudent skill,
Her varied knowledge and her ample mind?
Her could they shield from foreign heresy?
They took us from her: now she is no more,
And dying, left us not the soothing thought,
That reconcil'd with God, her spirit pass'd.

LEONORA.

Oh, mark not only that which fails to each;
Consider rather what to each remains!
And, princess, what doth not remain to thee?

PRINCESS.

What doth remain to me, Leonora? Patience!
Which I have learn'd to practise from my youth.
When friends and kindred, knit in social love,
In joyous pastime whil'd the hours away,
Sickness held me a captive in my chamber;
And in the sad companionship of pain
I early learn'd the lesson—to endure!
One pleasure cheer'd me in my solitude,
The joy of song. I commun'd with myself,
And lull'd with soothing tones the sense of pain,
The restless longing, the unquiet wish;—
Till sorrow oft would grow to ravishment,
And sadness' self to harmony divine.
Not long, alas! this comfort was allow'd,
The leech's stern monition silenc'd me;
I was condemn'd to live and to endure,
E'en of this sole remaining joy bereft.

LEONORA.

Yet many friends attach'd themselves to thee,
And now thou art in health, art joyous too.

PRINCESS.

I am in health; that is, I am not sick;
And many friends I have, whose constancy
Doth cheer my heart; and ah, I had a friend—

LEONORA.

Thou hast him still.

PRINCESS.

But soon must part with him.
That moment was of deep significance
When first I saw him. Scarce was I restor'd
From many sorrows; sickness and dull pain
Were scarce subdued; with shy and timid glance
I gaz'd once more on life, once more rejoic'd
In the glad sunshine, and my kindred's love,
And hope's delicious balm inhal'd anew;
Forwards I ventur'd into life to gaze,
And friendly forms saluted me from far:
Then was it, Leonora, that my sister
First introduc'd to me the vouthful bard,
She led him hither, and, shall I confess?—
My heart embrac'd him, and will hold for aye.

LEONORA.

My princess! Let it not repent thee now!
To apprehend the noble is a gain
Of which the soul can never be bereft.

PRINCESS.

The fair, the excellent we needs must fear;
'Tis like a flame, which nobly serveth us
So long as on our household hearth it burns.
Or sheds its lustre from the friendly torch.
How lovely then! Who can dispense with it?
But if unwatch'd it spreads destruction round.
What anguish it occasions! Leave me now;
I babble, and 'twere better to conceal,
Even from thee, how weak I am and sick.

LEONORA.

The sickness of the heart doth soonest yield
To tender plaints and soothing confidence.

PRINCESS.

If in confiding love a cure be found,
I'm whole, so strong my confidence in thee
Alas! my friend. I am indeed resolv'd:
Let him depart! But ah! I feel already
The long protracted anguish of the day
When I must all forego that glads me now
His beauteous form, transfigur'd in my dream,
The morning sun will dissipate no more;
No more the blissful hope of seeing him,
With jovous longing, fill my waking sense;
Nor to discover him, my timid glance

Search wistfully our garden's dewy shade.
How sweetly was the tender hope fulfill'd
To spend each eve in intercourse with him!
How, while conversing, the desire increas'd,
To know each other ever more and more;
And still our souls, in sweet communion join'd,
Were daily tun'd to purer harmonies.
What twilight-gloom now falls around my path!
The gorgeous sun, the genial light of day,
Of this fair world the splendors manifold,
Shorn of their lustre, are envelop'd all
In the dark mist, which now environs me.
In bygone times, each day compris'd a life;
Hush'd was each care, mute each foreboding voice.
And happily embark'd, we drifted on
Without a rudder o'er life's lucid wave.
Now, in the darkness of the present hour,
Futurity's vague terrors seize my soul.

LEONORA.

The future will restore to thee thy friend,
And bring to thee new happiness, new joy.

PRINCESS.

What I possess, that would I gladly hold;
Change may divert the mind, but profits not.
With youthful longing I have never join'd

The motley throng who strive from fortune's urn
To snatch an object for their craving hearts.
I honor'd him, and could not choose but love him,
For that with him my life was life indeed,
Fill'd with a joy I never knew before.
At first I whisper'd to my heart, beware!
Shrinking I shunn'd, yet ever drew more near.
So gently lur'd, so cruelly chastis'd!
A pure substantial blessing glides away,
And for the joy that fill'd my yearning heart
Some demon substitutes a kindred pain.

LEONORA.

If friendship's soothing words console thee not,
This beauteous world's calm power and healing time
Will imperceptibly restore thy heart.

PRINCESS.

Ay, beauteous is the world, and many a joy
Floats through its wide dominion here and there.
Alas! that ever, by a single step,
As we advance, it seemeth to retreat,
Our yearning souls along the path of life
Thus step by step alluring to the grave!
To mortal man so seldom is it given
To find what seem'd his heaven-appointed bliss;
Alas, so seldom he retains the good

Which, in auspicious hour, his hand had grasp'd;
The treasure to our heart that came unsought
Doth tear itself away, and we ourselves
Yield that which once with eagerness we seiz'd.
There is a bliss, but ah! we know it not;
We know it, but we know not how to prize.

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SCENE III.

LEONORA.

(Alone.) The good and noble heart my pity moves;
How sad a lot attends her lofty rank!
Alas, she loses,—thinkest thou to win?
Is his departure hence so requisite?
Or dost thou urge it for thyself alone,—
To make the heart and lofty genius thine,
Which now thou sharest,—and unequally?
Is't honest so to act? What lack'st thou yet?
Art thou not rich enough? Husband and son,
Possessions, beauty, rank—all these thou hast,
And him would'st have beside? What! Lov'st thou him?
How comes it else that thou canst not endure
To live without him? This thou dar'st confess!
How charming is it in his mind's clear depths
One's self to mirror. Doth not every joy
Seem doubly great and noble, when his song
Wafts us aloft as on the clouds of heaven?
Then first thy lot is worthy to be envied!
Not only hast thou what the many crave,
But each one knoweth what thou art and hast!
Thy fatherland doth proudly speak thy name;
This is the pinnacle of earthly bliss.

Is Laura's then the only favor'd name
That aye from gentle lips shall sweetly flow?
Is it Petrarca's privilege alone,
To deify an unknown beauty's charms?
Who is there that with Tasso can compare?
As now the world exalts him, future time
With honor due shall magnify his name.
What rapture, in the golden prime of life,
To feel his presence, and with him to near,
With airy tread, the future's hidden realm!
Thus should old age and time their influence lose,
And powerless be the voice of rumor bold,
Whose breath controls the billows of applause.
All that is transient in his song survives;
Still art thou young, still happy, when the round
Of changeful time shall long have borne thee on.
Him thou must have, yet takest naught from her.
For her affection to the gifted man
Doth take the hue her other passions wear;



artist: herm. schneider.

TORQUATO TASSO. ACT III, SCENE II.

leonora and the princess

Pale as the tranquil moon, whose feeble rays

Dimly illumine the night-wanderer's path;
They gleam, but warm not, and diffuse around
No blissful rapture, no keen sense of joy.
If she but know him happy, though afar,
She will rejoice, as when she saw him daily.
And then, 'tis not my purpose from this court,
From her, to banish both myself and friend.
I will return, will bring him here again.
So let it be!—My rugged friend draws near;
We soon shall see if we have power to tame him.

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SCENE IV.

Leonora, Antonio.

LEONORA.

War and not peace thou bringest: it would seem
As cam'st thou from a battle, from a camp,
Where violence bears sway, and force decides,
And not from Rome, where solemn policy
Uplifts the hand to bless a prostrate world,
Which she beholds obedient at her feet.

ANTONIO.

I must admit the censure, my fair friend,
But my apology lies close at hand;
'Tis dangerous to be compell'd so long
To wear the show of prudence and restraint.
Still at our side an evil genius lurks,
And with stern voice demands from time to time
A sacrifice, which I, alas, to-day
Have offer'd, to the peril of my friends.

LEONORA.

Thou hast so long with strangers been concern'd,
And to their humors hast conform'd thine own,
That once more with thy friends thou dost their aims
Mistake, and as with strangers dost contend.

ANTONIO.

Herein, beloved friend, the danger lies!
With strangers we are ever on our guard,
Still are we aiming with observance due
To win their favor, which may profit us;
But with our friends we throw off all restraint;
Reposing in their love, we give the rein
To peevish humor; passion uncontrol'd
Doth break its bounds; and those we hold most dear
Are thus amongst the first whom we offend.

LEONORA.

In this calm utterance of a thoughtful mind
I gladly recognize my friend again.

ANTONIO.

Yes, it has much annoy'd me, I confess—
That I to-day so far forgot myself.
But yet admit, that when a valiant man
From irksome labor comes with heated brow,
Thinking to rest himself for further toil
In the cool eve beneath the long'd-for shade,
And finds it, in its length and breadth, possess'd
Already, by some idler, he may well
Feel something human stirring in his breast.

LEONORA.

If he is truly human, then, methinks,

He gladly will partake the shade with one
Who lightens toil, and cheers the hour of rest,
With sweet discourse and soothing melodies.
Ample, my friend, the tree that casts the shade,
Nor either needs the other dispossess.

ANTONIO.

We will not bandy similes, fair friend.
Full many a treasure doth the world contain,
Which we to others yield and with them share;
But there exists one prize, which we resign
With willing hearts to high desert alone;
Another, that without a secret grudge,
We share not even with the highest worth—
And would'st thou touching these two treasures ask—
They are the laurel and fair woman's smile.

LEONORA.

How! Hath yon chaplet round our stripling's brow
Given umbrage to the grave, experienc'd man?
Say, for his toil divine, his lofty verse,
Could'st thou thyself a juster meed select?
A ministration in itself divine,
That floateth in the air in tuneful tones,
Evoking airy forms to charm our soul—
Such ministration, in expressive form,
Or graceful symbol, finds its fit reward.

As doth the bard scarce deign to touch the earth,
So doth the laurel lightly touch his brow.
His worshippers, with barren homage, bring
As tribute meet a fruitless branch, that thus
They may with ease acquit them of their debt.
Thou dost not grudge the martyr's effigy,
The golden radiance round the naked head;
And, certes, where it rests, the laurel crown
Is more a sign of sorrow than of joy.

ANTONIO.

How, Leonora! Would thy lovely lips
Teach me to scorn the world's poor vanities?

LEONORA.

There is no need, my friend, to tutor thee
To prize each good according to its worth.
Yet it would seem that, e'en like common men,
The sage philosopher, from time to time,
Needs that the treasures he is bless'd withal,
In their true light before him be display'd.
Thou, noble man, wilt not assert thy claim
To a mere empty phantom of renown.
The service that doth bind thy prince to thee,
By means of which thou dost attach thy friends,
Is true, is living service, hence the meed
Which doth reward it must be living too.

Thy laurel is thy sovereign's confidence,
Which, like a cherish'd burden, gracefully
Reposes on thy shoulders,—thy renown,
Thy crown of glory, is the general trust.

ANTONIO.

Thou speakest not of woman's smile, that, surely,
Thou wilt not tell me is superfluous.

LEONORA.

As people take it. Thou dost lack it not:
And lighter far, were ye depriv'd of it,



To thee would be the loss than to our friend.
For say, a woman were in thy behalf
To task her skill, and in her fashion strive
To care for thee, dost think she would succeed?
With thee security and order dwell;
And as for others, for thyself thou carest;
Thou dost possess what friendship fain would give;
Whilst in our province he requires our aid.
A thousand things he needs, which to supply
Is to a woman no unwelcome task.
The fine-spun linen, the embroider'd vest,
He weareth gladly, and endureth not,
Upon his person, aught of texture rude,

Such as befits the menial. For with him
All must be rich and noble, fair and good;
And yet all this to win he lacks the skill;
Nor even when possess'd, can he retain;
Improvident, he's still in want of gold;
Nor from a journey e'er returneth home,
But a third portion of his goods is lost.
His valet plunders him, and thus, Antonio,
The whole year round one has to care for him.

ANTONIO.

And these same cares endear him more and more.
Much-favor'd youth, to whom his very faults
As virtues count, to whom it is allow'd
As man to play the boy, and who forsooth
May proudly boast his charming weaknesses!
Thou must forgive me, my fair friend, if here
Some little touch of bitterness I feel.
Thou say'st not all, say'st not how he presumes,
And proves himself far shrewder than he seems.
He boasts two tender flames! The knots of love,
As fancy prompts him, he doth bind and loose.
And wins with such devices two such hearts!
Is't credible?

LEONORA.

Well! Well! This only proves

That 'tis but friendship that inspires our hearts.
And e'en if we return'd him love for love,
Should we not well reward his noble heart,
Who, self-oblivious, dreams his life away
In lovely visions to enchant his friends?

ANTONIO.

Go on! Go on! Spoil him yet more and more,
Account his selfish vanity for love;
Offend all other friends with honest zeal
Devoted to your service; to his pride
Pay voluntary tribute; quite destroy
The beauteous sphere of social confidence!

LEONORA.

We are not quite so partial as thou think'st;
In many cases we exhort our friend.
We wish to mould his mind, that he may know
More happiness himself, and be a source
Of purer joy to others. What in him
Doth merit blame is not conceal'd from us.

ANTONIO.

Yet much that's blamable in him ye praise.
I've known him long, so easy 'tis to know him,
Too proud he is to wear the least disguise.
We see him now retire into himself.
As if the world were rounded in his breast;

Lost in the working of that inner world,
The outward universe he casts aside,
And his rapt spirit, self-included, rests.
Anon, as when a spark doth fire a mine,
Upon a touch of sorrow or of joy,
Anger or whim, he breaks impetuous forth.
Now he must compass all things, all retain,
All his caprices must be realiz'd;
What should have ripen'd slowly through long years.
Must, in a moment, reach maturity;
And obstacles, which years of patient toil
Could scarce remove, be levell'd in a trice.
He from himself th' impossible demands,
That he from others may demand it too;
Th' extreniest limits of existing things
His soul would hold in contiguity,
This one man in a million scarce achieves,
And he is not that man; at length he falls,
No whit the better, back into himself.

LEONORA.

Others he injures not, himself he injures.

ANTONIO.

Yet others he doth outrage grievously.
Canst thou deny that in his passion's height.
Which o'er his spirit oft usurps control,

The prince and e'en the princess he contemns,
And dares at whom he may to hurl abuse?
True, for a moment only it endures;
But then the moment quickly comes again.
His tongue, as little as his breast, he rules.

LEONORA.

To me, indeed, it seems advisable
That he should leave Ferrara for awhile;—
Himself would benefit, and others too.

ANTONIO.

Perchance,—perchance too not. But now, my friend,
It is not to be thought of. For myself.
I will not on my shoulders bear the blame.
It might appear as if I drove him hence.
I drive him not. As far as I'm concern'd,
He at the court may tarry undisturb'd:
And if with me he will be reconcil'd,
And to my counsel if he will give heed,
We may live peaceably enough together.

LEONORA.

Now thou dost hope to work upon a mind
Which lately thou didst look upon as lost.

ANTONIO.

We always hope, and still in every case
'Tis better far to hope than to despair;

For who can calculate the possible?

Our prince esteems him; he must stay with us;

And if we strive to fashion him in vain,

He's not the only one we must endure.

LEONORA.

So free from passion and from prejudice

I had not thought thee;—thy conversion's sudden.

ANTONIO.

Age must, my friend, this one advantage claim,

That, though from error it be not exempt,

Its balance it recovers speedily.

Thou didst at first essay to heal the breach

Between thy friend and me. I urge it now.

Do what thou canst to bring him to himself,

And to restore things to their wonted calm.

Myself will visit him, when I shall know

From thee that he is tranquil, when thou thinkest

My presence will not aggravate the evil.

But what thou dost, that do within the hour;

Alphonso will return to town ere night;

I must attend him there. Meanwhile, farewell!

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SCENE V.

LEONORA.

(Alone.) For once, dear friend, we are not of one mind,

Our separate interests go not hand in hand.

I'll use the time to compass my design,

And will endeavor to win Tasso. Quick!



Fr. Pecht del

published by George Barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Antonio

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ACT IV.



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SCENE I.—

A Chamber.

TASSO.

(Alone.) Art thou awaken'd from a dream, and is
The fair delusion suddenly dissolv'd?
Thee, in fruition of the highest joy,
Hath sleep o'ermaster'd, and now holds thy soul
Tortur'd and bound with heavy fetters? Ay,
Thou art awake, and dreamest? Where the hours
That round thy head with flowery garlands play'd?
The days, when unrestrain'd thy yearning soul
Freely explor'd the heaven's o'erarching blue?
Thou'rt living still, art sensible to touch,
Feelest, yet know'st not if thou livest still.
Say, for mine own, or for another's fault,
Am I, as criminal, thus captive here?
Have I been guilty that I suffer thus?
Is not my fancied crime a merit rather?
With kindly feeling I encounter'd him,
Persuaded, by the heart's delusive hope,
He must be man who bears a mortal form:
With open arms I sped to his embrace,
And felt no human breast, but bolts and bars.

Oh, had I but with prudent forecast weigh'd.
How I most fitly could receive the man.
Who from the first inspir'd me with mistrust!
Let me, however, whatsoe'er betide,
Forever to this one assurance cling:—
'Twas she herself! She stood before my view!
She spoke to me! I hearken'd to her voice!
Her look, her tone, her words' sweet import, these,
These are forever mine; nor time nor fate,
Nor ruthless chance can plunder me of these!
And if my spirit hath too swiftly soar'd,
If all too promptiv in my breast I gave
Vent to the flame, which now consumes my heart,
So let it be,—I never can repeat,
E'en though my fortune were forever wreck'd
To her devoted, I obey'd with joy
The hand that beckon'd me to ruin's brink.
So let it be! Thus have I prov'd myself
Deserving of the precious confidence
That cheers my soul,—ay, cheers it in this hour,
When cruel fate unlocks the sable gates
Of long-protracted woe.—Yes, now 'tis done!
For me the sun of gracious favor sets,
Never to rise again; his glance benign
The prince withdraws, and leaves me standing here,

Abandon'd on this narrow, gloomy path.
The hateful and ill-boding feather'd throng,
Obscene attendants upon ancient night,
Swarm forth and whirl round my devoted head.
Whither, oh, whither, shall I bend my steps,
To shun the loathsome brood that round me flit,
And 'scape the dread abyss that yawns before?

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SCENE II.

Leonora, Tasso.

LEONORA.

Dear Tasso, what hath chanc'd? Hath passion's glow,
Hath thy suspicious temper urg'd thee thus?
How hath it happen'd? We are all amaz'd.
Where now thy gentleness, thy suavity,
Thy rapid insight, thy discernment just,
Which doth award to every man his due;
Thine even mind, which beareth, what to bear
The wise are prompt, the vain are slow, to learn;
The prudent mastery over lip and tongue?
I scarcely recognize thee now, dear friend.

TASSO.

And what if all were gone, forever gone!
If as a beggar thou should'st meet the friend
Whom just before thou hadst deem'd opulent!
Thou speakest truth, I am no more myself.
Yet am I now as much so as I was.
It seems a riddle, yet it is not one.
The tranquil moon, that cheers thee through the night,
Whose gentle radiance, with resistless power,
Allures thine eye, thy soul, doth float by day

An insignificant and pallid cloud.

In the bright glare of daylight I am lost,

Ye know me not, I scarcely know myself.

LEONORA.

Such words, dear friend, as thou hast utter'd them,

I cannot comprehend. Explain thyself.

Say, hath that rugged man's offensive speech

So deeply wounded thee, that now thou dost

Misjudge thyself and us? Confide in me.

TASSO.

I'm not the one offended. Me thou seest

Thus punish'd here because I gave offence.

The knot of many words the sword would loose

With promptitude and ease, but I'm not free.

Thou'rt scarce aware,—nay, start not, gentle friend,—

'Tis in a prison thou dost meet me here.

Me, as a schoolboy, doth the prince chastise.—

His right I neither can, nor will dispute.

LEONORA.

Thou seemest mov'd beyond what reason warrants.

TASSO.

Dost deem me then so weak, so much a child,

That this occurrence could o'erwhelm me thus?

Not what has happen'd wounds me to the quick,

'Tis what it doth portend that troubles me.

Now let my foes conspire! The field is clear.

LEONORA.

Many thou holdest falsely in suspect;
Of this, dear friend, I have convinc'd myself.
Even Antonio bears thee no ill-will,
As thou presum'st. The quarrel of to-day—

TASSO.

Let that be set aside: I only view
Antonio as he was and yet remains.
Still hath his formal prudence fretted me,
His proud assumption of the master's tone.
Careless to learn whether the listener's mind
Doth not itself the better track pursue,
He tutors thee in much which thou thyself
More truly, deeply feelest; gives no heed
To what thou sayest, and perverts thy words.
Misconstru'd thus, by a proud man, forsooth,
Who smiles superior from his fancied height!
I am not yet or old or wise enough
To answer meekly with a patient smile.
It could not hold, we must at last have broken;
The evil greater had it been postpon'd.
One lord I recognize, who fosters me,
Him I obey, but own no master else.
In poesy and thought I will be free,

In act the world doth limit us enough.

LEONORA.

Yet often with respect he speaks of thee.

TASSO.

Thou meanest with forbearance, prudent, subtle.

'Tis that annoys me; for he knows to use

Language so smooth and so conditional,

That seeming praise from him is actual blame,

And there is nothing so offends my soul,

As words of commendation from his lip.

LEONORA.

Thou should'st have heard but lately how he spoke

Of thee and of the gift which bounteous nature

So largely hath conferr'd on thee. He feels

Thy genius, Tasso, and esteems thy worth.

TASSO.

Trust me, no selfish spirit can escape

The torment of base envy. Such a man

Pardons in others honor, rank and wealth;

For thus he argues, these thou hast thyself,

Or thou canst have them, if thou persevere,

Or if propitious fortune smile on thee.

But that which Nature can alone bestow,

Which aye remaineth inaccessible

To toil and patient effort, which nor gold,

Nor yet the sword, nor stern persistency
Hath power to wrest,—that he will ne'er forgive.
Not envy me? The pedant who aspires
To seize by force the favor of the muse?
Who, when he strings the thoughts of other bards,
Fondly presumes he is a bard himself?
The prince's favor he would rather yield,
Though that he fain would limit to himself,
Than the rare gift which the celestial powers
Have granted to the poor, the orphan'd youth.

LEONORA.

Oh, that thy vision were as clear as mine!
Thou read'st him wrongly, thou'rt deceiv'd in him.

TASSO.

And if I err, I err with right good will!
I count him for my most inveterate foe,
And should be inconsolable, were I
Compell'd to think of him more leniently.
'Tis foolish in all cases to be just;
It is to wrong one's self. Are other men
Towards us so equitable? No, ah, no!
Man's nature, in its narrow scope, demands
The twofold sentiment of love and hate.
Requires he not the grateful interchange
Of day and night, of wakefulness and sleep?

No, from henceforward I do hold this man
The object of my direst enmity;
And naught can snatch from me the cherish'd joy
Of thinking of him ever worse and worse.

LEONORA.

Dear friend, I see not if this feeling last,
How thou canst longer tarry at the court.
Thou know'st the just esteem in which he's held.

TASSO.

I'm fully sensible, fair friend, how long
I have already been superfluous here.

LEONORA.

That thou art not, that thou canst never be!
Thou rather knowest how both prince and princess
Rejoice to have thee in their company.
The sister of Urbino, comes she not,
As much for thine as for her kindred's sake?
They all esteem thee, recognize thy worth.
And each confides in thee without reserve.

TASSO.

O Leonora! Call that confidence!
Of state affairs has he one single word.
One earnest word, vouchsaf'd to speak with me?
In special cases, when he has advis'd
Both with the princess, and with others too,

To me, though present, no appeal was made.

The cry was ever then. Antonio comes!

Consult Antonio! To Antonio write!

LEONORA.

Thanks here, methinks, were juster than complaint.

Thus in unchalleng'd freedom leaving thee,

He to thy genius fitting homage pays.

TASSO.

He lets me rest, because he deems me useless.

LEONORA.

Thou art not useless, e'en because thou restest.

Care and vexation, like a child belov'd.

Thou still dost cherish, Tasso, in thy breast.

It oft has struck me, and the more I think,

The more convinc'd I feel: on this fair soil,

Where fate auspicious seem'd to plant thy lot,

Thou dost not flourish.—May I speak, my friend?

May I advise thee?—Thou should'st hence depart.

TASSO.

Spare not thy patient, gentle leech! Extend

The draught medicinal, nor think thereon

If it is bitier.—This consider well,

Kind, prudent friend, if he can yet be cur'd!

I see it all myself, 'tis over now!

Him I indeed could pardon, he not me;

He's needful to them, I, alas! am not.
And he has prudence, I, alas! have none.
He worketh to my injury, and I
Cannot and will not counterwork. My friends
Leave things to chance, they see things otherwise,
They scarcely struggle, who should stoutly fight.
Thou think'st I should depart, I think so too:—
Then farewell, friends!—This, too, I must endure.
You're parted from me.—Oh, to me be given
The courage and the strength to part from you!



LEONORA.

Seen from a distance things show less confus'd,
That in the present serve but to perplex.
Perchance, when absent, thou wilt recognize
The love which here environs thee, wilt learn
The worth of friends, and feel how the wide world
Cannot replace those dearest to the heart.

TASSO.

I shall experience this! Alas! I've known,

The world from early youth, how, pressing on,
She lightly leaves us, helpless and forlorn,
Like sun and moon and other deities.

LEONORA.

Dear friend, if thou wilt lend an ear to me,
This sad experience thou wilt not repeat.
If I may counsel thee, thou wilt at first
Repair to Florence,—there thou'lt find a friend
Will cherish thee most kindly—'tis myself!
Thither I travel soon to meet my lord,
And there is nothing would afford us, Tasso,
A richer pleasure than thy company.
I need not tell thee, for thyself dost know,
How noble is the prince who ruleth there;
What men, what women, too, our favor'd town
Doth cherish in her bosom. Thou art silent!
Consider well my counsel, and resolve!

TASSO.

Full of sweet promise are thy words, dear friend,
And in accordance with my secret wish.
But 'tis too sudden; let me pause awhile,—
Let me consider! I will soon resolve!

LEONORA.

I leave thee now, and with the fairest hope
For thee, for us, and also for this house.

Only reflect, and weigh the matter well;

Thou scarcely wilt devise a better plan.

TASSO.

Yet one thing more, tell me, beloved friend,

How is the princess minded towards me? Speak!

Was she displeas'd with me? Give me her words.—

Hath she severely blam'd me? Tell me all!

LEONORA.

She knows thee well, and therefore has excus'd thee.

TASSO.

Say, have I lost her friendship? Flatter not.

LEONORA.

A woman's friendship is not lightly lost.

TASSO.

Without reluctance will she let me go?

LEONORA.

If 'twill promote thy welfare, certainly.

TASSO.

Shall I not lose the favor of the prince?

LEONORA.

His nature's noble, thou may'st trust in him.

TASSO.

And shall we leave the princess all alone?

Thou leavest her; and though perhaps not much,

I know full well that I was something to her.

LEONORA.

An absent friend is sweet society,
When of his welfare we are well assur'd.
My plan succeeds, I see thee happy now;
Thou wilt not hence depart unsatisfied.
The prince commands; Antonio seeks thee, Tasso.
He censures in himself the bitterness
With which he wounded thee. I do entreat.
Receive him with forbearance, when he comes.

TASSO.

I have no cause to shun the interview.

LEONORA.

And oh! dear friend, that Heaven would grant me this:
To make it clear to thee ere thou departest.
That in thy fatherland there is not one
Pursues thee, hates, or covertly molests.
Thou art deceiv'd, and as for others' pleasure
Wont art thou still to poetize, alas!
Thou in this case dost weave a cunning web
To blind thyself, the which to rend asunder,
I'll do mine utmost, that with vision clear
Thou may'st pursue life's glad career untrammel'd.
Farewell! I hope for happy words ere long.

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SCENE III.

TASSO.

(Alone.) I must believe, forsooth, that no one hates me,—

That no one persecutes, that all the guile,

The subtle malice that environs me,

Is but the coinage of my own sick brain!

I must acknowledge that myself am wrong!

And am unjust to many, who in sooth

Deserve it not! What! This confess e'en now,

When clearly in the open face of day

Appear their malice and my rectitude!

I ought to feel most deeply, how the prince

To me with generous breast his grace imparts.

And in rich measure loads me with his gifts,

E'en at the time when he is weak enough

To let his eyes be blinded by my foes,

Yea, doubtless, and his hand be fetter'd too!

His own delusion he cannot perceive,

That they deluders are, I may not prove;

And that uncheck'd he may delude himself.

And they delude him whensoever they please,

I still must hold my peace,—must yield forsooth!

And who thus counsels me? With prudent zeal.

And thoughtful kindness, who doth urge me thus?

Leonora's self, Leonora Santivale.
Considerate friend! Ha, ha, I know thee now!
Oh, wherefore did I ever trust her words?
She was not honest, when she utter'd forth
To me her favor and her tenderness,
With honey'd words! No, hers hath ever been
And still remains a crafty heart, she turns
With cautious, prudent step where fortune smiles.
How often have I willingly deceiv'd
Myself, in her! And yet it was in truth
But mine own vanity deluded me!
I knew her, but self-flatter'd, argu'd thus:—
True, she is so towards others, but towards thee
Her heart is honest, her intention pure.
Mine eyes are open now,—alas, too late!
I was in favor—on the favorite
How tenderly she fawn'd! I'm fallen now,
And she, like fortune, turns her back on me.
Yes, now she comes, the agent of my foe,
She glides along, the little artful snake,
Hissing, with slipp'ry tongue, her magic tones.
How gracious seem'd she! More than ever gracious!
How soothingly her honey'd accents flow'd!
Yet could the flattery not long conceal
The false intention; on her brow appear'd

Too legibly inscrib'd the opposite
Of all she utter'd. Quick I am to feel
Whene'er the entrance to my heart is sought
With a dishonest purpose. I should hence!
Should hie to Florence, with convenient speed.
And why to Florence? Ah, I see it all,
There reigns the rising house of Medici;
True, with Ferrara not in open feud,
But secret rivalry, with chilling hand,
Doth hold asunder e'en the noblest hearts.
If from those noble princes I should reap
Distinguish'd marks of favor, as indeed
I may anticipate, the courtier here
Would soon impugn my gratitude and truth;
And would, with easy wile, achieve his purpose.
Yes, I will go, but not as ye desire;
I will away, and farther than ye think.
Why should I linger? Who detains me here?
Too well I understood each several word
That I drew forth from Leonora's lips!
With anxious heed each syllable I caught;
And now I fully know the princess' mind—
That too is certain; let me not despair!
“Without reluctance she will let me go,
If it promote my welfare.” Would her heart

Were master'd by a passion that would overwhelm
Me and my welfare! Oh, more welcome far
The grasp of death than of the frigid hand
That passively resigns me!—Yes, I go!—
Now be upon thy guard, and let no show
Of love or friendship bind thee! None hath power
Now to deceive thee, if not self-deceiv'd.

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SCENE IV.

Antonio, Tasso.

ANTONIO.

Tasso, I come to say a word to thee,
If thou'rt dispos'd to hear me tranquilly.

TASSO.

I am denied, thou know'st, the power to act;
It well becomes me to attend and listen.

ANTONIO.

Tranquil I find thee, as I hop'd to find,
And speak to thee in all sincerity.
But in the prince's name I first dissolve
The slender band, that seem'd to fetter thee.

TASSO.

Caprice dissolves it, as caprice impos'd;
I yield, and no judicial sentence claim.

ANTONIO.

Next, Tasso, on my own behalf I speak.
I have, it seems, more deeply wounded thee,
Than I,—myself by divers passions mov'd,—
Was conscious of. But no insulting word
Hath from my lip incautiously escap'd.
Naught hast thou, as a noble, to avenge,

And, as a man, wilt not refuse thy pardon.

TASSO.

Whether contempt or insult galls the most,
I will not now determine; that doth pierce
The inmost marrow, this but frets the skin.
The shaft of insult back returns to him
Who wing'd the missile, and the practis'd sword
Soon reconciles the opinion of the world—
A wounded heart is difficult to cure.

ANTONIO.

'Tis now my turn to press thee urgently;
Oh, step not back, yield to mine earnest wish,
The prince's wish, who sends me unto thee.

TASSO.

I know the claims of duty, and submit.
Be it, as far as possible, forgiven!
The poets tell us of a magic spear,
Which could a wound, inflicted by itself
Through friendly contact, once again restore,
The human tongue hath also such a power;
I will not peevishly resist it now.

ANTONIO.

I thank thee, and desire that thou at once
Would'st put my wish to serve thee to the proof.
Then say if I in aught can pleasure thee;—

Most gladly will I do so; therefore speak.

TASSO.

Thine offer tallies with my secret wish.

But now thou hast restor'd my liberty,

Procure for me, I pray, the use of it.

ANTONIO.

What meanest thou? More plainly state thy wish.

TASSO.

My poem, as thou knowest, I have ended;

Yet much it wants to render it complete.

To-day I gave it to the prince, and hop'd

At the same time to proffer my request.

Full many of my friends I now should find

In Rome assembled; they have writ to me

Their judgments touching divers passages;

By many I could profit; others still

Require consideration; and some lines

I should be loath to alter, till at least

My judgment has been better satisfied.

All this by letter cannot be arrang'd,

While intercourse would soon untie the knots.

I thought myself to ask the prince to-day:

Th' occasion fail'd; I dare not venture now,

And must for this permission trust to thee.

ANTONIO.

It seems imprudent to absent thyself
Just at the moment when thy finish'd work
Commends thee to the princess and the prince.
A day of favor is a day of harvest:
We should be busy when the corn is ripe.
Naught wilt thou win if thou departest hence,
Perchance thou'lt lose what thou hast won already.
Presence is still a powerful deity,—
Learn to respect her influence,—tarry here!

TASSO.

I nothing have to fear; Alphons is noble,
Such hath he always prov'd himself tow'rds me;—
To his heart only will I owe the boon
Which now I crave. By no mean, servile arts
Will I obtain his favor. Naught will I receive
Which it can e'er repent him to have given.

ANTONIO.

Then do not now solicit leave to go;
He will not willingly accord thy suit,
And much I fear he will reject it, Tasso.

TASSO.

Duly entreated, he will grant my prayer;
Thou hast the power to move him, if thou wilt.

ANTONIO.

But what sufficient reason shall I urge?

TASSO.

Let every stanza of my poem speak!

The scope was lofty that I aim'd to reach,

Though to my genius inaccessible.

Labor and strenuous effort have not fail'd;

The cheerful stroll of many a lovely day,

The silent watch of many a solemn night,

Have to this pious lay been consecrate.

With modest daring I aspir'd to near

The mighty masters of the olden time;

With lofty courage plann'd to rouse our age

From lengthen'd sleep to deeds of high emprise;

Then with a Christian host I hop'd to share

The toil and glory of a holy war,

And that my song may rouse the noblest men

It must be worthy of its lofty aim.

What worth it hath is to Alphonso due;

For its completion I would owe him thanks.

ANTONIO.

The prince himself is here, with other men,

Able as those of Rome to be thy guides.

Here is thy station, here complete thy work;

Then haste to Rome to carry out thy plan.

TASSO.

Alphonso first inspir'd my muse, and he
Will be the list to counsel me. Thy judgment,
The judgment also of the learned men
Assembled at our court, I highly value;
Ye shall determine when my friends at Rome
Fail to produce conviction in my mind.
But them I must consult. Gonzaga there
Hath summon'd a tribunal before which
I must present myself. I scarce can wait.
Flaminio de' Nobili, Angelio
Da Barga, Antoniano, and Speron Speroni!
To thee they must be known.—What names they are!
They in my soul, to worth which gladly yields,
Inspire at once both confidence and fear.

ANTONIO.

Self-occupied, thou think'st not of the prince.
I tell thee that he will not let thee go;
And if he does, 'twill be against his wish.
Thou wilt not surely urge what he to thee
Unwillingly would grant. And shall I here
Still mediate what I cannot approve?

TASSO.

Dost thou refuse me then my first request
When I would put thy friendship to the proof?

ANTONIO.

Timely denial is the surest test
Of genuine friendship; love doth oft confer
A baneful good when it consults the wish,
And not the happiness of him who sues.
Thou in this moment dost appear to me
To overprize the object of thy wish,
Which, on the instant, thou would'st have fulfill'd.
The erring man would oft by vehemence
Compensate what he lacks in truth and power.
Duty enjoins me now, with all my might,
To check the rashness that would lead thee wrong.

TASSO.

I long have known this tyranny of friendship,
Which of all tyrannies appears to me
The least endurable. Because forsooth
Our judgments differ, thine must needs be right.
I gladly own that thou dost wish my welfare;
Require me not to seek it in thy way.

ANTONIO.

And would'st thou have me, Tasso, in cold blood,
With full and clear conviction, injure thee?

TASSO.

I will at once absolve thee from this care!
Thou hast no power to hold me with thy words.

Thou hast declar'd me free; these doors, which lead
Straight to the prince, stand open to me now.
The choice I leave to thee. Or thou or I!
The prince goes forth, no time is to be lost;
Determine promptly! Dost thou still refuse,
I go myself, let come of it what will.

ANTONIO.

A little respite grant me; not to-day;
Wait, I beseech thee, till the prince returns!

TASSO.

If it were possible, this very hour!
My soles are scorch'd upon this marble floor,
Nor can my spirit rest until the dust
Of the free highway shrouds the fugitive.
I do not entreat thee! How unfit I am
Now to appear before the prince, thou seest,
And thou must see, how can I hide from thee,
That I'm no longer master of myself;
No power on earth can sway my energies;
Fetters alone can hold me in control!
No tyrant is the prince; he spake me free.
Once to his words how gladly I gave ear!
To-day to hearken is impossible.
Oh, let me have my freedom but to-day,
That my vex'd spirit may regain its peace!

Back to my duty I will soon return.

ANTONIO.

Thou mak'st me dubious. How shall I resolve?

That error is contagious, I perceive.

TASSO.

If thy professions I'm to count sincere,

Perform what I desire, as well as thou canst.

Then will the prince release me; and I lose

Neither his favor nor his gracious aid.

For that I'll thank thee, ay, with cordial thanks.

But if thy bosom bear an ancient grudge,

Would'st thou forever banish me this court,

Forever would'st thou mar my destiny,

And drive me friendless forth into the world,

Then hold thy purpose and resist my prayer!

ANTONIO.

O Tasso!—for I'm doom'd to injure thee—

I choose the way which thou thyself dost choose;

The issue will determine who doth err!

Thou wilt away! I warn thee ere thou goest:

Scarce shalt thou turn thy back upon this house,

Ere thou shalt yearn in spirit to return,

While wilful humor still shall urge thee on.

Sorrow, distraction and desponding gloom

In Rome await thee. There as well as here

Thou'lt miss thine aim. But this I do not say
To counsel thee. Alas! I but predict
What soon will happen, and invite thee, Tasso,
In the worst exigence to trust to me.
I now, at thy desire, will seek the prince.

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SCENE V.

TASSO.

(Alone.) Ay, go, and in the fond assurance go,

That thou hast power to bend me to thy will.

I learn dissimulation, for thou art

An able master, and I prompt to learn.

Thus life full oft compels us to appear,

Yea, e'en to be like those, whom in our hearts

We haughtily despise. How clearly now

I see the subtle web of court intrigue!

Antonio desires to drive me hence,

Yet would not seem to drive me. He doth play

The kind, considerate friend, that I may seem

Incapable and weak; installs himself

My guardian too, degrading to a child,

Him whom he could not bend to be a slave.

With clouds of error thus he darkens truth,

And blinds alike the princess and the prince.

They should indeed retain me, so he counsels,

For with fair talents Nature has endow'd me;

Although, alas, she has accompanied

Her lofty gifts with many weaknesses,

With a foreboding spirit, boundless pride,

And sensibility too exquisite.

It cannot now be otherwise, since Fate,
In her caprice, has fashion'd such a man;
We must consent to take him as he is,
Be patient, bear with him, and then, perchance,
On days auspicious, as an unsought good,
Find pleasure in his joy-diffusing gift;
While for the rest, why e'en as he was born,
He must have license both to live and die.



artist: herm. schneider.

TORQUATO TASSO. ACT IV. SCENE IV.

[Editor: illegible text]

Where now Alphonso's firm and constant mind?
The man who braves his foe, who shields his friend,
In him who treats me thus can I discover?
Now I discern the measure of my woe!
This is my destiny,—towards me alone
All change their nature,—ay, the very men,
Who are with others steadfast, firm and true,
In one brief moment, for an idle breath,
Swerve lightly from their constant quality.
Has not this man's arrival here, alone,
And in a single hour, my fortune marr'd?

Has he not, even to its very base,
Laid low the structure of my happiness?
This, too, must I endure,—even to-day!
Yea, as before all press'd around me, now
I am by all abandon'd; as before
Each strove to seize, to win me for himself,
All thrust me from them, and avoid me now.
And wherefore? My desert and all the love,
Wherewith I was so bounteously endow'd,
Does he alone in equal balance weigh?
Yes! all forsake me now. Thou too! Thou too!
Beloved princess, thou too leavest me!
Hath she, to cheer me in this dismal hour,
A single token of her favor sent?
Have I deserv'd this from her?—Thou, poor heart,
Whose very nature was to honor her!—
How, when her gentle accents touch'd mine ear,
Feelings unutterable thrill'd my breast!
When she appear'd, a more ethereal light
Outshone the light of day. Her eyes, her lips
Drew me resistlessly, my very knees
Trembled beneath me, and my spirit's strength
Was all requir'd to hold myself erect
And curb the strong desire to throw myself
Prostrate before her. Scarcely could I quell

The giddy rapture. Be thou firm, my heart
No cloud obscure thee, thou clear mind! She, too,
Dare I pronounce what yet I scarce believe?
I must believe, yet dread to utter it.
She too! She too! Think not the slightest blame,
Only conceal it not. She too! She too!
Alas! This word, whose truth I ought to doubt
Long as a breath of faith sarviv'd in me;
This word, like fate's decree, doth now at last.
Engrave itself upon the brazen rim
That rounds the full-scroll'd tablet of my woe
Now first, mine enemies are strong indeed;
Forever now I am of strength bereft.
How shall I combat when she stands oppos'd
Amidst the hostile army? How endure
If she no more reach forth her hand to me?
If her kind glance the suppliant meet no more?
Ay, thou hast dar'd to think, to utter it,
And ere thou could'st have fear'd,—behold 'tis true!
And now, ere yet despair, with brazen talons,
Doth rend asunder thy bewilder'd brain,
Lament thy bitter doom, and utter torth
The unavailing cry—She too! She too!

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ACT V.



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SCENE I.—

A Garden.

Alphonso, Antonio.

ANTONIO.

Obedient to thy wish, I went to Tasso
A second time: I come from him but now.
I sought to move him, yea, I strongly urg'd;
But from his fix'd resolve he swerveth not;
He earnestly entreats that for a time
Thou would'st permit him to repair to Rome.

ALPHONSO.

His purpose much annoys me, I confess;—
I rather tell thee my vexation now,
Than let it strengthen, smother'd in my breast.
He fain would travel, good! I hold him not.
He will depart, he will to Rome; so be it!
Let not the crafty Medici, nor yet
Scipio Gonzaga wrest him from me though!
'Tis this hath made our Italy so great,
That rival neighbors zealously contend
To foster and employ the ablest men.
Like chief without an army, shows a prince
Who round him gathers not superior minds;

And who the voice of Poesy disdains
Is a barbarian, be he who he may.
Tasso I found, I chose him for myself,
I number him with pride among my train;
And having done so much for him already,
I should be loath to lose him without cause.

ANTONIO.

I feel embarrass'd, prince, for in thy sight
I bear the blame of what to-day befell;
That I was in the wrong. I frankly own,
And look for pardon to thy clemency:
But I were inconsolable could'st thou,
E'en for a moment, doubt my honest zeal
In seeking to appease him. Speak to me
With gracious look, that so I may regain
My self-reliance and my wonted calm.

ALPHONSO.

Feel no disquietude, Antonio;—
In no wise do I count the blame as thine;
Too well I know the temper of the man,
Know all too well what I have done for him,
How often I have spar'd him, and how oft
Towards him I have o'erlook'd my rightful claims.
O'er many things we gain the mastery,
But stern necessity and lengthen'd time

Scarce give a man dominion o'er himself.

ANTONIO.

When other men toil in behalf of one,

'Tis fit this one with diligence inquire

How he may profit others in return.

He who hath fashion'd his own mind so well,

Who hath aspir'd to make each several science

And the whole range of human lore, his own,

Is he not doubly bound to rule himself?

Yet doth he ever give it e'en a thought?

ALPHONSO.

Continu'd rest is not ordain'd for man!

Still, when we purpose to enjoy ourselves,

To try our valor, fortune sends a foe,

To try our equanimity, a friend.

ANTONIO.

Does Tasso e'en fulfil man's primal duty,

To regulate his appetite, in which

He is not, like the brute, restrain'd by nature?

Does he not rather, like a child, indulge

In all that charms and gratifies his taste?

When has he mingled water with his wine?

Comfits and condiments, and potent drinks,

One with another still he swallows down,

And then complains of his bewilder'd brain,

His hasty temper, and his fever'd blood,
Railing at nature and at destiny.
How oft I've heard him in a bitter style
With childish folly argue with his leech!
'Twould raise a laugh, if aught were laughable
Which teases others and torments one's self.
"Oh, this is torture!" anxiously he cries,
Then in splenetic mood, "Why boast your art?
Prescribe a cure!" "Good!" then exclaims the leech.
"Abstain from this or that." "That can I not."
"Then take this potion." "No, it nauseates me;
The taste is horrid, nature doth rebel."—
"Well then, drink water." "Water! never more!
Like hydrophobia is my dread of it."
"Then your disease is hopeless." "Why, I pray?"
"One evil symptom will succeed another,
And though your ailment should not fatal prove,
'Twill daily more torment you." "Fine, indeed;
Then wherefore play the leech? You know my case,
You should devise a remedy, and one
That's palatable too, that I may not
First suffer pain before reliev'd from it."
I see thee smile, my prince, 'tis but the truth;
Doubtless thyself hast heard it from his lips.

ALPHONSO.

Oft I have heard, and have as oft excus'd.

ANTONIO.

It is most certain, an intemperate life.

As it engenders wild, distemper'd dreams,

At length doth make us dream in open day.

What's his suspicion but a troubled dream?

He thinks himself environ'd still by foes.

None can discern his gift who envy not,

And all who envy, hate and persecute.

Oft with complaints he has molested thee:

Notes intercepted, violated locks,

Poison, the dagger! All before him float!

Thou dost investigate his grievance,—well,

Doth aught appear? Why, scarcely a pretext.

No sovereign's shelter gives him confidence.

The bosom of no friend can comfort him.

Would'st promise happiness to such a man,

Or look to him for joy unto thyself?

ALPHONSO.

Thou would'st be right, Antonio, if from him

I sought my own immediate benefit.

But I have learn'd no longer to expect

Service direct and unconditional.

All do not serve us in the selfsame way;

Who needeth much, according to his gifts
Must each employ, so is he ably serv'd.
This lesson from the Medici we learn'd;
'Tis practis'd even by the popes themselves.
With what forbearance, magnanimity
And princely patience, have they not endur'd
Full many a genius, who seem'd not to need
Their ample favor, yet who needed it!

ANTONIO.

Who knows not this, my prince? The toil of life
Alone can tutor us life's gifts to prize.
In youth he hath already won so much;
He cannot relish aught in quietness.
Oh, that he were compell'd to earn the blessings
Which now with liberal hand are thrust upon him!
With manly courage he would brace his strength,
And at each onward step feel new content.
The needy noble has attain'd the height
Of his ambition, it his gracious prince
Raise him, with hand benign, from poverty,
And choose him as an inmate of the court.
Should he then honor him with confidence,
And before others raise him to his side,
Consulting him in war, or state affairs,
Why then methinks, with silent gratitude,

The modest man may bless his lucky fate.
And with all this, Tasso enjoys besides
Youth's purest happiness:—his fatherland
Esteems him highly, looks to him with hope.
Trust me for this,—his peevish discontent
On the broad pillow of his fortune rests.
He comes, dismiss him kindly, give him time
In Rome, in Naples, wheresoe'er he will,
To search in vain for what he misses here,
Yet here alone can ever hope to find.

ALPHONSO.

Back to Ferrara will he first return?

ANTONIO.

He rather would remain in Belriguardo.
And, for his journey, what he may require,
He will request a friend to forward to him.

ALPHONSO.

I am content. My sister, with her friend,
Return immediately to town, and I,
Riding with speed, hope to reach home before them.
Thou'lt follow straight when thou for him hast car'd;
Give needful orders to the castellan,
That in the castle he may here abide
So long as he desires, until his friend
Forward his equipage, and till the letters,

Which we shall give him to our friends at Rome,
Have been transmitted. Here he comes. Farewell!

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SCENE II.

Alphonso, Tasso.

TASSO.

(With embarrassment.) The favor thou so oft has shown me, prince,

Is manifest, in clearest light, to-day.

The deed which, in the precincts of thy palace,

I lawlessly committed, thou hast pardon'd;

Thou hast appeas'd and reconcil'd my foe;

Thou dost permit me for a time to leave

The shelter of thy side, and rich in bounty.

Wilt not withdraw from me thy generous aid.

Inspir'd with confidence, I now depart,

And trust that this brief absence will dispel

The heavy gloom that now oppresses me.

My renovated soul shall plume her wing.

And pressing forward on the bright career,

Which, glad and bold, encourag'd by thy glance,

I enter'd first, deserve thy grace anew.

ALPHONSO.

Prosperity attend thee on thy way!

With joyous spirit, and to health restor'd,

Return again amongst us. Thus thou shalt

To us, in double measure, for each hour

Thou now depriv'st us of, requital bring.
Letters I give thee to my friends at Rome,
And also to my kinsmen, and desire
That to my people everywhere thou should'st
Confidingly attach thyself;—though absent,
Thee I shall certainly regard as mine.

TASSO.

Thou dost, O prince, o'erwhelm with favors one
Who feels himself unworthy, who e'en wants
Ability to render fitting thanks.
Instead of thanks I proffer a request!
My poem now lies nearest to my heart.
My labors have been strenuous, yet I feel
That I am far from having reach'd my aim.
Fain would I there resort, where hovers yet
The inspiring genius of the mighty dead,
Still raining influence; there would I become
Once more a learner, then more worthily
My poem might rejoice in thine applause.
Oh, give me back the manuscript, which now
I feel ashamed to know within thy hand.

ALPHONSO.

Thou wilt not surely take from me to-day
What but to-day to me thou hast consign'd.
Between thy poem, Tasso, and thyself

Let me now stand as arbiter. Beware—
Nor, through assiduous diligence, impair
The genial nature that pervades thy rhymes:
And give not ear to every critic's word!
With nicest tact the poet reconciles
The judgments thousandfold of different men,
In thoughts and life at variance with each other;
And fears not numbers to displease, that he
Still greater numbers may enchant the more.
And yet I say not but that here and there
Thou may'st, with modest care, employ the file.
I promise thee at once, that in brief space,
Thou shalt receive a copy of thy poem.
Meanwhile I will retain it in my hands,
That I may first enjoy it with my sisters.
Then, if thou bring'st it back more perfect still,
Our joy will be enhanc'd, and here and there,
We'll hint corrections, only as thy friends.

TASSO.

I can but modestly repeat my prayer;
Let me receive the copy with all speed.
My spirit resteth solely on this work,
Its full completion it must now attain.

ALPHONSO.

I praise the ardor that inspires thee, Tasso!

Yet, were it possible, thou for awhile
Should'st rest thy mind, seek pleasure in the world,
And find some means to cool thy heated blood.
Then would thy mental powers restor'd to health,



Through their sweet harmony, spontaneous yield,
What now, with anxious toil, in vain thou seekest.

TASSO.

My prince, it seems so, but I am in health
When I can yield myself to strenuous toil,
And this my toil again restores my health.
Long hast thou known me, thou must long have seen
I thrive not in luxurious indolence.
Rest brings no rest to me. Alas, I feel it;
My mind, by nature, never was ordain'd,
Borne on the yielding billows of the hour,
To float in pleasure o'er time's ample sea.

ALPHONSO.

Thine aims, thy dreams, all whelm thee in thyself.
Around us there doth yawn full many a gulf,
Scoop'd by the hand of destiny; but here,
In our own bosoms, lies the deepest;—ay!
And tempting 'tis to hurl one's self therein!

I charge thee, Tasso, snatch thee from thyself!

The man will profit, though the bard may lose.

TASSO.

To quell the impulse I should vainly strive,

Which ceaseless in my bosom, day and night

Alternates ever. Life were life no more

Were I to cease to poetize, to dream.

Would'st thou forbid the cunning worm to spin,

For that to nearer death he spins himself?

From his own being he unfoldeth still

The costly texture, nor suspends his toil,

Till in his shroud he hath immur'd himself.

Oh, to us mortals may some gracious power

Accord the insect's enviable doom,

In some new sunny vale, with sudden joy,

To spread our eager pinions!

ALPHONSO.

List to me!

Thou givest still to others to enjoy

Life with a twofold relish. Learn thyself

To know the worth of life, whose richest boon

In tenfold measure is bestow'd on thee.

Now fare thee well! The sooner thou returnest

All the more cordial will thy welcome be.

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SCENE III.

TASSO.

(Alone.) Hold fast, my heart, thy work has been well done!

The task was arduous, for ne'er before

Didst thou or wish or venture to dissemble.

Ay, thou didst hear it, that was not his mind,

Nor his the words; to me it still appear'd,

As if I heard again Antonio's voice.

Only give heed! Henceforth on every side

Thou'lt hear that voice. Be firm, my heart, be firm!

'Tis only for a moment. He who learns

The trick of simulation late in life,

Doth outwardly the natural semblance wear

Of honest faith; practise, and thou'lt succeed.

(After a pause.)

Too soon thou triumphest, for lo! she comes!

The gentle princess comes! Oh, what a feeling!

She enters now, suspicion in my breast

And angry sullenness dissolve in grief.

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SCENE IV.

Princess, Tasso.

(Towards the end of the Scene the others.)

PRINCESS.

Thou thinkest to forsake us, or remainest

Rather behind in Belriguardo, Tasso.

And then thou wilt withdraw thyself from us?

I trust thine absence will not be for long.

To Rome thou goest?

TASSO.

Thither first I wend,

And if, as I have reason to expect,

I from my friends kind welcome there receive,

With care and patient toil I may, at length,

Impart its highest finish to my poem.

Full many men I find assembled there,

Masters who may be styl'd in every art.

Ay, and in that first city of the world.

Hath not each site, yea, every stone a tongue?

How many thousand silent monitors,

With earnest men, majestic, beckon us!

There if I fail to make my work complete,

I never shall complete it. Ah, I feel it—

Success doth wait on no attempt of mine!
Still altering, I ne'er shall perfect it.
I feel, yea, deeply feel, the noble art
That quickens others, and does strength infuse
Into the healthy soul, will drive me forth,
And bring me to destruction. Forth I haste!
I will to Naples first.

PRINCESS.

Darest thou venture?
Still is the rigid sentence unrepeal'd
Which banish'd thee, together with thy father.

TASSO.

I know the danger, and have ponder'd it.
Disguis'd I go, in tatter'd garb, perchance
Of shepherd, or of pilgrim, meanly clad.
Unseen I wander through the city, where
The movements of the many shroud the one.
Thee to the shore I hasten, find a bark,
With people of Sorrento, peasant folk,
Returning home from market, for I too
Must hasten to Sorrento. There resides
My sister, ever to my parents' heart,
Together with myself, a mournful joy.
I speak not in the bark, I step ashore
Also in silence, slowly I ascend

The upward path, and at the gate inquire:
Where may she dwell, Cornelia Sersale?
With friendly mien, a woman at her wheel
Shows me the street, the house; I hasten on;
The children run beside me, and survey
The gloomy stranger, with the shaggy locks.
Thus I approach the threshold. Open stands
The cottage door; I step into the house—

PRINCESS.

O Tasso! if 'tis possible, look up,
And see the danger that environs thee!
I spare thy feelings, else I well might ask,
Is't noble so to speak as now thou speakest?
Is't noble of thyself alone to think,
As if thou didst not wound the heart of friends?
My brother's sentiments, are they conceal'd?
And how we sisters prize and honor thee,—
Hast thou not known and felt it? Can it be
That a few moments should have alter'd all?
O Tasso, if thou wilt indeed depart,

Yet do not leave behind thee grief and care.

[Tasso *turns away*.

How soothing to the sorrowing heart to give,
To the dear friend who leaves us for a season,
Some trifling present, though 'twere nothing more

Than a new mantle, or a sword perchance!
There's naught, alas, that we can offer thee,
For thou ungraciously dost fling aside
E'en what thou hast. Thou choosest for thyself
The pilgrim's scallop shell, his sombre weeds.
His staff to lean on, and departing thus,
In willing poverty, from us thou takest
The only pleasure we could share with thee.

TASSO.

Then thou wilt not reject me utterly?
O precious words! O comfort dear and sweet!
Do thou defend me! Shield me with thy care!—
Oh, send me to Consandoli, or here,
Keep me in Belriguardo, where thou wilt!
The prince is lord of many a pleasant seat,
Of many a garden, which the whole year round
Is duly kept, whose paths ye scarcely tread
A single day, perchance but for an hour.
Then, choose among them all the most remote
Which through long years ye have not visited.
And which perchance e'en now untended lies.
Oh, send me thither! There let me be yours!
And I will tend thy trees! With screen and tile
Will shield thy citrons from autumnal blasts,
Fencing them round with interwoven reeds!

Flowers of the fairest hue shall in the beds
Strike deep their spreading roots; with nicest care
Each pathway, every corner shall be kept.
And of the palace also give me charge!
At proper times the windows I will open,
Lest noxious vapor should the pictures mar;
The walls, with choicest stucco-work adorn'd,
I with light feather-work will free from dust;



artist: herm. schneider.

TORQUATO TASSO. ACT V, SCENE IV.

tasso and the princess

There shall the polish'd pavement brightly shine,
There shall no stone, no tiling be misplac'd;
There shall no weeds sprout from the crevices!

PRINCESS.

I find no counsel in my troubled breast,
And find no comfort for thyself and—us.
Around I look to see if some kind god
Will haply grant us succor, and reveal
Some healing plant, or potion, to restore
Peace to thy 'wilder'd senses, peace to us!
The truest word that floweth from the lip,

The surest remedy hath lost its power.

Leave thee I must,—yet doth my heart refuse

From thee to part.

TASSO.

Ye gods! And is it she?

She who thus pities, who thus speaks with thee?

And could'st thou e'er mistake that noble heart?

And in her presence, was it possible,

That thee despondency could seize, could master?

No, no, 'tis thou! I am myself again!

Oh, speak once more! Sweet comfort let me hear

Again from thy dear lips! Speak, nor withdraw

Thy counsel from me.—Say, what must I do,

That I may win the pardon of the prince,

That thou thyself may'st freely pardon me,

That ye may both with pleasure take me back

Into your princely service? Speak to me.

PRINCESS.

It is but little we require from thee.

And yet that little seemeth all too much.

Freely should'st thou resign thyself to us.

We wish not from thee aught but what thou art,

If only with thyself thou wert at peace.

When joy thou feelest, thou dost cause us joy,

When thou dost fly from it, thou grievest us;

And if sometimes we are impatient with thee,
'Tis only that we fain would succor thee,
And feel, alas, our succor all in vain,
If thou the friendly hand forbear to grasp,
Stretch'd longingly, which yet doth reach thee not.

TASSO.

'Tis thou thyself, a holy angel still,
As when at first thou didst appear to me!
The mortal's darken'd vision, oh, forgive,
If while he gaz'd, he for a moment err'd;
Now he again discerns thee, and his soul
Aspires to honor thee eternally.
A flood of tenderness o'erwhelms my heart—
She stands before me! She! What feeling this?
Is it distraction draws me unto thee?
Or is it madness? or a sense sublime
Which apprehends the purest, loftiest truth?
Yes, 'tis the only feeling that on earth
Hath power to make and keep me truly bless'd,
Or that could overwhelm me with despair,
What time I wrestled with it, and resolv'd
To banish it forever from my heart.
This fiery passion I had thought to quell,
Still with mine inmost being strove and strove,
And in the strife my very self destroy'd,

Which is to thee indissolubly bound.

PRINCESS.

If thou would'st have me, Tasso, listen to thee,
Restrain this fervid glow, which frightens me.

TASSO.

Restrains the goblet's rim the bubbling wine
That sparkling foams, and overflows its bounds?
Thine every word doth elevate my bliss,
With every word more brightly gleams thine eye,
Over my spirit's depths there comes a change;
Reliev'd from dark perplexity I feel
Free as a god, and all I owe to thee!
A charm unspeakable, which masters me,
Flows from thy lips. Thou makest me all thine.
Of mine own being naught belongs to me.
Mine eye grows dim in happiness and light,
My senses fail; no more my foot sustains me,
Thou draw'st me to thee with resistless might,
And my heart rushes self-impell'd to thee.
Me hast thou won for all eternity,
Then take my whole of being to thyself.

[He throws himself into her arms, and clasps her to his bosom.]

PRINCESS.

(Throwing him from her and retiring in haste.) Away!

LEONORA.

(Who has for some time appeared in the background, hastening forward.) What hath befallen? Tasso! Tasso!

[She follows the Princess.

TASSO.

(About to follow her.) O God!

ALPHONSO.

(Who has for some time been approaching with Antonio.) He is distracted, hold him fast.

[Exit.

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SCENE V.

Tasso, Antonio.

ANTONIO.

If that a foeman—as thou deem'st thyself
Environ'd by a multitude of foes—
Beside thee stood, how would he triumph now!
Unhappy man! I am not yet myself!
When something quite unparallel'd occurs,
When something monstrous first arrests our sight,
The stagger'd spirit stands a moment still,
For we know nothing to compare it with.

TASSO.

(After a long pause.) Fulfil thine office, I perceive 'tis thou!

Ay, thou deserv'st the prince's confidence.
Fulfil thine office, since my doom is seal'd.
With ling'ring tortures, torture me to death!
Draw! draw the shaft, that I may feel the barb
That lacerates, with cruel pangs, my heart!
The tyrant's precious instrument art thou;
Be thou his gaoler,—executioner,—
For these are offices become thee well!

(Towards the scene.)

Yes, tyrant, go! Thou could'st not to the last

Thy wonted mask retain; in triumph go!
Thy slave thou hast well pinion'd, hast reserv'd
For predetermin'd and protracted pangs:
Yes, go! I hate thee. In my heart I feel
The horror which despotic power excites,
When it is grasping, cruel and unjust.

(After a pause.)

Thus, then, at last I see myself exil'd,
Turn'd off, and thrust forth like a mendicant!
Thus they with garlands wreath'd me, but to lead
The victim to the shrine of sacrifice!
Thus, at the very last, with cunning words,
They drew from me my only property,
My poem,—ay, and they retain it too!
Now is my one possession in your hands,
My bright credential wheresoe'er I went;
My sole resource 'gainst biting poverty!
Ay, now I see why I must take mine ease.
'Tis a conspiracy, and thou the head.
Thus that my song may not be perfected,
That my renown may ne'er be spread abroad,
That envy still a thousand faults may find,
And my unhonor'd name forgotten die;
Therefore I must consent to idleness,
Therefore must spare my faculties, myself.

O precious friendship! Dear solicitude!
Odious appear'd the dark conspiracy
Which ceaseless round me wove its viewless web,
But still more odious does it now appear!
And, thou too, Siren! who so tenderly
Didst lead me on with thy celestial mien,
Thee now I know! Wherefore, O God, so late!
But we so willingly deceive ourselves,
We honor reprobates, who honor us.
True men are never to each other known;
Such knowledge is reserv'd for galley-slaves,
Chain'd to a narrow plank, who gasp for breath,
Where none hath aught to ask, nor aught to lose,
Where for a rascal each avows himself,
And holds his neighbor for a rascal too,—
Such men as these perchance may know each other.
But for the rest, we courteously misjudge them,
Hoping they may misjudge us in return.
How long thine hallow'd image from my gaze
Veil'd the coquette, working, with paltry arts!
The mask has fallen!—Now I see Armida
Denuded of her charms,—yes, thou art she,
Of whom my bodeful verse prophetic sang!
And then the little, cunning go-between!
With what profound contempt I view her now!

I hear the rustling of her stealthy step,
As round me still she spreads her artful toils.
Ay, now I know you! And let that suffice!
And misery, though it beggar me of all,
I honor still,—for it hath taught me truth.

ANTONIO.

I hear thee with amazement, though I know
How thy rash humor, Tasso, urges thee
To rush in haste to opposite extremes.
Collect thy spirit and command thy rage!
Thou speakest slander, dost indulge in words
Which to thine anguish though they be forgiven,
Yet thou canst ne'er forgive unto thyself.

TASSO.

Oh, speak not to me with a gentle lip,
Let me not hear one prudent word from thee!
Leave me my sullen happiness, that I
May not regain my senses, but to lose them.
My very bones are crush'd, yet do I live;—
Ay! live to feel the agonizing pain.
Despair enfolds me in its ruthless grasp,
And, in the hell-pang that annihilates,
These sland'rous words are but the feeble cry,
Wrung from the depth of my sore agony.
I will away! If honest, point the path,

And suffer me at once to fly from hence.

ANTONIO.

In thine extremity I will not leave thee;
And should'st thou wholly lose thy self-control,
My patience shall not fail.

TASSO.

And must I then
Yield myself up a prisoner to thee?
Resign'd I yield myself, and it is done;
I cease to struggle, and 'tis well with me—
Now let mine anguish'd heart recall how fair
What, as in sport, I madly flung away.
They hence depart—O God! I there behold
The dust, ascending from their chariot wheels—
The riders in advance—ay, there they go,
E'en to the very place from whence I came!
Now they are gone—they are estrang'd from me.
Oh, that I once again had kiss'd his hand!
Oh, that I once again might say farewell!
Once only might I falter: O forgive!
Once only hear the word: Go, thou'rt forgiven!
Alas! I hear it not;—I ne'er shall hear it—
Yes, I will go! Let me but say farewell,
Only farewell! Give me, oh, give me back
Their long'd-for presence for a single moment!

Perchance I might recover! Never more!
I am rejected, doom'd to banishment!
Alas! I am self-banish'd, never more
To hear that gentle voice, that tender glance
To meet no more—

ANTONIO.

Yet hear the voice of one
Who, not without emotion, stands beside thee!
Thou'rt not so wretched, Tasso, as thou thinkest.
Collect thyself! Too much thou art unmann'd.

TASSO.

And am I then as wretched as I seem?
Am I as weak as I do show myself?
Say, is all lost? Has sorrow's direful stroke,
As with an earthquake's sudden shock, transform'd
The stately pile into a ruin'd heap?
Is all the genius flown that did erewhile
So richly charm, and so exalt my soul?
Is all the power extinguish'd which of yore
Stirr'd in my bosom's depths? Am I become
A nothing? A mere nothing? No, all's here!
I have it still, and yet myself am nothing!
I from myself am sever'd, she from me!

ANTONIO.

Though to thyself thou seemest so forlorn,

Be calm, and bear in mind what still thou art!

TASSO.

Ay, in due season thou remindest me!—

Hath history no example for mine aid?

Before me doth there rise no man of worth

Who more hath borne than I, that with his fate,

Mine own comparing, I may gather strength.

No, all is gone!—But one thing still remains;

Tears, balmy tears, kind nature has bestow'd.

The cry of anguish, when the man at length

Can bear no more—yea, and to me beside,

She leaves in sorrow melody and speech,

To utter forth the fulness of my woe:

Though in their mortal anguish men are dumb,

To me a God hath given to tell my grief.

[Antonio approaches him and takes his hand.]

O noble man! thou standest firm and calm,

While I am like the tempest-driven wave.

But be not boastful of thy strength. Reflect!

Nature, whose mighty power hath fix'd the rock,

Gives to the wave its instability.

She sends her storm, the passive wave is driven,

And rolls, and swells, and falls in billowy foam.

Yet in this very wave the glorious sun

Mirrors his splendor, and the quiet stars

Upon its heaving bosom gently rest.
Dimm'd is the splendor, vanish'd is the calm!
In danger's hour I know myself no longer,
Nor am I now ashamed of the confession.
The helm is broken, and on every side
The reeling vessel splits. The riven planks,
Bursting asunder, yawn beneath my feet!
Thus with my outstretch'd arms I cling to thee!
So doth the shipwreck'd mariner at last
Cling to the rock, whereon his vessel struck.

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Clavigo

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Clavigo.

Carlos, *his friend.*

Beaumarchais.

Marie Beaumarchais.

Sophie Guilbert (*née* Beaumarchais).

Guilbert, *her husband.*

Buenco.

St. George.

The scene is at Madrid.



Fr. Pecht del

published by George Barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Clavigo

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ACT I.



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SCENE I.—

Clavigo's *Dwelling*.

Enter Clavigo and Carlos.

CLAVIGO.

(Rising up from the writingtable.) The journal will do a good work, it must charm all women. Tell me, Carlos, do you not think that my weekly periodical is now one of the first in Europe?

CARLOS.

We Spaniards, at least, have no modern author who unites such great strength of thought, so much florid imagination, with so brilliant and easy a style.

CLAVIGO.

Please don't. I must still be among the people the creator of the good style; people are ready to take all sorts of impressions; I have a reputation among my fellow-citizens, their confidence; and, between ourselves, my acquirements extend daily; my experience widens, and my style becomes ever truer and stronger.

CARLOS.

Good, Clavigo! Yet, if you will not take it ill, your paper pleased me far better when you yet wrote it at Marie's feet, when the lovely cheerful creature had still an influence over you. I know not how, the whole had a more youthful blooming appearance.

CLAVIGO.

Those were good times, Carlos, which are now gone. I gladly avow to thee, I wrote then with opener heart; and, it is true, she had a large share in the approbation which the public accorded me at the very beginning. But at length, Carlos, one becomes very soon weary of women; and were you not the first to applaud my resolution when I determined to forsake her?

CARLOS.

You would have become rusty. Women are far too monotonous. Only, it seems to me, it were again time that you cast about for a new plan, for it is all up when one is so entirely aground.

CLAVIGO.

My plan is the court; there there is no leisure nor holiday. For a stranger, who, without standing, without name, without fortune, came here, have I not already advanced far enough? Here in a court! amid the throng of men, where it is not easy to attract attention? I do so rejoice, when I look on the road which I have left behind me. Loved by the first in the kingdom! Honored for my attainments, my rank! Recorder of the king! Carlos, all that spurs me on; I were nothing if I remained what I am! Forward! forward! There it costs toil and art! One needs all his wits; and the women! the women! one loses far too much time with them.

CARLOS.

Simpleton, that is your fault. I can never live without women, and they are not in my way at all. Moreover, I do not say so very many fine things to them, I do not amuse myself entire months with sentiment and such like; for I do not at all like to have to do with prudish girls. One has soon said his say with them: afterwards, should one pay them attention for a while, scarcely are they a little bit inflamed with one, than straightway—the deuce—you are pestered with thoughts of marriage and promises of marriage, which I fear as the plague. You are pensive, Clavigo?

CLAVIGO.

I cannot get rid of the recollection that I jilted, deceived Marie, call it as you will.

CARLOS.

Wonderful! It seems to me, however, that one lives only once in this world, has only once this power, these prospects, and he who does not make the most of them, and rise as high as possible, is a fool. And to marry! to marry just at the time when life is for the first time about to soar aloft on wide-spread pinions! to bury one's self in domestic repose, to shut one's self up when one has not traversed the half of his journey—has not yet achieved the half of his conquests! To love her was natural; to promise her marriage was folly, and if you had kept your word it would have been downright madness.

CLAVIGO.

Hold! I do not understand men. I loved her truly, she drew me to her, she held me, and as I sat at her feet I vowed to her—I vowed to myself—that it should ever be so, that I would be hers as soon as I had an office, a position—and now, Carlos!

CARLOS.

It will be quite time enough when you are a made man, when you have reached the desired goal, if then—to crown and confirm all your happiness—you seek to ally yourself by a prudent marriage with a family of wealth and consequence.

CLAVIGO.

She has vanished! quite out of my heart vanished, and if her unhappiness does not sometimes remind me—strange that one is so changeable!

CARLOS.

If one were constant I would wonder. Look, pray, does not everything in the world change? Why should our passions endure? Be tranquil; she is not the first jilted girl, nor the first that has consoled herself. If I were to advise you, there is the young widow over the way—

CLAVIGO.

You know I do not set much store on such proposals. A love affair which does not come of its own accord has no charm for me.

CARLOS.

So dainty people!

CLAVIGO.

Be it so, and forget not that our chief work at present is to render ourselves necessary to the new minister. That what resigns the government of India is troublesome enough for us. In truth, otherwise it does not disquiet me; his influence abides—Grimaldi and he are friends, and we know how to talk and manœuvre.

CARLOS.

And think and do what we will.

CLAVIGO.

That is the grand point in the world. (*Rings for the servant.*) Take this sheet to the printing-office.

CARLOS.

Are you to be seen in the evening?

CLAVIGO.

I do not think so. However, you can inquire.

CARLOS.

This evening I should like to undertake something which gladdened my heart; all this afternoon I must write again, there is no end of it.

CLAVIGO.

Have patience. If we did not toil for so many persons, we would not get the ascendancy over so many.

[*Exit.*

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SCENE II.—

Guilbert's *SDwelling*.

Sophie Guilbert, Marie and Don Buenco.

BUENCO.

You have had a bad night?

SOPHIE.

I told her so yesterday evening. She was so foolishly merry and prattled till eleven, then she was overheated, could not sleep, and now again she has no breath and weeps the whole morning.

MARIE.

Strange that our brother comes not! It is two days past the time.

SOPHIE.

Only have patience, he will not fail us.

MARIE.

(Rising up.) How anxious am I to see this brother, my avenger and my saviour. I scarcely remember him.

SOPHIE.

Indeed! Oh, I can well picture him to myself; he was a fiery, open, brave boy of thirteen years, when our father sent us here.

MARIE.

A noble great soul. You have read the letter which he wrote when he learned my unhappiness; each letter of it is enshrined in my heart. "If you are guilty," writes he, "expect no forgiveness; over and above your misery the contempt of a brother will fall heavily upon you, and the curse of a father. If you are innocent, oh, then, all vengeance, all, all glowing vengeance on the traitor!"—I tremble! He will come. I tremble, not for myself, I stand before God in my innocence! You must, my friends—I know not what I want! O Clavigo!

SOPHIE.

You will not listen! You will kill yourself.

MARIE.

I will be still. Yes, I will not weep. It seems to me, however, I could have no more tears. And why tears? I am only sorry that I make my life bitter to you. For when all is said and done, what have I to complain of? I have had much joy as long as our old friend still lived. Clavigo's love has caused me much joy, perhaps more than mine for him. And now, what is it after all? of what importance am I? What matters it if a girl's heart is broken? What matters it whether she pines away and torments her poor young heart?

BUENCO.

For God's sake, mademoiselle!

MARIE.

Whether it is all one to *him*—that he loves me no more? Ah! why am I not more amiable? But *he* should pity, at least pity me!—that the hapless girl, to whom he had made himself so needful, now without him should pine and weep her life away—Pity! I wish not to be pitied by this man.

SOPHIE.

If I could teach you to despise him—the worthless, detestable man!

MARIE.

No, sister, worthless he is not; and must I then despise him whom I hate? Hate! Indeed, sometimes I can hate him—sometimes, when the Spanish spirit possesses me. Lately, oh! lately, when we met him, his look wrought full, warm love in me! And as I again came home, and his manner recurred to me, and the calm, cold glance that he cast over me, while beside the brilliant Donna; then I became a Spaniard in my heart, and seized my dagger and poison, and disguised myself. Are you amazed, Buenco? All in thought only, of course!

SOPHIE.

Foolish girl!

MARIE.

My imagination led me after him. I saw him as he lavished all the tenderness, all the gentleness at the feet of his new love—the charms with which he poisoned me—I

aimed at the heart of the traitor! Ah! Buenco!—all at once the good-hearted French girl was again there, who knows of no love-sickness, and no daggers for revenge. We are badly off! Vaudevilles to entertain our lovers, fans to punish them, and, if they are faithless?—Say, sister, what do they do in France when lovers are faithless?

SOPHIE.

They curse them.

MARIE.

And—

SOPHIE.

And let them go their ways.

MARIE.

Go!—and why shall I not let Clavigo go? If that is the French fashion, why shall it not be so in Spain? Why shall a Frenchwoman not be a Frenchwoman in Spain? We will let him go and take to ourselves another; it appears to me they do so with us too.

BUENCO.

He has broken a sacred promise, and no light love-affair, no friendly attachment. Mademoiselle, you are pained, hurt even to the depths of your heart. Oh! never was my position of an unknown, peaceful citizen of Madrid so burdensome, so painful as at this moment, in which I feel myself so feeble, so powerless to obtain justice for you against the treacherous courtier!

MARIE.

When he was still Clavigo, not yet recorder of the king; when he was the stranger, the guest, the new-comer in our house, how amiable was he, how good! How all his ambition, all his desire to rise, seemed to be a child of his love! For me, he struggled for name, rank, fortune; he has all now, and I!—

Guilbert*comes*.

GUILBERT.

(Privately to his wife.) Our brother is coming!

MARIE.

My brother! (*She trembles; they conduct her to a seat.*) Where? where? Bring him to me! Take me to him!

Beumarchais*comes.*

BEAUMARCHAIS.

My sister! (*Quitting the eldest to rush towards the youngest.*) My sister! My friends! Oh, my sister!

MARIE.

Is it you indeed? God be thanked it is you!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Let me come to myself.

MARIE.

My heart!—my poor heart!

SOPHIE.

Be calm! Dear brother, I hoped to see you more tranquil.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

More tranquil! Are you, then, tranquil? Do I not behold in the wasted figure of this dear one, in your tearful eyes, your sorrowful paleness, in the dead silence of your friends, that you are as wretched as I have imagined you to be during all the long way? and more wretched; for I see you, I hold you in my arms; your presence redoubles my sufferings. Oh, my sister!

SOPHIE.

And our father?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

He blesses you and me, if I save you.

BUENCO.

Sir, permit one unknown who, at the first look, recognizes in you a noble, brave man, to bear witness to the deep interest which all this matter inspires in me. Sir, you undertake this long journey to save, to avenge your sister! Welcome! be welcome as a guardian angel, though, at the same time, you put us all to the blush!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I hoped, sir, to find in Spain such hearts as yours; that encouraged me to take this step. Nowhere, nowhere in the world are feeling, congenial souls wanting, if only one steps forward whose circumstances leave him full freedom to carry his courage through. And oh, my friends, I feel full of hope! Everywhere there are men of honor among the powerful and great, and the ear of majesty is rarely deaf; only our voice is almost always too weak to reach to their height.

SOPHIE.

Come, sister! come, rest a moment. She is quite beside herself.

[They lead her away.]

MARIE.

My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

God willing, if you are innocent, then all, all vengeance on the traitor!
(Exeunt Marie and Sophie.) My brother!—my friends!—I see it in your looks that you are so. Let me come to myself, and then!—a pure, impartial recital of the whole story. This must determine my actions. The feeling of a good cause shall confirm my courage; and, believe me, if we are right, we shall get justice.



artist: c. karger.

CLAVIGO.

marie and beaumarchais.

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ACT II.



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SCENE I.—

Clavigo's *House*.

CLAVIGO.

Who may these Frenchmen be, who have got themselves announced in my house? Frenchmen! In former days this nation was welcome to me! And why not now? It is singular that a man who sets so much at naught is yet bound with feeble thread to a single point. It is too much! And did I owe more to Marie than to myself? and is it a duty to make myself unhappy because a girl loves me?

A Servant.

SERVANT.

The foreign gentlemen, sir.

CLAVIGO.

Bid them enter. Pray, did you tell their servant that I expect them to breakfast?

SERVANT.

As you ordered.

CLAVIGO.

I shall be back presently.

[Exit.

Beaumarchais, St. George.

The Servant places chairs for them and withdraws.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I feel myself so much at ease; so content, my friend, to be at length here, to hold him; he shall not escape me. Be calm: at least show him a calm exterior. My sister! my sister! who could believe that you are as innocent as unhappy? It shall come to light; you shall be terribly avenged! And Thou, good God! preserve to me the tranquillity of soul which Thou accordedst to me at this moment, that, amid this frightful grief, I may act as prudently as possible and with all moderation.

ST. GEORGE.

Yes; this wisdom—all, my friend, which you have ever shown of prudence—I claim here. Promise me, once more, dear friend, that you will reflect where you are. In a strange kingdom, where all your protectors, all your money cannot secure you from the secret machinations of worthless foes.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Be tranquil: play your part well; he shall not know with which of us he has to do. I will torture him! Oh! I am just in a fine humor to roast this fellow over a slow fire!

Clavigore returns.

CLAVIGO.

Gentlemen, it gives me joy to see in my house men of a nation that I have always esteemed.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Sir, I wish that we, too, may be worthy of the honor which you are good enough to confer on our fellow countrymen.

ST. GEORGE.

The pleasure of making your acquaintance has surmounted the fear of being troublesome to you.

CLAVIGO.

Persons, whom the first look recommends, should not push modesty so far.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

In truth it cannot be a novelty to you to be sought out by strangers; for, by the excellence of your writings, you have made yourself as much known in foreign lands as the important offices which his majesty has intrusted to you distinguish you in your fatherland.

CLAVIGO.

The king looks with much favor on my humble services, and the public with much indulgence on the trifling essays of my pen; I have wished that I could contribute in some measure to the improvement of taste, to the propagation of the sciences in my country; for they only unite us with other nations, they only make friends of the most

distant spirits, and maintain the sweetest union among those even, who, alas! are too often disunited through political interests.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

It is captivating to hear a man so speak who has equal influence in the state and in letters. I must also avow you have taken the word out of my mouth and brought me straight to the purpose, on account of which you see me here. A society of learned worthy men has commissioned me, in every place through which I travel and find opportunity, to establish a correspondence between them and the best minds in the kingdom. As no Spaniard writes better than the author of the journal called the *Thinker*—a man with whom I have the honor to speak (*Clavigo makes a polite bow*), and who is an especial ornament of learned men, since he has known how to unite with his literary talents so great a capacity for political affairs, he cannot fail to climb the highest steps, of which his character and acquirements render him worthy. I believe I can perform no more acceptable service to my friends than to put them in connection with a man of such merit.

CLAVIGO.

No proposal in the world could be more agreeable to me, gentlemen; I thereby see fulfilled the sweetest hopes, with which my heart was often occupied without any prospect of their happy accomplishment. Not that I believe I shall be able, through my correspondence, to satisfy the wishes of your learned friends; my vanity does not go so far. But as I have the happiness to be in accordance with the best minds in Spain, as nothing can remain unknown to me which is achieved in our vast kingdom by isolated, often obscure, individuals for the arts and sciences, so I have looked upon myself, till now, as a kind of colporteur, who possesses the feeble merit of rendering the inventions of others generally useful; but now I become, through your intervention, a merchant, happy enough through the exportation of native products to extend the renown of his fatherland and thereby to enrich it with foreign treasures. So then, allow me, sir, to treat as not a stranger a man who, with such frankness, brings such agreeable news; allow me to ask what business—what project made you undertake this long journey? It is not that I would, through this officiousness, gratify vain curiosity; no, believe rather that it is with the purest intention of exerting in your behalf all the resources, all the influence which I may perchance possess; for I tell you beforehand, you have come to a place where countless difficulties encounter a stranger in the prosecution of his business, especially at the court.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I accept so obliging an offer with warmest thanks. I have no secrets with you, sir, and this friend at my statement will not be in the way; he is sufficiently acquainted with what I have to say. (*Clavigo regards St. Georgewith attention.*) A French merchant, with a large family and a limited fortune, had many business friends in Spain. One of the richest came fifteen years ago to Paris, and made him this proposal: "Give me two of your daughters, and I shall take them with me to Madrid and provide for them. I am an aged bachelor without relatives; they will form the happiness of my declining

years, and after my decease I shall leave them one of the most considerable establishments in Spain. The eldest and one of the younger sisters were confided to his care. The father undertook to supply the house with all kinds of French merchandise which could be required, and so all went well, till the friend died without the least mention of the Frenchwomen in his will, who then saw themselves in the embarrassing position of superintending alone a new business. The eldest had meanwhile married, and notwithstanding their moderate fortune, they secured through their good conduct and varied accomplishments a multitude of friends, who were eager to extend their credit and business. (*Clavigo becomes more and more attentive.*) About the same time, a young man, a native of the Canary Islands, had got himself introduced into the family. (*Clavigo's countenance loses all cheerfulness, and his seriousness changes by-and-by into embarrassment, more and more visible.*) Despite his humble standing and fortune, they receive him kindly. The Frenchwomen, who remarked in him a great love of the French language, favored him with every means of making rapid progress in its study. Extremely anxious to make himself known, he forms the design of giving to the city of Madrid the pleasure, hitherto unknown to Spain, of reading a weekly periodical in the style of the English *Spectator*. His lady friends fail not to aid him in every way; they do not doubt that such an undertaking would meet with great success; in short, animated by the hope of soon becoming a man of some consequence, he ventures to make an offer of marriage to the younger. Hopes are held out to him. "Try to make your fortune," says the elder, "and if an appointment, the favor of the court, or any other means of subsistence shall have given you a right to think of my sister, if she still prefers you to other suitors, I cannot refuse you my consent." (*Clavigo, covered with confusion, moves uneasily on his seat.*) The younger declines several advantageous offers; her fondness for the man increases, and helps her to bear the anxiety of an uncertain expectation; she interests herself for his happiness as for her own, and encourages him to issue the first number of his periodical, which appears under an imposing title. (*Clavigo is terribly embarrassed. Beaumarchais, icy cold.*) The journal is a great success; the king even, delighted with this charming production, gave the author public tokens of his favor. He was promised the first honorable office that might be vacant. From that moment he removed all rivals from his beloved, while quite openly striving hard to win her good graces. The marriage was delayed only in expectation of the promised situation. At last, after six years' patient waiting, unbroken friendship, aid and love on the part of the girl; after six years' devotion, gratitude, attentions, solemn assurances on the part of the man, the office is forthcoming—and he vanishes. (*Clavigo utters a deep sigh, which he tries to stifle, and is quite overcome.*) The matter had made so great a noise in the world, that the issue could not be regarded with indifference. A house had been rented for two families. The whole town was talking of it. The hearts of all friends were wrung and sought revenge. Application was made to powerful protectors; but the worthless fellow, already initiated in the cabals of the court, knew how to render fruitless all their efforts, and went so far in his insolence as to dare to threaten the unhappy ladies; to dare to say in the very face of those friends, who had gone to find him, that the Frenchwomen should take care; he defied them to injure him, and if they made bold to undertake aught against him, it would be easy for him to ruin them in a foreign land, where they would be without protection and help. At this intelligence the poor girl fell into convulsions, which threatened death. In the depth of her grief the elder wrote to France about the public outrage which had been

done to them. The news most powerfully moves her brother; he demands leave of absence to obtain counsel and aid in so complicated an affair, he flies from Paris to Madrid, and the brother—it is I! who have left all—fatherland, duties, family, standing, pleasures, in order to avenge, in Spain, an innocent, unhappy sister. I come, armed with the best cause and firm determination, to unmask a traitor, to mark with bloody strokes his soul on his face, and the traitor—art thou!

CLAVIGO.

Hear me, sir—I am—I have—I doubt not—

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Interrupt me not. You have nothing to say to me and much to hear from me. Now, to make a beginning, have the goodness, in presence of this gentleman, who has come from France expressly with me, to declare: whether my sister has deserved this public outrage from you through any treachery, levity, weakness, rudeness, or any other blemish.

CLAVIGO.

No, sir. Your sister, Donna Maria, is a lady overflowing with wit, amiability and goodness.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Has she ever during your acquaintance given you any occasion to complain of her, or to esteem her less?

CLAVIGO.

Never! never!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Rising up.) And why, monster, had you the barbarity to torture the girl to death? Only because her heart preferred you to ten others, all more honorable and richer than you?

CLAVIGO.

Ah, sir! If you knew how I have been instigated; how I, through manifold advisers and circumstances—

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Enough! *(To St. George.)* You have heard the vindication of my sister; go and publish it. What I have further to say to the gentleman, needs no witnesses. *(Clavigorises St.)*

Georgetires.) Remain! remain! (*Both sit down again.*) Having now got so far, I shall make a proposal to you, which I hope you will accept. It is equally agreeable to you and me that you do not wed Marie, and you are deeply sensible that I have not come to play the part of a theatrical brother, who will unravel the drama, and present a husband to his sister. You have cast a slur upon an honorable lady in cold blood, because you supposed that in a foreign land she was without prop and avenger. Thus acts a base, worthless fellow. And so, first of all, testify with your own hand, spontaneously, with open doors, in presence of your servants, that you are an abominable man, who have deceived, betrayed my sister without the least cause; and with this declaration I set out for Aranjuez, where our ambassador resides; I show it, I get it printed, and after to-morrow the court and the town are flooded with it. I have powerful friends here, I have time and money, and of all shall I avail myself, to pursue you in the most furious manner possible, till the resentment of my sister is appeased and satisfied, and she herself says, "Stop."

CLAVIGO.

I will not make such a declaration.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I believe that, for in your place neither perhaps would I do it. But here is the reverse of the medal. If you do not write it, I remain from this moment beside you, I quit you no more, I follow you everywhere, till you, disgusted with such society, have sought to get rid of me behind Buenretiro. If I am more fortunate than you, without seeing the ambassador, without speaking here with any one, I take my dying sister in my arms, place her in my carriage, and return to France with her. Should fate favor you, I am played out, and so you may have a laugh at our expense. Meanwhile, the breakfast.

[*Beaumarchais rings the bell. An attendant brings the chocolate. Beaumarchais takes a cup, and walks in the adjoining gallery, examining the pictures.*]

CLAVIGO.

Air! air! I have been surprised and seized like a boy. Where are you then, Clavigo? How will you end this? How can you end it? Frightful position, into which your folly, your treachery has plunged you! (*He seizes his sword on the table.*) Ha! short and good! (*Lays it down.*) And is there no way, no means, but death—or murder?—horrible murder! To deprive the hapless lady of her last solace, her only stay, her brother! To see gushing out the blood of a noble, brave man! And to draw upon yourself the double, insupportable curse of a ruined family! Oh, this was not the prospect when this amiable creature, even from your first meeting, attracted you with so many winsome ways! And when you abandoned her, did you not see the frightful consequences of your crime? What blessedness awaited you in her arms! in the friendship of such a brother! Marie! Marie! Oh, that you could forgive! that at your feet I could atone for all by my tears!—And why not?—My heart overflows; my soul mounts up in hope! Sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

What is your determination?

CLAVIGO.

Hear me! My deceit towards your sister is unpardonable. Vanity has misled me. I feared by this marriage to ruin all my plans, all my projects for a world-wide celebrity. Could I have known that she had such a brother, she would have been in my eyes no unimportant stranger; I would have expected from our union very considerable advantages. You inspire me, sir, with the highest esteem, and in making me so keenly sensible of my errors, you impart to me a desire, a power, to make all good again. I throw myself at your feet! Help! help, if it is possible, to efface my guilt and put an end to unhappiness. Give your sister to me again, sir, give me to her! How happy were I to receive from your hand a wife and the forgiveness of all my faults!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

It is too late! My sister loves you no more, and I detest you. Write the desired declaration, that is all that I exact from you, and leave me to provide for a choice revenge.

CLAVIGO.

Your obstinacy is neither right nor prudent. I grant you that it does not depend on me, whether I will make good again so irremediable an evil. Whether I can make it good? That rests with the heart of your excellent sister whether she may again look upon a wretch who does not deserve to see the light of day. Only it is your duty to ascertain that and to conduct yourself accordingly, if your demeanor is not to resemble the inconsiderate passion of a young man. If Donna Maria is immovable! Oh, I know her heart! Oh, her good, her heavenly soul hovers before me quite vividly! If she is inexorable, then it is time, sir.



BEAUMARCHAIS.

I insist on the vindication.

CLAVIGO.

(Approaching the table.) And if I seize the sword?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Advancing.) Good, sir! Excellent, sir!

CLAVIGO.

(Holding him back.) One word more! You have the better case; let me have prudence for you. Consider what you are doing. Whether you or I fall, we are irrecoverably lost. Should I not die of pain, of remorse, if your blood should stain my sword, if I, to complete her wretchedness, bereft her of her brother; and on the other hand—the murderer of Clavigo would not recross the Pyrenees.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

The vindication, sir, the vindication!

CLAVIGO.

Well! be it so. I will do all to convince you of the upright feeling with which your presence inspires me. I will write the vindication, I will write it at your dictation. Only promise me not to make use of it till I am able to convince Donna Maria of the change and repentance of my heart, till I have spoken to her elder sister; till she has put in a good word for me with my beloved one. Not before, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I am going to Aranjuez.

CLAVIGO.

Well then, till your return, let the vindication remain in your portfolio; if I have not been forgiven, then let your vengeance have full swing. This proposal is just, fair and prudent; and if you do not agree to it, let us then play the game of life and death. And whichever of us two become the victim of his own rashness, you and your poor sister will suffer in any case.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

It becomes you to pity those whom you have made wretched.

CLAVIGO.

(Sitting down.) Are you satisfied?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Well, then, I yield the point. But not a moment longer. I come from Aranjuez, I ask, I hear! And if they have not forgiven you, which is what I hope and desire, I am off directly with the paper to the printing-office.

CLAVIGO.

(Takes paper.) How do you demand it?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Sir! in presence of your attendants.

CLAVIGO.

Why?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Command only that they are present in the adjoining gallery. It shall not be said that I have constrained you.

CLAVIGO.

What scruples!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I am in Spain and have to deal with you.

CLAVIGO.

Now then! *(Rings. A servant.)* Call my attendants together, and betake yourselves to the gallery there. *(The servant retires. The rest come and occupy the gallery.)* You allow me to write the vindication?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

No, sir! Write it, I beg you—write it, as I dictate it to you. *(Clavigo writes.)* “I, the undersigned, Joseph Clavigo, recorder of the king”—

CLAVIGO.

“Of the king.”

BEAUMARCHAIS.

“Acknowledge that after I was received into the family of Madame Guilbert as a friend”—

CLAVIGO.

“As a friend.”

BEAUMARCHAIS.

“I made her sister, Mademoiselle de Beaumarchais, a promise of marriage, repeated many times, which I have unscrupulously broken.” Have you written it?—

CLAVIGO.

My dear sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Have you another expression for it?

CLAVIGO.

I should think—

BEAUMARCHAIS.

“Unscrupulously broken.” What you have done you need not hesitate to write.—“I have abandoned her, without any fault or weakness on her part having suggested a pretext or an excuse for this perfidy.”

CLAVIGO.

Come!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

“On the contrary, the demeanor of the lady has been always pure, blameless, and worthy of all honor.”

CLAVIGO.

“Worthy of all honor.”

BEAUMARCHAIS.

“I confess that, through my deceit, the levity of my conversations, the construction of which they were susceptible, I have publicly humiliated this virtuous lady; and on this account I entreat her forgiveness, although I do not regard myself as worthy of receiving it.” (*Clavigostops.*) Write! write! “And this testimony of my own free will, and unforced, I have given, with this especial promise, that if this satisfaction should not please the injured lady, I am ready to afford it in every other way required. Madrid.”

CLAVIGO.

(*Rises, beckons to the servants to withdraw, and hands him the paper.*) I have to do with an injured, but a noble man. You will keep your word, and put off your vengeance. Only on this consideration, in this hope, I have granted you the shameful document, to which nothing else would have reduced me. But before I venture to appear before Donna Maria, I have resolved to engage some one to put in a word for me, to speak in my behalf—and you are the man.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Do not reckon on that.

CLAVIGO.

At least make her aware of the bitter heartfelt repentance which you have seen in me. That is all—all that I beg of you; do not deny me this; I should have to choose another less powerful intercessor, and even you owe her anyhow a faithful account. Do tell her how you have found me!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Well! this I can do, this I shall do. Good-by, then.

CLAVIGO.

Farewell! (*He wishes to take his hand; Beaumarchais draws it back.*)

CLAVIGO.

(*Alone.*) So unexpectedly from one position into the other. It is an infatuation, a dream!—I should not have given this vindication.—It came so quickly, so suddenly, like a thunder-storm!

Carlos enters.

CARLOS.

What visit is this you have had? The whole house is astir. What is the matter?

CLAVIGO.

Marie's brother.

CARLOS.

I suspected it. This old dog of a servant, who was formerly with Guilbert, and who at present acts the spy for me, knew yesterday that he was expected, and found me only this moment. He was here then?

CLAVIGO.

An excellent young man.

CARLOS.

Of whom we shall soon be rid. Already I have spread nets on his way!—What, then, was the matter? A challenge? An apology? Was he very hot, the fellow?

CLAVIGO.

He demanded a declaration, that his sister gave me no occasion for the change in my feelings towards her.

CARLOS.

And have you granted it?

CLAVIGO.

I thought it was best.

CARLOS.

Well, very well! Was that all?

CLAVIGO.

He insisted on a duel or the vindication.

CARLOS.

The last was the most judicious. Who will risk his life for a boy so romantic? And did he exact the paper with violence?

CLAVIGO.

He dictated it to me, and I had to call the servants into the gallery.

CARLOS.

I understand! ah! now I have you, little master! That will prove his ruin. Call me a scrivener, if I have not in two days the varlet in prison and off for India by the next transport.

CLAVIGO.

No, Carlos. The matter stands otherwise than as you think.

CARLOS.

How?

CLAVIGO.

I hope through his intervention, through my earnest endeavors, to obtain forgiveness from the unhappy lady.

CARLOS.

Clavigo!

CLAVIGO.

I hope to efface all the past, to heal the breach, and so in my own eyes and in the eyes of the world again to become an honorable man.

CARLOS.

The devil! Have you become childish? One can still detect the bookworm in you.—To let yourself be so befooled! Do you not see that that is a stupidly laid plan to entrap you?

CLAVIGO.

No, Carlos, he does not wish marriage; they are even opposed to it; she will not listen to aught from me.

CARLOS.

That is the very point. No, my good friend, take it not ill; I may, perhaps, in plays have seen a country squire thus cheated.

CLAVIGO.

You pain me. I beg you will reserve your humor for my wedding. I have resolved to marry Marie of my own accord, from the impulse of my heart. All my hope, all my felicity, rests on the thought of procuring her forgiveness. And then away, Pride! Heaven still lies, as before, in the breast of this loved one. All the fame which I acquire, all the greatness to which I rise will fill me with double joy, for it is shared by the lady who makes me twice a man. Farewell! I must hence. I must at least speak with Guilbert.

CARLOS.

Wait only till after dinner.

CLAVIGO.

Not a moment.

[*Exit.*

CARLOS.

(*Looking after him after a moment's silence.*) There is some one going to burn his fingers again!



artist: c. karger.

CLAVIGO.

beaumarchais dictating to clavigo.

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ACT III.



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SCENE I.—

Guilbert's *Abode*.

Sophie Guilbert, Marie, Beaumarchais.

MARIE.

You have seen him? All my limbs tremble! You have seen him? I had almost fainted when I heard he was come; and you have seen him? No, I can—I will—no—I can never see him again.

SOPHIE.

I was beside myself when he stepped in. For ah! did I not love him as you, with the fullest, purest, most sisterly love? Has not his estrangement grieved, tortured me? And now, the returning, the repentant one, at my feet! Sister, there is something so charming in his look, in the tone of his voice. He—

MARIE.

Never, never more!

SOPHIE.

He is the same as ever; has still that good, soft, feeling heart; still even that impetuosity of passion. There is still even the desire to be loved, and the excruciatingly painful torture when love is denied him. All! all! and of thee he speaks, Marie! as in those happy days of the most ardent passion. It is as if your good genius had even brought about this interval of infidelity and separation, to break the uniformity and tediousness of a prolonged attachment, and impart to the feeling a fresh vivacity.

MARIE.

Do you speak a word for him?

SOPHIE.

No, sister. Nor have I promised to do so. Only, dearest, I see things as they are. You and your brother see them in a light far too romantic. You have this experience in common with many a very good girl, that your lover became faithless and forsook you. And that he comes again penitent, will amend his fault, revive all old hopes—that is a happiness which another would not lightly reject.

MARIE.

My heart would break!

SOPHIE.

I believe you. The first moment must make a sensible impression on you—and then, my dear, I beseech you, regard not this anxiety, this embarrassment, which seems to overpower all your senses, as a result of hatred and ill-will. Your heart speaks more for him than you suppose, and even on that account you do not trust yourself to see him, because you so anxiously desire his return.

MARIE.

Spare me, dearest!

SOPHIE.

You should be happy. Did I feel that you despised him, that he was indifferent to you, I would not say another word, he should see my face no more. Yet, as it is, my love, you will thank me that I have helped you to overcome this painful irresolution, which is a token of the deepest love.

Guilbert, Buenco.

SOPHIE.

Come, Buenco! Guilbert, come! Help me to give this darling courage, resolution, now while we may.

BUENCO.

Would that I dared say—Receive him again.

SOPHIE.

Buenco!

BUENCO.

The thought makes my blood boil—that he should still possess this angel, whom he has so shamefully injured, whom he has dragged to the grave. He—possess her? Why? How does he repair all that he has violated? He returns; once more it pleases him to return and say: “Now I may; now I will,” just as if this excellent soul were suspected wares, which one after all tosses to the buyer, when he has already tormented you to the marrow by the meanest offers, and haggling like a Jew. No, my voice he will never obtain, not even if the heart of Marie herself should speak for him.

To return; and why, then, now?—now?—Must he wait till a valiant brother come, whose vengeance he must fear, and, like a schoolboy, come and crave pardon? Ha! he is as cowardly as he is worthless.

GUILBERT.

You speak like a Spaniard, and as if you did not know Spaniards. This moment we are in greater danger than you are aware of.

MARIE.

Good Guilbert!

GUILBERT.

I honor our brother's bold soul. In silence I have observed his heroic conduct. That all may turn out well, I wish that Marie could resolve to give Clavigo her hand; for—(*smiling*)—her heart he has still.

MARIE.

You are cruel.

SOPHIE.

Listen to him, I beseech you, listen to him!

GUILBERT.

Your brother has wrung from him a declaration, which will vindicate you in the eyes of the world, and ruin us.

BUENCO.

How?

MARIE.

O God!

GUILBERT.

He gave it in the hope of touching your heart. If you remain unmoved, then he must with might and main destroy the paper. This he can do; this he will do. Your brother will print and publish it immediately after his return from Aranjuez. I fear, if you persist, he will not return.

SOPHIE.

My dear Guilbert!

MARIE.

It is killing me!

GUILBERT.

Clavigo cannot let the paper be published. If you reject his offer and he is a man of honor, he goes to meet your brother, and one of them falls; and whether your brother perish or triumph he is lost. A stranger in Spain! The murderer of this beloved courtier! My sister, it is all very well to think and feel nobly, but to ruin yourself and yours—

MARIE.

Advise me, Sophie; help me!

GUILBERT.

And Buenco, contradict me, if you can.

BUENCO.

He dares not; he fears for his life; otherwise he would not have written at all; he would not have offered Marie his hand.

GUILBERT.

So much the worse. He will get a hundred to lend him their arm; a hundred to take away our brother's life on the way. Ha! Buenco, are you then so young? Should not a courtier have assassins in his pay?

BUENCO.

The king is great and good.

GUILBERT.

Go then, traverse the walls which surround him, the guards, the ceremonial, and all that his courtiers have put between his people and him; press through and save us. Who comes?

Clavigo appears.

CLAVIGO.

I must! I must!

[*Marie utters a shriek, and falls into Sophie's arms.*

SOPHIE.

Cruel man, in what a position you place us!

[*Guilbert and Buenco draw near to her.*

CLAVIGO.

Yes, it is she! it is she! and I am Clavigo! Listen to me, gentle Marie, if you will not look on me. At the time that Guilbert received me as a friend into his house, when I was a poor unknown youth, and when in my heart I felt for you an overpowering passion, was that any merit in me? or was it not rather an inner harmony of characters, a secret union of soul, so that you too could not remain unmoved by me, and I could flatter myself with the sole possession of this heart? And now—am I not even the same? Are you not even the same? Why should I not venture to hope? Why not entreat? Would you not once more take to your bosom a friend, a lover, whom you had long believed lost, if after a perilous, hapless voyage he returned unexpectedly and laid his preserved life at your feet? And have I not also tossed upon a raging sea? Are not our passions, with which we live in perpetual strife, more terrible and indomitable than those waves which drive the unfortunate far from his fatherland? Marie! Marie! How can you hate me when I have never ceased to love you? Amid all infatuation, and in the lap of all the enchanting seductions of vanity and pride, I have ever remembered those happy days of liberty which I spent at your feet in sweet retirement, as we saw lie before us a succession of blooming prospects.—And now, why would you not realize with me all that we hoped? Will you now not enjoy the happiness of life because a gloomy interval has deferred our hopes? No, my love, believe that the best friends in the world are not quite pure; the highest joy is also interrupted through our passions, through fate. Shall we complain that it has happened to us, as to all others, and shall we chastise ourselves in casting away this opportunity of repairing the past, of consoling a ruined family, of rewarding the heroic deed of a noble brother, and of establishing our own happiness forever? My friends! from whom I deserve nothing; my friends, who must be so, because they are the friends of virtue, to which I return, unite your entreaties with mine. Marie! (*He falls on his knees.*) Marie! Do you recognize my voice no more? Do you no more feel the pulse of my heart? Is it so? Marie! Marie!



MARIE.

O Clavigo!

CLAVIGO.

(Leaps up and kisses her hand with transport.) She forgives me! She loves me! *(He embraces Guilbert and Buenco.)* She loves me still! O Marie, my heart told me so! I might have thrown myself at your feet, silently uttered with tears my anguish, my penitence; without words you would have understood me, without words I would have received my forgiveness. No, this intimate union of our souls is not destroyed; no, still they understand each other as in the olden time, in which no sound, no sign was needful to impart our deepest emotions. Marie! Marie! Marie!

Beaumarchais *advances.*

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Ha!

CLAVIGO.

(Rushing towards him.) My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Do you forgive him?

MARIE.

No more, no more! my senses abandon me.

[They lead her away.]

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Has she forgiven him?

BUENCO.

It seems so.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

You do not deserve your happiness.

CLAVIGO.

Believe that I feel it.

SOPHIE.

(Returns.) She forgives him. A stream of tears broke from her eyes. He should withdraw, said she sobbing, till I recover! I forgive him.—“Ah, my sister!” she exclaimed, and fell upon my neck, “whence knows he that I love him so?”

CLAVIGO.

(Kissing her hand.) I am the happiest man under the sun. My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Embraces him.) With all my heart then. Although I must tell you: even yet I cannot be your friend, even yet I cannot love you. So now you are one of us, and let all be forgotten. The paper you gave me—here it is.

[He takes it from his portfolio, tears it, and gives it to him.]

CLAVIGO.

I am yours, ever yours.

SOPHIE.

I beseech you to retire, that she may not hear your voice, that she may rest.

CLAVIGO.

(Embracing them in turn.) Farewell! Farewell! A thousand kisses to the angel.

[Exit.]

BEAUMARCHAIS.

After all, it may be for the best, although I should have preferred it otherwise.
(*Smiling.*) A girl is a good-natured creature, I must say—and, my friends, I should tell you, too, it was truly the thought, the wish of our ambassador, that Marie should forgive him, and that a happy marriage might end this sad story.

GUILBERT.

I too am taking heart again.

BUENCO.

He is your brother-in-law, and so, good-by! You shall see me in your house no more.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Sir!

GUILBERT.

Buenco!

BUENCO.

I hate him now and always shall to the day of judgment. And take care with what kind of a man you have to do.

[*Exit.*

GUILBERT.

He is a melancholy bird of ill omen. But yet in time he will be persuaded, when he sees that all goes well.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Yet it was hasty to return him the paper.

GUILBERT.

No more! no more! no visionary cares.

[*Exit.*



Fr. Pecht del.

published by george barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Carlos

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ACT IV.



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SCENE I.—

Clavigo's *Abode*. Carlos, *Alone*.

CARLOS.

It is praiseworthy to place under guardianship a man, who, by his dissipation or other follies, shows that his reason is deranged. If the magistrate does that, who otherwise does not much concern himself about us, why should not we do it for a friend? Clavigo, you are in a bad position; but there is still hope. And, provided that you retain a little of your former docility, there is time yet to keep you from a folly which, with your lively and sensitive character, will cause the misery of your life, and lead you to an untimely grave. He comes.

CLAVIGO.

(Thoughtful.) Good-day, Carlos.

CARLOS.

A very sad, dull—. Good-day! Is that the mood in which you come from your bride?

CLAVIGO.

She is an angel! They are excellent people!

CARLOS.

You will not so hasten with the wedding that we cannot get an embroidered dress for the occasion?

CLAVIGO.

Jest or earnest, at our wedding no embroidered dresses will make a parade.

CARLOS.

I believe it indeed.

CLAVIGO.

Pleasure in each other's society, friendly harmony shall constitute the splendor of this festival.

CARLOS.

You will have a quiet little wedding.

CLAVIGO.

As those who feel that their happiness rests entirely with themselves.

CARLOS.

In those circumstances it is very proper.

CLAVIGO.

Circumstances! What do you mean by "those circumstances"?

CARLOS.

As the matter now stands and remains.

CLAVIGO.

Listen, Carlos, I cannot bear a tone of reserve between friends. I know you are not in favor of this marriage; notwithstanding, if you have aught to say against it, you may say it. Come, out with it. How then does the matter stand? how goes it?

CARLOS.

More unexpected, strange things happen to one in life, and it were not well if all went quite smoothly. One would have nothing to wonder at, nothing to whisper in the ear, nothing to pull to pieces in society.

CLAVIGO.

It will make some stir.

CARLOS.

Clavigo's wedding! that is clear of course. How many a girl in Madrid waits patiently for thee, hopes for thee, and if you now play them this trick?

CLAVIGO.

That cannot be helped now.

CARLOS.

'Tis strange, I have known few men who make so great and general an impression on women as you. In all ranks there are good girls who occupy their time with plans and projects to become yours. One relies on her beauty, another on her riches, another on her rank, another on her wit, and another on her connections. What compliments have been paid to me on your account! For, indeed, neither my flat nose, nor crisp hair, nor my known contempt for women can bring me such good luck.

CLAVIGO.

You mock.

CARLOS.

As if I have not already had in my hands declarations, offers, written with their own white fond little fingers, as badly spelled as an original love-letter of a girl can only be! How many pretty duennas have come under my thumb on this account!

CLAVIGO.

And you did not say a word of all this?

CARLOS.

I did not wish to trouble you with mere trifles, and I could not have advised you to take any such matter seriously. O Clavigo, my heart has watched over your fate as over my own! I have no other friend but you; all men are not to be tolerated, and you even begin to be unbearable.

CLAVIGO.

I entreat you, be calm.

CARLOS.

Burn the house of a man who has taken ten years to build it, and then send him a confessor to recommend Christian patience! A man ought to look out for no one but himself; people do not deserve—

CLAVIGO.

Are your misanthropic visions returning?

CARLOS.

If I harp anew on that string, who is to blame but you? I said to myself: What would avail him at present the most advantageous marriage? him, who for an ordinary man has doubtless advanced far enough? But with his genius, with his gifts, it is not probable, it is not possible, that he can remain stationary. I concerted my plans. There are so few men at once so enterprising and so supple, so highly gifted and so diligent. He is well qualified in all departments. As recorder, he can rapidly acquire the most important knowledge; he will make himself necessary; and should a change take place, he becomes minister.

CLAVIGO.

I avow it. Often, too, were these my dreams.

CARLOS.

Dreams! As surely as I should succeed in reaching the top of a tower, if I set off with the firm determination not to yield till I had carried my point, so surely would you have overcome all obstacles; and afterwards the rest would have given me no disquietude. You have no fortune from your family, so much the better! You would have become more zealous to acquire, more attentive to preserve. Besides, he who sits at the receipt of custom without enriching himself is a great fool; and I do not see why the country does not owe taxes to the minister as well as to the king. The latter gives his name, and the former the power. When I had arranged all that, I then sought out a fit match for you. I saw many a proud family which would have shut their eyes to your origin, many of the richest who would have gladly supported you in the maintenance of your rank, to share the dignity of the second king—and now—

CLAVIGO.

You are unjust, you lower my actual condition too much; and do you fancy then that I cannot rise higher, and make still further advances?

CARLOS.

My dear friend, if you lop off the heart of a young plant, in vain will it afterwards and incessantly put forth countless shoots; it will form, perhaps, a large bush, but it is all over with the kingly attempt of its first growth. And think not that at the court this marriage is regarded with indifference. Have you forgotten what sort of men disapproved your attachment, your union with Marie? Have you forgotten who inspired you with the wise thought of abandoning her? Must I count them all on my fingers?

CLAVIGO.

This thought has already distressed me; yes, few will approve this step.

CARLOS.

Nobody; and will not your powerful friends be indignant that you, without asking their leave, without consulting them, should have so hastily sacrificed yourself like a thoughtless child, who throws away his money in the market on worm-eaten nuts?

CLAVIGO.

That is impolite, Carlos, and exaggerated.

CARLOS.

Not at all. Let one commit an egregious error through passion, I allow it. To marry a chambermaid because she is as beautiful as an angel! Well, the man is blamed, and yet people envy him.

CLAVIGO.

People, always the people!

CARLOS.

You know I do not inquire very curiously after the success of others; but it is ever true that he who does nothing for others does nothing for himself; and if men do not wonder at or envy you, you too are not happy.

CLAVIGO.

The world judges by appearances. Oh! he who possesses Marie's heart is to be envied.

CARLOS.

Things appear what they are; but, frankly, I have always thought that there were hidden qualities that render your happiness enviable; for what one sees with his eyes and can comprehend with his understanding—

CLAVIGO.

You wish to make me desperate.

CARLOS.

“How has that happened?” they will ask in the town. “How has that happened?” they will ask in the court. “But, good God! how has that happened? She is poor, without position. If Clavigo had not had an intrigue with her one would not have known that she was in the world; she is said to be well bred, agreeable, witty!” But who takes to himself a wife for that? That passes away in the first years of marriage. “Ah!” says

some one, "she must be beautiful, charmingly, ravishingly beautiful." "That explains the matter," says another.

CLAVIGO.

(Troubled, lets a deep sigh escape.) Alas!

CARLOS.

"Beautiful? Oh," says one lady, "very good! I have not seen her for six years." "She may well be altered," says another. "One must, however, see her; he will soon take her out," says a third. People ask, look, are eager, wait, and are impatient; they recall the ever-proud Clavigo, who never let himself be seen in public without leading out in triumph a stately, splendid, haughty Spanish lady, whose full breast, blooming cheeks, impassioned eyes—all, all seemed to ask the world encircling her: "Am I not worthy of my companion?" and who in her pride lets flaunt so widely in the breeze the train of her silken robe, to render her appearance more imposing and remarkable.—And now appears the gentleman—and surprise renders the people dumb—he comes accompanied by his tripping little Frenchwoman, whose hollow eyes, whose whole appearance announces consumption, in spite of the red and white with which she has daubed her death-pale countenance. Yes, brother! I become frantic, I run away, when people stop me now and ask, and question, and say they cannot understand—

CLAVIGO.

(Seizing his hand.) My friend, my brother, I am in a frightful position. I tell you, I avow I was horror-struck, when I saw Marie again. How changed she is!—how pale and exhausted! Oh! it is my fault, my treacheries!—

CARLOS.

Follies! visions! She was in consumption when the romance of your love was still unfolding. I told you a thousand times, and— But you lovers have your eyes, nay, all your senses closed. Clavigo, it is a shame. All, yes, all to forget thus! A sick wife, who will plague all your posterity, so that all your children and grandchildren will in a few years be politely extinguished, like the sorry lamp of a beggar.—A man who could have been the founder of a family, which perhaps in future—Ah! I am becoming a fool, my reason fails me.

CLAVIGO.

Carlos, what shall I say to thee? When I saw her again, in the first transport, my heart went out towards her; and alas! when that was gone, compassion—a deep, heartfelt pity was breathed into me: but love—Lo! in the warm fulness of joy, I seemed to feel on my neck the cold hand of death. I strove to be cheerful; to play the part of a happy man again, in presence of those who surrounded me: it was all gone, all so stiff, so

painfully anxious! Had they not somewhat lost their self-possession, they would have remarked it.

CARLOS.

Hell! death and devil! and you are going to marry her! (*Clavigo remains absorbed, without giving any answer.*) It is all over with thee; lost forever. Farewell, brother, and let me forget all; let me, all the rest of my solitary life, furiously curse your fatal blindness. Ah! to sacrifice all, to render one's self despicable in the eyes of the world, and not even then satisfy thereby a passion, a desire! To contract a malady voluntarily which, while undermining your inmost strength, will make you hideous in the eyes of men!

CLAVIGO.

Carlos! Carlos!

CARLOS.

Would that you had never been elevated, at least you would never have fallen! With what eyes will they look on all this! "There is the brother," they will say; "he must be a lad of spirit; he has put to the last shift Clavigo, who dared not draw the sword." "Ah!" our flaunting courtesans will say, "one saw all along that he was not a gentleman." "Ah, ah!" exclaims another, while drawing his hat over his eyes, "the Frenchman should have come to me!" And he claps himself on the paunch—a fellow, who perhaps were not worthy of being your groom!

CLAVIGO.

(*Expresses the most acute distress, and falls into the arms of Carlos amid a torrent of tears.*) Save me! My friend! my best friend, save me! Save me from a double perjury! from an unutterable disgrace, from myself. I am done for!

CARLOS.

Poor, hapless one! I hoped that these youthful furies, these stormy tears, this absorbing melancholy would have been gone; I hoped to behold you, as a man, agitated no more, no more plunged in that overwhelming sorrow, which in other days you so often uttered on my breast with tears. Be a man, Clavigo; quit yourself like a man!

CLAVIGO.

Let me weep! (*Throws himself into a chair.*)

CARLOS.

Alas for you that you have entered on a career which you will not pursue to the end! With your heart, with your sentiments, which would make a tranquil citizen happy, you must unite this unhappy hankering after greatness! And what is greatness, Clavigo? To raise one's self above others in rank and consequence? Believe it not. If your heart is not greater than that of others; if you are not able to place yourself calmly above the circumstances which would embarrass an ordinary man, then with all your ribbons, all your stars, even with the crown itself, you are but an ordinary man. Take heart, compose your mind! (*Clavigorises, looks on Carlos, and holds out his hand, which Carlos eagerly seizes.*) Come, come, my friend! make up your mind. Look, I will put everything aside, and will say to you: Here lie two proposals on equal scales; either you marry Marie and find your happiness in a quiet citizen-like life, in tranquil homely joys; or you bend your steps along the path of honor to a near goal.—I will put all aside, and say: The beam of the balance is in equilibrium; your decision will settle which of the two scales will carry the day! Good! But decide! There is nothing in the world so pitiable as an undecided man, who wavers between two feelings, hoping to reconcile them, and does not understand that nothing can unite them except the doubt, the disquietude, which rack him. Go, and give Marie your hand, act as an honorable man, who, to keep his word, sacrifices the happiness of his life, who regards it as a duty to repair the wrong he has committed; but who, too, has never extended the sphere of his passions and activity further than to be in a position to repair the wrong he has committed; and thus enjoy the happiness of a tranquil retirement, the approval of a peaceful conscience, and all the blessedness belonging to those who are able to create their own happiness and provide the joy of their families. Decide, and then shall I say—You are every inch a man.

CLAVIGO.

Carlos! Oh, for a spark of your strength—of your courage!

CARLOS.

It slumbers in thee, and I will blow till it gives vent to flames. Behold on the one side the fortune and the greatness which await you. I shall not set off this future with the variegated hues of poetry; represent it to yourself with such vivacity as it clearly appeared before your mind, till the hot-headed Frenchman made you lose your wits. But there too, Clavigo, be a man thoroughly, and take your way straight, without looking to the right or left. May your soul expand, and this great idea become deeply rooted there, that extraordinary men are extraordinary precisely because their duties differ from the duties of ordinary men; that he, whose task it is to watch over, to govern, to preserve a great whole, needs not reproach himself with having overlooked trifling circumstances, with having sacrificed small matters to the good of the whole. Thus acts the Creator in nature, and the king in the state; why should not we do the same, in order to resemble them?

CLAVIGO.

Carlos, I am a little man.

CARLOS.

We are not little when circumstances trouble us, only when they overpower us. Yet another breath, and you are yourself again. Cast away the remnant of a pitiable passion, which in these days as little becomes you as the little gray jacket and modest mien with which you arrived at Madrid. What the poor girl has done for you, you have long ago returned; and that your first friendly reception was from her hands.—Oh! another, for the pleasure of your acquaintance, would have done as much and more, without putting forth such pretensions. And would you take it into your head to give your schoolmaster the half of your fortune because he taught you the alphabet thirty years ago? What say you, Clavigo!

CLAVIGO.

That is all very well. On the whole you may be right, it may be so; only how are we to get out of the embarrassment in which we stick fast? Advise me there, help me there, and then lecture.

CARLOS.

Good! Do you wish it so?

CLAVIGO.

Give me the power and I shall exert it. I am not able to think; think for me.

CARLOS.

Thus then. First you will go and meet this person, and then you will demand, sword in hand, the vindication which you inconsiderately and involuntarily gave.

CLAVIGO.

I have it already; he tore it and returned it to me.

CARLOS.

Excellent! excellent! That step taken already—and you have let me speak so long?—Your course is so much the shorter! Write him quite coolly: “You find it inconvenient to marry his sister; the reason he can learn if he will repair to-night to a certain place, attended by a friend, and armed with any weapons he likes.” And then follows the signature.—Come, Clavigo, write that; I shall be your second—and the devil is in it if—(*Clavigo approaches the table.*) Listen! A word! If I think aright of it,

it is an extravagant proposal. Who are we to risk our lives with a mad adventurer? Besides, the man's conduct, his standing, do not deserve that we regard him as an equal. Listen then! Now if I made a criminal charge against him, that he arrived secretly at Madrid, got himself announced under a pseudonym with an accomplice, at first gained your confidence with friendly words, and thereafter fell upon you all of a sudden, forcibly obtained a declaration, and afterwards went off to spread it abroad—that will prove his ruin: he shall learn what that means—to invade the tranquillity of a Spaniard under his own roof.

CLAVIGO.

You are right.

CARLOS.

But till the law-suit has begun, in which interval the gentleman might play all sorts of tricks, if now we could meanwhile play a dead-sure game, and seize him tight by the head.

CLAVIGO.

I understand, and know you are the man to carry it out.

CARLOS.

Ah! well! if I, who have been at it for five-and-twenty years, and have witnessed tears of anguish trickling down the cheeks of the foremost men, if I cannot unravel such child's play! So then, give me full power; you need do nothing, write nothing. He, who orders the imprisonment of the brother, pantomimically intimates that he will have nothing to do with the sister.

CLAVIGO.

No, Carlos! Let it go as it may, I cannot, I will not suffer that. Beaumarchais is a worthy man, and he shall not languish in an ignominious prison on account of his righteous cause. Another plan, Carlos, another!

CARLOS.

Bah! bah! Stuff and nonsense! We will not devour him. He will be well lodged and well cared for, and thereafter he cannot hold out long: for, observe, when he perceives that it is in earnest, all his theatrical rage will cease; he will come to terms, return smartly to France, and be only too thankful, if we secure a yearly pension for his sister—perhaps the only thing he cared a straw about.

CLAVIGO.

So be it then! Only let him be kindly dealt with.

CARLOS.

Leave that to me.—One precaution more! We cannot know but that it may be blabbed out—that the thing may get wind, and then he gets over you, and all is lost. Therefore, leave your house, so that your very servant does not know where you have gone. Take with you only absolute necessaries. I shall despatch you a fellow who will conduct you and bring you to a place where the holy Hermandad herself will not find you. I have always in readiness a few of these mouseholes. Adieu!

CLAVIGO.

Good-by!

CARLOS.

Cheer up! cheerily! When it is all over, brother, we will enjoy ourselves.

[Exit.

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SCENE II.—

Guilbert's *Abode*.



Sophie Guilbert, *Marie Beaumarchaisat work*.

MARIE.

With such violence did Buenco depart?

SOPHIE.

It was natural. He loves you, and how could he endure the sight of the man whom he must doubly hate?

MARIE.

He is the best, most upright citizen whom I have ever known. (*Showing her work to her sister.*) It seems to me I must do it thus. I shall take in that and turn the end up. That will do nicely.

SOPHIE.

Very well. And I am going to put a straw-colored ribbon on my bonnet; it becomes me best. Do you smile?

MARIE.

I am laughing at myself. We girls are wonderful people, I must say: hardly are our spirits but a little raised than straightway we are busy with finery and ribbons.

SOPHIE.

You cannot find fault with yourself at all; from the moment Clavigo forsook you, nothing could give you the least pleasure. (*Marie starts up and looks towards the door.*) What is the matter?

MARIE.

(*Anxious.*) I thought some one was coming! My poor heart! Oh, it will destroy me yet! Feel how it beats with groundless terrors!

SOPHIE.

You look pale. Be calm, I beseech you, my love!

MARIE.

(*Pointing to her breast.*) I feel here an oppression—a sudden pain. It will kill me.

SOPHIE.

Be careful.

MARIE.

I am a foolish, hapless girl. Pain and joy with all their force have undermined my poor life. I tell you, 'tis but half a joy that I have him again. Little shall I enjoy the happiness that awaits me in his arms; perhaps not at all.

SOPHIE.

My sister, my only love! You are wearing yourself out with these visions.

MARIE.

Why shall I deceive myself?

SOPHIE.

You are young and happy, and can hope for all.

MARIE.

Hope! Oh, the only sweet balm of life! How often it charms my soul! Happy youthful dreams hover before me and accompany the beloved form of the peerless one, who now is mine again. O Sophie, he is so winsome! Whilst I saw him not, he has—I know not how I shall express it;—all the qualities, which in former days lay hid in

him through his diffidence, have unfolded themselves. He has become a man, and must with this pure feeling of his, with which he advances, that is so entirely devoid of pride and vanity—he must captivate all hearts.—And he shall be mine? No, my sister, I was not worthy of him—and now I am much less so!

SOPHIE.

Take him, however, and be happy. I hear your brother!

Beaumarchais*enters.*

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Where is Guilbert?

SOPHIE.

He has been gone some time; he cannot be much longer.

MARIE.

What is the matter, brother? (*Springing up and falling on his neck.*) Dear brother, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Nothing! nothing at all, my Marie!

MARIE.

If I am thy Marie, do tell me what is on thy mind!

SOPHIE.

Let him be. Men often look vexed without having aught particular on their mind.

MARIE.

No, no. I see thy face only a little while; but already I read all thy thoughts, all the feelings of thy pure and sincere soul are stamped on thy brow. There is somewhat which makes thee anxious. Speak, what is it?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

It is nothing, my love. I hope that at bottom it is nothing. Clavigo—

MARIE.

How?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I was at Clavigo's house. He is not at home.

SOPHIE.

And does that perplex you?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

His hall-servant says he has gone he knows not where; no one knows how long. If he should be hiding himself! If he be really gone! Whither? for what reason?

MARIE.

We will wait.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Thy tongue lies. Ah! the paleness of thy cheeks, the trembling of thy limbs, all speak and testify that thou canst not wait. Dear sister! (*Clasps her in his arms.*) On this beating, painfully trembling heart I vow.—hear me, O God, who art righteous! hear me, all His saints!—thou shalt be avenged, if he—my senses abandon me at the thought—if he fail, if he make himself guilty of a frightful, double perjury; if he mock at our misery— No, it is, it is not possible, not possible—thou shalt be avenged.

SOPHIE.

All too soon, too precipitate. Be careful of her health. I beseech you, my brother. (*Marie sits down.*) What ails thee? You are fainting.

MARIE.

No, no. You are so anxious.

SOPHIE.

(*Gives her water.*) Take this glass.

MARIE.

No, no! what avails that? Well, for my own sake, give it me.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Where is Guilbert? Where is Buenco? Send after them, I entreat you. (*Sophie* exits.)
How dost thou feel, Marie?

MARIE.

Well, quite well! Think'st thou then, brother—

BEAUMARCHAIS.

What, my love?

MARIE.

Ah!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Is your breathing painful?

MARIE.

The disordered beating of my heart oppresses me.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Have you then no remedy? Do you use no anodyne?

MARIE.

I know of only one remedy, and for that I have prayed to God many a time and oft.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Thou shalt have it, and I hope from my hand.

MARIE.

That will do well.

Sophie enters.

SOPHIE.

A courier has just brought this letter; he comes from Aranjuez.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

That is the seal and the hand of our ambassador.

SOPHIE.

I bade him dismount and take some refreshment; he would not, because he had yet more despatches.

MARIE.

Will you, my love, send the servant for the physician?

SOPHIE.

Are you ill? Holy God! what ails thee?

MARIE.

You will make me so anxious that at last I shall scarcely dare ask for a glass of water. Sophie! Brother!—What is in the letter? See, how he trembles! how all courage leaves him!

SOPHIE.

Brother, my brother! (*Beaumarchais throws himself speechless into a chair and lets the letter fall.*) My brother! (*Lifts up the letter and reads it.*)

MARIE.

Let me see it! I must—(*tries to rise.*) Alas! I feel it. It is the last. O sister, spare not for mercy's sake the last quick death-stroke!—He betrays us!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(*Springing up.*) He betrays us! (*Beating on his brow and breast.*) Here! here! All is as dumb, as dead before my soul, as if a thunder-clap had disordered my senses. Marie! Marie! thou art betrayed!—and I stand here! Whither?—What?—I see nothing, nothing! no way, no safety! (*Throws himself into a seat.*)

Guilbert enters.

SOPHIE.

Guilbert! Counsel! Help! We are lost!

GUILBERT.

My wife!

SOPHIE.

Read! read! The ambassador makes known to our brother: that Clavigo has made a criminal complaint against him, under the pretext that he introduced himself into his house under a false name; and that taking him by surprise in bed and presenting a pistol, he compelled him to sign a disgraceful vindication; and if he do not quickly withdraw from the kingdom, they will get him thrown into prison, from which the ambassador himself perhaps will not be able to deliver him.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Springing up.) Indeed, they shall do so! they shall do so! shall get me imprisoned; but from his corpse, from the place where I shall have glutted my vengeance with his blood. Ah! the stern, frightful thirst after his blood fills my whole soul. Thanks to Thee, God in heaven, that Thou vouchsafest to man, amid burning, insupportable wrongs, a solace, a refreshment! What a thirst for vengeance I feel in my breast! how the glorious feeling, the lust for his blood, raises me out of my utter dejection, out of my sluggish indecision; raises me above myself! Vengeance! How I rejoice in it! how all within me strives after him, to seize him, to destroy him!

SOPHIE.

Thou art terrible, brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

So much the better.—Ah! No sword, no weapon! with these hands will I strangle him, that the triumph may be mine! all my own the feeling: I have destroyed him!

MARIE.

My heart! my heart!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

I have not been able to save thee, so thou shalt be avenged. I pant after his footsteps, my teeth lust after his flesh, my gums after his blood. Have I become a frantic wild beast! There burns in every vein, there glows in every nerve, the desire after him, after him!—I could hate him forever, who should make away with him by poison, who should rid me of him by assassination. Oh, help me, Guilbert, to seek him out. Where is Buenco? Help me to find him!

GUILBERT.

Save yourself! save yourself! you have lost your reason.

MARIE.

Flee, my brother!

SOPHIE.

Take him away; he will cause his sister's death.

Buenco appears.

BUENCO.

Up, sir! away! I saw it before. I gave heed to all. And now they are in hot pursuit; you are lost if you do not leave the town this moment.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Never more! Where is Clavigo?

BUENCO.

I do not know.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Thou knowest. I entreat you on my knees, tell me.

SOPHIE.

For God's sake, Buenco!

MARIE.

Ah! air! air! (*Falls back.*) Clavigo!—

BUENCO.

Help, she is dying!

SOPHIE.

Forsake us not, God in heaven! Hence! my brother, away!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Falls down before Marie, who despite every aid does not recover.) To forsake thee!
to forsake thee!

SOPHIE.

Stay, then, and ruin us all, as you have killed Marie. You are gone, then, O my sister,
through the heedlessness of your own brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Stop, sister!

SOPHIE.

(Mocking.) Saviour!—Avenger!—help yourself!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Do I deserve this?

SOPHIE.

Give her to me again! And then go to the prison, to the stake; go, pour forth thy blood
and give me her again.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Sophie!

SOPHIE.

Ha! and she is gone, she is dead—save yourself for us! *(Falling on his neck.)* My
brother, for us! for our father! Haste, haste! That was her fate! she has met it! And
there is a God in heaven, to Him leave vengeance.

BUENCO.

Hence! away! Come with me; I will hide you till we find means to get you out of the
kingdom.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Falls on Marie and kisses her.) Sister dear! *(They tear him away, he clasps Sophie, she
disengages herself. They remove Marie, and Buenco and Beaumarchais retire.)*

Guilbert, *a* Physician.

SOPHIE.

(Returning from the room to which they had taken Marie.) Too late! She is gone! she is dead!

GUILBERT.

Come in, sir! See for yourself! It is not possible!

[Exit.



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ACT V.



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SCENE I.—

The Street Before The House Of Guilbert. Night.

[The house is open, and before the door stand three men clad in black mantles, holding torches. Clavigo enters, wrapped in a cloak, his sword under his arm; a Servant goes before him with a torch.

CLAVIGO.

I told you to avoid this street.

SERVANT.

We must have gone a great way round, sir, and you are in such haste. It is not far hence where Don Carlos is lodged.

CLAVIGO.

Torches there!

SERVANT.

A funeral. Come on, sir.

CLAVIGO.

Marie's abode! A funeral! A death-agony shudders through all my limbs! Go, ask whom they are going to bury.

SERVANT.

(To the men.) Whom are you going to bury?

THE MEN.

Marie de Beaumarchais.

[Clavigo sits down on a stone and covers himself with a cloak.

SERVANT.

(Comes back.) They are going to bury Marie de Beaumarchais.

CLAVIGO.

(Springing up.) Must thou repeat it? Repeat that word of thunder which strikes all the marrow out of my bones?

SERVANT.

Peace, sir! Come on, sir. Consider the danger by which you are surrounded.

CLAVIGO.

To hell with thee, reptile! I remain.

SERVANT.

O Carlos! Oh, that I could find thee!—Carlos!—he has lost his reason.

[Exit.

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SCENE II.

Clavigo. *The Mutes in the distance.*

CLAVIGO.

Dead! Marie dead! Torches! her dismal attendants! it is a trick of enchantment, a night vision, which terrifies me; which holds up to me a mirror, in which I may see foreboded the end of all my treacheries. But there is still time. Still!—I tremble—my heart melts with horror! No! no! thou shalt not die—I come, I come! Vanish, ye spirits of the night, who with your horrible terrors set yourselves in my way. (*He goes up to them.*) Vanish—they remain! Ha! they look round after me! Woe! woe is me! They are men like myself. It is true! true! Canst thou comprehend it? She is dead! It seizes me amid all the horrors of midnight—the feeling—she is dead. There she lies, the flower at your feet! and thou—Oh, have mercy on me, God in heaven—I have not killed her! Hide yourselves, ye stars! look not down!—ye who have so often beheld the villain with feelings of the most heartfelt happiness leave this threshold; through this very street float along in golden dreams with music and song, and enrapture his maiden listening at the secret casement and lingering in transport. And now I fill the house with wailing and sorrow—and this scene of my bliss with the funeral song—Marie! Marie! take me with thee! take me with thee! (*Mournful music breathes forth a few sounds from within.*) They are setting out on the way to the grave. Stop! stop! Shut not the coffin. Let me see her once more. (*He runs up to the house.*) Ha! into whose presence am I rushing? Whom to face in his terrible sorrow? Her friends! her brother! whose breast is panting with raving grief! (*The music recommences.*) She calls me! she calls me! I come! What anguish is this which overwhelms me? What shuddering withholds me?

[The music begins for the third time and continues. The torches move before the door; three others come out to them, who range themselves in order to inclose the funeral procession, which now comes out of the house. Six bearers carry the bier, upon which lies the coffin, covered.]



Fr. Pecht del

published by george barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Marie Beaumarchais

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SCENE III.

Guilbert and Buenco (*in deep mourning*).

CLAVIGO.

(*Coming forward.*) Stay!

GUILBERT.

What voice is that?

CLAVIGO.

Stay!

[*The bearers stop.*

BUENCO.

Who dares to interrupt the solemn funeral?

CLAVIGO.

Set it down.

GUILBERT.

Ha!

BUENCO.

Wretch! Are thy deeds of shame not yet ended? Is thy victim not safe from thee in the coffin?

CLAVIGO.

No more! Make me not frantic. The wretched are dangerous; I must see her.

[*He tears off the pall and the lid of the coffin. Marie is seen lying within it, clad in white, her hands clasped before her; Clavigo steps back and covers his face.*

BUENCO.

Wilt thou awake her to murder her again?

CLAVIGO.

Poor mocker! Marie!

[He falls down before the coffin.]

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SCENE IV.

Enter Beaumarchais. The preceding.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Buenco has left me. They say she is not dead. I must see, spite of hell, I must see her. Ha! torches! a funeral!

[He runs hastily up to it, gazes on the coffin, and falls down speechless. They raise him up; he is as if deprived of sense; Guilbertholds him.]

CLAVIGO.

(Who is standing on the other side of the coffin.) Marie! Marie!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Springing up.) That is his voice. Who calls Marie? At the sound of that voice what burning rage starts into my veins!

CLAVIGO.

It is I. *(Beaumarchais staring wildly around and grasping his sword. Guilbertholds him.)* I fear not thy blazing eyes, nor the point of thy sword. Oh! look here, here, on these closed eyes—these clasped hands!

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Dost *thou* show *me* that sight?

[He tears himself loose, runs upon Clavigo, who instantly draws; they fight; Beaumarchais pierces him through the breast.]

CLAVIGO.

(Falling.) I thank thee, brother; thou marriest us.

[He falls upon the coffin.]

BEAUMARCHAIS.

(Tearing him away.) Hence from this saint, thou fiend!

CLAVIGO.

Alas!

[The bearers raise up his body and support him.]

BEAUMARCHAIS.

His blood! Look up, Marie, look upon thy bridal ornaments, and then close thine eyes forever. See how I have consecrated thy place of rest with the blood of thy murderer! Charming! Glorious!

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SCENE V.

Enter Sophie. The preceding.

SOPHIE.

My brother? Oh, my God, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS.

Draw nearer, my love, and see! I hoped to have strewn her bridal bed with roses; see the roses with which I adorn her on her way to heaven!

SOPHIE.

We are lost!

CLAVIGO.

Save yourself, rash one! save yourself, ere the dawn of day. May God, who sent you for an avenger, conduct you! Sophie, forgive me. Brothers, friends, forgive me.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

How the sight of his gushing blood extinguishes all the glowing vengeance within me! how with his departing life vanishes all my rage! (*Going up to him.*) Die! I forgive thee.

CLAVIGO.

Your hand! and yours, Sophie! and yours!

[*Buencohesitates.*

SOPHIE.

Give it him, Buenco.

CLAVIGO.

I thank you; you are as good as ever; I thank you. And thou, O spirit of my beloved, if thou still hoverest around this place, look down, see these heavenly favors, bestow thy blessing, and do thou too forgive me. I come! I come! Save yourself, my brother. Tell me, did she forgive me? How did she die?

SOPHIE.

Her last word was thy unhappy name. She departed without taking leave of us.

CLAVIGO.

I will follow her and bear your farewells to her.

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SCENE VI.

Carlos, *a* Servant. *The preceding.*

CARLOS.

Clavigo! murderers!

CLAVIGO.

Hear me, Carlos! Thou seest here the victim of thy prudence; and now, I conjure thee, for the sake of that blood, in which my life irrevocably flows away, save my brother.

CARLOS.

Oh, my friend! (*To the servant.*) You standing there? Fly for a surgeon.

[Exit servant.

CLAVIGO.

It is in vain; save, save my unhappy brother! thy hand thereon. They have forgiven me, and so forgive I thee. Accompany him to the frontiers, and—oh!

CARLOS.

(Stamping with his feet.) Clavigo! Clavigo!

CLAVIGO.

(Drawing nearer to the coffin, upon which they lay him down.) Marie! Thy hand!

[He unfolds her hands and grasps the right hand.

SOPHIE.

(To Beaumarchais.) Hence, unhappy one, away!

CLAVIGO.

I have her hand, her cold, dead hand. Thou art mine. Yet this last bridal kiss! Alas!

SOPHIE.

He is dying! Save thyself, brother!

[Beaumarchais falls on Sophie's neck. She returns the embrace and makes a sign for
him to withdraw.



artist: c. karger.

CLAVIGO.

death of clavigo

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Stella.

A Tragedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

STELLA.

CECILIA. (*At first under the name of MADAME SOMMER.*)

FERNANDO.

LUCY.

STEWARD.

LANDLADY.

ANNIE.

CARL.

SERVANT.



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ACT I.

At the Inn.

The sound of a Post-horn is heard.

LANDLADY.

Carl! Carl!

[The lad appears.]

CARL.

What's you want?

LANDLADY.

Where in the name of all that's holy have you been? Out with you! The stage is coming. Show the passengers in; lug their bags for them! Bestir yourself! Are you making up a face again? *(The lad exits; calling after him.)* Hold on! I'll cure you of your surly ways. A tavern-boy has got to be lively, on his taps. By-and-by, when such a rascal gets to be at the head of things, he lets everything go to pieces. If I ever thought of getting married again, it would be just on this account: that it's too hard for a woman alone to keep things in running order.

Madame Sommer, Lucy*(in travelling-dress)*, Carl.

LUCY.

(Carrying a valise, to Carl.) Just let it be; 't isn't heavy; but take my mother's bandbox.

LANDLADY.

At your service, ladies! You are in good time. The stage does not usually get in so early.

LUCY.

We had a very young, jolly, handsome postilion, in whose company I wouldn't object to travel round the world, and besides there were only two of us without much baggage.

LANDLADY.

If you want something to eat, please be good enough to be patient for a bit; dinner isn't quite ready yet.

MADAME SOMMER.

Might I trouble you for just a little lunch?

LUCY.

I am in no hurry at all. Please look out for my mother, however?

LANDLADY.

Right away.

LUCY.

She wants some real nice broth.

LANDLADY.

She shall have the best I've got.

[*Exit.*

MADAME SOMMER.

Strange that you cannot stop giving orders! It seems to me that our journey might have taught you a lesson or two! We have always paid for more than we have eaten; and in our circumstances!

LUCY.

We've never yet come out short.

MADAME SOMMER.

But we've been precious near it.

Postilionenters.

LUCY.

Well, my excellent driver, how do you feel? You'd like your fee, wouldn't you?

POSTILION.

Haven't I driven like a special post?

LUCY.

That means that you have also earned a special fee I suppose! You should be my private coachman, if I only kept horses.

POSTILION.

Even if you don't keep them, I am at your service.

LUCY.

There!

POSTILION.

Thank you, miss! Are you not going further?

LUCY.

We stop here for the present.

POSTILION.

Good-by!

[*Exit.*

MADAME SOMMER.

I see by his face that you gave him too much.

LUCY.

Would you have him leave us discontented? He was so friendly the whole time. You are always saying that I am selfwilled, mamma; but at all events I am not selfish.

MADAME SOMMER.

I beg of you, Lucy, don't misunderstand what I say to you. I honor your frankness as well as your good heart and your generosity; but they are virtues only in their proper places.

LUCY.

Mamma, this place pleases me very much. And I suppose that yonder house belongs to the lady whose companion I am going to be.

MADAME SOMMER.

I am glad if the place of your destination is agreeable to you!

LUCY.

Quiet it may be, that I can see. It's just like Sunday in the great square. But her ladyship has a fine garden and must be a good woman. We shall see how we get on together. Why are you looking about you, mamma?

MADAME SOMMER.

Leave me, Lucy! Fortunate girl, in whose heart no recollections are stirred! Alas! it used to be different! There is nothing more painful to me than to come into an inn.

LUCY.

Where don't you find something to worry about?

MADAME SOMMER.

And is there ever any lack of reasons for it? My darling, how different it used to be when your father travelled with me, when we enjoyed the happiest years of our lives in the free world, the first years of our married life! Then everything had the charm of novelty for me! And with his arm around me to hasten through so many thousand objects, when every trivial thing was made interesting to me by his intelligence, his love!—

LUCY.

I should like very much to travel.

MADAME SOMMER.

And when after a hot day, or after some series of accidents, perhaps on account of bad roads in winter, we arrived at much worse inns than this one, and together felt the enjoyment of simple comforts, or sat together on the wooden settle, eating our omelet and boiled potatoes—ah, then it was very different!

LUCY.

But now it is time to forget him.

MADAME SOMMER.

Do you know what that means? To forget? My dear girl, you have, thank God, never yet lost anything that could not be replaced. But since the moment when I became certain that he had deserted me, all the joy of my life was gone. Despair seized upon me. I had no faith in myself, I did not believe in a God. I can scarcely bear to think of it.

LUCY.

And all I know is that I sat on your bed and cried because you cried. It was in the green room, on the little bed. I felt worse about the room because we had to sell the house.

MADAME SOMMER.

You were seven years old and couldn't realize what you were losing.

Annie(*with the lunch*), the Landlady, Carl.

ANNIE.

Here is madame's lunch.

MADAME SOMMER.

Thank you, my love! Is that your little daughter?

LANDLADY.

My stepdaughter, madame; but she is so capable that she makes me forget that I have no children of my own.

MADAME SOMMER.

You are in mourning?

LANDLADY.

For my husband whom I lost three months ago. We had not lived together quite three years.

MADAME SOMMER.

Yet you seem somewhat comforted.

LANDLADY.

We have just as little time to weep as to pray. Alas! so it goes Sundays and work-a-days. If the parson did not come with his text once in a while, or once had a chance to go to a funeral—Carl, bring a couple of napkins! Put 'em here at the end!

LUCY.

Whose house is that over yonder?

LANDLADY.

It belongs to our gracious baroness. A most lovely woman!

MADAME SOMMER.

I am glad to have a neighbor confirm the report that was given to us at a distance. My daughter is going to live with her and be her companion.

LANDLADY.

I wish you the best success, miss.

LUCY.

I hope that she is going to please me.

LANDLADY.

You must have an extraordinary taste if your intercourse with the gracious lady does not please you.

LUCY.

So much the better! For if I am to get along well with any one my heart and will must be in it; else it does not succeed.

LANDLADY.

Well! well! we'll talk some more about this by-and-by, and you shall tell me if I have not spoken the truth. Whoever lives near our gracious ladyship is lucky. When my daughter gets a little bigger, then she is going to serve with her for a few years at least; it's a good thing for the girl all her life long.

ANNIE.

Ah! only wait till you see her! She is so sweet, so sweet! You can't believe how anxiously she has been waiting for you. She likes me too. Will you not go right over to her? I will go with you.

LUCY.

I must set myself to rights first, and I want something to eat too.

ANNIE.

Then can't I run over, mamma, and tell her ladyship that the mademoiselle has come?

LANDLADY.

Well then, run along!

MADAME SOMMER.

And tell her, little one, that we will wait upon her immediately after dinner.

[*Exit* Annie.

LANDLADY.

My daughter has an extraordinary fondness for her. And she is the best soul in the world and her whole heart is with children. She teaches them to do all sorts of work and to sing. She likes to have the peasant girls wait on her until they get some skill and then she gets them good places, and this is the way she spends her time since her husband has been gone. It's incomprehensible how she can be so unhappy and at the same time so kind and so good.

MADAME SOMMER.

Isn't she a widow?

LANDLADY.

God knows! her husband went away three years ago, and since then nothing has been seen or heard of him. And she loved him above all things. My man could never get done when he began to tell about them. And yet! I myself say it, there is not such a heart as hers in the world. Every year on the day when she saw him for the last time, she will not admit anyone, shuts herself up in her room, and generally when she speaks of him it goes through your very soul!

MADAME SOMMER.

Poor creature!

LANDLADY.

There's been a good deal of talk about it, first and last.

MADAME SOMMER.

What do you mean?

LANDLADY.

It is not pleasant to repeat it.

MADAME SOMMER.

I beg you to tell me.

LANDLADY.

If you will not abuse my confidence I will tell you the story. It's about eight years ago since they came here. They bought the barony. No one knew them; the people called him baron and called her my gracious lady, and they thought that he was an officer who had got rich in foreign wars and now wanted to settle down in peace. At that time she was just in the bloom of youth, not more than sixteen years old and handsome as an angel.

LUCY.

Then she can't be more than twenty-four now?

LANDLADY.

But she has had trouble enough for her years. She had one child; it did not live long; its grave is in the garden, with only turf over it, and since her husband went away she has had a hermitage built near it, and her own grave is to be made right by it. My blessed man was well along in years and not easy to get stirred up; but he liked to tell nothing better than about the happy lives of those people as long as they lived together. It made quite another man of him, he used to say, only to look on and see how fond they were of each other.

MADAME SOMMER.

My heart is moved for her.

LANDLADY.

But this was the way of it: Folk said he had curious principles; leastwise he never went to church; and folks that haven't any religion haven't any God, and are apt to get into bad ways. All of a sudden the report got out that the baron was off. He had started on his travels, and since then he has never come back.

MADAME SOMMER.

(Aside.) The very counterpart of my own fate!

LANDLADY.

Then all the mouths were full of it! It was just at the time that I came here as a young bride—three years ago St. Michael's day. And then everybody had a different story, and they went about whispering in their neighbor's ears that they'd never had any confidence in him. But don't you betray me. It was said that he was a highborn gentleman who had eloped with her, and all sorts of things were said. Ah, yes, if a young girl makes a false step like that she has to repent of it all her life long.

Enter Annie.

ANNIE.

Her ladyship begs most earnestly that you will come right over to her; she wants to speak with you just a moment, just to look at you!

LUCY.

It is not suitable to go in these clothes.

LANDLADY.

Oh, do go! I pledge you my word that she will not care at all.

LUCY.

Will you go with me, little girl?

ANNIE.

With all my heart.

MADAME SOMMER.

Lucy, a word with you! *(Landlady goes away.)* Don't you commit yourself at all. Don't speak of our rank, our fate. Meet her deferentially.

LUCY.

(Softly.) Trust it all to me! My father was a merchant, went to America, is dead and hence our circumstances. You just trust it to me; I've told the story often enough.
(Aloud.) Don't you want to rest a little while? You need to. The good landlady will show you to a room where there's a bed.

LANDLADY.

I have indeed a pretty, quiet chamber looking out into the garden. *(To Lucy.)* I hope that the gracious lady will please you.

[Exit Lucy with Annie.]

MADAME SOMMER.

My daughter is still a little flighty.

LANDLADY.

That is the way of youth; but the proud waves get calmed down after a little.

MADAME SOMMER.

So much the worse.

LANDLADY.

Come with me, madame, if you like to.

[Exeunt both.]

A Post-horn is heard.

Fernando *(in officer's uniform), a Servant.*

SERVANT.

Shall I have the horses harnessed again right away and your things packed?

FERNANDO.

You're to fetch them into the inn, I tell you. This is the end of our journey; do you hear?

SERVANT.

This is? But you said—

FERNANDO.

I tell you: have a room secured and bring my bags to it.

[*Exit*Servant.

FERNANDO.

(*Going to the window.*) And do I see thee again? Heavenly prospect! Do I see thee again? Scene of all my felicity! How silent is the house! Not a window open! How empty the balcony whereon we so often sat together! Fernando, behold the cloister-like air of her dwelling; how it flatters thy hopes! And can it be that in her loneliness Fernando is the object of her thoughts, of her occupation? And has he deserved it of her? Oh! it seems to me as if I had awakened into life again after a long, cold, joyless death-sleep; so novel, so significant is everything! The trees, the fountains, everything, everything! Even now the water runs from the pipes just as it did when I—ah! how many thousand times, gazed thoughtfully from our window and saw all things silently reflected in the running waters. The voice of the fountain is melody to me, thought-transporting melody! And she? She will be as she used to be! Yes, Stella, thou hast not changed; my heart tells me truly. How it beats in response to thine! How its beating urges me toward thee! But I will not, I dare not! I must first recover, must first persuade myself that I am actually here, that I am not deceived by the dream which so often, when I slept and when I waked, brought me hither from the farthest regions of the earth. Stella! Stella! I am coming! Dost thou not already feel my presence? In thy arms all shall be forgotten! And if thou hoverest about me, beloved shade of my unlucky wife, forgive me, depart from me! Thou art gone; so let me forget thee, forget everything in the arms of this angel—my fate, all my loss, my sorrows and my repentance! I am so near to thee and yet so far! And in a single moment—I cannot, I cannot! I must recover myself or I shall suffocate at her feet!

*Enter*Landlady.

LANDLADY.

Would you like something to eat, sir?

FERNANDO.

Is dinner ready?

LANDLADY.

Oh, yes! we are only waiting for a young lady who has gone across to the gracious lady's.

FERNANDO.

And how is her ladyship?

LANDLADY.

Do you know her?

FERNANDO.

A few years ago I used to be there a great deal. How is her husband?

LANDLADY.

Heaven only knows! He is somewhere in the wide world!

FERNANDO.

What! gone?

LANDLADY.

Fact! He has deserted the poor lady! God forgive him!

FERNANDO.

She will soon learn to console herself.

LANDLADY.

Do you think so, indeed? Then you can't know her very well. She lives as close as a nun ever since I've known her. Almost no one, nobody in the neighborhood, comes to visit her. She lives with her people, keeps all the children of the village attached to her, and except for her secret sorrow, is always friendly and pleasant.

FERNANDO.

I am going to see her, however!

LANDLADY.

I would. Oftentimes she has invited us, that is, the bailiff's wife and the pastor's wife and me, and she likes to discuss all sorts of questions with us. But faith, we avoid speaking of her husband, the baron! It happened we reminded her of him one day. God knows how we felt when she fell to and began to speak of him, to praise him and to cry about him. My dear sir, we all wept like children, and we could hardly get over it.

FERNANDO.

(Aside.) Hast thou deserved this of her! *(Aloud.)* Does my servant know which my room is?

LANDLADY.

Up one flight, number two! Carl, show the gentleman his room.

[Exit Fernandowith the lad.

Enter Lucyand Annie.

LANDLADY.

Well, how was it?

LUCY.

She is a lovely little woman and I shall get along with her very well. You have not praised her too highly. She did not want to let me go. She made me promise by all that is holy that I would bring my mother and my things right over after dinner.

LANDLADY.

I thought it would turn out so. Would you like to dine right away? Only a tall, handsome officer has just come; but you need not be afraid of him.

LUCY.

Not in the least! I like to have soldiers around better than anyone else. At least they don't set themselves up to know how to read people's characters at first sight. Is my mother asleep?

LANDLADY.

I don't know.

LUCY.

I must go and look after her.

[Exit.

LANDLADY.

Carl! there you've gone and forgotten the saltcellar again. What kind of work do you call that? And just look at the glasses! I'd smash one or two over your head if they didn't cost more than you are worth.

Enter Fernando.

LANDLADY.

The young lady has got back. She will be down to dinner right away.

FERNANDO.

Who is she?

LANDLADY.

I am not acquainted with her. She seems to be of good birth but without means: she is going to be lady's companion to the baroness.

FERNANDO.

She is young?

LANDLADY.

Very young and pert. Her mother is here too—up stairs.

Enter Lucy.

LUCY.

Your humble servant, sir.

FERNANDO.

I am fortunate to have such a charming companion at dinner.

[Lucy makes a courtesy.

LANDLADY.

Sit here, mademoiselle! And will you take this place, sir?

FERNANDO.

Shall we not have the honor of your company, good mistress?

LANDLADY.

Ah, no; if I rest, everything rests.

[*Exit.*

FERNANDO.

So we shall have a tête-à-tête!

LUCY.

With the table between us, I can endure it.

FERNANDO.

So you have determined to be companion to the baroness?

LUCY.

I've got to be.

FERNANDO.

It seems to me that you ought to be able to be a companion to some one who would be more entertaining than the baroness.

LUCY.

I have no way of finding such.

FERNANDO.

But your charming face?

LUCY.

I see that you are like all other men!

FERNANDO.

That means?

LUCY.

Why just this, you are all very assuming. You think that you are indispensable; but I don't think so, I grew up without men.

FERNANDO.

Then your father is dead?

LUCY.

I can scarcely remember that I ever had one. I was young when he left us to undertake a journey to America and the news came that his ship was wrecked.

FERNANDO.

And you seem to care so little about him.

LUCY.

Why should I care? He never did much to win my love; and even if I forgave him for deserting us, what does a man care for except his freedom? Yet I would not be in my mother's place, who is dying with grief.

FERNANDO.

And you are without resources, without protectors?

LUCY.

What is the difference? Our property has grown smaller day after day, and all the time I have been growing larger; and I am not sorry to support my mother.

FERNANDO.

Your courage astonishes me!

LUCY.

Ah, sir, it comes with trial. When you have several times been threatened with ruin and every time been saved, it inspires confidence.

FERNANDO.

And can't you communicate some of it to your dear mother?

LUCY.

Alas! it is she who has met the loss and not I. I thank my father that I was born into the world, for I am happy and contented; but she!—who hoped for nothing in life except from him, and who offered up to him the flower of her youth and was deserted—suddenly deserted!—Oh, it must be something dreadful to feel yourself deserted!—I have never lost anything; I cannot speak about it.—You seem to be pondering.

FERNANDO.

Yes, my dear, he who lives may lose (*standing up*); but he may also win. And so may God preserve to you your courage! (*He takes her hand.*) You have astonished me! Oh, my child, how fortunate you are!—In my experience with the world oftentimes my hopes, my joys have—yet there is—and—

LUCY.

What do you mean?

FERNANDO.

Everything that is good! the best, the warmest wishes for your happiness!

[*Exit.*

LUCY.

That is a most extraordinary man! Still he seems to be good!



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ACT II.



Stella and Servant.

STELLA.

Go right over, go just as quick as you can! Tell her I am waiting for her.

SERVANT.

She promised to come immediately.

STELLA.

But you see she has not come yet. I have taken a great fancy to the young girl. Go!—and have her mother come with her.

[Exit Servant.]

STELLA.

I can hardly wait till she comes! How one wishes and hopes for a new face such as hers to make its appearance! Stella! thou art a child! And yet why should I not love? I need much, very much to satisfy this heart of mine! Much? Poor Stella! Much?—When in other days, he still loved thee, when his head lay on thy bosom, his glances filled thy whole soul; and—O God in heaven! thy decrees are past finding out! When in the midst of his kisses I turned my eyes to Thee, when my heart glowed as it was pressed against his, and with trembling lips I drank in his great spirit, and then looked up with tears of joy to Thee and from a full heart spoke to Thee, prayed to Thee, saying: “Father, let us be happy still; Thou hast made us so happy!” But it was not Thy will. *(For a moment she is lost in thought, then quickly starts up, and presses her hands to her heart.)* No! Fernando, no! I did not mean to reproach thee!

Enter Madame Sommer and Lucy.

STELLA.

Now I have you! Thou, dear maiden, thou art henceforth mine! Madame, I thank you for the confidence which you have shown in placing in my hands such a treasure! The little witch, the frank, open heart! I have already begun to learn of thee, Lucy!

MADAME SOMMER.

You appreciate what I bring you and leave with you.

STELLA.

(After a pause in which she gazes at Madame Sommer.) Forgive me! I already know your story; I know that I am talking with people of good family; but your presence surprises me. At the first moment I feel confidence and respect toward you.

MADAME SOMMER.

Gracious lady!—

STELLA.

Don't speak of it! What my heart recognizes, my lips willingly confess. I hear that you are not well; tell me how you are. Do sit down!

MADAME SOMMER.

But, your ladyship, this journey in the springtime, the changing scenery, and this pure, invigorating air, which has so often before filled me with new and blessed energy—all have worked wonders for me, so that even the memory of departed joys became a pleasure to me, so that I saw a reflection of the golden days of youth and of love kindle in my soul!

STELLA.

Yes, the days of love! the first days of love!—No, thou golden age, thou hast not yet gone back to heaven! thou still fillest every heart in those moments when the flower of love unfolds!

MADAME SOMMER.

(Seizing her hands.) How grand! How charming!

STELLA.

Your face glows like the face of an angel, the color mantles in your cheeks!

MADAME SOMMER.

Ah, and my heart! how it swells! how it yearns toward you!

STELLA.

You have loved! Oh, thank God! a creature that understands me! that can have pity upon me, and that looks with sympathy upon my sorrows! It is no fault of ours that we are as we are! Have I not done everything, tried every means? Yes! but what good did it do? It must be this—nothing but this—and no world—and nothing else in the world.—Ah, the loved one is everywhere and all things are for the loved one.

MADAME SOMMER.

You have a heaven in your soul!

STELLA.

Before I am aware, here is his image again!—Thus he stood up in this or that company and looked around for me.—Thus he came galloping across yonder field, and when he reached the garden gate threw himself into my arms.—Out of this door I saw him depart, depart! ah! and he returned again, he returned to his watching love!—If I turn my thoughts to the bustle of the world—he is there! If I sat in the box I was sure, wherever he might be hidden, whether I saw him or not, that he was watching all my motions and loved me! my downsitteing and my uprising! I felt that the waving of my feather plumes attracted him more than all the shining eyes around him, and that all the music was only the melody of the everlasting song of his heart: “Stella! Stella! how dear to me thou art!”

LUCY.

Is it possible that people can love each other so?

STELLA.

Dost thou ask, little one? Then I cannot answer thee!—But how am I entertaining you?—Trivialities—important trivialities!—Truly I am nothing but a grown up child, and yet it is so enjoyable. Just as children hide their faces behind their aprons and cry “Peek-a-boo,” so that their friends will hunt for them!—How it fills our hearts, if we have had a quarrel and jealously resolve to leave the object of our love, and with what distortions of the strong soul do we come into his presence again! How our bosoms are torn this way and that! and how at last at one glance, at one pressure of the hand everything is all made up again!

MADAME SOMMER.

How happy you are! You still live in the feeling of the freshest, purest humanity.

STELLA.

A millennium of tears and sorrows could not counterbalance the bliss of the first glance, the thrills, the broken words, the presence, the abandonment, the very self forgetfulness, the first timid, fiery kiss, and the first peacefully breathing embrace.—Madame! you are lost in reverie! Why so deeply absorbed?

MADAME SOMMER.

O men! men!

STELLA.

They make us happy and wretched! With what foretaste of bliss do they not fill our hearts! What new, unknown feelings and hopes swell our souls when their stormy passion communicates itself to each of our tingling nerves! How often have I trembled and thrilled all over when with unrestrained tears he filled my heart with a world of sorrows! I besought him for God's sake to spare himself—to spare me—in vain! Through the inmost marrow he kindled such flames as swept through his being! And thus the maiden from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet became all heart, all feeling! And where is now the zone under heaven suitable for this creature to breathe the vital air and to find nourishment?

MADAME SOMMER.

We believe in men! In the moment of passion they deceive their own hearts, why then should we not be deceived?

STELLA.

Madame! a thought occurs to me! We will be to one another what they ought to have been to us! We will remain together!—Your hand! From this moment I will not let you go!

LUCY.

That will not do at all.

STELLA.

Why not, dear Lucy?

MADAME SOMMER.

My daughter feels that—

STELLA.

That this proposition is not a wise one? Oh, just consider what a benefit you would do me if you stayed! Oh, I cannot be alone! My darling, I have done everything, I have kept hens and cattle and dogs; I teach the little girls to sew and to make embroidery, just for the sake of not being alone, just for the sake of seeing something beside my own self, that is alive and growing. And then again, when I am lucky enough, when the gods seem to have relieved my soul of pain, some bright spring morning when I wake up full of peace, and the dear sun shines through my gleaming trees, and amid the duties of the day I feel industrious and joyous, then I spend quite a time ordering and directing things and teaching my servants, and in the freedom of my heart I speak my thanks aloud to Heaven for such happy hours.

MADAME SOMMER.

Ah, yes, your ladyship, I sympathize with you! Occupation and charity are gifts from heaven, a compensation for loving hearts that are unhappy.

STELLA.

Not compensation—makeshift, something instead of what has been lost, but not the lost itself. Lost love! where can a compensation for it be found? Oh, when time and again I sink from thought to thought, bringing up the blissful dreams of the past before my soul, yearning for a future full of hope, and thus in the flooding moonlight wander up and down my garden, then all of a sudden I am seized, seized with the feeling that I am all alone, and I stretch out my arms vainly to the four winds, expressing the magic of love with a force, a fervor so great that it seems to me as if I could drag the moon from the sky—and I am alone, no voice replies to me from the copse, and the stars look down upon my torments with cold, changeless glances! And then with the grave of my baby at my feet!—



MADAME SOMMER.

You had a baby?

STELLA.

Yes, dearest! O God, thou didst allow me only to taste of this felicity in order to prepare for me a bitter cup all my days. When even a peasant child comes running along barefooted on the walk and throws me a kiss and looks at me with her great innocent eyes, it goes to my very soul! I think my Mina was just her age. I lift her with love and anguish and kiss her a hundred times; my heart is torn, the tears gush from my eyes and I hasten away.

LUCY.

But you have so much the less annoyance.

STELLA.

(Smiling and patting her shoulder.) How deeply I still feel the pain! Strange that the terrible moments did not kill me! She lay before me! the flower was gathered! and I stood with my heart turned to stone—without pain, without consciousness, I stood! Then the nurse took up the child, pressed it to her heart and suddenly cried: “It lives!” I fell upon her, threw my arms around her neck, and wept a thousand tears upon her face, at her feet. Alas, she was deceived! Dead she lay there, and I close by in maddening, horrible despair!

[She throws herself into a chair.]

MADAME SOMMER.

Turn your thoughts from those melancholy scenes!

STELLA.

No, it is good indeed for me to unburden my heart once more, to prattle away the weight of sorrow that has oppressed me so long! Yes, if I am going to speak again of him who used to be all in all to me!—who—you must see his portrait!—his portrait!—Oh, it always seems to me that the form of man is the best text for all that can be felt and said about him!

LUCY.

I am full of curiosity!

STELLA.

(Opening her cabinet and leading them in.) Here, my friends! here!

MADAME SOMMER.

God!

STELLA.

Yes, yes! and yet it does not give a thousandth part of an idea of him as he really was. That brow, those black eyes, these brown curls, that earnest face! But alas! the painter could not express the love and the friendliness that he showed when his soul overflowed! Oh, my heart, thou alone canst feel that!

LUCY.

Madame, I am astonished!

STELLA.

He was indeed a man!

LUCY.

I must tell you that this very day I ate dinner with an officer over at the inn who was the image of this gentleman. Oh! it must be the same person! I would wager my life that it was!

STELLA.

To-day? Thou art deceived! thou art deceiving me!

LUCY.

Yes, to-day! It was the same, only older and more sunburned. Oh, it was! it was!

STELLA.

(Pulling the bell-cord.) Lucy! my heart is bursting! I will go right over!

LUCY.

It would not be suitable!

STELLA.

Suitable! Oh, my heart!

Enter Servant.

STELLA.

Henry, go right over to the inn! Go right away! There is an officer there, who must be—who is—Lucy, tell him—have him come right over!

LUCY.

Did you know the baron?

SERVANT.

As well as my own self.

LUCY.

Then go over to the inn; there is an officer there who bears an extraordinary resemblance to him. Find out if I have been deceived. I'd take my oath it is he!

STELLA.

Tell him that he must come here! come quick! quick! Could I endure this? If in this I have—oh, no, thou hast deceived thyself! It is impossible!—Leave me, my friends! leave me alone.

[She closes the door of the cabinet behind her

LUCY.

What is the matter, mother? how pale you are!

MADAME SOMMER.

This is the last day of my life! My heart cannot bear this! All, all at once.

LUCY.

Great God!

MADAME SOMMER.

My husband—the portrait—the long-expected—the long-loved! That is my husband! That is your father!

LUCY.

Mother! dearest mother!

MADAME SOMMER.

And he is here!—will take her into his arms in a moment or two!—And we?—Lucy, we must hurry away!

LUCY.

Anywhere you wish.

MADAME SOMMER.

Right away!

LUCY.

Come into the garden! I am going back to the inn. If only the stage has not gone yet, we can get away without the formality of leavetaking. Meantime she is intoxicated with her good fortune.

MADAME SOMMER.

Embracing him in all the bliss of seeing him again—him! And I in the very moment of finding him again—forever, forever!

Fernando enters with Servant.

SERVANT.

This way, sir! Do you not recognize your library again? She is beside herself! Ah! to think that you are back!

[Fernando passes without seeing the ladies.]

MADAME SOMMER.

'Tis he! 'tis he!—I am lost!

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ACT III.



Stella joyously entering with Fernando.

STELLA.

(To the walls.) He is here again! Do ye see him? He is here again! *(Coming before the picture of Venus.)* Dost thou see him, goddess? He is here again! How many times have I not run up and down before thee like one mad and wept and mourned before thee! He is here again! I do not trust my senses. Goddess! I have looked upon thee so often when he was not here! Now thou art here and he too is here! Dearest! dearest! Thou wert long away, but thou art here now. *(Falling into his arms.)* Thou art here! I wish to feel nothing, hear nothing, know nothing else except that thou art here again!

FERNANDO.

Stella! my Stella! *(Holding her close.)* God in heaven, thou givest me back the power to weep once more!

STELLA.

Oh, thou only one!

FERNANDO.

Stella, let me drink in thy sweet breath again, thy breath—in comparison with which the air of heaven is dull and unrefreshing.

STELLA.

Dearest!

FERNANDO.

Breathe new love into this parched, storm-tossed, ruined heart—new love, new life-
enjoyment from the abundance of thy heart!

[He presses a kiss upon her mouth.]

STELLA.

Best!

FERNANDO.

How invigorating! how invigorating! Here where thou breathest, everything is imbued with most satisfying young life. Love and abiding truth would here enchain the wasted wanderer.

STELLA.

Thou enthusiast!

FERNANDO.

Thou dost not know what heavenly dew it is to the thirsty one who comes back to thy bosom from the barren, desert world!

STELLA.

And the bliss of poor me, Fernando, to press to her heart again her long-lost, wandering, only lamb!

FERNANDO.

(At her feet.) My Stella!

STELLA.

Up, my dearest! arise! I cannot bear to see thee kneel.

FERNANDO.

Oh, let me! As I bend before thee on my knees, so my heart lies before thee, thou infinite love and goodness!

STELLA.

I hold thee again—I do not recognize myself, I do not understand my own heart! What has really happened?

FERNANDO.

It is to me as it was in the first moments of our bliss. I have thee in my arms, from thy lips I imbibe the reality of thy love! I reel and am drunken with passion, and in amaze I ask myself whether I wake or dream.

STELLA.

Now, Fernando, as I can well perceive, thou hast not been wise!

FERNANDO.

God forefend!—But these moments of bliss in thy arms restore me again to goodness, to virtue. I can pray, Stella, for I am happy!

STELLA.

God forgive you that you are such an unsettled and yet such a good man! May the God who made thee forgive thee—that thou art so inconstant and so true!—When I hear the accents of thy voice, then it seems to me that it must be the same Fernando who cared for nothing in all the world but me!

FERNANDO.

And when I gaze into thy sweet blue eyes and lose myself in their depths, it seems to me as if during all the time of my absence no other image had dwelt there but mine.

STELLA.

Thou art not mistaken.

FERNANDO.

Can it be?

STELLA.

I would confess to you! Did I not in the first days of my full love for you make thee my confessor for all the petty griefs that touched my heart? And didst thou not love me all the more for it?

FERNANDO.

Thou angel!

STELLA.

Why dost thou look at me so? I have grown older, have I not? Sorrow has faded the bloom of my cheeks, has it not?

FERNANDO.

Thou rose! my sweet flower! Stella! Why dost thou shake thy head?

STELLA.

How is it that one can love you so?—Why can we not reckon up the pains that you cause our hearts?

FERNANDO.

(Stroking her curls.) Let us see if we can find a single gray hair!—It is thy fortune that thou art so blonde without turning gray. And, indeed, it seems to be just as thick as ever. *(He pulls out the comb and the locks fall in voluminous waves.)*

STELLA.

Mischievous!

FERNANDO.

(Twining his arms in them.) Rinaldo again in his ancient chains!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Your ladyship!

STELLA.

What is the matter? Your face looks cross and stern! You know that such expressions are the death of me when I am happy!

SERVANT.

But excuse me, your ladyship!—The two strangers are preparing to go.

STELLA.

To go? Alas!

SERVANT.

'Tis as I told you! I saw the daughter going over to the inn, and then she came back and spoke to her mother. And then I asked about it over there and they told me that an extra stage had been ordered because the stage had already gone. I then had a talk with them; the mother with tears in her eyes begged me to send their things over to them as secretly as possible and that I should express their best wishes for the gracious lady; they could not remain longer!

FERNANDO.

Is it the lady who with her daughter came to-day?

STELLA.

I was going to take the daughter into my service and keep the mother too! Oh, why should they cause all this worry just at this time, Fernando?

FERNANDO.

What is the matter with them?

STELLA.

Heaven only knows! I don't know anything about it. I don't want to lose them!—Yet I have thee, Fernando!—If I had not, I should perish at this dilemma! Speak with them, Fernando; don't wait a minute!—Persuade the mother to come back, Henry! (*Exit* Servant.)—Speak with her! She shall have every liberty.—Fernando, I will go into the arboreum! Follow me! follow me! Ye nightingales, ye shall now welcome him!

FERNANDO.

Loveliest love!

STELLA.

(*Clinging to him.*) And wilt thou come soon?

FERNANDO.

Immediately! Immediately!

[*Exit* Stella.]

FERNANDO.

(Alone.) Angel of heaven! How joyous in her presence everything becomes, how free!—Fernando, dost thou know thyself? All that oppressed this heart is gone; every care, every painful recollection of what has been and what might have been!—Will ye return again?—And yet when I see thee, when I hold thy hand, Stella! all vanishes, every other image in my heart is blotted out.

Enter Steward.

STEWARD.

(Kissing Fernando's hand.) And have you come back again?

FERNANDO.

(Withdrawing his hand.) You see me!

STEWARD.

Let me! let me! O gracious master!

FERNANDO.

Has all gone well with thee?

STEWARD.

My wife is still alive, I have two children—and you are home again!

FERNANDO.

And how hast thou managed the estate?

STEWARD.

So that I am ready to lay down my reckoning. You will be surprised to see how we have improved the property.—But may I inquire how it has gone with you?

FERNANDO.

Silence!—But ought I not to tell thee all? Thou art worthy of my confidence, old comrade in my youthful follies.

STEWARD.

Thank God that you were not a pirate chieftain; at a word from you I would have applied the torch and set the flames!

FERNANDO.

Thou shalt hear!

STEWARD.

Your wife? your daughter?

FERNANDO.

I have failed to find them. I did not dare to go to the city; but from absolutely reliable sources I learn that she placed confidence in a merchant who proved to be a false friend and enticed from her, under the promise of heavier interest, the money which I left her! He deceived her. Making the pretext of going into the country she left the neighborhood and disappeared, and apparently is gaining a precarious livelihood by the labor of her hands and her daughter's. You know she had courage and character enough to embark in any such enterprise.

STEWARD.

And you are back again. How can we forgive you for being gone so long!

FERNANDO.

I have made a long journey of it.

STEWARD.

If I had not been so happy at home with my wife and children, I should envy you the way that you have travelled about the world. Shall you remain with us now?

FERNANDO.

God willing!

STEWARD.

There is after all nothing so satisfactory and nothing so good.

FERNANDO.

Yes, who could forget the good old times?

STEWARD.

And yet amid all our pleasure they brought much trouble. I remember perfectly well how lovely we found Cecilia, how we urged our suit upon her, and could not be hasty enough in making way with our youthful freedom!

FERNANDO.

Yet it was a happy, fortunate epoch in my life!

STEWARD.

How she brought us a gay, lively little daughter, but at the same time she lost much of her sprightliness and much of her charm.

FERNANDO.

Pray spare me this biography!

STEWARD.

How we looked around us here and there and everywhere, and how we at last found this angel, and how there was not any more said about coming and going, but how we had to decide which of the two we would make wretched; and how at last, when it seemed convenient, and the chance offered itself to sell the estates, and how when we got out of it with much loss, we abducted the angel and banished to this spot the beautiful child who did not know herself or the world.

FERNANDO.

It seems to me that thou art as full of prattle and inclined to preach as thou wert of yore!

STEWARD.

Have I not had the chance to learn? Have I not been the confidant of your conscience? When you wanted to get away from here—I don't know whether it was from pure desire to find your wife and daughter again, or because of some mental unrest—how I had to be your assistant in more ways than one.

FERNANDO.

This time I forgive thee!

STEWARD.

Only stay with us and all will be well!

[*Exit.*

*Enter*Servant.

SERVANT.

Madame Sommer!

FERNANDO.

Show her in!

[*Exit*Servant.

FERNANDO.

(*Alone.*) This woman makes me melancholy. How true it is that there is nothing whole, nothing pure in the world! This woman! Her daughter's courage has disturbed me; what effect will her sorrow have?

*Enter*Madame Sommer.

FERNANDO.

(*Aside.*) O God! and even her figure also must recall my past! O heart! my heart! Oh, when it lies within thee so to feel and so to act, why hast thou not strength also to pardon what has been done to thee? A shade of the image of my wife!—Oh, where do I not see thee! (*Aloud.*) Madame!

MADAME SOMMER.

What is your command, sir?

FERNANDO.

I should like to engage your services as companion to my Stella and to me. Pray take a seat!

MADAME SOMMER.

The presence of the sorrowful is burdensome to those who are happy, and alas! still more so is the happy to the sorrowful!

FERNANDO.

I do not understand you. Can you have misjudged Stella? she who is all love, all divine!

MADAME SOMMER.

Sir, I wish to go away in secrecy! Permit me! I must go! Be persuaded that I have reasons! But I beg of you to let me go!

FERNANDO.

(Aside.) What voice is that! What form! *(To Cecilia.)* Madame! *(He turns away.)* God! it is my wife! *(Aloud.)* Pardon me!

[Exit in haste.

MADAME SOMMER.

(Alone.) He knew me! I thank thee, O God, that thou hast given my heart so much strength at this moment! Is it I, the torn and crushed, who at this critical hour am so full of peace and courage? O Thou kind and infinite Protector, Thou dost take from our hearts nothing except to give it back again at the hour when it is most needed!

Re-enter Fernando.

FERNANDO.

(Aside.) Can she have recognized me? *(Aloud.)* I beg you, madame, I implore you to open your heart to me!

MADAME SOMMER.

You would like me to tell you my story, and how is it possible that you should be disposed to listen to sorrow and lamentation on a day when all the joys of life are given to you again, when you have once again given all the joys of life to the best of women? No, sir, let me go!

FERNANDO.

I beseech you!

MADAME SOMMER.

How gladly would I spare yourself and me! The memory of the first happy days of my life gives me deathly pain.

FERNANDO.

You have not always been unhappy?

MADAME SOMMER.

No; for then I should not be so unhappy as I am now. (*After a pause, with calmness.*) My youthful days were bright and joyous. I know not what there was in me that attracted men; a numerous throng wanted to ingratiate themselves with me. For a few I felt friendship, affection; yet was there none with whom I could have brought myself to unite my life. And thus passed the fortunate days of rosy-colored diversions—days of happiness that were seemingly endless. And yet there was something wanting. When I looked deeper into my life, and anticipated the joys and sorrows that must come to men, then I longed for a husband whose hand should lead me through the world, who in return for the love which my young heart could offer him would be in old age my friend, my protector, and take the place of my parents whom for his sake I left.

FERNANDO.

And now?

MADAME SOMMER.

Alas! I saw the man! I saw him, on whom in the early days of our acquaintance I concentrated all my hopes. The vivacity of his mind seemed united with such sincerity of heart that my heart quickly disclosed itself to him, that I gave him my friendship, and alas! how quickly followed it with my love. God in heaven, when his head rested on my breast, how did he not seem to thank Thee for the place that Thou hadst prepared for him in my arms! How eagerly he hastened from the tumult of care back to me again, and how in sad hours did I not find consolation on his heart!

FERNANDO.

What could have destroyed this lovely bond?

MADAME SOMMER.

Nothing is steadfast!—Alas! he loved, loved me as certainly as I loved him. There was a time when he thought of nothing, dreamed of nothing but to see me happy, to make me happy. That was, alas! the brightest period of my life, the first years of a relationship, when a slight ill-humor, a trifling ennui caused us more sorrow than if they had been real evils. Alas! he led me along the painful path in order to leave me solitary in an empty, fearful wilderness.

FERNANDO.

(*More and more confused.*) And how? His feelings, his heart?

MADAME SOMMER.

Can we know what goes on in the heart of man? I did not notice that little by little everything was growing—how shall I call it?—not more indifferent; that I cannot say. He still loved me, loved me! But he wanted more than my love. I had to share in his wishes, perhaps with a rival. I did not spare him my reproaches, and at last—

FERNANDO.

Was it possible that he—

MADAME SOMMER.

He left me. There is no name that befits the grief that I felt! All my hopes annihilated in one moment! in the moment when I was expecting to harvest the fruits of the flowers that I had offered—deserted!—deserted! All the stays of the human heart: love, trust, honor, position, daily increasing property, the charge of a numerous, well cared-for posterity, everything at once fell before me in ruin, and I—and the unfortunate pledge of our love which was left me—a deathlike sorrow followed close upon the raging pain, and the heart which had ceased to weep, given over to despair, sank into apathy. The succession of blows which reduced the estate of a poor deserted creature, I did not perceive, I did not feel, until at last I—

FERNANDO.

The guilty man!

MADAME SOMMER.

(With restrained melancholy.) No, he is not!—I commiserate the man who is attached to a maiden.

FERNANDO.

Madame!

MADAME SOMMER.

(With mild banter to hide her emotion.) Certainly not! I look upon him as a captive. They always say that it is so. He is removed from his world into ours with which he has nothing in common. He deceives himself for a time, and woe to us if his eyes are opened! After all I could be in his eyes only a blameless housewife who clung to him with the most strenuous endeavor, who tried to be agreeable to him, to be careful for him, who dedicated all her days to the advantage of her house, of her child, and indeed had to devote herself to such petty duties, that her heart and head often grew wild that she could be no entertaining companion, that he with the liveliness of his disposition could not help finding her society stupid. He is not to blame!

FERNANDO.

(At her feet.) I am he!

MADAME SOMMER.

(With a torrent of tears, on his neck.) My—!

FERNANDO.

Cecilia!—My wife!—

CECILIA.

(Turning from him.) Not mine! You would leave me, my heart. *(Again on his neck.)* Fernando!—Whoever thou art—let these tears of one who sorrows flow on thy bosom! Hold me for this moment and then leave me forever!—It is not thy wife!—Repulse me not!

FERNANDO.

God!—Cecilia, thy tears on my cheeks—the trembling of thy heart on mine!—Spare me! spare me!

CECILIA.

I ask nothing, Fernando!—Only this moment!—Grant my heart this relief! it will be calm, strong! Thou shalt be free from me—

FERNANDO.

My life shall be dissevered ere I leave thee!

CECILIA.

I shall see thee again, but not upon this earth! Thou belongest to another from whom I cannot tear thee!—Open, open heaven for me! One glance into that holy distance, into that everlasting abiding place! There alone is consolation at this terrible moment.

FERNANDO.

(Seizing her by the hand, gazing into her eyes. embracing her.) Nothing, nothing in the world shall separate me from thee. I have found thee again.

CECILIA.

Found what thou didst not seek.

FERNANDO.

Spare me! spare me!—Yes, I have sought thee; thee, my poor deserted one, my faithful heart! I found even in the arms of this angel here no rest, no joy; everything reminded me of thee, of thy daughter, of my Lucy. Merciful heavens! What joy! Can it be that this lovely creature is my daughter?—I have sought thee everywhere. Three years I wandered from place to place. On the spot where we had lived I found, alas! our dwelling changed, in the hands of strangers, and I learned the sad story of the loss of thy property. Thy disappearance tore my heart; I could find no trace of thee, and weary of myself, of life, I disguised myself in these clothes, took foreign service, helped suppress the dying freedom of the noble Corsicans, and now thou seest me here, after long and wonderful wanderings, on thy heart, my dearest, my best wife.

Enter Lucy.

FERNANDO.

Oh, my daughter!

LUCY.

Dearest, best father. If you are my father indeed!

FERNANDO.

Always and ever!

CECILIA.

And Stella?

FERNANDO.

Herein we must act quickly. The unfortunate soul! Why, Lucy, could we not have recognized each other this morning?—My heart beat fast; thou knowest how moved I was when I left thee. Why was it? why was it?—Stella! we might have spared her all these pangs!—Yet we will away! I will tell her that thou insisted on going away, that thou would'st not pain her with a farewell, and would take thy departure. And thou, Lucy, hasten over! Have a post-chaise for three persons put in readiness. My servant shall pack up my things with thine. Thou shalt stay over here, dearest, most precious wife! And thou, my daughter, when all is arranged, come back and wait in the large room of the summer-house—wait for me! I will free myself from her, tell her that I am going to escort thee over, provide for thy departure and pay the bill for thee.—Poor soul, how could I deceive thee with thy goodness!—We will away!—

CECILIA.

Away?—Just one word of reason!

FERNANDO.

Away! let it be so! Yes, my dear ones, we will away!

[*Exit Cecilia and Lucy.*

FERNANDO.

(*Alone.*) Away?—Whither? whither?—A dagger stroke would clear the way for all these pains and hurl me into that dull insensibility for which now I would give everything. Art thou here, thou miserable man? Remember the happy days when thou didst stand in strong sufficiency against the wretch who would throw away life's burden! How didst thou feel in those fortunate days and now?—Yes, the fortunate, the fortunate! Had this discovery come an hour earlier I should have been saved! I should never have seen her again, nor she me; I could have persuaded myself: "She has forgotten thee in these four years, has conquered her sorrow." But now! How shall I appear before her? what can I tell her? Oh, my sin, my sin weighs heavy upon me at this moment! Both these dear ones deserted! And I, at the moment when I find them again, deserted by myself! wretched! Oh, my heart!



artist: R. Schick.

STELLA.

madame sommer and fernando.

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ACT IV.



Hermitage in Stella's Garden.

STELLA.

(Alone.) Beautiful thou bloomest, more beautiful than of yore, dear, dear spot of everlasting rest so oft desired! But thou dost no longer entice me. I tremble before thee—cool, loose earth, I tremble before thee! Ah! how often in hours of fancy would I have wrapped my head and breast resolutely in the mantle of death, and stood calmly on the edge and stepped into thy depths and buried my aching heart under thy living covering. Then should'st thou, Corruption, like a dear child, suckle this overflowing, oppressed bosom, and release my whole being in a kindly dream. And now, sun of the heaven, thou shinest upon me!—It is so light, so open around me, and I rejoice at it!—He is here again!—and in an instant Nature stands full of love around me—and I am all life—and new, warmer, more glowing life will I drink from his lips!—To him—by him—with him to dwell in lasting strength! Fernando!—He comes! Hark!—No, not yet!—Here shall he find me, here at my altar of roses, under my rose arbor. These buds will I pluck for him.—Here! here! And then will I lead him into this bower. Well, well was it that I had it constructed for two, narrow though it be. Here my book was wont to lie, my writing materials to stand!—Get ye gone, book and writing!—Would that he were here.—Again deserted!—Have I him again? Is he here?

Enter Fernando.

STELLA.

Where didst thou remain, thou best of men? Where wast thou? I was long, long alone! *(Troubled.)* What was the matter?

FERNANDO.

Those women have put me out of humor.—The elder is an excellent woman; but she will not stay, will give no reason, but insists upon hastening away. Let her go, Stella!

STELLA.

If she is not to be moved, I do not want to keep her against her will. And, Fernando, I needed companionship—but now (*on his neck*) now, Fernando, I have thee!

FERNANDO.

Calm thyself!

STELLA.

Let me weep! I would that the day were past. Even now all my limbs are in a tremble!—Joy!—All unexpected, suddenly!—Thee, Fernando!—It is almost too much, too much! I shall die amid it all!

FERNANDO.

(*Aside.*) Wretched man that I am! Desert her! (*Aloud.*) Leave me, Stella!

STELLA.

It is thy voice, thy loving voice! Stella, Stella! Thou knowest how gladly I hear thee say that name “Stella!” No one else speaks it as thou dost. The whole soul of love is in the sound! How vivid in me is the remembrance of the day when first I heard thee utter it, when all my happiness in thee began!

FERNANDO.

Happiness?

STELLA.

I believe that thou art beginning to count up and regretfully dwell upon the sad hours that I have spent on account of thee. Let them go, Fernando, let them go! Oh, from the moment when I saw thee for the first time, how everything in my soul was changed! Dost thou remember that afternoon in my uncle's garden when thou camest to us? We were sitting under the great castania tree behind the summer-house.

FERNANDO.

(*Aside.*) She will rend my heart! (*Aloud.*) I see it yet, my Stella!

STELLA.

How thou camest to us? I know not whether thou didst notice that at the very first moment thou didst attract my gaze? I at least soon observed that thine eyes sought me! Ah! Fernando, when my uncle brought the music thou didst take thy violin, and

as thou didst play, my eyes rested carelessly on thee; I spied into every feature of thy countenance, and, at an unexpected moment thou didst lift up thine eyes and look—at me! Thine eyes met mine! How I blushed, how I looked away. Thou hadst noticed it, Fernando! for from that time I felt that thou didst often look away from thy notes, didst often get out of the measure, so that my uncle was vexed. Every mistake, Fernando, went through my heart! It was the sweetest confusion that I ever felt in my life! For all the gold of Golconda I could not have looked thee in the face. I made my escape and went away.

FERNANDO.

Even to the slightest circumstance! (*Aside.*) Unfortunate remembrance!

STELLA.

I am often astonished at myself how I love thee, how at every moment in thy presence I forget myself entirely; yet to have everything as vividly before me as though it were but to-day! Yes, how often have I told it over to myself, Fernando! How thou didst seek me! how thou, hand in hand with a friend whom thou didst learn to know before me, camest sweeping through the bosky dale, and she cried “Stella!” and thou didst cry “Stella! Stella!” I had scarcely heard thee speak and yet I knew thy voice. And when thou overtook'st me and didst take my hand, who was the more confused, thou or I? One thing helped the other, and from that moment on—my good Sara told me that very same evening—it all took place! And what bliss in thy arms! If my Sara could have seen my joy! She was a good creature. She wept much for me when I was so ill, so love-sick! I would gladly have taken her with me when for thy sake I left everything.

FERNANDO.

Left everything!

STELLA.

Does that offend thee? Is it not true? Left everything! Or canst thou interpret the words on Stella's lips as a reproach? Long is it since I have had a chance to do enough for thee.

FERNANDO.

Truly! Thy uncle who loved thee like a father, who treated thee with affection, whose will was thy will, was not that much? The estate, the property, all of which were thine, would have been thine; was that nothing? The spot where thou from early youth hadst lived and enjoyed life—thy sports—

STELLA.

And all that, Fernando, without thee? What was all that compared with thy love? When thy love first arose in my soul then did I begin to live! Yet I must assure thee that many times I thought in the lonely hours: "Why could I not enjoy all that and have his love besides? Why must we fly? Why not remain in possession of all this? Could my uncle have denied him my hand?—No!—Then why fly?" Oh, I have found excuses enough for thee! for thee! they never failed to suggest themselves to me! Even if it were a caprice, I said—as you then had numberless caprices—if it were a caprice to keep the maiden for yourself secretly as pillage! And if it were pride, to have the maiden so entirely alone without anything as dowry! Thou canst imagine that my pride was in no small degree interested to make out the best case possible! and thus thou didst accomplish thy plan.

FERNANDO.

I cannot endure it!

Enter Annie.

ANNIE.

Excuse me, gracious lady. Where are you, captain? Everything is packed and now you only are missing! The young lady has caused so much running and trouble to-day that it was unendurable; and now you are missing!

STELLA.

Go, Fernando, bring them over. Pay their bill for them, but come right back again.

ANNIE.

Are you not going with them? The young lady has ordered a post-chaise for three; your servant has certainly packed up your things!

STELLA.

Fernando, this is a mistake! What does the girl know?

ANNIE.

What do I know? Truly it looks strange that the captain is going off with the young lady away from your ladyship, since she made his acquaintance at table! That was a touching parting, when you pressed her hand and wished a blessing on her!

STELLA.

(Constrained.) Fernando!

FERNANDO.

This is a mere child!

ANNIE.

Don't you believe him, gracious lady; everything is all packed up! The gentleman is going with them!

FERNANDO.

Whither? whither?

STELLA.

Leave us, Annie! *(Exit Annie.)* Save me from this horrible uncertainty. I fear nothing, and yet this child's chatter troubles me. Thou art moved, Fernando! I am thy Stella!

FERNANDO.

(Turning about and seizing her hand.) Thou art my Stella!

STELLA.

Thou frightenest me, Fernando! Thy face is wild!

FERNANDO.

Stella, I am a scoundrel and a coward and can hide nothing from thee! Flee! I have not the heart to thrust the dagger into thy breast and would secretly poison thee, murder thee! Stella!

STELLA.

For God's sake!

FERNANDO.

(Trembling with rage.) I cannot stand thy grief nor hear thy despair! Fly!

STELLA.

I cannot endure it!

[She almost sinks but clings to him.]

FERNANDO.

Stella, whom I hold in my arms! Stella, thou who art all to me! Stella! *(Coldly.)* I leave thee!

STELLA.

(Laughing wildly.) Me?

FERNANDO.

(Gnashing his teeth.) Thee—with the woman whom thou hast seen! with the maiden!

STELLA.

It is growing dark!

FERNANDO.

And that woman is my wife! *(Stella looks at him without comprehending and lets her arms fall.)* And the maiden is my daughter! Stella! *(He notices for the first time that she has fallen fainting.)* Stella! *(He lifts her to a sitting posture.)* Stella! Help! help!

Enter Cecilia and Lucy.

FERNANDO.

Behold! behold the angel! she has fled! behold!—help!

[They bestir themselves in her behalf.]

LUCY.

She is coming to!

FERNANDO.

(Looking at her in silence.) Through thee! through thee!

[Exit.]

STELLA.

Who? who? *(Standing up.)* Where is he? *(She sinks back, looking at those who are assisting her.)* Thank you! thank you!—Who are you?

CECILIA.

Calm yourself! It is we!

STELLA.

You?—You are not gone? You are— God! who told me?—Who art thou? Art thou—
(*Seizing Cecilia by the hands.*) No, I cannot endure it!

CECILIA.

Best! dearest! I press thee, my angel, to my heart!

STELLA.

Tell me—it lies deep in my soul—tell me—art thou—

CECILIA.

I am—I am his wife!

STELLA.

(*Leaping to her feet, closing her eyes.*) And I?

[*She walks bewildered up and down.*]

CECILIA.

Come to your room!

STELLA.

Why dost thou remind me of it? What is mine?—Horrible! horrible!—Are these my trees, which I planted, which I watered? Why in an instant has everything become so strange?—Thrust out!—Lost!—Lost forever! Fernando! Fernando!

CECILIA.

Go, Lucy, find thy father!

STELLA.

For God's sake! stop! Away! Let him not come! Away with you!—Father!—Spouse!

CECILIA.

Sweet love!

STELLA.

Thou lovest me? Thou pressest me to thy heart?—No, no!—Leave me—thrust me away! (*On her neck.*) Yet one moment more! It will be all over so far as I am concerned! My heart! my heart!

LUCY.

Thou must rest!

STELLA.

I cannot endure to see you! I have poisoned your life! I have robbed you of everything! You in misery! and I—what bliss in his arms! (*She throws herself on her knees.*) Can ye forgive me?

CECILIA.

Don't! don't!

[*They try to lift her up.*]

STELLA.

Here will I lie, beg, mourn, before God and you: "Pardon! pardon!" (*She springs up.*) Pardon?—Ye give me consolation! I am not to blame!—Thou gavest him to me, holy God in heaven! I held him fast as the dearest gift from Thy hand—leave me! My heart is breaking!

CECILIA.

Thou art innocent! Dear one!

STELLA.

(*On her neck.*) I read in thy eyes, on thy lips heavenly words! Hold me! Bear me up! I am undone! She forgives me! She feels for my misery!

CECILIA.

Sister! my sister! Calm thyself! Have faith that He who put these feelings in our bosoms, these feelings that so often make us wretched, can also prepare consolation and help for them.

STELLA.

Let me die in thy arms!

CECILIA.

Come!

STELLA.

(After a pause, starting up wildly.) Leave me—all of you! See! a whole world of perplexities and pain overwhelms my soul and fills it with unspeakable torments!—It is impossible—impossible!—It is so sudden! It is not to be grasped, not to be borne!

[She stands for a time silently looking down, in deep reflection, then looks up, gazes at both of the women, starts back with a shriek and runs away.]

CECILIA.

Follow her, Lucy! Watch her! *(Exit Lucy.)* Look down upon Thy children and their perplexities, their griefs!—In sorrow, I have learned much! Strengthen [Editor: illegible text] And if the tangle can be unsolved, holy God in heaven, let not violence be done!



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ACT V.



Stella's Library.

In Moonlight.

STELLA.

(She has Fernando's portrait and is about to pluck it from the frame.) Fulness of the night, surround me! possess me! lead me! I know not whither I am going!—I must! I will away into the wide world! Whither? Alas! whither? Banished from Thy creation! Where thou, holy moon, shinest on the tops of my trees, where thou with thy terrible dear shadow surroundest my darling Mina's grave, shall I no longer wander? Must I go from the spot where all the treasures of my life, all my sacred associations are gathered?—And thou, place of my tomb, whereupon I have rested so often in reverence and tears, which I consecrated to myself, around which all the melancholy, all the joy of my life was dreamed over, where I hoped even after I should be no more to hover and to find enjoyment while yearning for the past, must I be banished from thee?—Be banished!—Thou art dazed, thank God! Thy brain is seared! thou canst not grasp it—the thought of banishment! Thou would'st lose thy senses! Well!—Oh, I am dizzy!—Farewell!—Farewell!—Shall I never see thee again?—There is a death-glance in the feeling! Not see thee again?—Away! Stella! *(She seizes the portrait.)* And must I leave thee behind? *(She takes a knife and begins to pry out the nails.)* Oh, would that I could be free from thought! Would that I might breathe out my life in heavy sleep, in rapturous tears! The truth is and must be that thou art wretched!—*(Turning the painting into the moonlight.)* Ah! Fernando! when thou camest to me, and my heart sprang to meet thee, didst thou not place reliance on thy faith, thy goodness!—Didst thou not feel what a sanctuary was ready for thee, when my heart opened to receive thee?—And thou didst not shrink back at my presence? Thou didst not sink! thou didst not escape?—Thou wast able to pluck my innocence, my happiness, my life, like a flower, for mere pastime, and cast it aside thoughtlessly upon the way?—Noble? ha! noble! My youth—my golden days!—And thou carriedst this deep treachery in thy heart!—Thy wife! thy daughter!—And my soul was free, pure as a spring morning!—All, all, a hope!—Where art thou, Stella?—*(Gazing at the portrait.)* So great! so flattering!—It was this expression that brought me to ruin!—I hate thee!—Away! turn away! So dreamy! so dear!—No, no!—Spoiler!—Me?—Me?—Thou?—Me?—*(She thrusts the dagger at the painting.)* Fernando!—*(She turns away, drops the knife, and with a torrent of tears kneels before the chair.)* Dearest! dearest! 'Tis vain, 'tis vain!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Your ladyship! According to your command the horses are at the back garden gate. Your linen is packed! Don't forget to take money.

STELLA.

The painting! (*Servant picks up the knife and cuts the painting from the frame and rolls it.*) Here is money.

SERVANT.

But why?

STELLA.

(*Standing motionless a moment, looking up and around.*) Come!

[*Exit.*

Hall.

FERNANDO.

(*Alone.*) Leave me! leave me! Lo! now it seizes me again with all its horrible confusion!—So chill, so fearful lies all before me—as though the world were naught—as though I had committed no wrong therein.—And the world!—Ha! I am no more wretched than you. What have yet to demand of me?—What is the end of the thought?—Here! and here! From one end to the other! Everything thought of! and thought of again and again! and evermore terrifying, more horrible! (*Holding his forehead.*) It comes to this at last! Nothing before, nothing back of me! Nowhere help, nowhere counsel!—And these two, these three noblest and best of women on the earth—wretched through me!—wretched without thee!—Alas! still more wretched with me—If I could mourn, could doubt, could beg for forgiveness—could in dull hope spend but one hour—could lie at their feet and enjoy the bliss of wretchedness in sympathy! And where are they? Stella! thou liest prone, thou gazest up to heaven and criest in despair: “What crime have I, poor blossom, done, that Thy wrath so crushes me? What was my sin that Thou should'st lead this villain to me?” Cecilia! my wife! oh, my wife!—Misery! misery! deep misery!—What beatitudes united to make me wretched! Husband! Father! Lover!—The noblest and best of women!—Thine! thine!—Canst thou comprehend this, this threefold, unspeakable delight?—And now it is this that affects thee so, that tears thee in pieces!—Each demands me absolutely! And I?—Here it is over!—Deep, unfathomable!—She will be wretched!—Stella! thou art wretched!—Of what have I robbed thee?—The consciousness of thyself, thy young life! Stella!—And I am so cold? (*He takes a pistol from the table.*) Yet whatever may come!—(*He loads.*)

Enter Cecilia.

CECILIA.

My best beloved! How is it with us? (*She looks at the pistol.*) That looks as if thou wert ready for a journey! (*Fernando lays it down.*) My friend, thou seemest to me serene. Can I speak one word with thee?

FERNANDO.

What will'st thou, Cecilia? What will'st thou, my wife?

CECILIA.

Call me not so until I have finished speaking. We are now indeed very much perplexed! Cannot this be regulated? I have suffered much, and hence want no violent resolutions! Dost thou understand me, Fernando?

FERNANDO.

I hear.

CECILIA.

Take it to heart! I am only a woman, a sorrowful, mourning woman; but my soul is full of resolution!—Fernando!—I have resolved!—I leave thee!

FERNANDO.

(*Derisively.*) Dost thou mean it?

CECILIA.

Dost thou think that one must go away secretly in order to take leave of what one loves?

FERNANDO.

Cecilia!

CECILIA.

I am not reproaching thee! and I do not believe that I am sacrificing thee so very much! Till now I mourned the loss of thee; I grieved over what I could not change. Now I find thee again; thy presence gives me new life, new power! Fernando! I feel that my love for thee is not selfish! is not the passion of a mistress who would give everything to get possession of the entreated object. Fernando! my heart is warm and full for thee! It is the feeling that a wife has who from love itself can offer up her love!

FERNANDO.

Never! never!

CECILIA.

Thou art angry?

FERNANDO.

Thou torturest me!

CECILIA.

Thou shalt yet be happy! I have my daughter—and a friend in thee! We will part, without a separation. I will live at a distance from thee, and remain a witness of thy happiness. Thy confidante will I be; thou shalt pour thy joy and sadness into my bosom. Thy letters shall be my only life; and mine to thee shall come as a precious visit. And thus thou wilt remain mine, thou wilt not be banished with Stella to a distant corner of the earth; we will love each other, share in each other's lot! And thus, Fernando, give me thy hand on it!

FERNANDO.

As a jest this would be too horrible; as meant in earnest, it is incomprehensible! Let it turn as it will, my dearest! Cold reason will not untie this knot. What thou sayest sounds beautiful, tastes sweet. Who would not feel that far more is hidden under what thou sayest than thou dreamest of, that thou deceivest thyself, while thou allayest thy tormenting feelings with a deceptive, chimerical consolation. No, Cecilia! my wife, no! thou art mine—I remain thine!—What effect have words? Why should I lay before thee the whys and wherefores? The reasons are so many lies. I remain thine, or—

CECILIA.

Well, then!—And Stella? (Fernando *starts up and walks wildly up and down.*) Who deceives himself deafens his torments through a cold, unfeeling, thoughtless, transitory consolation! Yes, you men know yourselves!

FERNANDO.

Do not boast of thy equanimity.—Stella! she is unhappy! She will weep out her days far from thee and me! Let her! Let me!

CECILIA.

Loneliness, I believe, would do her heart good; the knowledge that we were united would be good for her tender affection. Now she is covering herself with bitter reproaches. She would think if I left thee now that I was more unhappy than I really am; for she judges me by herself! She would not live in peace, she would not be able to love me, angel that she is, if she felt that her happiness was stolen. It is better for her—

FERNANDO.

Let her go away! let her go into a nunnery!

CECILIA.

Yes; but when that thought comes into my mind, I say: Why should she then be placed within the cloister walls? What is her sin, that she must sacrifice her most blooming years, the years of abundance, of ripening hopes, that she must weep in despair on the edge of the precipice? that she must be separated from her beloved world so dear to her—from him whom she loves so warmly? from him who—for you do love her, do you not, Fernando?

FERNANDO.

Ha! what dost thou mean? Art thou an evil spirit in the shape of my wife? Why dost thou torment my heart? Why dost thou torture the lacerated? Am I not sufficiently shaken, torn, tossed? God have pity upon thee!

[He throws himself into an arm-chair.]

CECILIA.

(Goes to him and takes his hand.) There was once upon a time a count—*(Fernando attempts to spring up; Cecilia restrains him)*—a German count. Him a feeling of duty drove from his spouse, from his estate to the holy land—

FERNANDO.

Ha!

CECILIA.

He was a gentleman; he loved his wife, he bade her farewell, intrusted to her care the management of his affairs, embraced her and departed. He journeyed through many lands, fought, and was captured. The daughter of his master had compassion on his slavery; she loosed his bonds, they fled. She was his companion through all the risks of the war, his beloved armor-bearer. Crowned with victory, the time came to

return—to his noble wife! And his maiden? He felt the impulse of humanity—he believed in humanity—and took her with him.—Behold, the glorious lady of his home hastens out to meet him, sees all her faithfulness, all her honor rewarded; she holds him in her arms again. And then side by side with him, his knights, with pride and proud respect dismount from their steeds upon the ancestral soil; his servants unpack the booty and lay it at her feet; and she stores it away in all her treasuries, decorates her castle with it, shares it with her friends.—“Dear, noble wife, the greatest treasure is yet to come!”—Who is it that all veiled steps with the throng anigh? Lightly she dismounts from her palfrey! “Here!” cries the count, taking her by the hand and leading her to his wife, “here! see the whole—and take it from her hands again, take it from her hands again! She hath unloosed the chains from my neck, she hath commanded the winds, she hath gained me, saved me, waited upon me! What is my indebtedness to her? Here she is in your power! Give her her reward!” (Fernando *with his arms spread out on the table sobs bitterly.*) On her neck the faithful wife cried, amid a thousand tears she cried: “Take all that I can give thee! Take half of him who is wholly thine! Take him absolutely! Leave him absolutely to me! Each of us shall possess him without robbing the other!” “And,” she cried on his neck, at his feet, “we are thine!” They grasped his hands, clung to him—and God in heaven rejoiced in their love and his holy vicar gave his blessing thereunto! And their happiness and their love sanctified one dwelling, one bed and one tomb.

FERNANDO.

God in heaven! what a ray of hope here is kindled!

CECILIA.

She is here! she is ours! (*At the library door.*) Stella!

FERNANDO.

Let her be! let me be!

[*About to go away.*

CECILIA.

Wait! Listen to me!

FERNANDO.

We have had enough of words. What can be, will be. Leave me! At this moment I am not yet ready to stand before you both!

[*Exit.*

CECILIA.

Unhappy man! Always so taciturn, always opposed to the friendly word that would set everything to rights, and she is just the same! Yet I must succeed! (*At the door.*) Stella! Hear me! Stella!



Enter Lucy.

LUCY.

Call her not! She is resting; after her heavy sorrows she is resting a moment. She suffers terribly: I fear, my mother, lest it be from purpose, I fear that she is dying.

CECILIA.

What dost thou say?

LUCY.

It was not medicament that she swallowed, I am afeared!

CECILIA.

And can I have hoped in vain? Oh, that thou mayest be in error!—Terrible—terrible!

STELLA.

(*At the door.*) Who calls me? Why do ye wake me? What o'clock is't? Why so early?

LUCY.

It is not early; it is evening!

STELLA.

'Tis right, 'tis good: evening for me!

CECILIA.

And dost thou deceive us?

STELLA.

Who deceived thee? Thyself!

CECILIA.

I brought thee back, I hoped!

STELLA.

For me there is no abiding.

CECILIA.

Alas, I would have sent for thee, would have journeyed, would have hastened to the
end of the world!

STELLA.

I am at the end!

CECILIA.

(To Lucy, who has meantime been in anguish, hurrying this way and that.) Why dost
thou delay? Hasten, call aid!

STELLA.

(Holding Lucy back.) Nay! remain! *(She leans on both and they come to the front.)* On
your arm I thought to go through life; thus lead me to the grave!

[They lead her slowly to the foreground and place her in a chair at the right.]

CECILIA.

Away, Lucy, away! Help! help!

[Exit Lucy.]

STELLA.

My help has come!

CECILIA.

How different it is from what I expected, from what I hoped!

STELLA.

Thou kind friend, full of patience, full of hope!

CECILIA.

What a horrible fate!

STELLA.

Deep wounds are made by the fates, but often they can be healed. Wounds that the heart makes on the heart, that the heart makes on itself are incurable, and so—let me die!

Enter Fernando.

FERNANDO.

Was Lucy too hasty, or is the tidings true? Oh, let it not be true, or I shall curse thy courage, Cecilia, thy forbearance!

CECILIA.

My heart makes me no reproaches, Good will is higher than all consequences, Hasten for aid! She still lives, is still ours!



Fr. Pecht del.

published by george barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Lucy



STELLA.

(Who looks up and seizes Fernando's hand.) Welcome! Give me thy hand! *(To Cecilia.)* And also thine! All for love's sake was the fate of my life. All for love's sake, and so now my death! In the most sacred moments we are silent and understand each other. *(She tries to put the hands of the husband and wife together.)* And now let me hold my peace and rest.

[She falls on her left arm which is resting on the table.]

FERNANDO.

Yes, we will keep silence, Stella, and rest!

[He goes slowly towards the door at the left.]

CECILIA.

(In impatient excitement.) Lucy does not come! No one comes! Can the house, can the neighborhood be a wilderness? Control thyself, Fernando. She still lives! Hundreds have arisen from the bed of death, have even arisen from the grave! Fernando! She still lives. And even if every earthly means fail us and there is no leech, no medicament here, yet there is One in heaven who hears us. *(On her knees, near Stella.)* Hear me, oh, hear me, God! Preserve her to us! let her not die! *(Fernando has taken a pistol with his left hand and is going slowly away.)* *(Cecilia, as before, holding Stella's left hand.)* Yes, she lives; her hand, her dear hand is still warm. I will not let thee go, I cling to thee with the whole force of faith and love. No, it is no delusion. Instant prayer is stronger than human means! *(Standing up and looking around her.)* He is gone, the silent man, the hopeless! Whither? Oh, may it be that he has not attempted the step to which his whole stormy life ever pointed! Let me follow him! *(She is about to hasten out, but stops and looks back at Stella.)* And must she lie helpless here? Great God! And thus at this horrible moment between these two whom I cannot separate and cannot unite!

[A shot is heard in the distance.]

CECILIA.

God!

[She wants to go in the direction of the shot.

STELLA.

(Painfully lifting herself up.) What was that? Cecilia, thou art standing so far from me! come nearer, do not leave me! I am so timid! Oh, my agony! I see a stream of blood! Is it my blood? It is not my blood! I am not wounded but I am sick unto death!—It is my blood!

Enter Lucy.

LUCY.

Help, mother, help! I am going for help, for the physician; am hurrying messengers away! But alas! quite different aid is needed! My father falls by his own hand! He is lying in his blood! *(Cecilia tries to go, Lucy holds her back.)* Not there, my mother! What is done is beyond help, and arouses despair!

STELLA.

(Who partially standing has been listening attentively, seizes Cecilia's hand.) And can it be so? *(Standing up and leaning on Cecilia and Lucy.)* Come! I feel strong again; let us go to him! There let me die!

CECILIA.

Thou totterest, thy knees do not hold thee. From my limbs also the strength has fled.

STELLA.

(Sinks down upon the chair again.) To the purpose then! Go thou then to him, to whom thou belongest! Catch his last sigh, his last death-rattle! He is thy spouse! Dost thou hesitate? I beg, I implore thee! Thy delay makes me restless! *(With emotion, but weak.)* Remember he is alone, and go!

[Exit Cecilia, *hastily.*

LUCY.

I will not leave thee, I will remain with thee!

STELLA.

No, Lucy, if thou desirest my happiness then hasten! Away! away! let me rest! The wings of love are palsied! they cannot bear me to him. Thou art fresh and young! Let duty be active where love is dumb! Away to him to whom thou belongest! He is thy

father! Dost thou know what that means? Away, if thou lovest me, if thou wilt calm
me!

[Lucy slowly turns away, and exit.

STELLA.

(*Sinking.*) And I die alone!



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THE Brother AND Sister

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

William,*a merchant.*

Marian,*his sister.*

Fabricius.

Postman.



Fr. Pecht del.

published by george barrie

[Editor: illegible text]

Marianna



WILLIAM.

(Seated at a desk with account books and papers.) Two new customers again this week! If one lifts his hand, there is always something happens; even if it's little it counts up in the long run, and a small game gives its own pleasure, though the gain's small, and little losses can be borne with equanimity. *(Enter Postman.)* What is it?

POSTMAN.

A registered letter for twenty ducats, half paid.

WILLIAM.

Good! Very good! Put it down on my account. *(Exit Postman.)* I didn't want to keep saying all day long that I was expecting this. *(Contemplating the letter.)* Now I can pay Fabricius right off, and not abuse his kindness any longer. Yesterday he said to me: "I am coming round to see you to-morrow." I was sorry to hear it. I knew that he wouldn't dun me, and for that very reason his presence is a kind of double dun. *(He opens the packet and counts.)* In the good old times when I kept up a rather gayer establishment than this I couldn't bear these silent creditors at all. Anyone who importunes me, who bores me, deserves nothing but the cold shoulder and all that that implies; while he who holds his peace touches my heart, and appeals to me in the most importunate way, since he puts it upon me to make his demand for him. *(He piles money upon the table.)* Good God! how I thank Thee that I am out of my trouble and on my feet again. *(He takes up a book.)* Thy blessing at retail or me who have wasted Thy gifts wholesale.—And so—can I express it?—Yet 'tis not for me that Thou art doing any more than I am doing for myself. If it were not for that dear good creature, should I be sitting here settling up losses? O Marian! If you only knew that he whom you call your brother is working for you with a very different heart, with very different hopes.—Maybe!—ah!—but it is cruel!—She loves me—certainly—but as a brother.—No! how absurd! This is unbelief, and that has never yet bred any good. Marian! I will be happy; and so shalt thou, Marian!

Enter Marian.

MARIAN.

What do you want, brother? You called me.

WILLIAM.

No, I did not. Marian.

MARIAN.

Did something vex you that you conjured me out of the kitchen?

WILLIAM.

It was spirits that you heard.

MARIAN.

Very well, William! Only I know your voice quite too well.

WILLIAM.

Come, now, what are you doing out there?

MARIAN.

I've only been plucking a couple of pigeons, because Fabricius is going to take supper with us this evening.

WILLIAM.

Perhaps he will.

MARIAN.

They'll be done soon; you must not say anything about it till afterwards. I want him to teach me his new song.

WILLIAM.

Do you like to study with him?

MARIAN.

He can sing lovely songs. And when afterwards you sit at table and your head nods, then I will begin. For I know that you laugh at me when I sing any of your favorite songs.

WILLIAM.

Have you noticed that in me?

MARIAN.

Certainly; whoever failed to notice what you menfolks do? But if you don't want me for anything, I'm off again; for I have still all sorts of things to do. Goodby.—Now give me just one kiss.

WILLIAM.

If the pigeons are well roasted I will give you a kiss for dessert.

MARIAN.

It's detestable that brothers should be so cross. If Fabricius or any other nice young man dared to steal a kiss they would jump over high walls for the chance, and that man there scorns the one that I want to give him.—Now I'm going to burn up the pigeons.

[*Exit.*

WILLIAM.

The angel, the dear angel! How can I restrain myself from taking her into my arms and telling her everything?—Dost thou look down upon us from heaven, O lady, who didst give this treasure into my keeping?—Yes, those above know about us here, they know about us!—Charlotte, thou could'st not reward my love to thee more gloriously, more sacredly than by leaving thy daughter in my care. Thou gavest me all that I lacked, thou madest life dear to me. I loved her as thy child—and now! Yet it is as though I were deceived. Methinks I see thee again, methinks Fate has given thee back to me again with youth renewed, so that I now may remain and dwell with thee in union as in that first dream of life I was not allowed to do and had no right to do. O joy! joy! Give the whole measure of thy blessing, Father in heaven!

Enter Fabricius.

FABRICIUS.

Good-evening.

WILLIAM.

I am very happy, my dear Fabricius; everything good has come to me this evening. However, let us not speak of business now. There lie your three hundred dollars. Pocket 'em quick. My I. O. U. you can return to me at your convenience. And now let us have a little talk.

FABRICIUS.

If you need the money longer—

WILLIAM.

If I need it again, well and good; I'm always deeply indebted to you. But now take it.—Listen! The memory of Charlotte came back to me again this evening with eternal freshness and life.

FABRICIUS.

That is a frequent occurrence.

WILLIAM.

You ought to have known her. I tell you she was one of the most magnificent of creatures.

FABRICIUS.

She was a widow; how did you come to know her?

WILLIAM.

So pure and stately. Yesterday I was reading over one of her letters. You are the only man who has ever known anything about it.

[Goes to the portfolio.]

FABRICIUS.

(Aside.) If he would only spare me this time! I have heard the story so many, many times before. As a general thing I like to hear him tell it, for it always comes from his heart; but to-day I have quite different things on my mind, and yet I want to keep him in good humor.

WILLIAM.

It was during the early days of our acquaintance. "The world will become dear to me again," she wrote; "I had cut myself loose from it, but it will be dear to me again through you. My heart reproaches me; I feel that I am going to be a cause of sorrow to you and myself. Six months ago I was ready to die, and now I feel so no longer."

FABRICIUS.

A lovely soul.

WILLIAM.

The earth was not worthy of her. Fabricius, I've told you many times before that through her I became quite a different man. I cannot describe the pain that I felt when I looked back and saw how I had squandered my paternal inheritance. I could not offer her my hand, could not make her lot more endurable. I felt then for the first time the necessity to earn a suitable support; to extricate myself from the slothfulness in which I was drifting along day after day. I went to work—but what did that amount to?—I kept at work, and thus a wearisome year passed away; at last came a ray of hope; my pittance increased visibly—then she died.—I could not stay. You have no idea how I suffered. No longer could I behold the region where I had lived with her, or leave the sacred soil where she rested. She wrote me just before she died.

[Taking a letter from the portfolio.]

FABRICIUS.

It is a splendid letter; you read it to me only a short time ago. Hark, William—

WILLIAM.

I know it by heart, and yet I read it again and again. When I see her writing, the sheet on which her hand rested, it seems to me as if she were here again. She *is* still here. *(The voice of a child crying is heard.)* I wonder why Marian can't be sensible! There, she's got our neighbor's youngster again; every day she comes romping round with him and disturbs me just at the wrong moment. *(At the door.)* Marian, be still with the child, or send him home if he's naughty. We want to talk.

[He stands, full of emotion.]

FABRICIUS.

You ought not to bring up these recollections so frequently.

WILLIAM.

These are the very lines; these were the last that she wrote. The farewell sigh of the departing angel. *(He folds the letter again.)* You are right, it is sinful. How seldom are we worthy of recalling the bitter-sweet moments of our past lives!

FABRICIUS.

Your story always goes to my heart. You told me that she left a daughter, who shortly afterwards followed her mother. If she had only lived, you would have had at least something of hers, you would have had some interest through which your cares and your grief might have been appeased.

WILLIAM.

(Turning eagerly to him.) Her daughter? It was an exquisite flower that she intrusted to me. What fate has done for me is beyond words to express. Fabricius—if I could only tell you all—

FABRICIUS.

If there is anything on thy heart—

WILLIAM.

Why should I not?

MARIAN.

(Coming in with a little boy.) He wants to say good-night, brother. You must not scowl at him, nor at me either. You always say that you would like to be married and have lots of children. One couldn't hold them in such a way that they would never cry and never disturb you.

WILLIAM.

But they would be my own children.

MARIAN.

Maybe there would be a difference in that.

FABRICIUS.

Do you think so, Marian?



MARIAN.

It would be too lovely for anything. *(She kneels before the child and kisses him.)* I love little Christopher so dearly! If he were only my own!—He already knows his letters; I have been teaching him.

WILLIAM.

And so you think that a child of your own at his age would know how to read?

MARIAN.

Why certainly! for all day long I wouldn't do anything else but take him out to walk and teach him and feed him and dress him and everything else.

FABRICIUS.

And your husband?

MARIAN.

He would have to help; his love for him would be as great as mine. But Christopher has got to go home and wants to say good-night. (*She leads him to William.*) Here! give your hand like a good little boy; that's a nice boy!

FABRICIUS.

(*Aside.*) She is the loveliest creature; I must tell her my hopes!

MARIAN.

(*Leading the child to Fabricius.*) Here! shake hands with this gentleman too!

WILLIAM.

(*Aside.*) She shall be mine! I will—no! I do not deserve it! (*To Marian.*) Marian, take the child away and entertain Fabricius till supper-time. I am going out for a little run: I've been sitting all day long. (*Exit Marian.*) Just one good full breath of the fresh air this lovely star-light night!—My heart is so full!—I shall be back directly

[*Exit.*

FABRICIUS.

Make an end to thy suspense, Master Fabricius! If thou bearest it any longer, the matter won't be any nearer conclusion. Thou hast made up thy mind. Good! Admirable! Thou wilt still help her brother; and she—she does not love me as I love her, that's certain. But it isn't in her to love passionately; she isn't that kind of a woman. Dear girl! She hasn't the slightest idea that I feel anything else but friendship for her! O Marian, we shall get along famously! This opportunity is just what I should have wished it to be! I must explain to her my intentions! And if her heart does not scorn me—anyway, I am sure of her brother!

Enter Marian.

FABRICIUS.

Have you sent the little fellow home?

MARIAN.

I should love to have kept him here; but I know that my brother does not like him, and so I let him go. Many and many a time the little rascal has begged me to let him sleep here all night.

FABRICIUS.

But don't you ever get tired of him?

MARIAN.

Oh, no, indeed! He is as wild as he can be the whole day, but when I go to put him to bed he is as good as a kitten! He's a little flatterer, and he loves to kiss me; sometimes I can't get him to sleep at all.

FABRICIUS.

(Half aside.) What a sweet nature!

MARIAN.

He loves me even better than his own mother.

FABRICIUS.

You are also a mother to him. *(Marian stands lost in thought; Fabricius gazes at her for some moments.)* Does the name of mother make you sad?

MARIAN.

Not exactly sad; but I was thinking

FABRICIUS.

What were you thinking about, sweet Marian?

MARIAN.

I was thinking—oh, nothing, nothing. Sometimes it seems very strange to me.

FABRICIUS.

Haven't you ever had any longings to—

MARIAN.

What were you going to ask?

FABRICIUS.

Can Fabricius presume so far?

MARIAN.

No, I have never had any longings, Fabricius. And if ever any such thought flashed through my head, it was gone in an instant. To leave my brother would be unendurable—impossible for me—no matter how attractive any other prospect might be.

FABRICIUS.

Now that is strange! If you lived near him in the same city, you wouldn't call that leaving him, would you?

MARIAN.

Oh, never, never speak of such a thing! Who would keep house for him? Who would take care of him? Let a servant take my place? Or let him get married? No, indeed, that couldn't be!

FABRICIUS.

Couldn't he go and live with you? Mightn't your husband be his friend? Couldn't you three live together just as happily as now, even happier? Couldn't your brother be in this way assisted in his perplexing business cares? Think what such a life might be!

MARIAN.

It can easily be imagined. And when I think about it, it is quite possible. But then again, it seems to me as though it would never come about.

FABRICIUS.

I don't understand you.

MARIAN.

It is just so now. When I wake in the morning I listen to hear if my brother is up before me: if no one is stirring, quick as a flash I get out of bed and run to the kitchen and build a fire, so that the water is thoroughly heated, and then the maid comes down, and my brother has his coffee as soon as he opens his eyes!

FABRICIUS.

What an admirable housewife!

MARIAN.

And then I sit down and knit stockings for him, and keep very happy, and measure a dozen times to see if they are long enough yet and if they set well round the calf, and if the feet are not too short, until he sometimes actually gets vexed. It isn't that I always want to be trying them on, but it seems to me that I must have something to do near him, as though he ought to see me at least once when he has been writing a couple of hours; he can't be gloomy with me, for it always brightens him up to see me. I can read it by his eyes if he will not let me know any other way. Often I laugh in my sleeve, because he acts as though he were solemn or angry. He is wise, for if he didn't I should plague him all day long.

FABRICIUS.

He is a lucky man.

MARIAN.

No, I am the lucky one. If I hadn't him I shouldn't know what to do in this world. I do everything for myself, however, and it seems to me as if I did everything for him, because even when I am working for myself I am always thinking of him.

FABRICIUS.

And now if you did everything for a husband, how absolutely happy he would be! How grateful he would be, and what a contented life you would lead!

MARIAN.

Many times I imagine it to myself, and tell myself a long story, as I sit and knit, or sew, how everything might be and would be! But when I come back to the reality, then I know that it will never come to pass.

FABRICIUS.

Why not?

MARIAN.

Where should I find a spouse who would like it if I said "I will love you!" but had to add to it "You cannot be dearer to me than my brother; I must take care of him just as I always have done." Ah! you see it is impossible.

FABRICIUS.

You would after a while help your husband in the same way; you would transfer your love to him.

MARIAN.

Ah! there lies the trouble. Certainly, if love could be taken and exchanged like money, or if you could go to a different lord and master every quarter as servants do, it would be a different thing. But with a husband everything would have to become exactly as it already is here, and that could never be.

FABRICIUS.

That is a stumbling-block.

MARIAN.

I don't know why it is; but when he sits at table and leans his head on his hand and looks down and seems full of anxiety, I could sit for hours and gaze at him. He is not handsome, I say to myself oftentimes, and yet I love to look at him. Of course I feel that it is on my account that he is anxious; the first glance that he gives me when he looks up tells me so, and that is a good deal.

FABRICIUS.

It's everything, Marian. And a husband who would care for you—

MARIAN.

There is one thing more, and that's moods. William also has his moods; but when he has them they do not trouble me: but in anybody else they would be unendurable. He easily loses his temper; oftentimes it pains me. If in such unhappy moments he repulses a kind, sympathetic, loving effort to cheer him, I confess it touches me, but only for an instant, and if I reprove him it is rather because he does not appreciate my love for him than because I love him the less.

FABRICIUS.

But suppose there were some one who, in spite of all that, were bold enough to offer you his hand.

MARIAN.

But there isn't any such person! And even then the question would arise whether I should be equally daring.

FABRICIUS.

Why should you not?

MARIAN.

But there's no such person.

FABRICIUS.

Marian, there is.

MARIAN.

Fabricius!

FABRICIUS.

You see him before you. Need I make a long defence? Shall I pour out before you what my heart has so long treasured? I love you. You have known it long. I offer you my hand: that you did not expect. Never did I see a maiden who so little as you realized the fact that she moved the hearts of those who see her. Marian, it is not a fiery, impulsive suitor who talks with you; I know you well; I have chosen you deliberately; my house is all in order: will you be mine? I have had many experiences in love, and more than once I have vowed to end my days as an old bachelor. But you have conquered me! Do not stand aloof from me! You know me. I am a friend of your brother; you cannot conceive of a parer union. Open your heart to me! Only one word, Marian!

MARIAN.

Dear Fabricius, only allow me a little time. I like you.

FABRICIUS.

Tell me that you love me. I will give your brother his own place; I will be a brother to him; together we will care for him. My property added to his will help him over many an anxious hour; he will gain fresh courage, he will—Marian, don't let me have to persuade you!

[He seizes her hand.]

MARIAN.

Fabricius, I never thought of such a thing. What an embarrassing dilemma you have brought me into.

FABRICIUS.

Just one word! may I hope?

MARIAN.

Speak with my brother!

FABRICIUS.

(Kneeling.) Angel! darling!

MARIAN.

(Silent for a moment.) Great heavens! What have I done!

[Exit.

FABRICIUS.

She is thine!—I can well afford to let the dear little thing caress her brother; that will soon cure itself when we come to get better acquainted, and he won't lose anything by it. Ah, it does me good to be so in love again and to be loved again so luckily. It is a thing, however, for which one never really loses the taste. We will live together. If it had not been for that, long ago I should have enlarged somewhat the good man's scrupulous economy. When I am his brother-in-law things will run smoother. He is becoming a regular hypochondriac with his everlasting reminiscences, doubts, business anxieties and mysteries. Everything will be lovely! He shall breathe freely again; the girl will get a husband—that's no trifle—and I—I shall get a wife honorably—and that's worth something.

Enter William.

FABRICIUS.

Did you have a good walk?

WILLIAM.

I went up along the market and Church Street and back again by the Bourse. It always gives me a wonderful sensation to walk through the city at night. After the toil of the day most men are at rest, but others are hurrying to their night-work, and thus the little

wheels of trade are constantly revolving. I took special pleasure in an old cheesemonger who, with her spectacles on her nose, was laying one piece after another on the scales, by the light of a candle end, and trimming off the edges until the purchaser got the quantity she wanted.

FABRICIUS.

Every one has his own powers of observation. I think that there are few people on the street who would have stopped to gaze at an old cheese-woman and her glasses.

WILLIAM.

In every one's business gain is precious, and a small retail trade seems to me respectable since I know how costly a dollar is when it has to be earned a penny at a time. (*He stands a few moments lost in thought.*) I have had quite a wonderful experience since I have been out. So many things have come into my mind all at once and all in confusion—and that which troubled my heart to its deepest foundations.

[*He stops in a brown study.*]

FABRICIUS.

(*Aside.*) I act like a fool. Just as soon as he comes in, the courage leaks out of my fingers' ends to confess that I love Marian. Yet I must tell him what has happened. (*To William.*) William, tell me, do you want to move from here? You have too little room and the rent is high. Do you know of any other rooms?

WILLIAM.

(*Absently.*) No!

FABRICIUS.

I thought perhaps we might both help each other. I have my father's house and occupy only the upper floors; you might take possession of the lower rooms. You are not likely to get married yet awhile. You can use the court and the warerooms for your business and give me a nominal rent, and so it would help both of us.

WILLIAM.

You are very kind. Truly, I have often thought of this plan after I have been to visit you and seen so much waste room, when I have to put up with such narrow quarters. But there are reasons—we must let it go; it is impossible.

FABRICIUS.

Why so?

WILLIAM.

Supposing I were to marry immediately.

FABRICIUS.

That could be managed. You have plenty of room with your sister, and if you had a wife there would be no trouble.

WILLIAM.

(Smiling.) And my sister?

FABRICIUS.

I would take her home with me, in that case. *(Williamis silent.)* And even if you didn't. Let me speak frankly—I love Marian; let her be my wife!

WILLIAM.

What?

FABRICIUS.

Why not? Say yes. Listen to me, brother. I love Marian. I have thought it over this long time. She only, you only can make me as happy as I can possibly be in this world. Give her to me! Give her to me!

WILLIAM.

(In confusion.) You do not know what you are asking.

FABRICIUS.

Ah! How could I know? Must I tell you all my wants and what I should have if she became my wife and you my brother-in-law?

WILLIAM.

(Losing his self-possession.) Never! never!

FABRICIUS.

What is the reason? I am sorry.—Your aversion!—If you are ever going to have a brother-in-law, as must come sooner or later, why not me?—Me whom you know, whom you love? At least I thought—



artist: max volkhart.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

william and fabricius

WILLIAM.

Leave me!—I cannot understand it.

FABRICIUS.

I must tell you all. On you alone depends my fate. Her heart is inclined towards me. You must have seen that. She loves you better than she loves me, but I am content. She will come to love her husband better than her brother; I shall then stand in your place, you in mine, and we shall all be satisfied. I never in my life knew of a union which seemed to promise a more beautiful human relationship. (*Williamspeechless.*) To seal the holy compact, best friend, give me thy consent, thy sanction. Tell her that it rejoices you, that it makes you happy. I have her promise.

WILLIAM.

Her promise!

FABRICIUS.

She gave it in a parting glance which said more than if she had stayed to speak it. Her embarrassment and her love, her willingness and her hesitation,—it was lovely!

WILLIAM.

No! no!

FABRICIUS.

I do not understand you. I am sure that you have no prejudice against me, and yet why are you so opposed to me? Do not be! Do not set yourself against her happiness, against mine.—And I keep thinking that you will be happy with us. Do not refuse thy acquiescence, thy friendly acquiescence in my wishes! (*William still speechless, with contending emotions.*) I cannot comprehend you—

WILLIAM.

Marian? you want to marry her?

FABRICIUS.

What do you mean?

WILLIAM.

And she wants you?

FABRICIUS.

She answered as becomes a modest maiden.

WILLIAM.

Go! go!—Marian!—I suspected it, I foresaw it!

FABRICIUS.

Only tell me—

WILLIAM.

What shall I tell you? It was this that lay on my mind this evening, like a thunder-cloud. The lightning flashed, it struck!—Take her!—take her!—My only treasure—my all! (*Fabricius looks at him with astonishment.*) Take her! And that you may know what you have taken from me—(*Pause. He collects himself.*) I have told you of Charlotte, the angel, who was snatched from my arms and who left me her image, her daughter.—And this daughter—I have deceived you—she is not dead; this daughter is Marian!—Marian is not my sister!

FABRICIUS.

I was not prepared for this revelation.

WILLIAM.

This blow I ought to have expected from you!—Why did I not follow the dictates of my heart and shut my house to you as to every one else, in the first days when I came here? To you alone I granted entrance into this sanctuary, and you succeeded in lulling my suspicions by your kindness, your friendliness, your encouragement, your apparent coldness towards women. Just as I was, according to all appearances, her brother, so I considered your feeling for her a genuine brotherly one. And even if sometimes a suspicion arose in my mind, I put it away as ignoble, ascribed her affection for you to her angelic heart, which looks upon all the world with friendly glances. And you!—And she!

FABRICIUS.

It is not right for me to listen longer and I have nothing to say. So goodbye!

[*Exit.*

WILLIAM.

Yes, go!—You take all my happiness away with you! So undermined, so hopelessly destroyed are all my prospects—my nearest hopes—suddenly! All precipitated into the abyss—and with them the magic golden bridge that was to bear me over to the bliss of paradise!—and through him, the traitor who has so abused my frankness, my confidence! O William, William! Hast thou gone so far as to be unjust to thy good friend? What sin has he committed? O Fate, thy retribution weighs heavy upon me, and thou art just.—Why am I standing here? Why? Just at this moment? Forgive me! Have I not been punished for it? Forgive me! It is long I have suffered infinitely. I seemed to love you; I believed that I loved you; with inconsiderate amiability, courtesies, I shut fast your heart and brought you pain. Forgive me and let me go! Must I be so punished?—Must I lose Marian? the last hope of my life, the epitome of my solicitude. It cannot be! it cannot be!

[*He is silent.*

MARIAN.

(*Approaching with embarrassment.*) Brother.

WILLIAM.

Ah!

MARIAN.

Dear brother, you must forgive me, I bother you about everything. You are vexed; I might have known it. I have done a piece of stupidity.—It is a most extraordinary thing to me.

WILLIAM.

(Collecting his thoughts.) What is the matter, my girl?

MARIAN.

I wish that I could tell it to you. Everything is whirling about so in my head. Fabricius wants to marry me and I—

WILLIAM.

(Half bitterly.) Speak it out, you gave him your promise.

MARIAN.

No, not for the world! Never will I marry him; I cannot marry him.

WILLIAM.

How strange that sounds!

MARIAN.

Strange enough. You are very unkind, my brother; I should be glad to go away and wait a good long hour did not my heart oblige me to say first and last: I cannot marry Fabricius.

WILLIAM.

(Standing up and taking Marian by the hand.) How so, Marian?

MARIAN.

He was here and he brought up so many reasons that I imagined that it would be possible. He was so importunate that without due consideration I told him to speak with you. He took this for yes, and in that very instant I felt that it could never be.

WILLIAM.

He has spoken to me.

MARIAN.

I beg of you, with all my heart and soul, by all the love which I have for you, by all the love which you feel for me, set it right again, tell him!

WILLIAM.

(Aside.) Merciful heavens!

MARIAN.

Do not be angry! He will not be angry either. We will live just as we have always lived. For I could not live with any one besides you. It has always been deep in my soul, and this accident has brought it out, brought it out with emphasis that I love no one besides you!

WILLIAM.

Marian!

MARIAN.

Kindest brother, I cannot tell you what has passed through my heart during these last moments. It seemed to me very much as it did lately, when there was a fire in the market, and first there was smoke and steam over everything, until all at once the fire caught the roof and then at last the whole house was one flame. Do not let me go! Do not force me away from thee, my brother!

WILLIAM.

But it cannot always remain as it is!

MARIAN.

That is the very thing that troubles me so! I will gladly promise you not to get married; I will always take care of you, always and always. A little distance up the street just such a brother and sister live together; I have often thought of it in fun: "If I should get as old and wrinkled—provided only we still lived together."

WILLIAM.

(Mastering his heart, half aside.) If I can withstand this, I will never again get into such a tight place.

MARIAN.

I know that you do not like it; of course you will marry in time, and I should always be sorry if I could not love her as well as I love you.—No one loves you as well as I; no one could love you so. *(William says to speak.)* You are always so reserved; I always have it on my tongue's end to tell you just how I feel and I do not dare. Thank God, this accident has unlocked my lips!

WILLIAM.

Marian, say no more!

MARIAN.

You must not forbid me! Let me tell you all! Then I will go back to the kitchen and sit for days at a time at my work, seeing you only once in a while, as if to say: "Thou knowest my secret." (*William is speechless in the excess of his joy.*) You might have known it long ago, you know how long, ever since our mother's death, as I grew up out of childhood and was always with you. See! I feel more contented to be near you than gratified by your more than fraternal watchfulness. And gradually you so completely occupied my whole heart, my whole intellect, that now anything else would find it hard to get a resting-place. I know well that you have often laughed at me when I was reading novels: it happened once that I was reading "Julia Mandeville" and I asked if Henry, or whatever his name was, did not look like you. You laughed and I didn't like it. So the next time I kept quiet. But I was perfectly in earnest about it; for whoever seemed to be the dearest, best men, they all looked to me like you. I saw you walking in the great gardens, and riding and travelling and fighting duels.

[She laughs at the remembrance.]

WILLIAM.

What pleases you?

MARIAN.

Because I must also confess that if a lady were very beautiful and very good and very much loved—and very much in love—it always seemed to be myself, except at the end when the disentanglement came and they got married after all the hindrances; but I am certainly a very impulsive, fond, talkative creature!

WILLIAM.

Go on! (*Aside.*) I must drink the cup of joy to the dregs! God in heaven, keep me in my senses!

MARIAN.

Least of all could I endure it when I read of a couple of people loving each other, and finally finding out that they were relations, or were brother and sister. That "Miss Fanny" I could have burned alive! I cried so over it! It is such a pathetic story.

[She turns away and weeps bitterly.]

WILLIAM.

(Taking her to his heart with a flood of tears.) Marian! my Marian!

MARIAN.

William! no! no! never will I let thee go from me! Thou art mine! I will hold thee fast! I will not let thee go!

Enter Fabricius.

MARIAN.

Ah, Fabricius, you come at the right time! My heart is full and strong, so that I can tell you all. I did not give any promise. Be our friend; but I can never marry you!

FABRICIUS.

(Cold and bitter.) I foresaw it, William! If you put all your weight on the scale, of course I should be found too light. I come back to put out of my heart what has no right there. I renounce all claims and perceive that things have already accommodated themselves! At least I am glad that I am the innocent cause of it.

WILLIAM.

Be not petulant at this moment, and still more do not lose a sensation for which you would vainly seek in a pilgrimage around the world! Look at this creature—she is entirely mine—and yet she has not the slightest idea—

FABRICIUS.

(Half scornfully.) She does not know—

MARIAN.

What don't I know?

WILLIAM.

Could one tell a falsehood thus, Fabricius?

FABRICIUS.

(Touched.) She does not know?

WILLIAM.

I assure you.

FABRICIUS.

Live for each other then! You are worthy of each other!

MARIAN.

What does this mean?

WILLIAM.

(Taking her in his arms.) Thou art mine, Marian!

MARIAN.

Heavens! What does this mean? Can I give thee back this kiss! What a kiss that was,
my brother!



WILLIAM.

Not the kiss of a reserved, apparently cold brother, but the kiss of an eternally happy
lover! *(Kneeling.)* Marian, thou art not my sister. Charlotte was thy mother, not mine.

MARIAN.

Thou! thou!

WILLIAM.

Thy lover!—From this moment forth, thy husband, unless thou scornest me.

MARIAN.

Tell me how it all came about!

FABRICIUS.

Enjoy what God himself can only give once in a lifetime. Accept it, Marian, and ask no questions!—You will find time enough to make all explanations.

MARIAN.

(Looking at him.) No, it is impossible!

WILLIAM.

My sweetheart, my wife!

MARIAN.

(In his arms.) William! it is impossible!



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A TALE.



THE thick fog of an early autumnal morning obscured the extensive courts which surrounded the prince's castle, but through the mists, which gradually dispersed, a stranger might observe a cavalcade of huntsmen, consisting of horse and foot, already engaged in their early preparations for the field. The active employments of the domestics were already discernible. These latter were engaged in lengthening and shortening stirrup-leathers, preparing the rifles and ammunition, and arranging the game-bags; whilst the dogs, impatient of restraint, threatened to break away from the slips by which they were held. Then the horses became restive, from their own high mettle, or excited by the spur of the rider, who could not resist the temptation to make a vain display of his prowess, even in the obscurity by which he was surrounded. The cavalcade awaited the arrival of the prince, who was detained a little too long by the tender endearments of his young wife.

Lately married, they thoroughly appreciated the happiness of their own congenial dispositions; both were lively and animated, and each shared with delight the pleasures and pursuits of the other. The prince's father had already survived and enjoyed that period of life when one learns that all the members of a state should spend their time in diligent employments, and that every one should engage in some energetic occupation corresponding with his taste, and should by this means first acquire, and then enjoy, the fruits of his labor.

How far these maxims had proved successful might have been observed on this very day, for it was the anniversary of the great market in the town, a festival which might indeed be considered a species of fair. The prince had on the previous day conducted his wife on horseback through the busy scene, and had caused her to observe what a convenient exchange was carried on between the productions of the mountainous districts and those of the plain, and he took occasion then and there to direct her attention to the industrious character of his subjects.

But whilst the prince was entertaining himself and his courtiers almost exclusively with subjects of this nature, and was perpetually employed with his finance minister, his chief huntsman did not lose sight of his duty, and upon his representation it was impossible, during these favorable autumnal days, any longer to postpone the amusement of the chase, as the promised meeting had already been several times deferred, not only to his own mortification, but to that of many strangers who had arrived to take part in the sport.

The princess remained, reluctantly, at home. It had been determined to hunt over the distant mountains, and to disturb the peaceful inhabitants of the forests in those districts by an unexpected declaration of hostilities.

Upon taking his departure, the prince recommended his wife to seek amusement in equestrian exercise, under the conduct of her uncle Frederick; "and I commend you, moreover," he said, "to the care of our trusty Honorio, who will act as your esquire, and pay you every attention:" and saying this as he descended the stairs, and gave the proper instructions to a comely youth who stood at hand, the prince quickly disappeared amid the crowd of assembled guests and followers.

The princess, who had continued waving her handkerchief to her husband as long as he remained in the court-yard, now retired to an apartment at the back of the castle, which showed an extensive prospect over the mountain, as the castle itself was situated on the brow of the hill, from which a view at once distant and varied opened in all directions. She found the telescope in the spot where it had been left on the previous evening, when they had amused themselves in surveying the landscape and the extent of mountain and forest amid which the lofty ruins of their ancestral castle were situated. It was a noble relic of ancient times, and shone out gloriously in the evening illumination. A grand but somewhat inadequate idea of its importance was conveyed by the large masses of light and shadow which now fell upon it. Moreover, by the aid of the telescope, the autumnal foliage was seen to lend an indescribable charm to the prospect, as it waved upon trees which had grown up amid the ruins, undisturbed and unmolested for countless years. But the princess soon turned the telescope in the direction of a dry and sandy plain beneath her, across which the hunting cavalcade was expected to bend its course. She patiently surveyed the spot, and was at length rewarded, as the clear magnifying power of the instrument enabled her delighted eyes to recognize the prince and his chief equerry. Upon this she once more waved her handkerchief as she observed, or rather fancied she observed, a momentary pause in the advance of the procession.

Her uncle Frederick was now announced, and he entered the apartment, accompanied by an artist, bearing a large portfolio under his arm.

"Dear cousin," observed the worthy knight, addressing her, "we have brought some sketches of the ancestral castle for your inspection, to show how the old walls and battlements were calculated to afford defence and protection in stormy seasons and in years gone by, though they have tottered in some places, and in others have covered the plain with their ruins. Our efforts have been unceasing to render the place accessible, since few spots offer more beauty or sublimity to the eye of the astonished traveller."

The prince continued, as he opened the portfolio containing the different views: "Here, as you ascend the hollow way, through the outer fortifications, you meet the principal tower, and a rock forbids all further progress. It is the firmest of the mountain range. A castle has been erected upon it, so constructed that it is difficult to say where the work of nature ceases and the aid of art begins. At a little distance, side-walls and buttresses have been raised, the whole forming a sort of terrace. The height

is surrounded by a wood. For upwards of a century and a half, no sound of an axe has been heard within these precincts, and giant trunks of trees appear on all sides. Close to the very walls spring the glossy maple, the rough oak and the tall pine. They oppose our progress with their boughs and roots, and compel us to make a circuit to secure our advance. See how admirably our artist has sketched all this upon paper; how accurately he has represented the trees as they become entwined amid the masonry of the castle, and thrust their boughs through the opening in the walls. It is a solitude which possesses the indescribable charm of displaying the traces of human power long since passed away, contending with perpetual and still reviving nature.”

Opening a second picture, he continued his discourse: “What say you to this representation of the castle court, which has been rendered impassable for countless years by the falling of the principal tower? We endeavored to approach it from the side, and in order to form a convenient private road were compelled to blow up the old walls and vaults with gunpowder. But there was no necessity for similar operations within the castle walls. Here is a flat rocky surface which has been levelled by the hand of nature, through which, however, mighty trees have here and there been able to strike their roots. They have thriven well, and thrust their branches into the very galleries where the knights of old were wont to exercise, and have forced their way through doors and windows into vaulted halls, from which they are not likely now to be expelled, and whence we, at least, shall not remove them. They have become lords of the territory, and may remain so. Concealed beneath heaps of dried leaves we found a perfectly level floor, which probably cannot be equalled in the world.

“In ascending the steps which lead to the chief tower, it is remarkable to observe, in addition to all that we have mentioned above, how a maple tree has taken root on high, and has grown to a great size, so that in ascending to the highest turret to enjoy the prospect, it is difficult to pass. And here you may refresh yourself beneath the shade, for even at this elevation the tree of which we speak throws its shadows over all around.

“We feel much indebted to the talented artist who, in the course of several views, has brought thus the whole scenery as completely before us as if we had actually witnessed the original scene. He selected the most beautiful hours of the day and the most favorable season of the year for his task, to which he devoted many weeks incessantly. A small dwelling was erected for him and his assistant in a corner of the castle; you can scarcely imagine what a splendid view of the country, of the court, and of the ruins he there enjoyed. We intend these pictures to adorn our country-house, and every one who enjoys a view of our regular parterres, of our bowers and shady walks, will doubtless feel anxious to feed his imagination and his eyes with an actual inspection of these scenes, and so enjoy at once the old and the new, the firm and the pliant, the indestructible and the young, the perishable and the eternal.”

Honorio now entered and announced the arrival of the horses. The princess thereupon addressing her uncle, expressed a wish to ride up to the ruins and examine personally the subjects which he had so graphically described. “Ever since my arrival here,” she said, “this excursion has been intended, and I shall be delighted to accomplish what

has been declared almost impracticable, and what the pictures show to be so difficult.”

“Not yet, my dear,” replied the prince; “these pictures only portray what the place will become; but many difficulties impede a commencement of the work.”

“But let us ride a little towards the mountain,” she rejoined, “if only to the beginning of the ascent; I have a great desire to-day to enjoy an extensive prospect.”

“Your desire shall be gratified,” answered the prince.

“But we will first direct our course through the town,” continued the lady, “and across the market-place, where a countless number of booths wear the appearance of a small town, or of an encampment. It seems as if all the wants and occupations of every family in the country were brought together and supplied in this one spot; for the attentive observer may behold here whatever man can produce or require. You would suppose that money was wholly unnecessary, and that business of every kind could be carried on by means of barter; and such in fact is the case. Since the prince directed my attention to this view yesterday, I have felt pleasure in observing the manner in which the inhabitants of the mountain and of the valley mutually comprehend each other, and how both so plainly speak their wants and their wishes in this place. The mountaineer, for example, has cut the timber of his forests into a thousand forms, and applied his iron to multifarious uses, while the inhabitant of the valley meets him with his various wares and merchandise, the very materials and object of which it is difficult to know or to conjecture.”

“I am aware,” observed the prince, “that my nephew devotes his attention wholly to these subjects, for at this particular season of the year he receives more than he expends; and this after all is the object and end of every national financier, and indeed of the pettiest household economist. But excuse me, my dear, I never ride with any pleasure through the market or the fair; obstacles impede one at every step, and my imagination continually recurs to that dreadful calamity which happened before my own eyes, when I witnessed the conflagration of as large a collection of merchandise as is accumulated here. I had scarcely—”

“Let us not lose our time,” said the princess, interrupting him, as her worthy uncle had more than once tortured her with a literal account of the very same misfortune. It had happened when he was upon a journey, and had retired fatigued to bed, in the best hotel of the town, which was situated in the marketplace. It was the season of the fair, and in the dead of the night he was awakened by screams and by the columns of fire which approached the hotel.

The princess hastened to mount her favorite palfrey, and led the way for her unwilling companion, when she rode through the front gate down the hill, in place of passing through the back gate up the mountain. But who could have felt unwilling to ride at her side or to follow wherever she led? And even Honorio had gladly abandoned the pleasure of his favorite amusement, the chase, in order to officiate as her devoted attendant.

As we have before observed, they could only ride through the market step by step, but the amusing observations of the princess rendered every pause delightful. "I must repeat my lesson of yesterday," she remarked, "for necessity will try our patience." And in truth the crowd pressed upon them in such a manner, that they could only continue their progress at a very slow pace. The people testified unbounded joy at beholding the young princess, and the complete satisfaction of many a smiling face evinced the pleasure of the people at finding that the first lady in the land was at once the most lovely and the most gracious.



Mingled together promiscuously were rude mountaineers who inhabited quiet cottages amongst bleak rocks and towering pine trees, lowlanders from the plains and meadows, and manufacturers from the neighboring small towns. After quietly surveying the motley crowd, the princess remarked to her companion that all the people she saw seemed to take delight in using more stuff for their garments than was necessary, whether it consisted of cloth, linen, ribbon or trimming. It seemed as if the wearers, both men and women, thought they would be the better if they looked a little larger.

"We must leave that matter to themselves," answered the uncle; "every man must dispose of his superfluity as he pleases; well for those who spend it in mere ornament."

The princess nodded her assent.

They had now arrived at a wide open square which led to one of the suburbs; they there perceived a number of small booths and stalls, and also a large wooden building from whence a most discordant howling issued. It was the feeding hour of the wild animals which were there enclosed for exhibition. The lion roared with that fearful voice with which he was accustomed to terrify both woods and wastes. The horses trembled, and no one could avoid observing how the monarch of the deserts made himself terrible in the tranquil circles of civilized life. Approaching nearer, they remarked the tawdry colossal pictures on which the beasts were painted in the brightest colors, intended to afford irresistible temptation to the busy citizen. The grim and fearful tiger was in the act of springing upon a negro to tear him to pieces. The lion stood in solemn majesty as if he saw no worthy prey before him. Other wonderful creatures in the same group presented inferior attractions.

"Upon our return," said the princess, "we will alight and take a nearer inspection of these rare creatures."

“Is it not extraordinary,” replied the prince, “that man takes pleasure in fearful excitements? The tiger, for instance, is lying quietly enough within his cage, and yet here the brute must be painted in the act of springing fiercely on a negro, in order that the public may believe that the same scene is to be witnessed within. Do not murder and death, fire and desolation, sufficiently abound, but that every mountebank must repeat such horrors? The worthy people like to be alarmed, that they may afterwards enjoy the delightful sensation of freedom and security.”

But whatever feelings of terror such frightful representations might have inspired, they disappeared when they reached the gate, and surveyed the cheerful prospects around. The road led down to a river, a narrow brook in truth, and only calculated to bear light skiffs, but destined afterwards, when swelled into a wider stream, to take another name, and to water distant lands. They then bent their course further through carefully cultivated fruit and pleasure gardens, in an orderly and populous neighborhood, until first a copse and then a wood received them as guests, and delighted their eyes with a limited but charming landscape. A green valley leading to the heights above, which had been lately mowed for the second time, and wore the appearance of velvet, having been watered copiously by a rich stream, now received them with a friendly welcome. They then bent their course to a higher and more open spot, which, upon issuing from the wood, they reached after a short ascent, and whence they obtained a distant view of the old castle, the object of their pilgrimage, which shone above the groups of trees, and assumed the appearance of a well-wooded rock. Behind them (for no one ever attained this height without turning to look round) they saw through occasional openings in the lofty trees the prince's castle on the left, illuminated by the morning sun; the higher portion of the town obscured by a light cloudy mist, and on the right hand, the lower part through which the river flowed in many windings, with its meadows and its mills; whilst straight before them the country extended in a wide productive plain.

After they had satisfied their eyes with the landscape, or rather, as is often the case in surveying an extensive view from an eminence, when they had become desirous of a wider and less circumscribed prospect, they rode slowly along a broad and stony plain, where they saw the mighty ruin standing with its coronet of green, whilst its base was clad with trees of lesser height; and proceeding onwards they encountered the steepest and most impassable side of the ascent. It was defended by enormous rocks which had endured for ages; proof against the ravages of time, they were fast rooted in the earth and towered aloft. One part of the castle had fallen, and lay in huge fragments irregularly massed, and seemed to act as an insurmountable barrier, the mere attempt to overcome which is a delight to youth, as supple limbs ever find it a pleasure to undertake, to combat and to conquer. The princess seemed disposed to make the attempt; Honorio was at hand: her princely uncle assented, unwilling to acknowledge his want of agility. The horses were directed to wait for them under the trees, and it was intended they should make for a certain point where a large rock had been rendered smooth, and from which a prospect was beheld, which, though of the nature of a bird's-eye view, was sufficiently picturesque.



It was midday; the sun had attained its highest altitude, and shed its clearest rays around; the princely castle in all its parts, battlements, wings, cupolas and towers presented a glorious appearance. The upper part of the town was seen in its full extent, the eye could even penetrate into parts of the lower town, and with the assistance of the telescope distinguish the market-place, and even the very booths. It was Honorio's invariable custom to sling this indispensable instrument to his side. They took a view of the river, in its course and its descent, and of the sloping plain, and of the luxuriant country with its gentle undulations, and then of the numerous villages, for it had been from time immemorial a subject of contention how many could be counted from this spot.

Over the wide plain there reigned a calm stillness, such as is accustomed to rule at midday—an hour when, according to classical phraseology, the god Pan sleeps, and all nature is breathless, that his repose may be undisturbed.

“It is not the first time,” observed the princess, “that, standing upon an eminence which presents a wide extended view, I have thought how pure and peaceful is the look of holy nature, and the impression comes upon me that the world beneath must be free from strife and care; but returning to the dwellings of man, be they the cottage or the palace, be they wide or circumscribed, we find that there is in truth ever something to subdue, to struggle with, to quiet and allay.”

Honorio, in the meantime, had directed the telescope towards the town, and now exclaimed, “Look, look! the town is on fire in the market-place.”

They looked and saw a column of smoke arising, but the glare of daylight eclipsed the flames. “The fire increases,” they exclaimed, still looking through the instrument. The princess saw the calamity with the naked eye; from time to time they perceived a red flame ascending amid the smoke. Her uncle at length exclaimed, “Let us return; it is calamitous. I have always feared the recurrence of such a misfortune.”

They descended, and having reached the horses, the princess thus addressed her old relative, “Ride forward, sir, hastily with your attendant, but leave Honorio with me, and we will follow.”

Her uncle perceived the prudence and utility of this advice, and riding on as quickly as the nature of the ground would allow, descended to the open plain. The princess mounted her steed, upon which Honorio addressed her thus: “I pray your highness to ride slowly; the fire-engines are in the best order, both in the town and in the castle,

there can surely be no mistake or error even in so unexpected an emergency. Here, however, the way is dangerous, and riding is insecure, from the small stones and the smooth grass, and, in addition, the fire will no doubt be extinguished before we reach the town."

But the princess indulged no such hope; she saw the smoke ascend, and thought she perceived a flash of lightning and heard a thunder-clap, and her mind was filled with the frightful pictures of the conflagration which her uncle's oft-repeated narrative had impressed upon her.



That calamity had indeed been dreadful, sudden and impressive enough to make one apprehensive for the repetition of a like misfortune. At midnight a fearful fire had broken out in the market-place, which was filled with booths and stalls, before the occupants of those temporary habitations had been roused from their deep slumber. The prince himself, after a weary day's journey, had retired to rest, but rushing to the window perceived with dismay the flames which raged around on every side and approached the spot where he stood. The houses of the market-place, crimsoned with the reflection, appeared already to burn, and threatened every instant to burst out into a general conflagration. The fierce element raged irresistibly, the beams and rafters crackled, whilst countless pieces of consumed linen flew aloft, and the burnt and shapeless rags sported in the air and looked like foul demons revelling in their congenial element. With loud cries of distress, each individual endeavored to rescue what he could from the flames. Servants and assistants vied with their masters in their efforts to save the huge bales of goods already half consumed, to tear what still remained uninjured from the burning stalls, and to pack it away in chests, although they were even then compelled to abandon their labors and leave the whole to fall a prey to the conflagration. How many wished that the raging blaze would allow but a single moment's respite, and pausing to consider the possibility of such a mercy, fell victims to their brief hesitation. Many buildings burned on one side, while the other side lay in obscure darkness. A few determined, self-willed characters bent themselves obstinately to the task of saving something from the flames, and suffered for their heroism. The whole scene of misery and devastation was renewed in the mind of the beautiful princess; her countenance was clouded, which had beamed so radiantly in the early morning; her eyes had lost their lustre, and even the beautiful woods and meadows around now looked sad and mournful.

Riding onwards she entered the sweet valley, but she felt uncheered by the refreshing coolness of the place. She had, however, not advanced far, before she observed an unusual appearance in the copse near the meadow where the sparkling brook which flowed through the adjacent country took its rise. She at once recognized a tiger couched in the attitude to spring, as she had seen him represented in the painting. The impression was fearful. "Fly! gracious lady," cried Honorio, "fly at once!" She turned her horse to mount the steep hill which she had just descended, but her young

attendant drew his pistol, and approaching the monster, fired; unfortunately he missed his mark, the tiger leaped aside, the horse started, and the terrified beast pursued his course and followed the princess. The latter urged her horse up the steep stony acclivity, forgetting for a moment that the pampered animal she rode was unused to such exertions. But urged by his impetuous rider the spirited steed made a new effort, till at length, stumbling at an inequality of the ground, after many attempts to recover his footing, he fell exhausted to the ground. The princess released herself from the saddle with great expertness and presence of mind, and brought her horse again to its feet. The tiger was in pursuit at a slow pace. The uneven ground and sharp stones appeared to retard his progress, though as Honorio approached, his speed and strength seemed to be renewed. They now came nearer to the spot where the princess stood by her horse, and Honorio, bending down, discharged a second pistol. This time he was successful and shot the monster through the head. The animal fell, and as he lay stretched upon the ground at full length, gave evidence of that might and terror, which was now reduced to a lifeless form. Honorio had leaped from his horse, and was now kneeling on the body of the huge brute. He had already put an end to his struggles, with the hunting knife which gleamed within his grasp. He looked even more handsome and active than the princess had ever seen him in list or tournament. Thus had he oftentimes driven his bullet through the head of the Turk in the riding-school, piercing his forehead under the turban, and, carried onward by his rapid courser, he had oftentimes struck the Moor's head to the ground with his shining sabre. In all such knightly feats he was dexterous and successful, and here he had found an opportunity for putting his skill to the test.

"Despatch him quickly," said the princess faintly, "I fear he may injure you with his claws."

"There is no danger," answered the youth, "he is dead enough, and I do not wish to spoil his skin—it shall ornament your sledge next winter."

"Do not jest at such a time," continued the princess; "such a moment calls forth every feeling of devotion that can fill the heart."

"And I never felt more devout than now," added Honorio, "and therefore are my thoughts cheerful; I only consider how this creature's skin may serve your pleasure."

"It would too often remind me of this dreadful moment," she replied.

"And yet," answered the youth, with burning cheek, "this triumph is more innocent than that in which the arms of the defeated are borne in proud procession before the conqueror."

"I shall never forget your courage and skill," rejoined the princess; "and let me add that you may during your whole life command the gratitude and favor of the prince. But rise, the monster is dead; rise, I say, and let us think what next is to be done."

"Since I find myself now kneeling before you," replied Honorio, "let me be assured of a grace, of a favor, which you can bestow upon me. I have oftentimes implored your

princely husband for permission to set out upon my travels. He who dares aspire to the good fortune of becoming your guest, should have seen the world. Travellers flock hither from all quarters, and when the conversation turns on some town, or on some peculiar part of the globe, your guests are asked if they have never seen the same. No one can expect confidence who has not seen everything. We must instruct ourselves for the benefit of others."



"Rise," repeated the princess; "I can never consent to desire or request anything contrary to the wish of my husband; but, if I mistake not, the cause of your detention here has already been removed. It was the wish of your prince to mark how your character should ripen, and prove worthy of an independent nobleman, who might one day be required to assert his honor abroad, as you have done hitherto here at court, and I doubt not that your present deed of bravery will prove as good a passport as any youth can carry with him through the world."

The princess had scarcely time to mark that, instead of an expression of youthful delight, a shade of grief now darkened his countenance, and, he could scarcely display his emotion, before a woman approached, climbing the mountain hastily, and leading a boy by the hand. Honorio had just risen from his kneeling posture and seemed lost in thought, when the woman advanced with piercing cries, and immediately flung herself upon the lifeless body of the tiger. Her conduct, no less than her gaudy and peculiar attire, bore evidence that she was the owner and attendant of the animal. The boy by whom she was accompanied was remarkable for his sparkling eyes and jet-black hair. He carried a flute in his hand, and he united his tears to those of his mother, whilst, with a more calm but deep-felt sorrow than she displayed, he knelt quietly at her side.

The violent expression of this wretched woman's grief was succeeded by a torrent of expostulations, which rushed from her in broken sentences, reminding one of a mountain stream whose course is interrupted by impending rocks. Her natural expressions, short and abrupt, were forcible and pathetic; it would be a vain task to endeavor to translate them into our idiom; we must be satisfied with their general meaning. "They have murdered thee, poor animal, murdered thee without cause. Tamely thou would'st have lain down to await our arrival, for thy feet pained thee, and thy claws were powerless. Thou didst lack thy burning native sun to bring thee to maturity. Thou wert the most beautiful animal of thy kind. Who ever beheld a more noble royal tiger stretched out to sleep, than thou art as thou liest here never to rise again? When in the morning thou awokest at the earliest dawn of day, opening thy wide jaws and stretching out thy ruddy tongue, thou seemedst to us to smile; and even when a growl burst from thee, still didst thou ever playfully take thy food from the hand of a woman, or from the fingers of a child. Long did we accompany thee in thy

travels, and long was thy society to us as indispensable as profitable. To us, in very truth, did food come from the ravenous, and sweet refreshment from the strong. But alas! alas! this can never be again!"

She had not quite finished her lamentations, when a troop of horsemen was observed riding in a body over the heights which led from the castle. They were soon recognized as the hunting cavalcade of the prince, and he himself was at their head. Riding amongst the distant hills, they had observed the dark columns of smoke which obscured the atmosphere, and, pushing on over hill and dale, as if in the heat of the chase, they had followed the course indicated by the smoke, which served them as a guide. Rushing forwards, regardless of every obstacle, they had come by surprise upon the astonished group, who presented a remarkable appearance in the opening of the hills. The recognition of each other produced a general surprise, and after a short pause a few words of explanation cleared up the apparent mystery. The prince heard with astonishment the extraordinary occurrence, as he stood surrounded by the crowd of horsemen and pedestrian attendants. There seemed no doubt about the necessary course. Orders and commands were at once issued by the prince.

A stranger now forced his way forward, and appeared within the circle. He was tall in figure, and attired as gaudily as the woman and her child. The members of the family recognized each other with mutual surprise and pain. But the man, collecting himself, stood at a respectful distance from the prince, and addressed him thus:—

"This is not a moment for complaining. My lord and mighty master, the lion has also escaped, and is concealed somewhere here in the mountain; but spare him, I implore you; have mercy upon him, that he may not perish, like this poor animal."

"The lion escaped!" exclaimed the prince. "Have you found his track?"

"Yes, sire. A peasant in the valley, who needlessly took refuge in a tree, pointed to the direction he had taken—this is the way, to the left; but perceiving a crowd of men and horses before me I became curious to know the occasion of their assembling, and hastened forward to obtain help."

"Well," said the prince, "the chase must begin in this direction. Load your rifles; go deliberately to work; no misfortune can happen, if you but drive him into the thick woods below us; but in truth, worthy man, we can scarcely spare your favorite; why were you negligent enough to let him escape?"

"The fire broke out," replied the other, "and we remained quiet and prepared; it spread quickly round, but raged at a distance from us. We were provided with water in abundance, but suddenly an explosion of gunpowder took place, and the conflagration immediately extended to us and beyond us. We were too precipitate, and are now reduced to ruin."

The prince was still engaged in issuing his orders, and there was general silence for a moment, when a man was observed flying, rather than running, down from the castle. He was quickly recognized as the watchman of the artist's studio, whose business it

was to occupy the dwelling and to take care of the workmen. Breathless he advanced, and a few words served to announce the nature of his business.

“The lion had taken refuge on the heights, and had lain down in the sunshine behind the lofty walls of the castle. He was reposing at the foot of an old tree in perfect tranquillity. But,” continued the man, in a tone of bitter complaint, “unfortunately, I took my rifle to the town yesterday to have it repaired, or the animal had never risen again; his skin, at least, would have been mine, and I had worn it in triumph for my life.”

The princes whose military experience had often served him in time of need, for he had frequently been in situations where unavoidable danger pressed on every side—observed, in reply to the man, “What pledge can you give that, if we spare your lion, he will do no mischief in the country?”

“My wife and child,” answered the father, hastily, “will quiet him and lead him peacefully along, until I repair his shattered cage, and then we shall keep him harmless and uninjured.”



artist: carl gehrts.

THE PRINCE AND THE LION-TAMER.

The child seemed to be looking for his flute. It was that species of instrument which is sometimes called the soft, sweet flute, short in the mouthpiece, like a pipe. Those who understood the art of using it could extract from it the most delicious tones.

In the meantime the prince inquired of the caretaker on which path the lion had ascended the mountain.

“Through the low road,” replied the latter; “it is walled in on both sides, has long been the only passage, and shall continue so. Two footpaths originally led to the same point, but we destroyed them, that there might remain but one way to that castle of enchantment and beauty which is to be formed by the taste and talent of Prince Frederick.”

After a thoughtful pause, during which the prince stood contemplating the child, who continued playing softly on his flute, the former turned towards Honorio, and said:

“Thou hast this day rendered me an essential service; finish the task you have begun. Occupy the narrow road of which we have heard, hold your rifle ready, but do not shoot if you think it likely that the lion may be driven back; but under any circumstances kindle a fire, that he may be afraid to descend in this direction. The man and his wife must answer for the consequences.”

Honorio proceeded without delay to execute the orders he had received.

The child still continued to play upon his flute. He produced no exact melody, as a mere succession of notes followed, without any precise order or artistic arrangement, yet, perhaps for this very reason, the effect seemed replete with enchantment. Every one was delighted with the simple music, when the father, full of a noble enthusiasm, addressed the assembled spectators thus:—

“God has bestowed the gift of wisdom upon the prince, and the power of seeing that all divine works are good, each after its kind. Behold how the rocks stand firm and motionless, proof against the effects of sun and storm. Their summits are crowned with ancient trees, and, elated with the pride of their ornaments, they look round boldly far and wide. But should a part become detached, it no longer appears as before; it breaks into a thousand pieces, and covers the side of the declivity. But even there the pieces find no resting-place; they pursue their course downwards, till the brook receives them, and carries them onward to the river. Thence, unresisting and submissive, their sharp angles having become rounded and smooth, they are borne along with greater velocity from stream to stream, till they finally attain the ocean, in whose mighty depths giants abide and dwarfs abound.

“But who celebrates the praise of the Lord, whom the stars praise from all eternity? Why, however, should we direct our vision so far? Behold the bee, how he makes his provision in harvest time, and constructs a dwelling, rectangular and level, at once the architect and workman. Behold the ant, she knows her way, and loses it not; she builds her habitation of grass and earth and tiny twigs, builds it high and strengthens it with arches, but in vain,—the prancing steed approaches and treads it into nothing, destroying the little rafters and supports of the edifice. He snorts with impatience and with restlessness, for the Lord has formed the horse as companion to the wind, and brother to the storm, that he may carry mankind whither he will. But in the palm forest even he takes to flight. There, in the wilderness, the lion roams in proud majesty; he is monarch of the beasts, and nothing can resist his strength. But man has subdued his valor; the mightiest of animals has respect for the image of God, in which the very angels are formed, and they minister to the Lord and His servants. Daniel trembled not in the lions' den; he stood full of faith and holy confidence, and the wild roaring of the monsters did not interrupt his pious song.”

This address, which was delivered with an expression of natural enthusiasm, was accompanied by the child's sweet music. But when his father had concluded, the boy commenced to sing with clear and sonorous voice, and some degree of skill. His parent in the meantime seized his flute, and in soft notes accompanied the child as he sung:

“Hear the Prophet's song ascending
From the cavern's dark retreat.
Whilst an Angel, earthward bending,
Cheers his soul with accents sweet.
Fear and terror come not o'er him,
As the lion's angry brood
Crouch with placid mien before him,
By his holy song subdued.”

The father continued to accompany the verses with his flute, whilst the mother's voice was occasionally heard to intervene as second.

The effect of the whole was rendered more peculiar and impressive by the child's frequently inverting the order of the verses. And if he did not, by this artifice, give a new sense and meaning to the whole, he at least highly excited the feelings of his audience:

“Angels o'er us mildly bending,
Cheer us with their voices sweet.
Hark! what strains enchant the ear!
In the cavern's dark retreat,
Can the Prophet quake with fear?
Holy accents sweetly blending,
Banish ev'ry earthly ill,
Whilst an Angel choir descending
Executes the heavenly will.”

Then all three joined with force and emphasis:

“Since the Eternal eye, far-seeing,
Earth and sea surveys in peace,
Lion shall with lamb agreeing
Live, and angry tempests cease.
Warriors' sword no more shall lour;
Faith and Hope their fruit shall bear;
Wondrous is the mighty power
Of Love, which pours its soul in prayer.”

The music ceased. Silence reigned around. Each one listened attentively to the dying tones, and now for the first time could one observe and note the general impression. Every listener was overcome, though each was affected in a different manner. The prince looked sorrowfully at his wife, as though he had only just perceived the danger which had lately threatened him, whilst she, leaning upon his arm, did not hesitate to draw forth her embroidered handkerchief to dry the starting tear. It was delightful to relieve her youthful heart from the weight of grief with which she had for some time felt oppressed. A general silence reigned around, and the fears were forgotten which all had experienced both from the conflagration below and the appearance of the formidable lion above.

The repose of the whole company was first interrupted by the prince, who made a signal to lead the horses nearer; he then turned to the woman and addressed her thus: “You think, then, to master the lion wherever you meet him, by the power of your song, assisted by that of the child and the tones of your flute, and believe that you can thus lead him harmless and uninjured to his cage?”

She protested and assured him that she would do so; whereupon a servant was ordered to show her the way to the castle. The prince and a few of his attendants now took

their departure hastily, whilst the princess, accompanied by the rest, followed more slowly after. But the mother and the child, accompanied by the servant, who had armed himself with a rifle, hastened to ascend the mountain.

At the very entrance of the narrow road which led to the castle, they found the hunting attendants busily employed in piling together heaps of dry brushwood to kindle a large fire.

“There is no necessity for such precaution,” observed the woman; “all will yet turn out well.”

They perceived Honorio at a little distance from them, sitting upon a fragment of the wall, with his double-barrelled rifle in his lap, prepared as it seemed for every emergency. But he paid little attention to the people who approached; he was absorbed in his own contemplations, and seemed engaged in deepest thought. The woman entreated that he would not permit the fire to be kindled; he, however, paid not the smallest attention to her request. She then raised her voice, and exclaimed with a loud cry: “Thou handsome youth, who killed my tiger, I curse thee not; but spare my lion, and I will bless thee.”

But Honorio was looking upon vacancy; his eyes were bent upon the sun, which had finished its daily course and was now about to set.

“You are looking to the evening,” cried the woman, “and you are right, for there is yet much to do; but hasten, delay not, and you will conquer. But, first of all, conquer yourself.” He seemed to smile at this observation—the woman passed on, but could not avoid looking round to observe him once more. The setting sun had cast a rosy glow upon his countenance; she thought she had never beheld so handsome a youth.

“If your child,” said the attendant, “can, as you imagine, with his fluting and his singing, entice and tranquillize the lion, we shall easily succeed in mastering him; for the ferocious animal has lain down to sleep under the broken arch, through which we have secured a passage into the castle court, as the chief entrance has been long in ruins. Let the child then entice him into the interior, when we can close the gate without difficulty, and the child may, if he please, escape by a small winding staircase, which is situated in one of the corners. We may in the meantime conceal ourselves; but I shall take up a position which will enable me to assist the child at any moment with my rifle.”

“These preparations are all needless; Heaven and our own skill, bravery and good fortune are our best defence.”

“But first let me conduct you by this steep ascent to the top of the tower, right opposite to the entrance of which I have spoken. The child may then descend into the arena, and there he can try to exercise his power over the obedient animal.”

This was done. Concealed above, the attendant and the mother surveyed the proceeding. The child descended the narrow staircase and soon appeared in the wide courtyard. He immediately entered into the narrow opening opposite, when the sweet

sounds of his flute were heard, but these gradually diminished till at length they finally ceased. The pause was fearful—the solemnity of the proceeding filled the old attendant with apprehension, accustomed as he was to every sort of danger. He declared that he would rather engage the enraged animal himself. But the mother preserved her cheerful countenance, and, leaning over the parapet in a listening attitude, betrayed no sign of the slightest fear.

At length the flute was heard again. The child had issued from the dark recess, his face beaming with triumph; the lion was slowly following, and seemed to walk with difficulty. Now and then the animal appeared disposed to lie down, but the child continued to lead him quietly along, bending his way through the half-leafless autumn-tinged trees, until he arrived at a spot which was illumined by the last rays of the setting sun. They were shedding their parting glory through the ruins, and in this spot he recommenced his sweet song, which we cannot refrain from repeating:

“Hear the Prophet’s song ascending
From the cavern’s dark retreat,
Whilst an Angel, earthward bending,
Cheers his soul with accents sweet.
Fear and terror come not o’er him,
As the lion’s angry brood
Crouch with placid mien before him,
By his holy song subdued.”

The lion in the meantime had lain quietly down, and raising his heavy paw, had placed it in the lap of the child. The latter stroked it gently and continued his chant, but soon observed that a sharp thorn had penetrated into the ball of the animal’s foot. With great tenderness the child extracted the thorn, and taking his bright-colored silk handkerchief from his neck, bound it round the foot of the huge creature, whilst the attentive mother, still joyfully leaning over the parapet with outstretched arms, would probably have testified her approbation with loud shouts and clapping of hands, if the attendant had not rudely seized her and reminded her that the danger was not yet completely over.

The child now joyfully continued his song, after he had hummed a few notes by way of prelude:

“Since the Eternal eye, far-seeing,
Earth and sea surveys in peace,
Lion shall with lamb agreeing
Live, and angry tempests cease.
Warriors’ sword no more shall lour;
Faith and Hope their fruit shall bear;
Wondrous is the mighty power
Of Love, which pours its soul in prayer.”

If it were possible to conceive that the features of so fierce a monster, at once the tyrant of the forest and the despot of the animal kingdom, could display an expression

of pleasure and grateful joy, it might have been witnessed upon this occasion; and, in very truth, the child, in the fulness of his beauty, looked like some victorious conqueror, though it could not be said that the lion seemed subdued, for his mighty power was only for a time concealed; he wore the aspect of some domesticated creature, who had been content to make a voluntary surrender of the mighty power with which it was endued. And thus the child continued to play and to sing, transposing his verses or adding to them, as he felt inclined:

“Holy Angels, still untiring,
Aid the good and virtuous child,
Every noble deed inspiring
And restraining actions wild
So the forest king to render
Tame as child at parent's knee,
Still be gentle, kind, and tender,
Use sweet love and melody.”

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The Good Women.

HENRIETTA and Armidoro had been for some time engaged in walking through the garden in which the Summer Club was accustomed to assemble. It had long been their practice to arrive before the other members, for they entertained the warmest attachment to each other, and their pure and virtuous friendship fostered the delightful hope that they would shortly be united in the bonds of unchanging affection.

Henrietta, who was of a lively disposition, no sooner perceived her friend Amelia approach the summer-house from a distance, than she ran to welcome her. The latter was already seated at a table in the ante-chamber, where the newspapers, journals and other recent publications lay displayed.

It was her custom to spend occasional evenings in reading in this apartment, without paying attention to the company who came and went, or suffering herself to be disturbed by the rattling of the dice or the loud conversation which prevailed at the gaming-tables. She spoke little, except for the purpose of rational conversation. Henrietta, on the contrary, was not so sparing of her words, being of an easily satisfied disposition, and ever ready with expressions of commendation. They were soon joined by a third person, whom we shall call Sinclair. "What news do you bring?" exclaimed Henrietta, addressing him as he approached.

"You will scarcely guess," replied Sinclair, as he opened a portfolio. "And even if I inform you that I have brought for your inspection the engravings intended for the Ladies' Almanac of this year, you will hardly guess the subjects they portray; but when I tell you that young ladies are represented in a series of twelve engravings—"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Henrietta, interrupting him, "you have no intention, I perceive, of putting our ingenuity to the test. You jest, if I mistake not; for you know how I delight in riddles and charades, and in guessing my friends' enigmas. Twelve young ladies, you say—sketches of character, I suppose; some adventures, or situations, or something else that redounds to the honor of the sex."

Sinclair smiled in silence, whilst Amelia watched him with calm composure, and then remarked, with that fine sarcastic tone which so well became her, "If I read his countenance truly, he has something to produce of which we shall not quite approve. Men are so fond of discovering something which shall have the appearance of turning us into ridicule."

SINCLAIR.

You are becoming serious, Amelia, and threaten to grow satirical. I shall scarcely venture to open my little packet.

HENRIETTA.

Oh! produce it.

SINCLAIR.

They are caricatures.

HENRIETTA.

I love them of all things.

SINCLAIR.

Sketches of naughty ladies.

HENRIETTA.

So much the better; we do not belong to that class. Their portraits would afford us as little pleasure as their society.

SINCLAIR.

Shall I show them?

HENRIETTA.

Do so at once.

So saying, she snatched the portfolio from him, took out the pictures, spread six of them upon the table, glanced over them hastily, and then shuffled them together as if they had been a pack of cards. "Capital!" she exclaimed; "they are done to the very life. This one, for instance, holding a pinch of snuff to her nose, is the very image of Madame S—, whom we shall meet this evening; and this old lady with the cat is not unlike my grand-aunt;—that figure, holding the skein of thread, resembles our old milliner. We can find an original for every one of these ugly figures; and even amongst the men I have somewhere or other seen an old fellow bent double, just like that picture; and also a close resemblance to the figure holding the thread. They are full of fun, these engravings, and admirably executed."

Amelia, who had glanced carelessly at the pictures, and instantly withdrawn her eyes, inquired how they could look for resemblances in such things. "One deformity is like another, just as the beautiful ever resembles the beautiful. Our minds are irresistibly attracted by the latter, in the same degree as they are repelled by the former."

SINCLAIR.

But our fancy and our wit find more amusement in deformity than in beauty. Much can be made of the former, but nothing at all of the latter.

“But beauty exalts, whilst deformity degrades us,” observed Armidoro, who, from his post at the window, had paid silent attention to all that had occurred. Without approaching the table, he then adjourned into the adjoining cabinet.

All clubs have their peculiar epochs. The interest of the various members towards each other, and their friendly harmony together, are of a fluctuating character. The club of which we speak had now attained its zenith. The members were, for the most part, men of refinement, or at least of calm and quiet deportment; they mutually recognized each other's value, and allowed all want of merit to find its own level. Each one sought his own individual amusement, and the general conversation was often of a nature to attract attention.

At this time a gentleman named Seyton arrived, accompanied by his wife. He was a man who had seen much of the world, first from his engagement in business, and afterwards in political affairs; he was moreover an agreeable companion; although, in mixed society, he was chiefly remarkable for his talent as a card-player. His wife was a worthy woman, kind and faithful, and enjoying the most perfect confidence and esteem of her husband. She felt happy that she could now give uncontrolled indulgence to her taste for pleasure. At home she could not exist without a companion, and she found in amusement and dissipation the only incentive to home enjoyment.

We must treat our readers as strangers, or rather as visitors to the club, and in full confidence we must introduce them speedily to our new society. A poet paints his characters by describing their actions; we must adopt a shorter course, and by a hasty sketch introduce our readers rapidly to the scenes.

Seyton approached the table and looked at the pictures.

“A discussion has arisen,” observed Henrietta, “with respect to caricatures. What side do you take? I am an advocate for them, and wish to know whether all caricatures do not possess something irresistibly attractive.”

AMELIA.

And does not every evil calumny, provide it relate to the absent, also possess an incredible charm?

HENRIETTA.

But does not a sketch of this kind produce an indelible impression?

AMELIA.

And that is just the reason why I condemn it. Is not the indelible impression of what is disagreeable precisely the evil which so constantly pursues us in life and destroys our greatest enjoyments?

HENRIETTA.

Favor us, Seyton, with your opinion.

SEYTON.

I should propose a truce to the argument. Why should our pictures be better than ourselves? Our nature seems to have two sides, which cannot exist separately. Light and darkness, good and evil, height and depth, virtue and vice, and a thousand other contradictions unequally distributed, appear to constitute the component parts of human nature; and why, therefore, should I blame an artist who, whilst he paints an angel bright, brilliant and beautiful, on the other hand paints a devil black, ugly and hateful?

AMELIA.

There could be no objection to such a course if caricaturists did not introduce within their province subjects which belong to higher spheres.

SEYTON.

So far I think you perfectly right. But artists, whose province is the Beautiful alone, also appropriate what does not precisely belong to them.

AMELIA.

I have no patience, however, with caricaturists who ridicule the portraits of eminent men. In spite of my better sense, I can never consider that great man Pitt as anything else than a snub-nosed broomstick; and Fox, who was in many respects an estimable character, anything better than a stall-fed swine.

HENRIETTA.

Precisely my view. Caricatures of such a nature make an indelible impression, and I cannot deny that it often affords amusement to evoke their recollection and pervert them even into worse distortions.

SINCLAIR.

But, ladies, allow us to revert for a moment from this discussion to a consideration of our engravings.

SEYTON.

I observe that a fancy for dogs is here delineated in no very flattering manner.

AMELIA.

That I have no objection to, for I detest such animals.

SINCLAIR.

First an enemy to caricatures, and then unfriendly to the dog tribe.

AMELIA.

And why not? What are such animals but caricatures of men?

SEYTON.

You remember, probably, what a certain traveller relates of the city of Grätz, "that the place was full of dogs, and of dumb persons half idiotic." Might it not be possible that the habitual sight of so many barking, senseless animals should have produced an effect upon the human race?

SINCLAIR.

Our attachment to animals deteriorates our passions and affections.

AMELIA.

But if our reason, according to the general expression, is sometimes capable of standing still, it may surely do so in the presence of dogs.

SINCLAIR.

Fortunately there is no one in our company who cares for dogs but Madame Seyton. She is very much attached to her pretty greyhound.

SEYTON.

And that same animal is particularly dear and valuable to her husband.

Madame Seyton, from a distance, raised her finger to her lips in an attitude of playful threatening.

SEYTON.

I know a proof that such animals detach our affections from their legitimate objects. May I not, my dear child (addressing his wife), relate our anecdote? We need not be ashamed of it.

Madame Seyton signified her assent by a friendly nod, and he commenced his narration.

“We loved each other and had entered into an engagement to marry before we had well considered the possibility of supporting an establishment. At length better hopes began to dawn, when I was unexpectedly compelled to set out upon a journey which threatened to last longer than I could have wished. On my departure I forgot my favorite greyhound. It had often been in the habit of accompanying me to my intended wife's house, sometimes returning with me, and occasionally remaining behind. It now became her property, was a cheerful companion, and reminded her of my return. At home the little animal afforded much amusement, and in the promenades, where we had so often walked together, it seemed constantly engaged in looking for me, and barked as if announcing me as it sprang from among the trees. My darling little Meta amused itself thus for a considerable time by fancying me really present, until at length, about the time when I had hoped to return, the period of my absence being again indefinitely prolonged, the poor animal pined away and died.”

MADAME SEYTON.

Just so, dear husband! And your narrative is sweetly interesting.

SEYTON.

You are quite at liberty to interrupt me, my dear, if you think fit. My friend's house now seemed desolate, her walks had lost all their interest, her favorite dog, which had ever been at her side when she wrote to me, had grown to be an actual necessity of existence, and her letters were now discontinued. But she found, however, some consolation in the company of a handsome youth, who evinced an anxiety to fill the place of her former four-footed companion, both in the house and in the promenades. But without enlarging on this subject, and let me be ever so inimical to rash judgments, I may say that matters began to assume a rather critical appearance.

MADAME SEYTON.

I must let you continue. A story which is all truth and wholly free from exaggeration is seldom worth hearing.

SEYTON.

A mutual friend of ours, who was a prudent man, versed in the world, and acquainted with human nature, continued to reside near my dear friend after my departure. He paid frequent visits at her house, and observed with pain and anxiety the change

which she had undergone. He formed his plan in secrecy, and called upon her one day, accompanied by a greyhound which precisely resembled mine. The cordially affectionate and appropriate address with which he accompanied his present, the unexpected appearance of a favorite, which seemed to have risen from the grave, the silent rebuke with which her susceptible heart reproached her at the sight, brought back to her mind a lively recollection of me. My young supplanter accordingly received his congé in the politest manner possible, and the new favorite was retained by the lady as her constant companion. When, upon my return, I held my beloved in my embrace, I thought the greyhound was my own, and wondered not a little that he barked at me as at a stranger. I thought that dogs of the present day had far less faithful memories than those of classical times, and observed that Ulysses had been remembered by his dog after many years' absence, whilst mine had forgotten me in an incredibly short space of time. "But yet he has taken good care of your Penelope," she replied, promising at the same time to explain her mysterious speech. This was soon done, and unbroken confidence has ever since been the characteristic of our union.

MADAME SEYTON.

Well, now, conclude with the anecdote. If you please, I will walk for an hour, for you intend doubtless to sit down to the card-table.

He signified his assent. She took the arm of her companion and went towards the door. "Take the dog with you, my dear!" he exclaimed, as she departed. The entire company smiled, as did Seyton also when he saw the precise point of his unintentional observation, and every one else silently felt a trifling degree of malicious satisfaction.

SINCLAIR.

You have related an anecdote of a dog which was happily instrumental in promoting a marriage; I can tell another whose influence destroyed one. I was also once in love, and it was also my fate to set out upon a journey, and, moreover, left a dear young friend behind me. But there was this difference between the two cases, my wish to possess my treasure had been as yet undeclared. At length I returned. The many adventures in which I had engaged were imprinted strongly upon my mind. Like all travellers, I was fond of recounting them, and I hoped by this means to win the attention and sympathy of my beloved. I was anxious that she should know all the experience I had acquired and the pleasures I had enjoyed. But I found that her attention was wholly directed to a dog. Whether she so engaged herself from that spirit of opposition which so often characterizes the fair sex, or whether it arose from some unlucky accident, it so happened that the amiable qualities of the dog, their amusements together and her attachment to the little animal were the sole topics of conversation which she could find for a lover who had long been passionately devoted to her. I wondered and felt astonished, and related a thousand circumstances to prove my affection for her. I then felt vexed at her coldness, and took my leave, but soon returned with feelings of self-reproach and became even more unhappy than before. Under these circumstances our attachment cooled and our acquaintance was discontinued, and I felt in my heart that I might attribute the misfortune to a dog.

Armidoro, who had once more joined the company from the cabinet, observed, upon hearing the anecdote, "that it would be interesting to make a collection of stories showing the influence which social animals of the lower order exercise over mankind. In the expectation that such a collection will be one day made, I will relate an anecdote to show how a dog was the cause of a very tragical occurrence.

"Ferdinand and Cardano, two young noblemen, had been attached friends from their very earliest youth. As court pages and as officers in the same regiment they had shared many adventures together, and had become thoroughly acquainted with each other's dispositions. Cardano's attraction was the fair sex, whilst Ferdinand had a passion for play. The former was thoughtless and haughty, the latter suspicious and reserved. It happened, at a time when Cardano was accidentally obliged to break off a certain tender attachment, that he left a beautiful little pet spaniel behind him. He soon procured another, which he afterwards presented to a second lady, from whom he was about to separate; and from that time, upon taking leave of every new female friend with whom he had become intimate, he invariably presented her with a similar little spaniel. Ferdinand was aware of Cardano's peculiar habit in this respect, but he never paid much attention to the circumstance.

"The different pursuits of the two friends at length caused a long separation between them, and, when they next met, Ferdinand had become a married man, and was leading the life of a country gentleman. Cardano spent some time with him, either at his house or in the neighborhood, where, as he had many relations and friends, he resided for nearly a year.

"Upon his departure Ferdinand's attention was attracted by a very beautiful spaniel of which his wife had lately become possessed. He took it in his arms, admired its beauty, stroked it, praised it and inquired where she had obtained so charming an animal. She replied, 'from Cardano.' He was struck at once with the memory of bygone times and events, and with a recollection of the significant memorial with which Cardano was accustomed to mark his insincerity; he felt oppressed with the indignity of an injured husband, raged violently, flung the innocent little animal with fury to the earth and ran from the apartment amid the cries of the spaniel and the supplications of his astonished wife. A fearful dispute and countless disagreeable consequences ensued, which, though they did not produce an actual divorce, ended in a mutual agreement to separate; and a ruined household was the termination of this adventure."

The story was not quite finished when Eulalia entered the apartment. She was a young lady whose society was universally sought after, and she formed one of the most attractive ornaments of the club—an accomplished woman and a successful authoress.

The female caricatures were laid before her with which the clever artist, before alluded to, had attacked the fair sex, and she was invited to defend her good sisterhood.

“Probably,” said Amelia, “a collection of these charming portraits is intended for the almanac, and possibly some celebrated author will undertake the witty task of explaining in words what the ingenious artist has represented in his pictures.”

Sinclair felt that the pictures were not worthy of utter condemnation, nor could he deny that some sort of explanation of their meaning was necessary, as a caricature which is not understood is worthless, and is in fact only valuable for its application. For however the ingenious artist may endeavor to display his wit, he cannot always succeed, and without a title or an explanation his labor is lost: words alone can give it value.

AMELIA.

Then let words bestow a value upon this little picture. A young lady has fallen asleep in an armchair, having been engaged, as it appears, with some sort of writing. Another lady, who stands by weeping, presents a small box, or something else, to her companion. What can it mean?

SINCLAIR.

Shall I endeavor to explain it, notwithstanding that the ladies seem but ill-disposed both to caricatures and their exposition? I am told that it is intended to represent an authoress who was accustomed to compose at night; she always obliged her maid to hold her inkstand, and forced the poor creature to remain in that posture even when she herself had been overcome by sleep, and the office of her maid had thus been rendered useless. She was desirous, on awaking, to resume the thread of her thoughts and of her composition, and wished to find her pen and ink ready at the same moment.

Arbon, an artist of talent who had accompanied Eulalia, declared war against the picture. He observed that to delineate the situation or circumstance above alluded to another course should have been adopted.

HENRIETTA.

Let us then compose the picture afresh.

ARBON.

But let us first of all consider the subject attentively. It seems natural enough that a person employed in writing should cause the inkstand to be held, if the circumstances are such that no place can be found to set it down. So Brantome's grandmother held the inkstand for the Queen of Navarre, when the latter, reposing in her litter, composed the history which we have all read with so much pleasure. Again, that any one who writes in bed should cause his inkstand to be held is quite conceivable. But tell us, pretty Henrietta, you who are so fond of questioning and guessing, tell us what the artist should have done to represent this subject properly.

HENRIETTA.

He should have put the table away, and have so arranged the sleeper that nothing should appear at hand upon which an inkstand could be placed.

ARBON.

Quite right. I should have drawn her in a well-cushioned easy-chair, of the fashion which, if I mistake not, are called Bergères; she should have been near the fireplace, and presenting a front view to the spectator. I should suppose her to be engaged in writing upon her knee, for usually one becomes uncomfortable in exacting an inconvenience from another. The paper sinks upon her lap, the pen from her hand, and a sweet maiden stands near holding the inkstand with a forlorn look.

HENRIETTA.

Quite right. But here we have an inkstand upon the table already; and what is to be done, therefore, with the inkstand in the hand of the maiden? It is not easy to conceive why she should be engaged in wiping away her tears.

SINCLAIR.

Here I defend the artist; he allows scope for the ingenuity of the commentator.

ARBON.

Who will probably be engaged in exercising his wit upon the headless men that hang against the wall. This seems to me a clear proof of the inevitable confusion that arises from uniting arts between which there is no natural connection. If we were not accustomed to see engravings with explanations appended to them, the evil would cease. I have no objection that a clever artist should attempt witty representations; but they are difficult to execute, and he should at all events endeavor to make his subject independent of explanations. I could even tolerate remarks and little sentences issuing from the mouths of his figures, provided he restricted himself to being his own commentator.

SINCLAIR.

But if you allow such a thing as a witty picture, you must admit that it is intended only for persons of intelligence; it can possess an attraction for none but those conversant with the occurrences of the day; why then should we object to a commentator who enables us to understand the nature of the intellectual amusement prepared for us?

ARBON.

I have no objection to explanations of pictures which fail to explain themselves. But they should be short and to the point. Wit is for the intelligent; they alone can understand a witty work; and the productions of bygone times and foreign lands are completely lost upon us. It is all well enough with the aid of such notes as we find appended to Rabelais and Hudibras, but what should we say of an author who should find it necessary to write one witty work to elucidate another? Wit, even when fresh from its fountain, is oftentimes feeble enough; it will scarcely become stronger by passing through two or three hands.

SINCLAIR.

How I wish that, instead of thus arguing, we could assist our friend, the owner of these pictures, who would be glad to hear the opinions that have been expressed.

ARMIDORO.

(Coming from the cabinet.) I perceive that the company is still engaged about these censurable pictures: had they produced a pleasant impression, they would doubtless have been laid aside long ago.

AMELIA.

I propose that that be their fate now; the owner must be required to make no use of them. What! a dozen and more hateful, objectionable pictures to appear in a ladies' almanac! Can the man be blind to his own interest? He will ruin his speculation. What lover will present a copy to his mistress, what husband to his wife, what father to his daughter, when the first glance will display such a libel upon the sex?

ARMIDORO.

I have a proposal to make. These objectionable pictures are not the first of the kind which have appeared in the best almanacs. Our celebrated Chodowiecki has, in his collection of monthly engravings, already represented scenes not only untrue to nature, but low and devoid of all pretensions to taste; but how did he do it? Opposite the pictures I allude to he delineated others of a most charming character—scenes in perfect harmony with nature, the result of a high education, of long study, and of an innate taste for the Good and Beautiful. Let us go a step beyond the editor of the proposed almanac and act in opposition to his project. If the intelligent artist has chosen to portray the dark side of his subject, let our author or authoress, if I may dare to express my view, choose the bright side to exercise her talents, and so form a complete work. I shall not longer delay, Eulalia, to unite my own wishes to this proposal. Undertake a description of good female characters. Create the opposite to these engravings, and employ the charm of your pen, not to elucidate these pictures, but to annihilate them.



SINCLAIR.

Promise to comply, Eulalia. Place us under so great an obligation to you.

EULALIA.

Authors are ever apt to promise too easily, because they hope for ability to execute their wishes: but experience has rendered me cautious. And even if I could foresee the necessary leisure, within so short a space of time, I should yet hesitate to undertake the arduous duty. The praises of our sex should be spoken by a man—a young, ardent, loving man. A degree of enthusiasm is requisite for the task, and who has enthusiasm for one's own sex?

ARMIDORO.

I should prefer intelligence, justice and delicacy of taste.

SINCLAIR.

And who can discourse better on the character of good women than the authoress from whose fairy tale of yesterday we all derived such pleasure and so much incomparable instruction?

EULALIA.

The fairy tale was not mine.

SINCLAIR.

Not yours?

ARMIDORO.

To that I can bear witness.

SINCLAIR.

But still it was a lady's?

EULALIA.

The production of a friend.

SINCLAIR.

Then there are two Eulalias.

EULALIA.

Many, perhaps; and better than—

ARMIDORO.

Will you relate to the company what you so lately confided to me? You will all hear with astonishment how this delightful production originated.

EULALIA.

A young lady, with whose great excellence I became accidentally acquainted upon a journey, found herself once in a situation of extreme perplexity, the circumstances of which it would be tedious to narrate. A gentleman to whom she was under many obligations, and who finally offered her his hand, having won her entire esteem and confidence, in a moment of weakness obtained from her the privileges of a husband, before their vows of love had been cemented by marriage. Some peculiar circumstances compelled him to travel, and, in the retirement of a country residence, she anticipated with fear and apprehension the moment when she should become a mother. She used to write to me daily, and informed me of every circumstance that happened. But there was shortly nothing more to fear—she now needed only patience, and I observed, from the tone of her letters, that she began to reflect with a disturbed mind upon all that had already occurred, and upon what was yet to take place in her regard. I determined, therefore, to address her in an earnest tone on the duty which she owed no less to herself than to her infant, whose support, particularly at the commencement of its existence, depended so much upon her mind being free from anxiety. I sought to console and to cheer her, and for this purpose sent her several volumes of fairy tales, which I expressed a wish that she should read. Her own desire to escape from the burden of her melancholy thoughts, and the arrival of these books, formed a remarkable coincidence. She could not help reflecting frequently upon her peculiar fate, and she therefore adopted the expedient of clothing all her past sorrowful adventures, as well as her painful apprehensions for the future, in a garb of romance. The events of her past life—her attachment, her passion, her errors and her sweet maternal cares—no less than her present sad condition, were all embodied by her imagination in forms vivid, though impalpable, and passed before her mind in a

varied succession of strange and unearthly fancies. With pen in hand, she spent many a day and night in noting down her reflections.

AMELIA.

In which occupation she must have found it difficult to hold her inkstand.

EULALIA.

Thus did I acquire the rare collection of letters which I now possess. They are all picturesque, strange and romantic. I never received from her an account of anything actual, so that I sometimes trembled for her reason. Her own situation, the birth of her infant, her sweet affection for her offspring, her joys, her hopes and her maternal fears, were all treated as events of another world, from which she only expected to be liberated by the arrival of her husband. Upon her nuptial day she concluded the fairy tale, which you heard recited yesterday, almost in her own words, and which derives its chief interest from the unusual circumstances under which it was composed.

The company could not sufficiently express their astonishment at this statement, and Seyton, who had abandoned his place at the gaming-table to another person, now entered the apartment, and made inquiries concerning the subject of conversation. He was briefly informed that it related to a fairy tale, which, partly founded on facts, had been composed by the fantastic imagination of a mind that was diseased.

“It is a great pity,” he remarked, “that private diaries are so completely out of fashion. Twenty years ago they were in general use, and many persons thought they possessed a veritable treasure in the record of their daily thoughts. I recollect a very worthy lady upon whom this custom entailed a sad misfortune. A certain governess had been accustomed from her earliest youth to keep a regular diary, and, in fact, she considered its composition to form an indispensable part of her daily duties. She continued the habit when she grew up, and did not lay it aside even when she married. Her memorandums were not looked upon by her as absolute secrets, she had no occasion for such mystery, and she frequently read passages from it for the amusement of her friends and of her husband. But the book in its entirety was intrusted to nobody. The account of her husband's attachment had been entered in her diary with the same minuteness with which she had formerly noted down the ordinary occurrences of the day: and the entire history of her own affectionate feelings had been described from their first opening hour until they had ripened into a passion, and become at length a rooted habit. Upon one occasion this diary accidentally fell in her husband's way, and the perusal afforded him a strange entertainment. He had undesignedly approached the writing-desk upon which the book lay, and, without suspicion or intention, had read through an entire page which was open before him. He took the opportunity of referring to a few previous and subsequent passages, and then retired with the comfortable assurance that it was high time to discontinue the disagreeable amusement.

HENRIETTA.

But, according to the wish of my friend, our conversation should be confined to good women, and already we are turning to those who can scarcely be counted amongst the best.

SEYTON.

Why this constant reference to bad and good? Should we not be quite as well contented with others as with ourselves, either as we have been formed by nature, or improved by education?

ARMIDORO.

I think it would be at once pleasant and useful to arrange and collect a series of anecdotes such as we have heard narrated, and many of which are founded on real occurrences. Light and delicate traits, which mark the characters of men, are well worthy of our attention, even though they give birth to no extraordinary adventures. They are useless to writers of romance, being devoid of all exciting interest; and worthless to the tribe of anecdote-collectors, for they are for the most part destitute of wit and spirit; but they would always prove entertaining to a reader who, in a mood of quiet contemplation, should wish to study the general characteristics of mankind.

SINCLAIR.

Well said. And if we had only thought of so praiseworthy a work a little earlier, we might have assisted our friend, the editor of the Ladies' Calendar, by composing a dozen anecdotes, if not of model women, at least of well-behaved personages, to balance his catalogue of naughty ladies.

AMELIA.

I should be particularly pleased with a collection of incidents to show how a woman forms the very soul and existence of a household establishment; and this because the artist has introduced a sketch of a spendthrift and improvident wife, to the defamation of our sex.

SEYTON.

I can furnish Amelia with a case precisely in point.

AMELIA.

Let us hear it. But do not imitate the usual custom of men who undertake to defend the ladies: they frequently begin with praise and end with censure.

SEYTON.

Upon this occasion, however, I do not fear the perversion of my intention through the influence of any evil spirit. A young man once became tenant of a large hotel which was established in a good situation. Amongst the qualities which recommend a host, he possessed a more than ordinary share of good temper, and as he had from his youth been a friend to the ale-house, he was peculiarly fortunate in selecting a pursuit in which he found it necessary to devote a considerable portion of the day to his home duties. He was neither careful nor negligent, and his own good temper exercised a perceptible influence over the numerous guests who assembled around him.

He had married a young person who was of a quiet, passive disposition. She paid punctual attention to her business, was attached to her household pursuits, and loved her husband, though she often found fault with him in secret for his carelessness in money matters. She had a great love for ready money; she thoroughly comprehended its value and understood the advantage of securing a provision for herself. Devoid of all activity of disposition, she had every tendency to avarice. But a small share of avarice becomes a woman, however ill extravagance may suit her. Generosity is a manly virtue, but parsimony is becoming in a woman. This is the rule of nature, and our judgments must be subservient thereto.

Margaret (for such was the name of this prudent personage) was very much dissatisfied with her husband's carelessness. Upon occasions when large payments were made to him by his customers, it was his habit to leave the money lying for a considerable time upon the table, and then to collect it in a basket, from which he afterwards paid it away, without making it up into packages, and without keeping any account of its application. His wife plainly perceived that, even without actual extravagance, where there was such a total want of system, considerable sums must be wasted. She was above all things anxious to make her husband change his negligent habits, and she became grieved to observe that the small savings which she collected and so carefully retained were as nothing in comparison with the money that was squandered; and she determined, therefore, to adopt a rather dangerous expedient to make her husband open his eyes. She resolved to defraud him of as much money as possible, and for this purpose had recourse to an extraordinary plan. She had observed that when he had once counted his money, which he allowed to remain so long upon the table, he never reckoned it over a second time before putting it away; she therefore rubbed the bottom of a candlestick with tallow, and then, apparently without design, she placed it near the spot where the ducats lay exposed, a species of coin for which she entertained a warm partiality. She thus gained possession of a few pieces, and subsequently of some other coins, and was soon sufficiently well satisfied with her success. She therefore repeated the operation frequently, and entertained no scruple about employing such evil means to effect so praiseworthy an object, and she tranquillized her conscience on the subject by the reflection that such a mode of abstracting her husband's money could not be termed robbery, as her hands were not employed for the purpose. Her secret treasure increased gradually, and soon became very much greater by the addition of the ready money which she herself received from the customers of the hotel, and of which she invariably retained possession.

She had carried on this practice for a whole year, and, though she carefully watched her husband, she never had reason to believe that his suspicions were awakened, until at length he began to grow discontented and unhappy. She induced him to tell her the cause of his anxiety, and learned that he was grievously perplexed. After the last payment which he had made of a considerable sum of money, he had laid aside the amount of his rent, and not only this had disappeared, but he was unable to meet the demand of his landlord from any other channel; and as he had always been accustomed to keep his accounts in his head, and to write down nothing, he could not possibly understand the cause of the deficiency.

Margaret reminded him of his great carelessness, censured his thoughtless manner of receiving and paying away money, and spoke of his general imprudence. Even his generous disposition did not escape her remarks; and, in truth, he had no excuse to offer for a course of conduct the consequences of which he had so much reason to regret.

But she could not leave her husband long in this state of grievous trouble, more especially as she felt a pride in being able to render him once more happy. Accordingly, to his great astonishment, on his birthday, which she was always accustomed to celebrate by presenting him with something useful, she entered his private apartment with a basket filled with rouleaux of money. The different descriptions of coin were packed together separately, and the contents were carefully indorsed in a handwriting by no means of the best. It would be difficult to describe his astonishment at finding before him the precise sums which he had missed, or at his wife's assurance that they belonged to him. She thereupon circumstantially described the time and the manner of her abstracting them, confessed the amount which she had taken, and told also how much she had saved by her own careful attention. His despair was now changed into joy, and the result was that he abandoned to his wife all the duty of receiving and paying away money for the future. His business was carried on even more prosperously than before; although from the day of which we have spoken not a farthing ever passed through his hands. His wife discharged the duty of banker with extraordinary credit to herself; no false money was ever taken; and the establishment of her complete authority in the house was the natural and just consequence of her activity and care; and, after the lapse of ten years, she and her husband were in a condition to purchase the hotel for themselves.

SINCLAIR.

And so all this truth, love and fidelity ended in the wife becoming the veritable mistress. I should like to know how far the opinion is just that women have a tendency to acquire authority.

AMELIA.

There it is again. Censure, you observe, is sure to follow in the wake of praise.

ARMIDORO.

Favor us with your sentiments on this subject, good Eulalia. I think I have observed in your writings no disposition to defend your sex against this imputation.

EULALIA.

In so far as it is a grievous imputation, I should wish it were removed by the conduct of our sex. But where we have a right to authority we can need no excuse. We like authority because we are human. For what else is authority, in the sense in which we use it, than a desire for independence, and for the enjoyment of existence as much as possible. This is a privilege which all men seek with determination; but our ambition appears, perhaps, more objectionable because nature, usage and social regulations place restraints upon our sex, whilst they enlarge the authority of men. What men possess naturally, we have to acquire; and property obtained by a laborious struggle will always be more obstinately held than that which is inherited.

SEYTON.

But women, as I think, have no reason to complain on that score. As the world goes, they inherit as much as men, if not more; and in my opinion it is a much more difficult task to become a perfect man than a perfect woman. The phrase, "He shall be thy master," is a formula characteristic of a barbarous age long since passed away. Men cannot claim a right to become educated and refined without conceding the same privilege to women. As long as the process continues, the balance is even between them; but, as women are more capable of improvement than men, experience shows that the scale soon turns in their favor.

ARMIDORO.

There is no doubt that in all civilized nations women in general are superior to men, for where the two sexes exert a corresponding influence over each other, man becomes effeminate, and that is a disadvantage; but when a woman acquires any masculine virtue, she is the gainer, for if she can improve her own peculiar qualities by the addition of masculine energy, she becomes an almost perfect being.

SEYTON.

I have never considered the subject so deeply. But I think it is generally admitted that women do rule and must continue to do so; and therefore whenever I become acquainted with a young lady, I always inquire upon what subjects she exercises her authority, since it must be exercised somewhere.

AMELIA.

And thus you establish the point with which you started?

SEYTON.

And why not? Is not my reasoning as good as that of philosophers in general, who are convinced by their experience? Active women, who are given to habits of acquisition and saving, are invariably mistresses at home; pretty women, at once graceful and superficial, rule in large societies, whilst those who possess more sound accomplishments exert their influence in smaller circles.

AMELIA.

And thus we are divided into three classes.

SINCLAIR.

All honorable, in my opinion; and yet those three classes do not include the whole sex. There is still a fourth, to which perhaps we had better not allude, that we may escape the charge of converting our praise into censure.

HENRIETTA.

Then we must guess the fourth class. Let us see.

SINCLAIR.

Well, then, the first three classes were those whose activity was displayed at home, in large societies, or in smaller circles.

HENRIETTA.

What other sphere can there be where we can exercise our activity?

SINCLAIR.

There may be many. But I am thinking of the reverse of activity.

HENRIETTA.

Indolence! How could an indolent woman rule?

SINCLAIR.

Why not?

HENRIETTA.

In what manner?

SINCLAIR.

By opposition. Whoever adopts such a course, either from character or principle, acquires more authority than one would readily think.

AMELIA.

I fear we are about to fall into the tone of censure so general to men.

HENRIETTA.

Do not interrupt him, Amelia. Nothing can be more harmless than these mere opinions, and we are the gainers by learning what other persons think of us. Now, then, for the fourth class, what about it?

SINCLAIR.

I must take the liberty of speaking unreservedly. The class I allude to does not exist in our country, and does not exist in France, because the fair sex, both amongst us and our gallant neighbors, enjoys a proper degree of freedom. But in countries where women are under restraint and debarred from sharing in public amusements, the class I speak of is numerous. In a neighboring country there is a peculiar name by which ladies of this class are invariably designated.

HENRIETTA.

You must tell us the name; we can never guess names.

SINCLAIR.

Well, I must tell you, they are called roguish.

HENRIETTA.

A strange appellation.

SINCLAIR.

Some time ago you took great interest in reading the speculations of Lavater upon physiognomy; do you remember nothing about roguish countenances in his book?

HENRIETTA.

It is possible; but it made no impression upon me. I may perhaps have construed the word in its ordinary sense, and read on without noticing it.

SINCLAIR.

It is true that the word "roguish" in its ordinary sense is usually applied to a person who, with malicious levity, turns another into ridicule; but in its present sense it is meant to describe a young lady, who, by her indifference, coldness and reserve—qualities which attach to her as a disease—destroys the happiness of one upon whom she is dependent. We meet with examples of this everywhere; sometimes even in our own circle. For instance, when I have praised a lady for her beauty, I have heard it said in reply, "Yes, but she is a bit of a rogue." I even remember a physician saying to a lady who complained of the anxiety she suffered about her maid-servant, "My dear madam, the girl is somewhat of a rogue, and will give a deal of trouble."

Amelia rose from her seat and left the apartment.

HENRIETTA.

That seems rather strange.

SINCLAIR.

I thought so too, and I therefore took a note of the symptoms, which seemed to mark a disease half moral and half physical, and framed an essay which I entitled "A Chapter on Rogues," and as I meant it to form a portion of a work on general anthropological observations, I have kept it by me hitherto.

HENRIETTA.

But you must let us see it, and if you know any interesting anecdotes to elucidate your meaning of the word "rogue," they must find a place in our intended collection of novels.

SINCLAIR.

This may be all very well, but I find I have failed in the object which brought me hither. I was anxious to find some one in this intelligent assembly to undertake an explanation of these engravings, or who could recommend a talented writer for the purpose; in place of which, the engravings are abused and pronounced worthless, and I must take my leave without having attained my purpose. But if I had only made notes of our conversation and anecdotes this evening, I should almost possess an equivalent.

ARMIDORO.

(Coming from the cabinet, to which he had frequently retired.) Your wish is accomplished. I know the motive of our friend, the editor of the work. I have taken down the heads of our conversation upon this paper. I will arrange the draft, and if Eulalia will kindly promise to impart to the whole that spirit of charming animation

which she possesses, the graceful tone of the work, and perhaps also its contents, will in some measure expiate the offence of the artist for his ungallant attack.

HENRIETTA.

I cannot blame your officious friendship, Armidoro, but I wish you had not taken notes of our conversation; it is setting a bad example. Our intercourse together has been quite free and unrestrained, and nothing can be worse than that our unguarded conversation should be overheard and written down, perhaps even printed for the amusement of the public.

But Henrietta's scruples were silenced by a promise that nothing should meet the public eye except the little anecdotes which had been related.

Eulalia, however, could not be persuaded to edit the notes of the short-hand writer. She had no wish to withdraw her attention from the fairy tale with which she was then occupied. The notes remained in possession of the gentlemen of the party, who, with the aid of their own memories, generously afforded their assistance, that they might thereby contribute to the general edification of all "good women."

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Reynard The Fox.



artist: carl gehrts.

THE ACCUSATION.

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CHAPTER I.



THE ACCUSATION.

THE pleasant feast of Whitsuntide was come;
The woods and hills were clad in vernal bloom;
The full-awakened birds, from every tree,
Made the air ring with cheerful melody;
Sweet were the meadows after passing showers;
Brilliant the heaven with light, the earth with flowers.
Noble, the king of beasts, now holds his court;
Thither his summoned vassals all resort;
From north and south they troop, from east and west,
Of birds and quadrupeds the first and best.
The royal will had been proclaimed, that all
Of ev'ry class should come, both great and small,
To grace the pomp of that high festival:
Not one should fail; and yet there did fail one;
Reynard the Fox, the rogue, was seen of none;
His many crimes from court kept him away;
An evil conscience shuns the light of day.
To face that grave assembly much he feared,
For all accused him; no one had he spared;

Graybeard, the Badger, stood his friend alone,
The Badger, who was Reynard's brother's son.
Begirt with many a relative and friend,
Who aid in war, in peace might counsel lend,
Sir Isegrim, the Wolf, approached the throne,
And with due rev'rence bowing humbly down,
His suit in plaintive accents he began,
And thus his wrathful accusation ran:—
“Most gracious lord and king! in pity hear!
Let my complaint find favor in your ear.
Happy the subjects of your glorious reign;
Here none who seek for justice seek in vain.
Vouchsafe, then, to commis'rate my distress;
For Reynard's malice grant me some redress.
Me in all ways the wretch hath wronged and shamed,
My spouse dishonored and my children maimed;
Three lie at home, the youngest born of six,
Befouled and blinded by his filthy tricks.
“ 'Tis long ago my plaint in court was filed,
Showing by Reynard how I'd been beguiled:
The cunning Fox knew well a plea to draw,
And boldly he presumed to wage his law:
He dared not come at the appointed day;
So I had judgment—and my costs to pay.
All present here can vouch this tale is true;

But none can tell such things as I can do.
Had I the tongues of angels, lungs of brass,
Whole days and weeks—nay, months and years would pass
Ere I could mention all my injuries,
Or tell one half his crimes and tricks and lies.
If all the Sheep on earth were killed and flayed,
And all their skins were into parchment made,
Not half sufficient were they to contain
The wrongs whereof I justly would complain:
The worst is the dishonor of my wife;
That eats away my heart, and sours my life;
Desire of vengeance haunts me night and day,
And vengeance I will have, come what come may.”
He ceased, and stood in silent mood apart,
Gloom on his brow and anger in his heart.
Up jumped a Poodle from a neighboring bench.
Hight Frizpate, who addressed the kind in French.
And he complained, it was not long ago,
In winter, when the ground was deep in snow,
That not a single beast could hunt his prey,
He'd given much in charity away,
And for himself had but one sausage left;
By the false Fox of this he was bereft:
A foul and almost sacrilegious theft!
Scant had he spoken, when with fiery eyes

Tybalt, the Cat, sprang forth in angry wise.
And kneeling cried—"My august and gracious king.
Reynard must answer many a grievous thing:
Most dreaded of all living beasts is he;
Ay, more than e'en your sacred majesty.
Grant me your patience, though; and hear me out:
Frizpate hath little to complain about:
The thing he speaks of happened years bygone:
That sausage ne'er was his; it was my own,
My all, my only remaining sustenance;
I stumbled on it by the merest chance.
I happened once into a mill to creep;
It was deep night: the miller fast asleep:
Being at that time stinted in my diet,
I took the sausage: why should I deny it?
But Frizpate filched it from me; so that he
Should be the last to speak of robbery."
The Panther then—"These jars are little use:
Reynard's misdeeds admit of no excuse:
He is a robber and a murderer;
That in this presence, boldly I aver.
No kind of crime but he doth exercise;
Naught sacred is there in his impious eyes:
His soul is fixed upon ungodly pelf;
Although the noble, nay, the king himself

Should suffer loss of health and wealth and all,
And the whole state to hopeless rum fall
So he could get the leg of a fat capon, he
Would never care the value of a half-penny.
“Let me relate the trick he tried to play
To Puss, the gentle Hare, but yesterday;—
Poor Puss, who lives just like an anchorite,
And never injured moral being yet.
Reynard, who latterly has given out
That he has turned ascetic and devout,
Promised he'd teach him at the quickest rate,
How he, as chaplain, might officiate;
'The service you shall chant,' quoth he, 'as we do;
And we'll begin our lesson with the *Credo!*'
So down they sat together and began;
For he had no misgivings, the good man.
But not long time continued they to sing;
For, 'gainst the peace of our dread lord, the king,
And setting at defiance all his laws,
He seized on Puss with his pernicious claws.
I heard their song as I was passing by,
And wondered that it stopped so suddenly;
I'd scarce proceeded though a dozen span, ere
I took the felon Reynard with the mamour.
Fast hold had he of Pussy by the throat,

That he could scarce articulate one note.
Certes, at that time had I not come up,
He'd gone that night in Paradise to sup.
You stands our timid friend; and in his flesh
You still may see his wounds all raw and fresh.
"Will not our sov'reign lord these ills abate?
Will you, brave peers and pillars of the State,
Such daily breaches of the peace permit,
Such violations of the royal writ?
If there no stop be put to these foul crimes,
Much do I fear me, that in future times
Frequent reproach the king will have to hear
From all to whom justice and right are dear."
Again spoke Isegrim; "'Tis even so,
Reynard has ever been the common foe;
'Twere better he had perished long ago.
For while that wretch shall live, no rest will be
For honest, loyal, peaceful folk like me.
Albeit, according to the present fashion,
The felon ever meets with most compassion;
If such crimes pass unpunished, not a year hence
We all shall rue our most unwise forbearance."
Undaunted by this host of angry foes,
The Badger, Reynard's nephew, now uprose;
Boldly prepared to plead his uncle's cause,

All stained with crime and falsehood as he was.
“Now fair and soft, Sir Isegrim,” said he;
“Your words smack less of truth than enmity.
'Tis known you hate my uncle; and, in sooth,
A fair word had he ne'er from your foul mouth.
Yet from your malice hath he naught to fear:
In the king's favor stood he now but here,
He'd give you ample reason to repent
Stirring in these stale subjects of complaint.
You take good care too not to say one word
Of ills that he for your sake hath incurred.
Yet many of the barons here well know
What happened not so very long ago;
When you and he a solemn cov'nant sware,
That friendship each should to the other bear,
And, like true comrades, good and evil share.
I must relate, it is not long to tell,
The strange adventure which that time befell,
When you and he, in the cold winter weather,
Went through the country travelling together.
“It chanced a Carter, on the king's high road,
Was driving homeward with a heavy load;
Your subtle nostrils soon sniffed out 'twas fish,
You'd soon have had them if you'd had your wish:
But they were closely packed; and what was worse,

You'd not a single stiver in your purse.
What then did my kind-hearted uncle do?
Ah! what indeed hath he not done for you?
Down in the road he laid himself for dead:
'Twas a bold thought to come into his head!
And when the Carter saw him lying there,
To kill him out-an-end did he prepare;
But, cunning Reynard still held in his breath,
Stiff'ning his limbs and counterfeiting death;
'Twas a consummate masterpiece of art,
That showed him cool of head as brave of heart;
The Carter picked him up and pitched him in his cart.
A cap he thought to make out of his skin,
And a bag too to keep his dollars in.
This did my uncle do for Isegrim:
When would he venture such a risk for him?
While onward went the Carter with his load,
Reynard kept throwing fish down in the road;
And Isegrim, who was in haste to sup,
Fast as he threw them down, gobbled them up.
Reynard grew weary of this sport at last,
And thought 'twas his turn now to break his fast;
So down he sprang; but with disgust and wonder
Found Isegrim had pilfered all the plunder:
He'd stuffed till he was nigh to burst in sunder.

He told my uncle he had left his share—
But nothing but the heads and bones were there.
“Another of his tricks I must narrate;
And so Heaven help me, as I truth relate.
A countryman had lately killed a swine;
Large were its hams and noble was its chine.
Reynard had found out where the carcass hung.
And told it Isegrim with truthful tongue.
And they agreed in common they would toil.
Would share the danger and divide the spoil
To Reynard's share the danger fell alone.
But of the spoil, forsooth, he'd next to none.
The larder-walls were strong and steep and high;
My uncle climb'd them, though, right skillfully:
True to his word, did he the Porker throw
Out of the window to the Wolf below.
Now, by bad fortune, there were in the grounds
A couple of most ill-conditioned Hounds:
They chased my uncle with appalling din.
He got away, but not with a whole skin:
And straight unto the Wolf his way did make.
To show what he had suffered for his sake,
And claim his lawful share: then Isegrim
Said he'd reserved the prime tit-bit for him:
And thrusting in his cheek his lying tongue,

Produced the hook by which the Pig had hung.
His feelings Reynard had no words t'express.
But what he felt all present here may guess.
"Scores of such pranks I might remember well,
Were you inclined to hear, and I to tell:
But 'Tis enough: were Reynard summoned here,
Soon would he make his innocence appear.
"As for the other charge, 'tis most absurd
You, my dread liege, and you, my lords, have heard
What Isegrim has said about his wife.
Whom 'twas his duty ti protect with life.
In all its details that affair I know,
It happened now just seven years ago.
That Reynard's bosom first received a wound
From the soft eyes of Lady Gieremund.
My uncle is not to be blamed at all
They met together at a fancy hall
Isegrim had gone upon a tour to Rome:
Husbands, if wise, would always stay at home.
My uncle proffered her his farb and troth.
She sanctioned his attentions, nothing foil
Is it not, therefore, a most crying shame,
That her own lord should sully not fair dame?
What any man of honor would conceal,
He seems to take a pleasure to reveal.

“What have we next? This trumpery affair.
The Panther has brought up about the Hare
Such utter trash’ what’ shall a master scruple
To chastise a perverse or sluggish pupil?
If this be so, how are our youth to be
Trained up in learning and morality?
The wisest book that ever was compiled
Says, if you spare the rod you spoil the child
“Then we have Monsieur Frizpate, who complains
He was deprived of his ill-gotten gains.
A pretty fuss, forsooth, about a sausage!
’Twere better he said nothing of that passage.
For it turns out ’twas stolen; and the thief
Has the assurance now to ask relief.
The evil on his own head has recoiled:
’Tis only just the spoiler should be spoiled.
Is Reynard blamed, that from a robber he
Has wrung the fruits of his dishonesty?
He did his duty, that deny who can,
Like a true Fox and loyal gentleman.
Why, had he hanged him on the spot, I ween,
He must assuredly have pardoned been:
But he respects the king’s prerogative,
And therefore spared the thief and let him live.
“But little justice can my uncle get;

At least, but little hath he got as yet;
Since the king's peace was publicly made known,
No one hath led the life that he hath done,
With books he passes half his time away,
And takes but one abstemious meal a day.
Water his only drink, and roots his food;
Poultry and butchers' meat he hath eschewed,
And cannot bear the very thought of blood;
With whips doth mortify his flesh, and wear
Next to his very skin a shirt of hair.
I heard it mentioned only yesterday.
By one who happened to have passed that way;
His castle, Malepartus, he hath shut.
And in the desert built a hermit's hut.
So lean and pale and haggard he hath grown,
By his best friends he scarcely would be known.
But 'tis the burden of a good old song,
That absent folks are ever in the wrong.
I only wish to heav'n that he were here;
From all these scandals he would soon be clear."
Scarce had he ceased, when from a neighb'ring hill
A cry resounded, like a clarion shrill.
The voice it was of honest Chanticleer,
Who with his wives and concubines drew near;
A dead Hen borne behind him on a bier.

It was the headless corpse of young Grayleg,
As good a fowl as ever laid an egg;
His fav'rite daughter of a num'rous brood;
And impious Reynard now had shed her blood.
Foremost the sad and mourning sire doth stride,
His dappled wings low trailing by his side:
While after him two youthful Cock'rels march,
Each bearing in his grasp a burning torch;
Cantart of one, Cryart the other's name;
'Twixt France and Holland none more known to fame;
They were the brothers of the murdered dame.
Four tender Pullets bore their mother's bier,
Clucking so loud 'twas pitiful to hear;
Dire was the clatter, awful were the cries,
And the shrill clamor pierced the startled skies.
Soon as the Heralds silence had restored,
Unto the throne stepped up the martial bird;
O'erwhelmed with woe he thrice essayed to speak,
And thrice the words died choking in his beak.
Ashamed so chicken-hearted to appear,
He gave one vig'rous crow his voice to clear,
And thus began:—"My liege and sov'reign, hail!
With pity listen to my grievous tale;
Before you stands the wretchedest of Cocks,
A hapless victim of that cruel Fox.

“Whenas stern winter fled on stormy wing,
And the glad earth welcomed the cheery spring,
How pleased was my paternal heart and proud,
As I surveyed my young and hopeful brood:
Ten gallant sons and fourteen daughters fair
Partlett had hatched me, with parental care;
Partlett, the best and most submissive wife
That ever solaced a poor husband's life.
How joyed was I with her and them to rove,
And watch my offspring full of life and love.
That time no terrors for their lot I felt,
For in complete security we dwelt:
Our home was in a convent's spacious yard,
Whose lofty walls its inmates safely guard;
And six stout Dogs belonging to the farm,
Who loved us well, protected us from harm.
“Reynard, it seems, that lawless reprobate,
Like Satan, envying our happy state,
Around our Eden often lay in wait.
Stealthily round the walls by night he'd creep.
And through the crannies of the gates would peep.
The trusty guardians of myself and wife
Oft made the ruffian scamper for dear life;
Once they did catch him, and well tanned his hide,
He got away, though sorely scarified;

And for a good while after let us bide.
“But ah, sire! now begins my tale of woe:
Again he came, and that not long ago;
Within our convent walls he slyly slunk
Clad in the vestments of a holy monk.
Wore a long frock, and sandals 'stead of shoes,
And looked for all the world like a recluse.
He brought a writ: 'twas sealed with the great seal;
'Twas genuine; I know the impress well:
This writ proclaimed, in unambiguous words,
Peace should be kept between all beasts and birds.
As for himself, he'd vowed his ways to mend,
And think of nothing but his latter end;
He'd quite reformed, he said, his mode of life,
Had e'en forsworn the embraces of his wife;
Water his only drink and roots his food;
All flesh of ev'ry kind he had eschewed,
And could not bear the very thought of blood.
But that my wife and daughters present were,
He said he would have shown the shirt of hair,
Which he for penance next his skin must wear:
And, on the word and honor of a fowl,
I myself saw the tonsure 'neath his cowl.
Tow'rds him I own I felt my heart relent,
He seemed so really, truly penitent;

He spoke of his past sins with such compunction,
And of the heav'nly grace with so much unction.
'Farewell!' at length he cried, 'I needs must go;
I still have many pious deeds to do;
I have the nones and vespers yet to say,
And by a dying Vulture's bed to pray;
He too was a sad sinner in his day.
Bless you, my children, may you ever thrive
In the calm peace which this world cannot give.'
And saying thus, the odious hypocrite
Crossing himself departed from our sight.
He left us, all his soul on mischief bent;
While ours were filled with happiest content.
'We ventured forth; and habit, more than fear,
Kept us at first to the old convent near.
Reynard we daily saw near our abode;
It seemed some bus'ness led him oft that road;
His looks were ever bent upon the ground,
As though his mind were lost in thought profound;
Or, if he chanced our family to see,
It was 'Goode'n' and 'Benedicite';
And he would tell his beads and seem to pray,
And smite his breast, and so pass on his way.
'Now, bolder grown, we farther went abroad,
In search of pleasure and our daily food.

Ah! fatal error! from behind a bush
Reynard among us made a sudden rush.
Scatt'ring and squand'ring to the left and right,
Tow'rds our old home we took our screaming flight,
In vain, alas! our foe was there before;
In threatening guise he barred us from the door:
With surer aim this time he bore away
Of all my sons the fairest as his prey:
And I was there, and impotent to save!
My son! my son! my beautiful, my brave!
“And now he once had tasted of our blood,
It seemed as he disdained all other food:
At all times came he on us—night and day—
Nor Dogs, nor men, nor gates kept him away.
Of all mine offspring I'm well nigh bereft;
Five, out of twenty, all that now are left:
With grief and terror I am all but wild;
Soon will he leave me neither chick nor child.
Oh, give me justice! 'twas but yesterday
He tore my daughter from my side away;
Villain! without or pity or remorse:
The Dogs were but in time to save her corpse.
See, there she lies! my child whom Reynard slew!
Help me, or he will have the others too!
Oh! Cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle doo!”

Fierce was the fire that in the king's eye burned,
As to the Badger wrathfully he turned,
And thus began: "Come hither, sir, and see
This sample of your uncle's piety!
Now by my royal mane I make a vow,
This miscreant shall not pass unpunished so,
If Heaven preserve my life another year.
But words avail not. Honest Chanticleer,
I claim the right your inj'ries to redress,
To share, if not to lessen, your distress.
Entombed shall your fair daughter be, with all
The pomp befits a royal funeral:
A vigil shall be sung, a mass be said,
The more to honor the illustrious dead:
We with our council will the while take thought
How may the murd'rer be to justice brought."
In sable was the Chapel Royal hung;
The mass was duly said, the vigil sung:
The people, joining with the choristers,
Sang *Domino placebo*, verse by verse.
I could relate who gave each versicle,
Who the responses; but 'twere long to tell;
And so I pass it by: 'tis just as well.
Deep in a grave they laid the honored dead,
And placed a marble tablet at her head;

'Twas thick, and square, and polished bright as glass,
With this inscription graven on its face:
grayleg the speckled one lies buried here
the dear-loved daughter of brave chanticleer
throughout the earth 'twere vain to seek her match
no hen could oft'ner lay or featlier scratch
in reynard's clutch she drew her latest breath
and passed untimely to the realms of death
[Editor: illegible text] all good men her murd'rer execrate
and shed a tear of pity for her fate
Meanwhile the king in solemn council sate,
Discussing with the wisest in his state,
How they the culprit might to justice draw
And vindicate the majesty of law.
At length it was resolved, by one and all,
To send a summons to the criminal,
Commanding him, all bus'ness laid aside,
He should to court repair, and there his doom abide.
The summons writ and sealed, Bruin, the Bear,
Selected they to be the messenger;
And him the king addressed: "Sir Bruin, see
That you perform your mission faithfully.
We know you stout of limb and brave of heart;
Yet would we counsel caution on your part;
Courage is oft but a poor match for art.

Reynard, remember, speaks but to deceive;
Neither his lies nor flattery believe,
Or you may soon have too good cause to grieve.”
“Fear not, my liege,” the trusty Bear replied,
Confident in his strength and shaggy hide;
“Reynard, however tricky he may be.
Will not, I wager, try his tricks on me.
Me or my mission an he treat with scorn,
I'll make him rue the hour that he was born.”



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CHAPTER II.



THE FIRST SUMMONS.

NOW with his ragged staff the Bear set forth,
And with his best grease larded the lean earth.
Through forests vast he went and deserts drear;
But his bold heart knew neither doubt nor fear.
At length the mountain region he approached,
Wherein Sir Reynard generally poached:
But Bruin would not tarry or delay;
Tow'rds Malepartus held he on his way,
The fav'rite fastness of the robber chief;
And there he hoped to catch the wily thief:
Thither for safety usually he fled,
When threat'ning danger overhung his head.
At length Sir Bruin stood before the gate,
And, finding it was shut, he scratched his pate,
Not knowing whether best to go or wait.
Then he began to cry, with mighty din:
"What, Cousin Reynard, ho! are you within?
Bruin the Bear it is who calls. I bring
A missive from our sov'reign lord, the king:

He orders you, all bus'ness laid aside,
Repair to court and there your doom abide;
That equal right and justice may be done,
And satisfaction giv'n to every one.
I am to fetch you: if you hesitate,
The gallows or the wheel will be your fate.
Better to come at once, fair cousin, sith
The king, you know, will not be trifled with.”
Reynard, from the beginning to the end,
Had heard this summons; and did now perpend
In what way he might punish his fat friend.
Into a private corner he had fled,
Where he could hear securely all was said.
His keep was built with many a secret door,
With traps above and pits beneath the floor;
With labyrinthine passages and channels,
With secret chambers and with sliding panels.
There he would often hide, the cunning hound,
When he was wanted, and would not be found.
Amid this intricate obscurity,
Where none could safely find his path but he,
Full many a simple beast had lost his way,
And to the wily robber fall'n a prey.
Reynard suspected there might be some cheat;
For the deceitful always fear deceit.

Was Bruin quite alone? He felt afraid,
There might be others hid in ambuscade.
But soon as he was fully satisfied
His fears were vain, forth from the door he hied;
And, "Welcome, dearest uncle, here," quoth he,
With studied look of deep humility,
And the most jesuitical of whispers.
"I heard you call; but I was reading vespers.
I am quite grieved you should have had to wait,
In this cold wind too, standing at my gate.
How glad I am you're come; for I feel sure
With your kind aid my cause will be secure;
However that may be, at least, I know
More welcome nobody could be than you.
But truly 'twas a pity I must say
T' have sent you such a long and tedious way.
Good Heav'ns! how hot you are! you're tired to death!
How wet your hair is, and how scant your breath!
Although no slight our good king could have meant,
Some other messenger he might have sent
Than Bruin, the chief glory of his court,
His kingdom's main adornment and support.
Though I should be the last to blame his choice,
Who have, in sooth, no cause but to rejoice.
How I am slandered well aware am I,

But on your love of justice I rely,
That you will speak of things just as you find them;
As to my enemies I need not mind them:
Their malice vainly shall my cause assail;
For truth, we know, is great, and must prevail.
“To court to-morrow we will take our way:
I should myself prefer to start to-day,
Not having cause—why should I have?—to hide;
But I am rather bad in my inside.
By what I've eaten I am quite upset,
And nowise fitted for a journey yet.”
“What was it?” asked Sir Bruin, quite prepar'd,
For Reynard had not thrown him off his guard.
“Ah!” quoth the Fox, “what boots it to explain?
E'en your kind pity could not ease my pain.
Since flesh I have abjured, for my soul's weal,
I'm often sadly put to't for a meal.
I bear my wretched life as best I can;
A hermit fares not like an alderman.
But yesterday, as other viands failed,
I ate some honey,—see how I am swelled!
Of that there's always to be had enough:
Would I had never touched the cursed stuff.
I ate it out of sheer necessity:
Physic is not so nauseous near to me.”

“Honey!” exclaimed the Bear; “did you say honey?

Would I could any get for love or money!

How can you speak so ill of what's so good?

Honey has ever been my fav'rite food;

It is so wholesome, and so sweet and luscious;

I can't conceive how you can call it nauseous.

Do get me some on't; and you may depend

You'll make me evermore your steadfast friend.”

“You're surely joking, uncle!” Reynard cried;

“No, on my sacred word!” the Bear replied;

“I'd not, though jokes as blackberries were rife,

Joke upon such a subject for my life.”

“Well! you surprise me,” said the knavish beast;

“There's no accounting certainly for taste;

And one man's meat is oft another's poison.

I'll wager that you never set your eyes on

Such store of honey as you soon shall spy

At Gaffer Joiner's, who lives here hard by.”

In fancy o'er the treat did Bruin gloat;

While his mouth fairly watered at the thought.

“Oh, take me, take me there, dear coz,” quoth he,

“And I will ne'er forget your courtesy.

Oh, let me have a taste, if not my fill:

Do, cousin.” Reynard grinned, and said, “I will.

Honey you shall not long time be without:

'Tis true just now I'm rather sore of foot;
But what of that? the love I bear to you
Shall make the road seem short and easy too.
Not one of all my kith or kin is there
Whom I so honor as th' illustrious Bear.
Come then! and in return I know you'll say
A good word for me on the council-day.
You shall have honey to your heart's content,
And wax too, if your fancy's that way bent."
Whacks of a different sort the sly rogue meant.
Off starts the wily Fox, in merry trim,
And Bruin blindly follows after him.
"If you have luck," thought Reynard, with a titter,
"I guess you'll find our honey rather bitter."
When they at length reached Goodman Joiner's yard,
The joy that Bruin felt he might have spar'd.
But Hope, it seems, by some eternal rule,
Beguiles the wisest as the merest fool.
'Twas ev'ning now, and Reynard knew, he said,
The Goodman would be safe and sound in bed.
A good and skilful carpenter was he:
Within his yard there lay an old oak tree,
Whose gnarled and knotted trunk he had to split;
A stout wedge had he driven into it:
The cleft gaped open a good three foot wide;

Towards this spot the crafty Reynard hied;
“Uncle,” quoth he, “your steps this way direct,
You’ll find more honey here than you suspect.
In at this fissure boldly thrust your pate;
But I beseech you to be moderate:
Remember, sweetest things the soonest cloy,
And temperance enhances ev’ry joy.”
“What!” said the Bear, a shocked look as he put on
Of self-restraint; “d’ye take me for a glutton?
With thanks I use the gifts of Providence,
But to abuse them count a grave offence.”
And so Sir Bruin let himself be fooled:
As strength will be whene’er by craft ’tis ruled.
Into the cleft he thrust his greedy maw
Up to the ears, and either foremost paw.
Reynard drew near; and tugging might and main
Pulled forth the wedge; and the trunk closed again.
By head and foot was Bruin firmly caught:
Nor threats nor flatt’ry could avail him aught.
He howled, he raved, he struggled and he tore,
Till the whole place re-echoed with his roar;
And Goodman Joiner, wakened by the rout,
Jumped up much wond’ring what ’twas all about;
And seized his axe, that he might be prepar’d,
And danger, if it came, might find him on his guard.

Still howled the Bear and struggled to get free
From the accursed grip of that cleft tree.
He strove and strained; but strained and strove in vain,
His mightiest efforts but mereased his pain:
He thought he never should get loose again.
And Reynard thought the same, for his own part;
And wished it too, devoutly from his heart.
And as the Joiner coming he espied,
Armed with his axe, the jesting ruffian cried:
“Uncle, what cheer? Is th’ honey to your taste?
Don’t eat too quick, there’s no such need of haste.
The Joiner’s coming; and I make no question.
He brings you your desert, to help digestion.”
Then deeming ’twas not longer safe to stay,
To Malepartus back he took his way.
The Joiner, when he came and saw the Bear,
Off to the ale-house did with speed repair,
Where oft the villagers would sit and swill;
And a good many sat carousing still.
“Neighbors,” quoth he, “be quick! In my courtyard
A Bear is trapped; come, and come well prepar’d:
I vow, ’tis true.” Up started every man,
And pell-mell, helter-skelter off they ran;
Seizing whatever handiest they could take,
A pitchfork one, another grasps a rake,

A third a flail; and arm'd was ev'ry one
With some chance weapon, stick or stake or stone.
The priest and sacristan both joined the throng,
A mattock this, the other bore a prong.
The parson's maid came too; (Judith her name,
And fair was she of face and fair of fame;
His rev'rence could not live without her aid;
She cooked his victuals, and she warmed his bed.)
She brought the distaff she had used all day,
With which she hoped the luckless Bear to pay.
Bruin with terror heard th' approaching roar,
And with fresh desperation tugged and tore:
His head he thus got free from out the cleft:
But hide and hair, alack! behind he left;
While from the hideous wound the crimson blood
Adown his breast in copious currents flow'd.
Was never seen so pitiable a beast!
It help'd him naught his head to have releas'd:
His feet still being fastened in the tree,
These with one more huge effort he set free.
But than his head no better fared his paws;
For he rent off alike the skin and claws.
This was in sooth a different sort of treat
From what he had expected there to meet;
He wished to Heav'n he ne'er had ventured there:

It was a most unfortunate affair!
Bleeding upon the ground he could but sprawl,
For he could neither stand, nor walk, nor crawl.
The Joiner now came up with all his crew:
To the attack with eager souls they flew;
With thwacks and thumps belaboring the poor wight;
They hoped to slay him on the spot outright.
The priest kept poking at him with his prong,
From afar off—the handle being long.
Bruin in anguish roiled and writhed about;
Each howl of his called forth an answering shout.
On every side his furious foemen swarmed,
With spits and spades, with hoes and hatchets armed:
Weapons all wielded too by nerves of pith:
His large sledge-hammer bore the sinewy smith.
They struck, they yelled, they pelted and they halooed:
While in a pool of filth poor Bruin wallowed
To name these heroes were too long by half:
There was the long-nosed Jem, the bandy Ralph;
These were the worst; but crooked-fingered Jack,
With his flail fetched him many a grievous thwack:
His step-brother, hight Cuckelson the fat,
Stood, but aloof, with an enormous bat:
Dame Judith was not idle with her distaff:
While Gaffer Grumble stirred him up with his staff;

And men and women many more were there,
All vowing vengeance 'gainst th' unhappy Bear.
The foremost—in the noise—was Cuckelson;
He boasted that he was Dame Gertrude's son;
And all the world believed that this was true;
But who his father, no one ever knew.
Fame indeed said—but fame is such a liar,
That Brother Joseph, the Franciscan friar,
Might, if he chose, claim the paternity;
Or share the same with others, it might be.
Now stones and brickbats from all sides were shower'd;
And Bruin, tho' he scorned to die a coward,
Was by opposing numbers all but overpower'd.
The Joiner's brother then, whose name was Scrub,
Whirling around his head a massive club,
Rushed in the midst, with execrations horrid,
And dealt the Bear a blow plump on the forehead.
That blow was struck with such tremendous might,
Bruin lost both his hearing and his sight.
One desp'rate plunge he made though, and as luck
Would have it, 'mong the women ran a-muck.
Ye saints! how they did scream and shriek and squall!
Over each other how they tumbled all!
And some fell in the stream that ran hard by,
And it was deep just there, unluckily.

The pastor cried aloud—"Look, neighbors, look!
See, yonder—in the water—Jude, my cook;
With all her wool—she's left her distaff here,
Help! save her! you shall have a cask of beer;
As well as absolution for past crimes,
And full indulgence for all future times."
Fired with the promised boon, they left the Bear,
Who lay half dead, all stunned and stupid there;
Plunged to the women's rescue; fished out five;
All that had fallen in, and all alive.
The miserable Bear, while thus his foes
Were busied, finding respite from their blows,
Managed to scramble to the river's brim;
And in he rolled; but not with hopes to swim;
For life a very burden was to him:
Those shameful blows no more he could abide;
They pierced his soul more than they pained his hide.
He wished to end his days in that deep water,
Nor feared t' incur the perils of self-slaughter.
But no! against his will he floated down;
It seemed in truth he was not born to drown.
Now when the Bear's escape the men descried,
"O shame! insufferable shame!" they cried;
Then in a rage began to rate the women;
"See where the Bear away from us is swimming;

Had you but stayed at home, your proper place,
We should not have encountered this disgrace.”
Then to the cleft tree turning, they found there
The bleeding strips of Bruin's hide and hair;
At this into loud laughter they broke out,
And after him thus sent a jeering shout:
“You'll sure come back again, old devil-spawn,
As you have left your wig and gloves in pawn.”
Thus insult added they to injury,
And Bruin heard them and sore hurt was he;
He cursed them all, and his own wretched fate;
He cursed the honey that had been his bait;
He cursed the Fox who led him in the snare;
He even cursed the king who sent him there.
Such were his pray'rs as quick he swept along,
For the stream bore him onward, swift and strong;
So, without effort, in a little while,
He floated down the river near a mile.
Then with a heavy heart he crawled on shore,
For he was wet and weary, sick and sore.
The sun throughout his course would never see
A beast in such a shocking plight as he.
Hard and with pain he fetched his lab'ring breath,
And ev'ry moment looked and wished for death.
His head swam round with a strange sort of dizziness,

As he thought o'er the whole perplexing business.

“O Reynard!” he gasped out, “thou traitor vile!

O scoundrel, thief!” and more in the same style.

He thought upon the tree; the jibes and knocks

He had endured; and once more cursed the Fox.



artist: carl gehrts.

THE ATTACK ON THE BEAR.

Reynard well pleased t' have cozened Uncle Bruin,

And lured him, as he thought, to his sure ruin,

Had started off upon a chicken-chase;

He knew, close by, a tried and fav'rite place.

A fine fat Pullet soon became his prey,

Which in his felon clutch he bore away:

This he devoured, bones and all, right speedily;

And, if the truth be spoken, somewhat greedily.

Prepared for any chance that might betide.

He slowly sauntered by the river-side;

Stopping from time to time to take a draught;

And thought aloud, while in his sleeve he laugh'd:

“How pleased I am t' have tricked that stupid Bear!

Honey he longed for, and has had his share;

I'm not to blame; I warned him of the *wax*:

By this he knows how tastes a Joiner's axe.

I'm glad to have shown him this good turn, as he

Has ever been so good and kind to me.
Poor uncle! well; by chance should he be dead,
I'll for his soul have scores of masses said.
It is the least methinks that I can do.”
While musing thus he chanced to look below;
And saw Sir Bruin on the other shore
Writhing and welt'ring in a pool of gore.
Reynard could scarce, so great was his surprise,
Believe the evidence of his own eyes.
“Bruin alive! and in this place!” quoth he,
“Why, Joiner, what a booby you must be!
A Bear's hams make the most delicious food!
You could not surely know they were so good.
A dish, by which a duke would set vast store,
To be so slighted by a stupid boor!
My friend has left though, I am glad to see,
A pledge for your kind hospitality.”
Thus spake the Fox, as he beheld the Bear,
Lying all weary-worn and bleeding there.
Then he called out—“Why, uncle, is that you?
What upon earth can you have here to do?
You've something at the Joiner's left, I fear,
Shall I run back and let him know you're here?
Prithee, is stolen honey very sweet?
Or did you honestly pay for your treat?

How red your face is! you have ate too quick;
I trust you have not gorged till you are sick.
Really you should have been more moderate;
I could have got you lots at the same rate.
Nay, I declare—I trust there is no harm in't—
You seem t' have on some sort of priestly garment;
With scarlet gloves, and collar too, and hat;
Rather a dangerous prank to play is that.
Yet, now I look more close, your ears are gone, sure;
Have you of late submitted to the tonsure,
And did the stupid barber cut them off?"
Thus did the cruel-hearted Reynard scoff;
While Bruin, all unable to reply,
Could only moan with grief and agony.
No longer could he these sharp jibes sustain,
So crept into the water back again:
He floated downward with the stream once more,
And again landed on the shelving shore,
There in a miserable state he lay,
And piteously unto himself did say:
"That some one would but slay me here outright!
Ne'er shall I reach the court in this sad plight;
But on this spot in shame and grief shall die,
A mortal proof of Reynard's treachery.
Oh! I will have a dire revenge, I swear,

If it please Providence my life to spare.”
With firm resolve his pain to overcome,
At length he started on his journey home;
And after four long toilsome days were past,
Crippled and maimed, he reached the court at last.
When the king saw the Bear so sorely maimed,
“Great Heaven! Is this Sir Bruin?” he exclaimed;
“My trusty messenger in such a state!”
“Ah, sire!” said Bruin, “and is this the fate
That should a king’s ambassador befall?
But spare my breath—the Fox has done it all.”
Then spake the king in wrath: “Now by the mass,
This outrage vile shall not unpunished pass.
What! shall the noblest baron of our court
Afford this traitor means of savage sport?
No; by my sceptre and my crown I swear,
If crown or sceptre I am fit to bear,
Or of stern justice longer wield the sword,
Right shall be done! Pledged is my royal word.”
Summoned in haste the council promptly sate,
On this fresh outrage to deliberate.
Subject to the king’s will, they all agree
That Reynard once again must summoned be;
At court he should appear; and, if he might,
Answer th’ impeachment and defend his right:

Tybalt, the Cat, should now the summons carry,
As he was well known to be wise and wary.
So counsell'd one and all: the king concurr'd;
And thus to Tybalt spoke his sov'reign lord:
"Now mark your mission and the sequence well;
If a third summons Reynard should compel,
He and his whole race, I have sworn an oath
Shall feel the deadly power of my wrath.
So let him come in time, if he be wise;
Nor this last warning recklessly despise."
Tybalt replied: "My liege, I fear that I
Shall scarcely prosper in this embassy;
Not that indeed I ought to say, 'I fear,'
To do your will all danger would I dare:
I merely hint, that for this task, of all
I am least fit, being so very small.
If the stout, stalwart Bear was so abused,
What can poor I do? Hold me, pray, excused."
"Nay," said the king, "wisdom and wit, 'tis known,
Are not the attributes of strength alone.
How often do we see a little man
Succeed more neatly than a great one can.
Though not a giant, you are learned and wise,
And wisdom compensates for want of size."
The Cat was flattered and he bowed his head;

“Your will be done, my sov’ reign liege,” he said;

“If on my right I only see a sign,

A prosp’rous journey will, I know, be mine.”



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CHAPTER III.



THE SECOND SUMMONS.

NOT far did Tybalt on his journey get,
Before a Magpie on the wing he met:
“Hail, noble bird!” quoth he; “vouchsafe to ’light,
As a propitious omen, on my right.”
The Magpie screeched; his onward way he cleft;
Then stooped his wing and perched on Tybalt’s left.
The Cat much serious ill from this forebode,
But on it put the best face that he could.
To Malepartus he proceeded straight,
And found Sir Reynard sitting at his gate.
“Good even, gentle cousin,” Tybalt said,
“May bounteous Heav’n show’r blessings on your head.
I bring sad news; the king has sent to say,
If you come not to court without delay,
Not only your own life will forfeit be,
His wrath will fall on your whole family.”
“Welcome, dear nephew,” quoth the Fox; “not less
I wish you ev’ry kind of happiness.”
Though thus he spoke, it went against his will;

For in his heart he wished him ev'ry ill;
And thought 'twould be the very best of sport
To send him also back disgraced to court.
“Nephew,” said he; for he still called him *nephew*;
“Step in and see what supper we can give you;
You must be tired; and all physicians tell ye,
You can't sleep soundly on an empty belly.
I am your host for once; you stay to-night;
And we'll to court start with to-morrow's light.
For you of all my kindred love I best,
To you confide myself the readiest.
That brutal Bear was here the other day,
Bouncing and swaggering in such a way,
That not for all the world contains would I
Myself have trusted in his company.
But having you my comrade, travelling
Will be a very different sort of thing.
So you will share our potluck, then to bed,
And off we start by sunrise: that's agreed.”
“Nay,” replied Tybalt, “why not go to-night?
The roads are dry; the moon is shining bright.”
May be, the omen on his mem'ry struck;
May be, he had no fancy for potluck.
“I am not fond of trav'ling after night-fall,”
Replies the Fox; “some people are so spiteful;

Who, though by day they civilly would greet you,
Would cut your throat, if they by night should meet you.”

“Well, but,” says Tybalt, in a careless way,

“What have you got for supper if I stay?”

Says Reynard, “Well, I candidly avow,

Our larder is but poorly stocked just now;

But we’ve some honey - comb, if you like that.”

“Like such infernal rubbish!” quoth the Cat,

And spat, and swore a loud and lusty oath,

As he was wont to do when he was wroth;

“If you indeed had got a Mouse or so,

I should much relish them; but honey—pooh!”

“What!” answers Reynard, “are you fond of Mice?

I think I can procure some in a trice,

If you’re in earnest; for the priest, my neighbor,

Vows that to keep them down is quite a labor;

In his tithe barn so num’rously they swarm;

They do him, he declares, no end of harm.”

Thoughtlessly said the Cat, “Do me the favor

To take me where these Mice are; for in flavor

All other game they beat out of the field;

Beside the sport which they in hunting yield.”

“Well.” says the Fox, “now that I know your taste,

I’ll promise you shall have a sumptuous feast.

We’ll start at once and not a moment waste.”

Tybalt had faith and followed; quickly they
Reached the priest's tithe barn, built with walls of clay.
Only the day before, Reynard a hole
Had through it scratched, and a fat Pullet stole.
Martin, the priest's young son—or nephew rather,
For he was ne'er allowed to call him *father*,—
Had found the theft out, and, if possible,
Determined to find out the thief as well;
So, craftily, a running noose he tied,
And fixed it firmly by the hole inside;
Thus hoped he to avenge the stolen Pullet,
Should the thief chance return, upon his gullet.
Reynard, suspecting something of the sort.
Said, "Nephew dear, I wish you lots of sport;
In at this op'ning you can safely glide;
And while you're mousing, I'll keep watch outside.
You'll catch them by the dozen, now 'tis dark:
How merrily they chirrup; only hark!
I shall be waiting here till you come back;
So come as soon as you have had your whack.
To-night, whatever happens, we'll not part,
As we so early in the morning start."
Tybalt replies, as any prudent beast would,
"I've no great faith, I own it, in the priesthood:
Is't quite safe, think ye?" Reynard answers, "Well;

Perhaps not: 'tis impossible to tell;
We'd best return at once, as you're so nervous;
My wife, I'll answer for it, will not starve us;
She'll toss up for supper something nice,
If not quite so much to your taste as Mice.”
Stung to the quick by Reynard's taunting tongue,
Into the op'ning Tybalt boldly sprung,
And plunged directly in the ready snare:
Such entertainment and such dainty fare
Did the sly Fox for all his guests prepare.
When the Cat felt the string about his neck,
He gave a sideward spring and got a check;
This made him throw a wondrous somersaut,
And, the noose tight'ning, he was fairly caught.
To Reynard then he loudly called for aid,
Who list'ning at the hole in mock'ry said:
“Nephew, how are the Mice? I hope they're fat;
They are well fed enough, I'm sure of that:
If the priest knew his vermin were your venison.
I'm sure he'd bring some mustard, with his benison;
Or send his son with it,—that best of boys.
But nephew, prithee, why make such a noise?
Is it at court the fashion so to sing
At meals? It seems an inconvenient thing.
Oh! but I wish the gentle Isegrim

Were in your place; how I would badger him!

I stake my tail on't I would make him pay

For all the ill he's wrought me many a day."

Then off he starts t' indulge some other vice;

No matter what; he was not over nice:

There never lived a soul, at any time,

More foully tainted with all kinds of crime;



Murder and theft, adultery and perjury;

'Twas past the skill of spiritual surgery:

He'd broke the Ten Commandments o'er and o'er,

And would as readily have broke a score.

He fancied now some fresh sport might be found

In a short visit to Dame Gieremund;

This he proposed with a two-fold intent;

To learn the grounds of Isegrim's complaint;

And likewise to renew an ancient sin,

Which he especially delighted in.

Is'grim, he knew, was absent at the court;

And it was common subject of report,

The she Wolf's passion for the shameless Fox

Had made her husband's hatred orthodox.
When Reynard to the Wolf's retreat had come,
He found Dame Gieremund was not at home:
"God bless you, my stepchildren dear:" quoth he;
And to the young ones nods good-humor'dly:
The object of his call he never mentions;
But hastes away after his own inventions.
Dame Gieremund returns at break of day;
"Has no one called here, while I've been away?"
Asks she; her children answer, "Yes, mamma;
We've had a visit from our godpapa,
Reynard; he called us his stepchildren though;
What did he mean by that?" "I'll let him know,"
Quoth she, and angrily she hurried off,
Determined to avenge this cutting scoff.
She knew where it was likely she should meet him;
And when she found him thus began to greet him:
"Wretch, monster, brute!" her rage was quite bewild'ring;
"How dare you use such language to my children?
You, of all men, t' attack my character!
But you shall dearly pay for it, I swear."
With that she flew at him, and—oh, disgrace!
She pulled him by the beard and scratched his face.
Then first he felt the power of her teeth,
As, grappled by the throat, he gasped for breath:

He 'scaped her clutches though, and fled amain;
She after him; and mark what happened then.
It chanced a ruined abbey stood in sight,
And thitherward in haste both bent their flight:
A fissure was there in the crumbling wall,
Narrow it was and low and all ways small;
Through this the subtle Fox contrived to pass,
Though hardly, thin and lanky as he was;
My lady, who was anything but slim,
Rammed in her head and tried to follow him;
But fast she stuck—it seemed fate helped the blackguard,—
And she could neither forward get nor backward.
Soon as the Fox saw how she was confin'd,
Quick he whipped round and fell on her behind:
And not without full many a bitter scoff,
For all she'd done he amply paid her off.
Wearied with vengeance, if not satiated,
The mischief-loving rogue at length retreated.
And when Dame Gieremund at length got free,
No where in all the neighborhood was he.
Homeward, with tottering steps, she then returned;
While with revenge and shame her panting bosom burned.
Return we now to Tybalt; when he found
How in that slipknot durance he was bound,
That strength and struggling nothing might avail,

After the mode of Cats, he 'gan to wail.
This Martin heard, and swift sprang out of bed:
"The Lord be praised!" the impish urchin said,
"The thief is caught that stole our Hen away;
And, please the pigs, he shall the piper pay;
And that right dearly too, if but the noose hold:"
Then struck a light and woke up all the household;
Shouting, "The Fox is caught!" Up rose they all,
And came down helter-skelter, great and small;
Women and men, in shirts, and in chemises,
But ill protected 'gainst the cool night-breezes.
Roused from his sleep, e'en the good father came;
But threw a mantle round his decent frame;
His cook with lighted flambeau ran before;
The little Martin a stout cudgel bore;
With this, soon as the wretched Cat he spies out,
He strikes a blow and knocks one of his eyes out.
All fell upon him; with a three-pronged fork,
The priest approached and deemed to end the work.
Then Tybalt thought it was his hour to die;
One plunge he made with desp'rate energy,
Darting between the rev'rend pastor's thighs,
He scratched and bit with wild demoniac cries.
And fearfully avenged his injured eyes.
The parson shrieked and fell into a swoon;

The cook beside him knelt in anguish down;
Pitying the sufferings of the good old priest,
She said, "The devil damn the vicious beast!"
And wildly did she prattle in her ravings;
She would have lost far sooner all her savings,
Than this mishap had chanced; she even swore,
That if she had possessed of gold a store,
In alms she would have freely giv'n it, rather
Than such hurt had been done the worthy father.
Thus did she wail, and many tears she shed:
At length they bore him bleeding to his bed.
In grief some passed the night, and some in chat,
Trying to put together this and that;
And quite forgetting all about the Cat.
But Tybalt, when he found himself alone,
Maimed tho' he was, with half his senses gone,
Felt the strong love of life tenacious yet,
And from that stubborn noose resolved to get.
He seized it in his teeth and gnawed amain,
And with success, for the cord brake in twain;
And he was loose. How happy then was he,
If such a woeful wretch could happy be.
Out at the hole he crept, where he sprang in,
And fled the spot, where he'd so outraged been.
He hastened on his road, in shame and sorrow,

Towards the court, and reached it on the morrow.

And bitterly did he himself upbraid:

“Me! to be so completely gulled!” he said;

“How shall I ever show my face for shame,

All battered as I am, half blind, and lame?

The very Sparrows in the hedge will cry out,

‘There you go, Master Tybalt, with your eye out!’ ”

Who shall describe the wrath King Noble felt,

When at his feet the injured Tybalt knelt?

He swore the traitor vile should die the death:

His council in all haste he summoneth:

The lords spiritual and temporal

Assembled in obedience to his call:

And the king said—he wished it to be known

He would maintain the honor of his crown;

That is, so it were done consistently

With the true principles of liberty:

But something must at once be done to stem

Rebellion; and he left it all to them.—

Judgment, ’twas moved, against the Fox should pass, he

Being doomed at once to death for contumacy.

The Badger, seeing what a storm was brewing,

How all conspired to work his kinsman’s ruin,

Thus spake: “My liege, it boots not to deny

These charges press on Reynard grievously;

But justice follows one eternal plan:
Remember, sire, the Fox is a free man;
The law in such a case is most precise,
Requiring that he should be summoned thrice:
If then he fail, there is naught more to say;
But law and justice both must have their way.”
“Ha!” said the monarch sternly, “say you so?
Where shall be found the messenger to go?
Who hath an eye too many? who will stake
His life and limbs for this bad traitor’s sake?
’Gainst Reynard’s cunning who will wage his wit?
I doubt if any one will venture it.”
The Badger answered, “*I will venture, sire;*
And undertake the task, if you desire;
Happen what may. Whether ’tis better, I
A summons bear straight from your majesty;
Or of my own accord appear to go:
Whichever you think best, that will I do.”
“Go then! so let it be;” the monarch said;
“You know what crimes to Reynard’s charge are laid;
You know too all his malice; so beware,
Your predecessors’ fate lest you may share.”
Graybeard replied, “I trust I may prevail;
But shall have done my duty, if I fail.”
Away to Malepartus doth he hie;

Finds Reynard with his wife and family;
And greets him: "Save you, uncle; I can't tell
How charmed I am to see you look so well.
E'en let your enemies say what they can,
You're a most extraordinary man:
Prudent and wise and wary as you are,
Yet the king's wrath so scornfully to dare.
You'd best be warned in time; on ev'ry side
Are ill reports against you multiplied.
Take my advice; with me to court away,
'Twill help you nothing longer to delay.
You're charged with almost ev'ry sort of crime;
You're summoned now to-day for the third time,
And surely sentenced if you fail t' appear:
The king will straightway lead his barons here;
And what can you expect will then befall?
You will be ta'en and hanged: nor is that all:
Your fortress razed, your children and your wife
Cruelly butchered, or enslaved for life.
From the king's wrath you cannot hope to flee;
Better then, surely, to return with me.
You need not dread to stand before your judges;
You're never at a loss for cunning dodges:
With your consummate skill and artifice,
You've got thro' many a scrape, and will thro' this."

Thus Graybeard spake, and Reynard thus replied:

“Your counsel, nephew, shall my conduct guide:

I were to blame, should I your warning slight;

I will to court; and Heav'n defend the right;

The king besides, I trust, some grace may show;

The use I've been to him he well doth know;

That for no other cause than this I'm hated,

And, save your presence, like a Badger baited.

The court would go to pieces but for me;

I don't pretend that from all blame I'm free;

But were I ten times deeper in disgrace,

Could I but see my sov'reign face to face,

And come to speech with him, I would engage

To soothe the transports of his royal rage.

Many 'tis true may at his council sit;

But many heads have oft but scanty wit:

When they get fixed in one of their dead locks,

To whom send they for aid, but to the Fox?

No matter how involved the case may be,

They find it smooth and easy, thanks to me.

For this I meet with envy; even those

I most befriend turn out my bitt'rest foes;

But moralists agree 'tis not more hateful,

Than it is natural, to be ungrateful.

'Tis this I have to fear; for well I know

My death they have intended long ago.
Ten of the mightiest barons in the land
My utter downfall seek—a pow'rful band:
Can I alone such odds as these withstand?
'Twas only this kept me from court, I vow;
But I agree 'twere best to go there now.
By far more honorable that will be,
Than bring my dearest wife and family,
By tarrying here, into disgrace and trouble;
For that would only make the mischief double.
And of the king I stand in wholesome awe,
His arm is mighty and his will is law.
Mine enemies perchance by courtesy
I may subdue; at least I can but try.”
Then to his wife, who stood with weeping eyne,
He turned and said—“My gentle Ermelyne,
Be mindful of our children; yet I know
You need no hint from me to make you so.
Our youngest, Graykin, will most care require;
He'll be the living image of his sire,
If these convulsions do not stop his breathing,
And by Heaven's blessing he survive his teething.
And here's this cunning little rascal, Russel,
He thro' the world will manage well to bustle;
His pluck may get him into many a scrape,

His craft will ever teach him how to 'scape:



I love him well, and have no fear for him;
He'll be a match, I ween, for Isegrim
And all his brood. And now, farewell, dear Chuck;
When I return, as, have I any luck,
I soon shall do, I'll prove me sensible
Of all your kindness: so once more, farewell.”
Then from his home with Graybeard he departed;
And sad he felt in spirit and down-hearted;
And sad too, grieving for her mate and sick son,
Was the leal soul of Ermelyne, the Vixen.
Reynard nor Graybeard neither silence brake
For near an hour; then thus the former spake:
“Ah, nephew, heavy is my soul to-night;
For, truth to speak, I'm in a mortal fright;
My frame with strange forebodings shuddereth;
I feel assured I go to certain death;
My conscience sinks 'neath mine enormities;
You little think how ill I am at ease.
Will you, dear nephew, my confession hear?
There is, alas! no rev'rend pastor near:

Could I but of this load my bosom free,
I then should face the king more cheerfully.”
“Confession certes benefits the soul,”
Quoth Graybeard; “but you must confess the whole;
All treasons, felonies and misdemeanors,
However great—and great, no doubt, have been yours.”
“Yea,” answered Reynard, “I will naught conceal;
List then, oh, list, while I my crimes reveal.
Confiteor tibi, Pater—” “Nay, no Latin!”
Quoth Graybeard: “’tis a tongue I’m nowise pat in.
It would not much avail you to be shriven,
If I knew not the sins I had forgiven.”
“So be it then;” the Fox rejoined; “I ween
A very wicked sinner I have been;
And I must do what penance you enjoin
To save this miserable soul of mine.
The Otter, and the Dog, and many more,
With many a trick have I tormented sore:
Indeed of living beasts there scarce is one
To whom I’ve not some turn of mischief done.
Mine Uncle Bruin I beguiled of late;
With honey he prepared his maw to sate;
I sent him back with bloody paws and pate:
And Cousin Tibby, he came here to mouse;
I cozened him into a running noose,

And there, I'm told, an eye he chanced to lose.
But I must say the fault was somewhat theirs;
They should have minded more the king's affairs.
With justice too complains Sir Chanticleer;
I ate his chicks—and very good they were.
Nay, with unfeigned repentance I must own
I have not spared the king upon the throne;
And, Heaven forgive me for it! even the queen
Has not been safe from my malicious spleen.
But most I've outraged Isegrim, the Wolf;
'Twixt him and me yawns an abysmal gulf.
Him I've disgraced in ev'ry way I could;
And if I might have done so more, I would.
I've even called him uncle, as a jibe;
For I'm no kin to any of his tribe.
"He came to me about six years ago;
I lived then in the cloister, down below;
He sought my help a monk to get him made;
His fancy was to toll the bells, he said;
He loved the sound so much: so with a loop,
I fastened his fore-feet into the rope:
He was delighted, and began to toll—
'Twas the great bell—with all his heart and soul;
But not much credit did his efforts win;
For he kicked up such an infernal din,

Out rushed the people when the noise they heard,
Thinking some dread mishap must have occur'd.
They came and found my friend the Wolf; and ere
His purpose to turn monk he could declare,
They fell to work, and so belabored him,
'Twas all but up with Master Isegrim.
“The fool was still unsatisfied; still craved
To be a monk and have his noddle shaved;
With a hot iron then I singed his poll,
Till the swart skin all shrivelled on his skull.
Ah! many are the blows and thumps and kicks
That he has been regaled with through my tricks.
I taught him the best manner to catch fish;
And he caught just as many as I'd wish.
“Once, when in partnership we chanced t' engage,
We groped our way into a parsonage;
Well stored the larder was of the good priest.
For he was rich and amply benefic'd.
Bacon there was and hams more than enough,
And lots of pork lay salting in a trough.
Is'grim contrived to scratch the stone wall through,
And crept in at the hole with much ado,
Urged on by me and his own appetite;
For with long fasting he was rav'nous quite.
I did not follow, as I had some doubt

How, if I once got in, I might get out.
Isegrim gorged till chuck-full to the eyes,
And swelled to nearly twice his former size;
So that, although he strove with might and main,
He could not for his life get out again.
'Thou lett'st me in,' he cried, 'O faithless hole!
Empty, and will not let me out when full.'
Away I hastened; raised a loud alarm,
On the Wolf's track in hopes the boors might swarm.
Into the parson's dwelling then I run;
And find him to his dinner sitting down,—
A fine fat capon just brought on the tray,—
This I snapped up, and with it stole away.
Up rose the priest in haste and overthrew
The table with the food and liquors too;
On ev'ry side the glass and crock'ry flew.
'Kill him!' called out th' enraged ecclesiastic;
'Oh! that the bones in his damned gullet may stick!'
Then, his feet catching in the cloth, he stumbled.
And all among the mess and fragments tumbled.
But loudly he continued still to bawl:
The hubbub brought the household, one and all.
Away I sped, as fast as I could go;
They after me, with whoop and tally-ho:
The parson shouting loud as he was able,

'The thief! he's stole my dinner from my table!'
I ne'er, until I reached the pantry, stopped;
But there, ah, well-a-day! the fowl I dropped;
I could no longer toil beneath its weight,
But lightened of my load escaped by flight.
The parson, stooping to pick up the fowl,
Spied Master Is'grim stuck fast in the hole:
'Halloo!' he cried, 'halloo! come here, my friends!
See what a scapegoat righteous Heaven sends!
Here's a Wolf caught; if he should get away
We were disgraced forever and a day.'
The Wolf no doubt wished he'd ne'er seen the larder;
Meanwhile their blows rained on him, harder and harder;
And many a grievous thump and kick and thwack
He got upon his shoulders, sides and back;
And all the while, as if the devil stirr'd them,
They yelled and screamed and swore—I stood and heard them.
At length it seemed all up with Isegrim;
He swooned; and then they left off beating him.
I'd lay a bet he never had before
His hide so curried, and will never more.
'Twould make an altar-piece, to paint the way
They made him for the parson's victuals pay.
At length out in the street for dead they threw him;
And over shards and pebbles rough they drew him:

Then flung him, as no signs of life he show'd,
Into a stagnant ditch beside the road,
And left him buried there in slime and mud.
How he recovered's more than I can tell;
It almost seems a sort of miracle.
"Yet after this, about a year, he swore
To be my friend and firm ally once more:
I cannot say his word I quite believed;
I felt that one of us would be deceived.
I soon found out his object was to get
A meal of fowls on which his heart was set.
I told him of a rafter, where there us'd
A Cock with seven fine fat Hens to roost.
It was past twelve o'clock one cloudy night,
When moon and stars gave not one ray of light,
I took him to a house I'd known before,
Where was a window on the second floor;
The lattice shutter by good luck stood ope;
To this along the wall we slyly crope;
And, being never barren in expedients,
I prayed mine uncle he would take precedence:
'Go boldly in,' I whispered; 'do not fear;
You never saw such fowls, as you'll find here;
I'll warrant, you ne'er finer met or plumper;
I'd lay my life you'll carry off a thumper.'

Cautiously in he stole, while I stayed out;
And here and there he 'gan to grope about:
But before long in tones subdued he said,
'Reynard, by all that's holy, I'm betrayed;
You've led me, I suspect, a wildgoose chase;
Of fowls I find not the remotest trace.'
'The foremost I've long had,' said I; 'you'll find
The others just a little way behind:
You'd better make your way across the rafter;
Don't be afraid; I'll follow closely after.'
This rafter now was anything but broad,
And no ways suited to sustain a load;
And Isegrim was fain to use his talons
In order any how to keep his balance.
Out at the window I contrived to back,
And then slammed to the shutter in a crack;
It jarred the rafter, and the Wolf fell plump, ere
He could restore himself, a monstrous thumper.
Thus was again my prophecy fulfill'd;
In such prophetic warnings am I skill'd.
The housecarles, who around the chimney dozed,
Were, by his heavy fall, from slumber roused;
'What's that fall'n from the window?' cried they all,
And lit the lamp and searched about the hall;
And in a corner found they Isegrim;

Good saints in heav'n! how they did punish him!

Yet somehow he contrived to get away

With a whole skin, but how I cannot say.

“I must confess too, even though it wound

A lady's honor, with Dame Gieremund

I've oftentimes committed mortal sin:—

It is so hard to stop when you begin.

This fault with deep contrition I deplore,

And trust I never may be tempted more.

“Such are my sins, O father! if not all,

At least I have confessed the principal.

I pray for absolution, and submit

To whatsoever penance you think fit.”

Then Graybeard shook his head, looked wise and big;

And from a neighb'ring bush plucked off a twig.

“My son,” quoth he, “this rod receive; with it

Three times your back in penance must you smite;

Next, having laid it gently on the ground,

Three times across it must you gravely bound;

Lastly, in humble and obedient mood,

Three times with rev'rence must you kiss the rod.

This done, I pardon and absolve you quite,

And ev'ry other punishment remit.”

This penance cheerfully by Reynard done,

Graybeard resumed: “Let your good works, my son,

Prove the sincerity of your repentance.
Read psalms, and learn by heart each pious sentence;
Go oft to church; mind what the pastor says;
And duly fast on the appointed days;
Show those, who seek, the right path; from your store
Give willingly and largely to the poor;
And from your heart and soul renounce the devil
And all his works, and ev'ry thought of evil.
So shall you come to grace at last." "To do
All this," said Reynard, "solemnly I vow."
The shrift now ended, tow'rds the court they bent
Their steps,—the confessor and penitent—
In seeming meditation wrapt: their way
Through pleasant woods and fertile pastures lay.
On their right hand an ancient cloister stood,
Where holy women of religious mood,
Passed a pure life in social solitude.
Stored was their yard with Cocks and Hens and Chickens,
Who often roamed abroad in search of pickings.
Reynard, when not with weightier matters busied,
Would pay them frequently a friendly visit.
And now to Graybeard did he turn and say,
"By yonder wall you'll find our shortest way."
He did not mean exactly what he said;
His confessor towards the wall he led;

While greedily his eyes rolled in his roguish head.

One Cock'rel notes he in particular,

Who plump and proud was strutting in the rear:

On him pounced Reynard sudden from behind,

And made his feathers scatter in the wind.

While the Fox licked his disappointed chaps,

Graybeard, incensed at such a sad relapse,

Exclaimed, "Alas, alas! what have you done?"

Is this your penitence, unworthy son?

Fresh from confession, for a paltry fowl

Will you so peril your unhappy soul?"

Said Reynard, "You rebuke me as you ought;

For I have sinned in truth, tho' but in thought.

Pray for me, dearest nephew, pray to heaven,

With other sins that this may be forgiven.

Never, oh! never more will I offend."

The cloister passed, the highway they regain'd:

Their pathway lay across a narrow nook:

The Fox behind cast many a longing look

Towards those tempting fowls; it was in vain

He strove his carnal yearnings to restrain.

If any one had then struck off his head,

Back to the fowls it must perforce have fled.

Graybeard said sternly, "Whither doth your eye

Still wander? This is hateful gluttony."

Quoth Reynard, "You quite misconceive th' affair;
You should not interrupt me when in pray'r.
Let me conclude my orisons for those
Whose souls I've sent to premature repose;
Their bodies to my maw a prey were given:
For thus accomplished was the will of Heaven."
Graybeard was silent; Reynard did not turn
His head, while yet the fowls he could discern.
They've left the cloister now behind them quite;
They near the court; the palace is in sight:
Reynard's bold heart beats faintly in his breast;
So grave the charges that against him prest.



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CHAPTER IV.



THE TRIAL.

SOON as 'twas known by general report
Reynard was really coming to the court,
Out they all rushed in haste, both great and small,
Eager to see the famous criminal:
In flocks and herds and droves they thronged to meet him,
But scarce did one with word of welcome greet him.
Reynard cared little though for this: he thought—
Or seemed at least to think—it mattered naught.
With Graybeard on indiff'rent things he talked
As, bold as brass, along the street he walked;
He could not, had he been the king's own son,
Free from all crime, with prouder step have gone:
And so before the king and all his peers
He stood, as though he felt nor doubts nor fears.
“Dread lord and gracious sov'reign!” thus said he,
“For ever gracious have you proved to me;—
Therefore I stand before you, void of fear,
Sure that my tale with patience you will hear;—
A more devoted servant to the crown,

Than I have been, my liege hath never known:
'Tis this brings me such hosts of enemies,
Who strive to work me mischief in your eyes;
And bitter reason should I have to grieve,
Could you one half their calumnies believe.
But high and just and righteous all your views are;
You hear th' accused as well as the accuser:
Howe'er behind my back they slander me,
You know how great is my integrity.”
“Silence that lying tongue!” the monarch cries,
“Nor think to veil your crimes with sophistries.
In one career of vice your life is spent;
It calls aloud to heav'n for punishment.
How have you kept the peace that I ordained
Throughout my kingdom's breadth should be maintained?
Yon mourns the Cock, disconsolate with grief;
His children slain by you, false-hearted thief!
You boast of your devotion to the crown,
Is't by your treatment of my servants shown?
Bruin, by your devices, hath been lamed;
My faithful Tybalt so severely maimed,
The Leech doubts if he may his health restore—
But I will waste my words on you no more;
Lo! your accusers press on ev'ry side;
All further subterfuge seems now denied.”

“Ah! sire,” rejoined the Fox, “am I to blame
My Uncle Bruin has returned so lame?
Or is it my fault he has tastes so funny,
He must needs pilfer honest people’s honey?
What if the peasants caught him in the fact,
And, ’spite his size and strength, he got well whack’d?
I could not help it, nor could succor him;—
In sooth ’twas lucky he knew how to swim.
Then as for Tybalt, when he came to me,
I showed him ev’ry hospitality.
Gave him the best I had; but not content,
His mind was wholly upon thieving bent:
He scorned my larder, and would poke his nose in
The parson’s granary to go a-mousing,
In spite of all my caution and advice—
It seems he has a strange penchant for Mice.
Shall I be punished because they were fools?
Does that comport with justice’ sacred rules?
But you will do your royal will I know;
And I must e’en submit for weal or woe:
Whether I am imprisoned, tortured, martyred,
Burned or beheaded, or hung, drawn and quartered;
So it must be, if so it be you list;
Your pow’r is great, how can the weak resist?
Tho’ to the State small good my death will bring;

I shall at least die loyal to my king.”

Up spake the Ram then, “Friends, the time is come;

Urge now your plaints, or evermore be dumb!”

Then, all confederate for Reynard's ruin,

Stepped Tybalt forth and Isegrim, and Bruin;

And other beasts came swarming by the score,

The thin-skinned Roebuck and the thick-skinned Boar,

Neddy the Donkey too, and many more.

Frizzy the Poodle also, and the Goat,

The Squirrel, and the Weazel, and the Stoat;

Nor did the Ox or Horse fail to appear;

And beasts of savage nature too were there;

The flitting Rabbit, and the nimble Hare.

The Swan, the Stork, the Heron and the Crane;

All thither flew, all eager to complain.

Sibby the Goose, with anger hissing, came,

And the Duck Quackley, who was sadly lame;

And Chanticleer, that most unhappy Cock,

Whose sorrows might have touched a heart of rock.

With the few children that to him were left,

Accused the Fox of murder and of theft.

In countless flocks came swarming in the Birds,

The Beasts in vast innumerable herds;

All vehement alike on vengeance bent,

All clam'rous pressed for Reynard's punishment.

Charge upon charge there followed, thick and fast,
And each fresh plaint more weighty than the last.
Since Noble sat upon his father's throne,
Was never yet such a grand Oyer known;
Indeed so num'rous the complainants were,
It seemed an Oyer with no Terminer.
Meanwhile the Fox conducted his defence
With most consummate skill and impudence;
One time a witness he would browbeat so,
That what he said the poor man scarce should know;
Or else repeat his answers in a tone,
Which gave a sense quite diff'rent from his own;
Or interrupt with some facetious jest,
Or tell a story with such hum'rous zest,
That, serious things forgotten in the sport,
They laughed the prosecutor out of court.
And when he spoke, truth seemed to tip his tongue,
Indignant as each charge aside he flung;
They heard with wonder and diversion blent,
Almost disposed to think him innocent;
Nay, some there were who more than half believed
He was himself the party most aggrieved.
At length came witnesses who stood so high
For unimpeachable veracity,
That all his crimes and outrages, as clear

As is the sun at noon, were made appear;
The council all agreeing, with one breath,
Pronounced him guilty and condemned to death;
Bound, to the gallows he should thence be led,
And hanged there by the neck till he was dead.
And Reynard now gave up the game for lost;
His skill had served him for display at most;
And as the king himself his doom pronounced,
All hope of mercy he as vain renounced:
For seized and pinioned, hopeless was his case,
With ignominious death before his face.
As there he stood, disgraced, disconsolate,
His foes bestirred themselves to speed his fate.
His friends the while in silent awe stood round;
Great was their trouble, and their pain profound;
Martin the Ape, Graybeard and many more,
Who to the hapless culprit kindred bore:
The king's will they respected as they ought;
But sorrowed all—more than one might have thought:
For Reynard was a peer of high degree,
And now stood stripped of ev'ry dignity;
Adjudged to die a death of infamy.
A sight indeed to make his kinsmen grieve!
Then of the king they one and all took leave,
And left the court, as many as were there;

Reynard's disgrace they had no mind to share.
The king was sore chagrined though in his heart,
To see so many peers and knights depart:
It proved the Fox had some adherents still
Too much disposed to take his sentence ill.
Then turning to his chancellor, he said,
"Though Reynard's crimes his doom have merited,
'Tis cause for anxious thought and deepest care,
How we his num'rous friends from court may spare."
But Bruin, Isegrim and Tybalt, all
Were busied round the luckless criminal.
Anxious to execute the king's decree,
They hurried forth their hated enemy,
And onward hastened to the fatal tree.
Thus to the Wolf then spake the spiteful Cat:
"Sir Isegrim, you've now got tit-for-tat;
You need not be reminded, I'll be sworn,
Of all the wrongs from Reynard you have borne.
You'll not forget, unless your heart's grown callous,
He had your brother hanged on that same gallows,
And taunted him with many a biting scoff;
In his own coin you now can pay him off.
Remember too the foul trick you were played,
Sir Bruin, when by Reynard's craft betrayed
To that base Joiner and his rabble crew;

The insults you received, the beating too;
Besides the deep and scandalous disgrace
To be the talking-stock of ev'ry place.
Keep close together then and have a care;
Lest he slip off before one is aware:
For if, by any artifice or chance,
He now contrive to 'scape our vigilance,
We shall remain eternally disgrac'd,
Nor ever shall the sweets of vengeance taste.”
Quoth Isegrim, “What boots it chattering so?
Fetch me a halter without more ado.
A halter, ho! and see that it be strong:
We would not have his suff'ring last too long.”
Thus against Reynard did they vent their wrath,
As tow'rds the gibbet they held on their path.
He'd heard all they had said, and not yet spoke;
But now, with sidelong leer, he silence broke:
“If you a halter want, Tybalt's the man
To fit you one upon the newest plan;
He knows how best to make a running noose,
From which one cannot possibly get loose;
He learned it at the parson's granary,
Where to catch Mice he went, and lost an eye.
But, Isegrim! and Bruin! why pretend
Such zeal to hasten your poor uncle's end?

In sooth it does not to your credit tend.”

Now rose the king, with all his lords, to see
Justice was done with due solemnity;
And, by her courtly dames accompanied,
The queen herself walked by the monarch's side:
And never was there seen a crowd so great
As followed them to witness Reynard's fate.
Meanwhile Sir Isegrim his friends besought
To march close packed, and keep a sharp look out;
For much he feared, lest by some shifty wile
The Fox might yet their watchfulness beguile:
And specially did he conjure his wife:
“See that the wretch escape not, on thy life;
If he should this time slip from out our pow'r,
We ne'er should know another peaceful hour.
Think of your wrongs;” thus Bruin he address'd;
“And see you pay them with full interest.
Tybalt can clamber; he the rope shall fix;
You hold Sir Reynard tight, and mind his tricks:
I'll raise the ladder, and you may depend on't
In a few minutes we shall make an end on't.”
Quoth Bruin, “Quick! and get the ladder plac'd:
I'll warrant me I'll hold the ruffian fast.”
“Why should you take,” again thus Reynard saith,
“Such pains to expedite your uncle's death?”

You know, the more the haste, the worse the speed.

Ah! sad and cruel is my lot indeed,

To meet with hate from such old friends as you!

I know 'twere vain, or I for grace would sue.

Stern Isegrim hath e'en compelled his wife

Join this unkindly plot against my life:

Her mem'ries of the past might surely wake

Some feelings of compassion for my sake:

But when you can foretell to-morrow's wind,

Then trust the constancy of womankind.

But if so be it must; so let it be

The sooner done, the sooner I am free.

My fate will but with my poor father's match;

Albeit, good soul, he died with more despatch.

Neither did such a goodly company

Attend his death, as now has honored me.

You seem to fancy, if you spared me now

You'd all be shamed; and, haply, 'twould be so."

"Hear him!" cried Bruin; "hear the ruffian boast;

Quick! prithee, quick! let no more time be lost."

Then Reynard seriously to think began—

"Could I but now devise some cunning plan;

That, in this hour of my extremest need,

I might be pardoned and from bondage freed;

Escape with credit from death's bitter throes,

And heap disgrace on these detested foes.
What can be done? 'tis worth some pains to take,
Since nothing less than life is here at stake.
Slight seem the chances for me; strong, against;
The king, no doubt, is bitterly incens'd;
My enemies all here; my friends away;
All my misdeeds brought to the light of day:—
And, truth to speak, but little good I've done;
Yet ever hoped this evil hour to shun.
If they'd but grant me liberty of speech,
Some of their cruel hearts I yet may reach;
And so get free of this accursed rope;
At least I'll try it:—while there's life there's hope.”
Then turning on the ladder where he stood,
He thus addressed th' assembled multitude:
“My doom is fixed; chance of escape is none;
Grant then a dying man one trifling boon:
Before you all, as many as are here,
Ere yet I close my criminal career,
Fain would I freely all my sins confess,
Lamenting that their number is not less;
Else for some crime in secret done by me,
The innocent perchance might punished be:
And thus my sinful soul some hope may have
Of mercy on the other side the grave.”

Many were moved at this and 'gan to say:
"Small is the favor, brief is the delay."
And as it seemed a reasonable thing,
They begged it and obtained it of the king.
A load was now removed from Reynard's heart,
And he at once prepared to play his part:
While through the crowd expectant murmurs ran,
With well-feigned penitence he thus began:
"Oh, aid me now, *Spiritus Domini!*
For I am sentenced and must shortly die.
Vast as this meeting, scarce can I see one,
To whom I've not some grievous inj'ry done.
Whilst I was still a tiny little brat,
Scarce weaned, and not much higher than my hat,
I loved to watch the Lambs and Kids at play
When from their watchful herds they chanced to stray:
It made my bosom throb to hear them bleat,
My bowels yearn too for substantial meat.
Ere long, in jest, I bit to death a Lamb,
Who'd strolled away some distance from its Dam;
While yet 'twas warm and fresh, I licked the blood,
And found that it was exquisitely good.
Four of the youngest Kids I next did slaughter:
The thought—Heav'n help me!—makes my mouth yet water.
Grown bolder, I indulged each wild caprice;

My tooth spared neither Fowls nor Ducks nor Geese;

I caught and ate them wheresoever found,

And some, half-eaten, buried in the ground.

“One winter, on the Rhine, it chanced I met

Is' grim.—a meeting I may well regret.

He claimed direct relationship with me,

Showed we were cousins, and in what degree.

Guileless myself, I readily believed;

Perhaps too ready to be so deceived.

Ourselves we bound then in a solemn league;

Force should be used by him; by me, intrigue;

Eternal friendship each to each we swore,

Ah! little did I ween what fruit his friendship bore.

“The provinces we traversed, one and all;

He the large booty stealing; I, the small.

Our bargain was, we should divide all fair;

But what he chose to leave was all my share;

Nor was this all th' injustice I must bear.

If e'er he chanced a Goat or Sheep to steal,

And I came up, and found him at his meal;

Or caught him gorging a fresh-slaughtered Calf,

Of which he'd not devoured more than half;

He'd grin his teeth at me, and swear and curse;

I was e'en glad that matters were no worse.

And thus it was he always treated me,

However large the booty chanced to be.

In hunting, if we ever caught, by luck,



artist: carl gehrts.

THE ARREST.

Some head of noble game, as Hind, or Buck,
Or Ox, or Cow, whose carcass vast was more
Than e'en his gluttony could all devour;
His wife and children straight made their appearance,
And in a trice there was a total clearance;
Not e'en a spare rib fell unto my share,
But what was gnawed and polished, clean and bare:
And thus was I forever forced to fare.
But Heav'n be thanked I never suffered hunger;
I'd means to live on, twenty years or longer;
A treasure vast of silver and of gold,
Securely hidden in a secret hold.
More than a single wagon, I might say
Even at seven loadings, could convey."

Noble, the king, heard all that Reynard said,
And bending forward now his royal head:
“Say, then, where did you get it from?” he cried,
“I mean the treasure.” And the Fox replied,
“It boots me naught to keep my secret now;
I cannot take my wealth to where I go;
All, as your grace commands me, will I tell;
From fear or favor naught will I conceal.
Stol’n was the treasure; I’ll not tell a lie:
Th’ occasion though the theft shall justify.
“There was a plot, a most atrocious thing!
Even to murder you, my lord and king;
And then to seize upon the vacant throne.
Beyond all doubt the deed would have been done,
If but secure that treasure had been left;
Your life, my liege, depended on that theft,
It helped indeed to lay my father low,
Perchance involved his soul in endless woe:
But private interests, however dear,
With public duties must not interfere.”
The queen had heard this lengthy rigmarole
With most extreme bewilderment of soul,
Alternating between alarm and pleasure;
Her husband’s murder, heaps of glitt’ring treasure,
And widow’s weeds, and bridal garments white,

In wild confusion danced before her sight.
“Reynard,” she cried, “your hour is almost come;
Before you lies the road to your long home;
Naught but true penitence can save your soul;
Tell nothing but the truth, and tell the whole.”
Then spake the king, “Be silent, ev’ry one!
Let Reynard from the gallows-tree come down;
And let him—but still bound—approach mine ear;
’Tis fit that this strange hist’ry I should hear.”
With cheerful hopes buoyed up the Fox descends,
While grieved his foes were, and rejoiced his friends;
Approached, as he was bid, the king and queen;
Who longed to know what might this myst’ry mean.
His web of lies he straight prepared to spin;
“If the king’s grace,” he thought, “I could but win,
And, by some cunning trick of policy,
Could ruin those who seek to ruin me,
From peril then should I be wholly freed.
Ah! that would be a master-stroke indeed.
’Tis a bold cast; if I would prosper in ’t,
’Twill need the use of falsehood without stint.”
The queen impatient questioned him again:
“The whole proceeding, Reynard, now explain;
Speak truth, and ease your conscience and your soul.”
“Truly,” said Reynard, “will I tell the whole.

Am I not doomed, too justly doomed, to die?
No chance there is to 'scape my destiny.
My soul to burden more at such a time
Were but to add a folly to my crime.
Better to speak the truth at any rate,
Though friends and kinsmen I may implicate.
There is no help for it, I know right well;
Before mine eyes I have the pains of hell.”
And the king's heart with gloom was overspread;
“And speak'st thou naught but sober truth?” he said.
Reynard replied, with sanctimonious mien,
“A miserable sinner have I been;
And oft have lied to serve mine interest;
But surely now the truth shall aid me best:
Falsely to make a dying declaration
Would be to court eternal condemnation.
Yourself, my liege, have doomed that I must die;
With my last words I dare not breathe a lie.”
While thus did Reynard, vile dissembler, speak,
Remorse and terror seemed to blanch his cheek.
And the queen said, “His anguish moves my ruth:
Encourage him, dear lord, to speak the truth;
And hear his story calmly to the end:
Our safety may upon his tale depend.
Give your commands that no one silence break,

And let him publicly his statement make.”

At the king's bidding not a sound was heard;

And Reynard spake, “Please you, my gracious lord,

Receive with favor what I have to say;

Though note nor minute have I here to-day,

The whole conspiracy will I lay bare,

And no one, be he friend or foe, will spare.”



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CHAPTER V.



THE PARDON.

NOW hear what lying tales the Fox dared state,
To screen himself, and others inculpate;
To what base falsehoods utterance he gave,
Slandered his very father in the grave,
Traduced the Badger too, his staunchest friend;
He thought all means were sanctioned by the end;
So he could but get credit for his lies,
And have revenge upon his enemies.
Thus he began: "It chanced that once my sire,
Whose wit and wisdom still the world admire,
Discovered, hid in an obscure retreat,
The treasures of King Emmerick the Great;
It seemed a godsend, but it brought such evil,
'Twas much more likely sent him from the devil.
With his new fortune he waxed haught and proud;
For his old comrades deemed himself too good;
Fancied that by assistance of his pelf
To higher circles he might raise himself;
Conceived ideas the most absurd and vain,

And hatched the strangest maggots in his brain.
He sent off Tybalt to Ardennes' wild regions
For Bruin, tend'ring him his sworn allegiance;
Inviting him to Flanders to repair,
And promising to make him king when there.
Bruin with vast delight his letter read,
Without delay to Flanders off he sped;
Him did my sire exultingly receive;
And planned how their designs they might achieve.
They got to join them in the enterprise,
Is'grim the Savage, and Graybeard the Wise.
These four in the conspiracy combin'd;
Four persons truly, though but one in mind;
While Tybalt joined their counsels for a fifth:
They journeyed onwards till they came to Ifth;
A little village is there of that name,
Obscure it is and all unknown to fame;
'Twixt this and Ghent, in a sequestered spot,
They met together to arrange their plot.
Over the meeting, which murk night did hide,
The devil and my father did preside;
One o'er their minds with false hopes kept his hold,
One, with the influence of his dirty gold.
Regardless of all loyalty and faith,
They compassed and imagined the king's death;

The five then swore on Is'grim's cursed head,
Bruin the Bear should reign in Noble's stead;
And at Aix-la-Chapelle, upon the throne,
Should bind his temples with the golden crown.
If any one their trait'rous scheme withstood,
Bound to the king by fealty or blood,
Him should my sire with words or bribes persuade,
Or, failing these, call force in to his aid.
I learned the bus'ness in the strangest way;
The Badger had been drinking hard one day,
Th' uxorious blockhead, though it risked his life,
Told the whole secret to his wheedling wife;
He bound her though to solemn secrecy,
And the fool fancied that he safe would be.
But what are woman's vows? His wife and mine



Gossips had been together from lang syne;
And when they met, the former, as with child,
Of her grand secret, nodded, smirked and smil'd;
And having made my wife first swear an oath,
By the three kings, and by her faith and troth,

Never to breathe one word to mortal soul,
Relieved her lab'ring bosom of the whole.
My wife was horror-struck, and straightway she
Felt it her duty to tell all to me;
Of course; for moralists have all one mind,
That inofficious vows can never bind.
I saw at once—what man of sense would not?—
The wickedness and folly of the plot:
All living Beasts had gone unto the Dogs,—
And fared, as formerly those stupid Frogs;
Who with their ceaseless croakings worried Heaven,
To change the king who first to them was given;
His tranquil reign inglorious they deemed;
They longed for greater freedom, as it seemed;
Then o'er them to preside Heav'n sent the Stork;
Like a legitimate he set to work;
All who opposed he banished from the State,
Decreed their lands and chattels confiscate;
And while he thus enriched himself, he swore
'Twas all to benefit the church and poor;
While love for law and order he professed,
Freedom in speech and action were repressed;
And none were heard, or suffered, to repine;
Thus did he prove he ruled by right divine.
The poor fools cursed their self-invited fate,

And wished the old king back; but 'twas too late.”
Thus spake the Fox; and lied at ev'ry word,
That all who heard him wondered as they heard.
“The State,” he thus proceeded, “had been lost;
But 'twas your safety, sire, concerned me most:
The risks I ran to save you were immense,
And merited some better recompense.
Bruin's fell mind I knew; his temper curst,
His love of cruelty forebode the worst;
Our lives, if he had chanced to get the sway,
Had not been worth the purchase of a day.
Our present king enjoys a diff'rent fame;
Noble alike by nature and by name.
A sad and stupid change indeed it were—
A royal Lion for a clownish Bear!
Thus with myself I oft communed in thought;
And means to ward this evil daily sought.
“One thing was certain; if my sire retain'd
This vast amount of wealth at his command,
Hosts of allies together he might bring,
Would win his game, while we should lose our king.
And now my chiefest study was to trace
This secret treasure to its hiding-place;
Then bear it safe away, if so I might;
Of this I dreamed by day and schemed by night.

Wherever now the crafty old one went,
Through field or forest where his steps he bent,
Whether in cold, or heat, or wet, or dry,
Close on his track incessantly was I.
“But chance at length, or rather, Heav’n’s high will,
Procured me what I could not gain by skill.
Concealed behind a bush, one summer’s day,
Chewing the cud of bitter thought, I lay;
Grinding all sorts of plans within my pate,
This treasure to secure, and save the State:
When from a fissure in the rocks hard by,
I saw my father creep out stealthily;
With expectation breathless I lay hid:
While, cautious, he looked round on ev’ry side;
Thought himself safe, perceiving no one near,
And then began his games, as you shall hear.
The hole with sand he filled, and all around
He levelled skilfully th’ adjacent ground;
Nor was this all; before he left the place,
All marks of footsteps he contrived t’ efface:
Bent to the earth, he swished his tail about,
And smoothed it o’er with his elastic snout.
Ah! truly was my sire a wondrous man!
The wide world now may match him, if it can!
How many quips and cranks and wanton wiles

I learned from him, most cunning of old files!
“But to proceed. He quickly left the spot;
‘Here then the treasure is concealed,’ I thought.
I hastened to the rocks with eager soul,
Soon scratched away the sand and cleared the hole,
And down into the cleft with caution stole.
Good heav’ns! what precious things there met my sight!
What masses of red gold and silver white!
The oldest present here, I’m bold to say,
Ne’er saw such stores as I beheld that day.
My wife I brought the glorious sight to see;
To move the treasure hourly labored we;
And sooth, it was a work of toil and pain;
We’d naught to help us,—neither cart nor wain.
My good wife held out bravely to the last,
Till we in safety had the treasure plac’d.
“Meanwhile my sire consulted day by day
With those who sought our sov’ reign to betray.
For dread and horror now your souls prepare,
Their machinations base whilst I lay bare.
By Isegrim and Bruin briefs were sent,
To raise recruits and stir up discontent;
All were allured in Bruin’s host to serve;
Whom lucre might from duty tempt to swerve.
And that the call they sooner might obey,

They were assured a month's advance of pay.
These briefs my father round the country bore;
He deemed in safety he had left his store;
Though if with all his friends he'd searched forever,
He ne'er had found a solitary stiver.
No pains he spared to further the design;
Sought ev'ry spot between the Elbe and Rhine.
And many converts to the cause he made;—
Who largely promises may soon persuade.
“At length the summertide once more was come;
With it returned my weary father home;
Of troubles and mishaps he'd much to tell,
Of many hair-breadth 'scapes by field and fell;
How for his life he had been forced to flee,
Among the towered heights of Saxony;
Where wicked hunters chased him out of spite,
With horse and hound, from morn till starry night;
That scarce he saved his skin by rapid flight.
With joy then to his comrades he display'd
The long list of adherents he had made.
Bruin was charmed, and, with the other four,
Studied th' important writing o'er and o'er.
Twelve hundred souls of Is'grim's savage clan
Had pledged themselves to join him to a man;
With sharp and hungry teeth and open jaws,

They promised to support King Bruin's cause.
The Cats and Bears enrolled without a bribe;
And all the Glutton, all the Badger tribe;
But, less devoted, or more cautious, they
Had bargained for the month's advance of pay.
All these and many more had sworn t' attend,
At the first summons which the Bear should send.
By me this plot was foiled: but thanks be given
Not unto me for this; but unto Heaven!
"My sire now hastened to the cave once more;
Eager to tell his cherished treasure o'er:
But, though the firmest faith possessed his mind,
The more he sought the more he did not find.
Vain were his labors, his regrets as vain,
Doomed never to behold his wealth again.
Three days disconsolate he roamed the wood,
Shunning his mates, and never tasting food;
The fourth—sad day for me! although his heir—
He hanged himself from grief and sheer despair.
"Thus have I done, thus suffered, good my lord,
To countervail a plot my soul abhorr'd.
Though for my pains this strange return I get,
The steps I took I never can regret.
Is'grim and Bruin sit at your right hand;
Doomed as a traitor the poor Fox must stand;

But yet this thought shall consolation bring;
I lost my father, but I saved my king.
The ill I've done be buried in my grave,
My name this one good deed from infamy shall save.”
He ceased: a murmur ran through all the crowd;
But what all thought, none dared to speak aloud.
The king and queen both felt a strong desire
This wondrous store of treasure to acquire;
They called the Fox aside and bade him say
In what place he had stowed it all away.
Though Reynard found it hard his joy to hide,
Still in desponding accents he replied:
“Why should I tell this secret to my lord,
Who dooms my death and ever doubts my word?
In traitors he prefers his trust to place,
Whose triumph is achieved in my disgrace.”
“Nay,” said the queen, impatient; “nay, not so!
His vengeance just my lord may yet forego,
The past he may forgive, may e'en forget;
And you may live a life of credit yet;
Could he but have some certain pledge, that you
Would for the future loyal prove and true.”
“Ah, gracious queen!” the wily Fox replies,
“Let me find favor in King Noble's eyes;
Through your mild influence let me pardoned be,

And hence depart in life and member free;
Amplly will I atone for all my crimes;
Nor king nor kaiser lives of modern times
Can truly boast one half the wealth to own,
Which I will lay before my sov'reign's throne.”
“Believe him not!” the angry monarch cries;
“Whose lips ne'er open but to utter lies.
If he would teach you how to cheat or thieve,
His words you then might readily believe.”
And the queen said—“Let not my lord be wroth:
Though Reynard's life ill augurs for his truth;
Yet surely this time hath he spoken sooth.
His father and his uncle hath he not
Shown to have shared in that accursed plot?
He might have sure devised some stratagem,
While blaming others, to exon'rate them.
And if he do speak truth, how great a prize
We lose, if now with him his secret dies.”
Awhile the monarch paused, immersed in thought,
In his soul's depths as though he counsel sought.
Then answered—“If you think 'twere better so,
Nor deem that ill from such a course may flow,
I may pursue the bent of my own mind,
To mercy more than vengeance still inclin'd.
The culprit I will pardon, and restore,

As a new man, to all he held before.
This time I trust him—let him though take heed—
This time I trust him, for the last indeed;
For by my father's crown I make a vow,
If with false tidings he deceive me now,
On all who claim his kin, where'er they be,
My wrath shall fall, e'en to the tenth degree,
In torture shall they perish utterly.”
Seeing the king so easily was sway'd,
Reynard took heart and spake out undismay'd:
“To lie now were most criminal, no doubt;
When I should be so speedily found out.”
Thus the sly knave the royal pardon won,
Both for his father's treasons and his own.
Freed from the gallows and his enemies,
Great was his joy nor less was their surprise.
“Noblest of kings!” he cried, “and best of lords!
My gratitude is all too vast for words.
But the warm thanks of this poor heart are giv'n
To you, and your august spouse, next to Heav'n.
My life you spare; my wealth is but your due;
For life and wealth belong alike to you.
The favors heaped on my unworthy self
Far, far outweigh all thoughts of paltry self.
To you as a free gift I now make o'er

The whole of good King Emmerick's mighty store.

Then listen, sire, while I its hiding-place

By certain signs enable you to trace.

"Now mark me! Far in Flanders, to the east,

There lies a wild inhospitable waste;

There grows a single copse named Husterlow,

Near it the waters of a fountain flow,

Called Krekelburn; these names remember well;

Why they're so called is more than I can tell.

It is a savage and romantic scene,

Where foot of Beast hath ne'er or rarely been;

There dwell alone the Owl, the Bat, the Jay;

And there it was I stowed my wealth away.

Remember, sire, close each to each they lie,

The copse, and the spring Krekelburn hard by.

Yourself and royal spouse had best go there,

It were not safe to send a messenger;

'Twere far too great a risk to trust a stranger;

And with the truest friend not much less danger.

Now further mark my words: at Krekelburn

Sharp to the left you take a sudden turn;

A stone's throw off two birches shall you see,

Their pensile branches drooping gracefully.

Directly up to these then must you go;

There delve forthwith; the treasure lies below.

At first but moss you'll find about the roots,
But soon your toil will meet with richer fruits;
Heaps of red gold you'll find; in ingots part,—
Part fabricated by the goldsmith's art;
Among it will be seen King Emmerick's crown,
Which silly Bruin hoped to call his own;
And many a costly chain and jewel rare,
Far more than I can reckon up, are there.
Then, gracious sire! when all this wealth you see,
Will you not think with kindness on poor me?
'That honest Fox!' methinks I hear you say,
'With so much skill to store his wealth away!
My blessing be upon him day and night!' ”
Thus Reynard spake, the wily hypocrite.
And the king answered: “You must with me go,
Or ne'er shall I find out this Husterlow?
Of Lubeck and Cologne I've oft heard tell,
Of Paris also and Aix-la-Chapelle;
But never yet of Husterlow before,
Or Krekelburn, until this very hour.
How may I know that this is not again
A pure invention of your subtle brain?”
Sadly perplexed and daunted sore to find
Suspicion haunting still the royal mind;
“Ah, sire!” exclaimed the Fox, “ ’tis all the same

To hang a Dog as give him a bad name!
A trip through Flanders sure is no such burden!
'Tis not a pilgrimage beyond the Jordan!
It is enough to drive one to despair,
To find one's word so doubted everywhere!
Haply there may be some one here in court
Who may avouch the truth of my report.”
He looked around and called the Hare,—who came—
A timid terror trembling through his frame.
“Come hither, Master Puss!” the Fox began;
“Hold up your head, and look, sir, like a man!
The king desires to learn if aught you know
Of either Krekelburn or Husterlow:
Speak truly now, on your allegiance oath.”
And the Hare answered—“Sire! I know them both.
Far off in Flanders in the waste they lie,
Husterlow first, and Krekelburn close by:
Husterlow is the name they give a copse,
Where crookback Simon had his working shops;
He coined false money; that was years ago.
It is a dreary spot, as well I know;
From cold and hunger there I've suffered much,
When flying from the cruel Beagles' clutch.”
Quoth Reynard then: “Enough! you may retire.
I trust I now have satisfied you, sire!”

And the king said to Reynard: "Be content:
My doubts were not to wound your feelings meant."

(He thought indeed by what the Hare had stated

The Fox's tale was quite corroborated.

And thus it is that many a man of sense

Will deal with the effect of evidence.)

"But you must with us go; for much I doubt

That else I ne'er shall find the treasure out."

"Dread sire!" rejoined the Fox; "to go with you

Would be a source of pride and pleasure too!

But, sooth to speak, my company would be

A cause of sorrow to your majesty.

I hoped to 'scape exposure of this evil;

But I must speak the truth and shame the devil.

"How Isegrim turned monk, sire, you have heard;

'Twas more to serve his belly, than the Lord.

Soon were his brethren weary of his tricks;

Almost starved out; he ate enough for six;

And caring nothing for his wretched soul,

For flesh on fast days would he rave and howl.

At last, one afternoon, about mid-Lent,

He sent for me, and straight to him I went:

And I must needs confess that I was stagger'd

To see him look so sadly gaunt and haggard.

He thus entreated me, with tearful eyes,

By all our loves, by all our kindred ties:
'Get me some food, or I shall die of famine!
Sweet coz, you see the wretched plight I am in.'
My heart was softened; for he is my kin;
And in my weakness I committed sin:
To the next town I hied and stole some meat;
Placed it before the Wolf, and he did eat.
But for my goodness ill was I repaid,
By this vile Judas treach'rously betray'd.
And I, for this offence, more heinous than
All my past crimes, lie 'neath the church's ban.
But now I have escaped my threatened doom,
I thought, with your kind leave, to wend to Rome;
By penitence and alms I there might hope
To purchase absolution of the pope;
Thence, having kissed his holiness's toe,
I purposed to Jerusalem to go;
With cockle hat and staff and sandal shoon;
Why should a Fox not take a Palmer's tone?
Returned, from all sins purged, I might with pride
Then take my place, sire, at your honored side.
But, if perchance I ventured this to-day,
Would not the pious scandalmongers say:
'Lo! how the king seeks Reynard's company,
Whom he so lately had condemned to die;

And he still excommunicated too!

But judge you, sire, what may be best to do.”

“Heav’ns!” cried the king, “how should I know all this?

It were a sin to keep you here, I wis;

The Hare, or some one else, can show the way:

You have our leave to go without delay.

For worlds I’d not your pilgrimage prevent,

Since I believe you truly penitent.

May Heaven, which alone your heart can read,

Prosper your purpose and your journey speed!”



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CHAPTER VI.



THE RELAPSE.

THUS Reynard gained once more his sov'reign's grace:

Who slowly mounting up to his high place,

Prepared t' address the meeting from his throne;

Bade them be silent all, and all sit down,

After their rank, ranged on the verdant sward;

On either hand drew up the royal guard;

At the queen's side th' undaunted Reynard stood;

And thus the monarch spake in thoughtful mood:

“Be still and listen, all ye Beasts and Birds,

Both small and great, hear and attend our words!

Here, in our mercy, see where Reynard stands,

Late doomed to suffer by the hangman's hands.

But now for certain reasons, grave and high,

Touching ourself, our crown and dignity,

And, at the intercession of our queen,

Restored to grace and favor hath he been;

And free we here pronounce him, from this date,

In life and limb, in person and estate.

In our protection him and his we take,

Desiring they be honored, for our sake:
And furthermore, it is our royal will.
Henceforth of him none dare to utter ill;
Convinced, as we his former faults forgive,
In future he a better life will live.
To-morrow will he leave his hearth and home,
And start upon a pilgrimage for Rome;
Thence will he make, as he doth now aver,
A journey to the Holy Sepulchre;
And then return, his sins confessed and shriven,
Completely reconciled to us and Heaven.”
He ceased. The Cat, in anger and despair,
Sought out his dear allies, the Wolf and Bear:
“Our labor’s lost,” he cried, “ah! well-a-day,
The very devil is there here to pay!
From this cursed place would I were safe away!
If Reynard once get pow’r, be sure that he
His fierce revenge will wreak on all us three.
Of my right eye already am I left;
Alas! the other will not long be left.”
“Woe’s me! what shall we do?” exclaimed the Bear.
“Let us,” said Is’grim, “to the throne repair!
Sure ’tis the strangest thing that e’er was seen!”
Forthwith they knelt before the king and queen:
For justice loud they spoke, or rather stammered;

For justice, inarticulately clamored.
But angrily the king broke forth:—"My lords!
Either you did not hear, or mark my words.
It is my pleasure Reynard to forgive;
It is a branch of my prerogative;
For is it not to ev'ry schoolboy known,
Mercy's the brightest jewel of the crown?"
His mighty wrath had now to fury risen;
He bade them both be seized and cast in prison;
Deeming they still might plot, if left at large,
The treasons, laid by Reynard to their charge.
The Fox was now well paid for all his pains;
Himself in favor, and his foes in chains:
Nay, more—he from the king contrived to win
The grant of a square-foot of Bruin's skin;
He vowed—and never could enough extol it,—
It was the very thing to make a wallet.
Thus was he for his pilgrim-journey suited;
But liking not to make it quite barefooted,
He sued the queen: "May't please your majesty,
Your own devoted pilgrim now am I;
The road I have to go is rough and long,
And I in health am anything but strong;
It greatly would protect my tender toes,
Saving your presence, if I had some shoes.

Now Isegrim the Wolf hath got two pair;
Stout-built and strong; and one he well may spare;
It cannot incommode him much to lose them,
Since he has no occasion now to use them.
Speak for me, gracious madam, to the king,
He will not sure deny so small a thing.
Dame Gieremund, too, cannot be averse
To let me have the loan of two of hers;
As she'll not see her lord some time to come,
Like a good housewife, she will stay at home.”
The queen replied, she thought it was but fair
That each of them should let him have a pair:
And Reynard thanked her with his best of bows,
Saying: “I promise, if I get the shoes,
Your majesty shall have my daily pray'rs,
That Heav'n preserve you free from fretting cares;
Besides, what holy relics back I bring,
You shall be sure to share them with the king.”
He had his wish: from Isegrim's fore paws
Two shoes they stripped him off, both skin and claws;
And Gieremund, his next to widowed dame.
As to her hinder feet, they served the same.
Now while the Wolf and Bear together lie
In prison and in pain, and wish to die;
With shoes and wallet fitted out, the Fox

Draws near to Gieremund, whom thus he mocks:
“Look, best and dearest one, these shoes, you see,
Fit just as though they had been made for me!
Though you have wished me ill in days bygone,
Such well-timed kindness can for all atone.
Who would have thought, a few short hours ago,
To see me honored and accoutred so?
But fortune's wheel is ever on the move
And what is now depressed soon mounts above.
Act on this maxim, and you baffle fate;
Hope, when in trouble; fear, when fortunate.
Whene'er to Rome I get, or cross the sea,
My heart untravelled with my friends will be;
And you the largest portion shall obtain
Of those indulgences I hope to gain.”
Poor Gieremund meanwhile in torture lay,
And scarce could muster strength enough to say:
“This hour is thine, and we must needs submit;
But there may come a day of reck'ning yet.”
Thus Isegrim and Bruin both remained
Wounded, disgraced, imprisoned and enchained;
And Reynard's triumph seemed complete to be;—
Although he grieved that Tybalt still was free.
When morning came, the hypocrite arose,
And first he greased, and then he donned his shoes;

Next to the royal levée hastening,
To make his congé, thus addressed the king:
“Your servant, sire, your notice would engage
Ere he sets out on his long pilgrimage.
Sad is my lot: the church’s ban hangs o’er me,
A dreary, dang’rous journey lies before me:
’Twould give me hope, and confidence of heart
To have your chaplain’s blessing ere I start;
Success would then my onward steps attend,
And bring my travels to a happy end.”
Now Noble’s private chaplain was the Ram;
A gentle brute, and Bellyn was his name;
The king, who of his services was chary,
Employed him also as his secretary.
Him now he bade come forth and thus address’d:
“Speak over Reynard,—’tis his own request,—
Some holy words, his deep remorse t’ assuage,
And cheer him on his lonely pilgrimage;
He goes, you know, to Rome; then o’er the sea;
And by your blessing sanctified would be;
Then, having hung his wallet by his side,
Give him a Palmer’s staff his steps to guide.”
And Bellyn answered thus: “My gracious lord,
What Reynard has avowed you surely heard;
He owns he still is excommunicate;

And truly I lament his wretched state;
But should I do the thing you now require,
I might incur my worthy bishop's ire;
The matter easily might reach his ear;
And he could punish me, and would, I fear.
To Reynard, certes, I wish nothing ill;
And gladly would perform my sov'reign's will;
For this, all things in reason would I venture,
Could I be sure to 'scape my bishop's censure;
But the good prelate is an awful man,
And such a strict disciplinarian;
Besides, there are th' archdeacon and the dean"—
The king no longer could contain his spleen,—
“What,” he exclaimed, “boots all this idle prate?
I asked for deeds, not words, Sir Woolypate.”
And then he swore, and loudly, at the Ram,
Saying, “Are you aware, sir, who I am?
Nor priest nor pope shall in my realm have sway;
I look my subjects shall their king obey.
And whether you wish Reynard well or ill
Can have no influence on my royal will.
It is my pleasure he should go to Rome;
May be 'tis yours he should remain at home.”
Astounded by the monarch's stern reproof,
The poor Ram trembled to his very hoof;

And straight he took his book and 'gan to read
A blessing over Reynard's sinful head;
But little did that wretch attend to it,
Or little care about the benefit.
The blessing o'er, they bring his scrip and staff;
How in his sleeve doth the false pilgrim laugh;
While down his cheeks dissembling tear-drops course,
As though his heart were melting with remorse.
And in good sooth he did feel some regret,
That Tybalt was not in his power yet:
He wished to cage him with the other three,
Whom he had brought to such extremity.
He begged them all, and chiefly Isegrim,
That they would pardon and would pray for him;
Then, with some fear still ling'ring at his heart,
Lest he might be detained, prepared to start.
And Noble, King of Beasts, much edified
To see such symptoms of repentance, cried:
"Say, my good Reynard, prithee, why such haste?
Some few hours with your friends you sure may waste."
"Nay, my kind lord," said that false-hearted loon,
"A good work ne'er can be commenced too soon.
Dismiss me, sire; th' important hour is come,
Big with the fate that Reynard leads to Rome."
The monarch, taken in by Reynard's art,

Gave him his gracious license to depart;
And bade th' assembled barons of his court
The pilgrim a short distance to escort.
The Wolf and Bear 'scaped this humiliation;
And from their fetters forged some consolation.
To the king's favor quite restored again,
Reynard sets forth with all that lordly train,
Upon his pious journey to be shriven,—
Much the same road that lawyers go to heaven;—
Pleased to have brought the king to such a pass,
Led by the nose as easy as an Ass.
Honored was he and waited on by those
Who even now had been his bitter foes.
Nor could he yet let his old tricks alone;
But turning back he knelt before the throne,
Kissed the king's hand, and cried:—"Ah, dearest lord!
Vouchsafe to let me speak one parting word:
Remember what great int'rests are at stake,
And of those traitors an example make:
Some acts of mercy reason will condemn;
Your people suffer, if you pardon them."
And then with downcast look away he went,
And all the bearing of a penitent.
The king broke up his court without delay;
Then to his royal palace took his way:

And those who, to their shame, and Reynard's pride,
His progress had some way accompanied,
Now took their leave and hastened to depart.
Meanwhile the rogue so well had plied his art,
Insisting on the blessings of repentance,
He'd softened not a few of his attendants;
And specially the tender-hearted Hare
From sympathetic tears could not forbear.
Him now the cunning Fox accosted thus:
"And must we part indeed, dear Cousin Puss?
If you and Bellyn could persuaded be
A little further yet to go with me,
'Twould be an act of kindness on your part,
And comfort much my poor afflicted heart.



artist: carl gehrts.

REYNARD'S RELAPSE.

How greatly to my credit 'twill redound
If I in such society am found;
Pleasant companions are ye both, I ken,
And, what's far better, honest, gentle men;
Ne'er doing wrong, you others' wrongs forgive,

And, as I lately did, you always live:
Of grass and herbs and leaves you make your food,
And never soil your guiltless teeth with blood;
Hence are your consciences serene and quiet;—
Such good results from vegetable diet.”
And thus into the snare he laid they fell:
A little flattery sometimes does well.
To Malepartus, journeying on, they came;
When thus the wily Fox addressed the silly Ram:
“Dear Bellyn, will you tarry here a little?
You must, by this time, surely want some victual;
And hereabouts you'll find enough to eat;
The herbage is particularly sweet,
In fact we rather of our pastures vaunt;
I'll just take Pussy in to see his aunt;—
Poor soul! she sits alone disconsolate,
And mourning over my unhappy fate;
And when she hears that I to Rome must go,
'Twill cause her quite an ecstasy of woe.
Pussy, I know, for his dear uncle's sake,
Will to his aunt the sad news gently break.”
And thus, to carry out his own vile ends,
The Fox contrived to separate the friends.
Puss entered with him; when—omen of ill!—
His footsteps stumbled on the very sill;

But Reynard smiled, and they passed onward, where
His vixen wife and cubby children were.
How Ermelyne rejoiced to see her lord
In safety to her longing arms restored!
She'd suffered much anxiety and pain,
Lest by his wrathful foes he should be slain,
Or a close pris'ner for his life remain;
And seeing him decked out with scrip and staff,
She scarce knew whether first to cry or laugh,
So great her joy and wonder: thus she spoke:
"Reynie, my love; my heart had almost broke;
How glad I am you're come! Where *have* you been?
And what *does* all this masquerading mean?"
And thus the Fox replied—"Ah, dearest wife!
But narrowly have I escaped with life:
My foes were powerful, and I was weak;
I had the halter round my very neck;
But our good king, with that peculiar sense
That marks all sov'reigns, saw my innocence;
And, as a testimonial to my worth,
In pious Palmer's weeds has sent me forth;
My character without the slightest stain;
The Wolf and Bear as hostages remain;
And Master Puss, you see, has by the king
Been giv'n to me as a peace-offering:

For the king said—‘Reynard, you see that Hare,
Yon trembling coward, who stands crouching there;
That is the wretch by whom you’ve been betray’d.’
And for his treason he shall now be paid.”
Puss heard these threat’ning words with mortal fear;
They seemed to ring a death-knell in his ear;
Confused and scared he strove in haste to fly,
But Reynard darted on him viciously,
And clutched him by the throat; Puss shrieked amain,
“Help, Belly, help!” he cried, and cried again,
“Help! or by this false pilgrim I am slain.”
But long he did not cry: for Reynard’s teeth
Soon cut his windpipe, and let out his breath.
Thus did this cursed and incarnate fiend
Betray and murder his too-trusting friend.
“Come now,” he said, “to supper let us haste;
Our friend is fat and delicate to taste;
The simpleton was ne’er of use before;
To make him so long time ago I swore.
He wished to wound, but was afraid to strike;
So perish ev’ry one who does the like!”
Then the whole family sat down to sup;
The Hare was skinned and shared and eaten up:
The vixen greatly the repast enjoyed,
And oft exclaimed, as with the bones she toyed:

“Heav’n bless the king and queen! how good they are,
To cater for us such delicious fare.”
“For this time,” said the Fox. “it may suffice;
I hope ere long a nobler sacrifice;
That I may let the whole world plainly see,
None injures Reynard with impunity.”
Quoth Ermelyne—“Dear lord, I prithee tell,
How you have got away so safe and well.”
“’Twould take,” said he, “full many a weary hour
To show how I escaped the law’s grim pow’r;
T’ explain the tricks I played my enemies,
And how I dammed—with dust—King Noble’s eyes.
In sooth the bonds that now our hearts unite,
Though we are sworn as lieges, are but slight;
And when the truth shall break upon his mind,
Within no bounds his rage will be confin’d.
Me if again within his pow’r he hold
No wealth can save of silver or of gold;
No chance of mercy left, my fate will be
To hang like fruit, upon the gallows tree.
“Let us, dear love, at once to Swabia fly;
Unknown by all, perdue we there may lie;
A safe asylum we are sure to find,
And heaps of provender of ev’ry kind;
Fowls, Geese, Hares, Rabbits; butter, cheese and cream;

Birds in the air and fishes in the stream.
There far from faithless friends and furious foes
Our life will ebb in leisure and repose;
In charity with all we'll pass our days,
And bring our children up in virtue's ways.
“For, dearest Chuck, to speak without disguise,
I've told a most infernal pack of lies:
A tale I forged about King Emmerick's store;
And that 'twas hid at Krekelburn I swore.
If they go thither, as they will no doubt,
They soon must find the whole deception out;
And when 'tis all discovered, you may form
Some faint idea of how the king will storm,
How he will swear; what vengeance he will vow;
And sure I feel that what he swears, he'll do.
You may suppose what fibs I told, dear wife;
Ne'er was I so put to it in my life:
Again to lie were not the slightest use,
And therefore would admit of no excuse.
“But happen now what may, one thing is plain;
Nothing shall tempt me back to court again:
Not for the wide world's wealth, from north to south,
I'd thrust my head into the Lion's mouth.”
Him answered thus the sorrowing Ermelyne:
“And why should we be outcasts, husband mine?

Why should we leave our comfortable home,
Abroad, like rogues and vagabonds, to roam?
Here known by all, by all respected too,
Your friends are faithful and your vassals true;
And certainties against uncertainties
To change, is neither provident nor wise.
Against our will we cannot hence be torn;
Our stronghold here might laugh a siege to scorn.
Let the king hither come with all his host:
He'll have his journey for his pains at most.
Of our escape I entertain no doubt;
So many ways we have of getting out.
The king is strong and we are weak; but yet
We to his pow'r can well oppose our wit.
For this I have no fears: but for your vow
To undertake a pilgrimage just now,
That chills my heart with icy fears I own:
What can I do, left friendless and alone?"
To her thus Reynard: "Sweet, you have prevailed;
'Twas but a moment that my courage failed:
His threats are idle, and my fears are vain;
Shadows avaunt! Reynard's himself again!
As for my vow—better to be forsworn,
Than live the wretched finger-mark of scorn:
Vows, when compulsory, bind not the least;

I've heard that doctrine taught by many a priest:

For my part, it may to the devil go;—

I speak not of the doctrine, but my vow.

“So be it as you wish. I stay at home;

For what on earth have I to do at Rome?

And for my promised journey to Jerusalem,

I only named the project to bamboozle 'em;

Nor if, instead of the one oath I swore,

I'd sworn a dozen, would I go the more.

With you and my dear children will I stay,

And get out of my scrape as best I may.

And though the king should have me in his clutch,

Perchance it may not help him over-much;

I may succeed, as I have done ere now,

To fit a fool's cap on his royal brow:

At least I'll try: the vow I freely make,

I dare be sworn, I think, I shall not break.”

Belyyn meanwhile had all impatient grown;

Had ate his fill, and wanted to be gone;

“Puss! are you ready? It is getting late.”

Thus he calls out at Malepartus' gate;

And softly at the first, then louder knocks:

When to the door proceeds the wily Fox,

And says—“You must excuse our cousin Puss;

You can return; he'll pass the night with us.”

“Methought,” replied the Ram, “I heard him cry,

‘Help! Bellyn, help! oh, help me or I die!’

I trust no ill could here my coz befall.”

“I thought,” said Reynard, “you’d have heard him call;

For in good sooth he made a mighty din;

I’ll tell you how it happened—just step in.”

But Bellyn’s heart was not quite free from fear;

So he said, “Thank ye; I am better here.”

Then wily Reynard answered: “Very well!

You shall hear how the accident befell.

I had just told my wife about my vow—

My promised pilgrimage to Rome, you know—

When she, alas! good soul, was so cast down,

That with the shock she fell into a swoon.

Our simple friend, alarmed, began to cry,

‘Help! Bellyn, help!—help, or my aunt will die.’ ”

“Certes,” said Bellyn, “he did loudly call.”

“He did,” quoth Reynard. “Now I’ve told you all.

As for my inj’ring him,” the false one said;

“I could not hurt a hair of that dear head.

I would be torn to pieces, limb by limb,

Sooner than even think of harming him.

“And now,” quoth he, “to bus’ness. Yesterday,

The king desired me, as I came away,

That I, by letter, should communicate

My thoughts on certain grave affairs of State.
This letter, with some other papers too,
I beg you'll carry back to court with you.
I've giv'n the king some excellent advice,
Which, though I say it, is beyond all price.
While Puss was resting from his weary jaunt,
And talking old times over with his aunt,
I just contrived a spare half hour to snatch,
And have drawn up a masterly despatch."
"I would with pleasure all your letters take;"
Said Bellyn, "but I fear the seals might break;
And I a serious censure should expect,
Having no pouch the papers to protect."
"That's true, dear nephew," answered Reynard, pat,
"But we can very soon get over that:
The wallet that they made of Bruin's skin,
Will be the very thing to put them in;
'Tis strong and thick, and will the wet repel;
I've one within will suit me just as well;
And doubt not that your labor will be vain;
Some favor from the king you'll sure obtain."
The silly Ram believed all Reynard said;
Then back into his house the sly one sped,
And in his wallet crammed the poor Hare's head;
Next having thought how he might best prevent

The Ram from finding out what 'twas he sent;
Unto the door returning, thus he spake:
'Here, nephew, hang this wallet round your neck.
In its contents I trust you will not pry;
'Twould prove a fatal curiosity.
The knots in a peculiar way are done,
Which only to the king and me are known;
A mode that I invariably use,
Whenever I transmit important news;
If the king sees the fastenings all right,
The messenger finds favor in his sight.
"Nay, if a greater merit you desire;
And to preferment in the church aspire;
You have my fullest leave to tell the king,
The letters were of your imagining;
That though the handiwork by me was done,
The whole idea was yours, and yours alone;
So shall your mental powers be highly rated,
And you, no doubt, be duly elevated.
You'll rise to any station that you wish, up:
Be made a prebend or—who knows?—a bishop."
Who then so happy as that silly Ram?
He frisked and gambolled like a very lamb;
And joyfully he cried: "Now do I see
The love, dear uncle, that you bear to me.

What credit will not this adventure bring!
How shall I be respected by the king!
That I such clever letters should indite—
I, who was ne'er considered over-bright!
And all this pleasure and this honor too,
I've none to thank for, uncle dear, but you.
No longer will I tarry. Let me see:—
You're sure that Puss will not go back with me?"
"Nay," answered Reynard, "that's impossible:
For, truth to speak, he's just now far from well;
A cold he's got has settled in his head;
He's had his gruel and is gone to bed:
His aunt it is, this treatment doth advise;
She's greatly skilled in all such remedies.
He'll follow speedily; nay, I would swear
He'll be at court as soon as you are there."
"Farewell, then!" said the Ram; "no time I'll waste;
Farewell!" And off he started in great haste:
Travelled all night, the roads not being heavy,
And just arrived in time for the king's levée.
When the king saw him with the wallet on,
He motioned him he should approach the throne,
Then said, while he held out his hand to kiss,
"Bellyn, you're welcome back; but what means this?
Is not that Reynard's wallet that you bear?"

Methinks that I should know it anywhere.
I trust you left him safe and well in health;
I would not have him harmed for thrice his wealth.”
And Bellyn said: “Despatches, sire, I bring
From Reynard greeting to my lord the king;
To get them all complete we both combin’d;
And what he executed, I design’d.
For though the handiwork by him was done,
The whole idea was mine, and mine alone.
He tied the knots in a peculiar way,
Which you would understand, he bade me say.”
The king, perplexed, straight for the Beaver sent;
He was a man for learning eminent;
Could read off-hand, and seldom stopped to spell;
Knew foreign tongues—and his own pretty well;
He acted for the king as notary;
To read despatches oft employed was he;
Vast was his science; Castor was his name;
And at the royal bidding now he came.
And Tybalt was commanded to assist,
The fastenings of the wallet to untwist.
The strings untied, the pouch was op’d; when lo!
A sight of dread and agonizing woe!
Forth Castor drew the poor Hare’s mangled head:
“This call you a despatch, forsooth?” he said;

“I own it fairly puzzles my poor brains;
Heav’n only knows, for I don’t, what it means.”
Both king and queen were startled and distress’d;
And Noble’s head sunk down upon his breast;
The only words he said distinctly were—
“O Reynard! Reynard! would I had you here!”
Then long a stern and solemn silence kept;
Till, by degrees, along the circle crept
Th’ astounding tidings that the king had wept.
At length his grief found utterance, and he spoke,
While his strong frame like to a woman’s shook:—
“He has deceived me;—Me! his king and lord!
How could I trust the perjured traitor’s word?
O day of shame! where shall I hide my head?
Disgraced! dishonored! would that I were dead!”
He seemed quite frantic; and the courtly crew
Felt it their duty to seem frantic too.
But Leopardus, near the throne who stood,—
A prince he was, and of the royal blood—
Thus spake: “My gracious liege, I cannot see
Why you and our good queen thus grieved should be.
Banish such gloomy feelings, and take heart;
Despair was never yet a monarch’s part.
As you, sire, who so prudent? who so strong?
Remember too, a king can do no wrong.”

“Alas!” cried Noble, “it is even so;
And this it is adds sharpness to my woe.
'Tis not alone that I have been deceiv'd;
For that, I might have well in private griev'd;
But that the wretch, to gain his wicked ends,
Has caused me do injustice to my friends;—
Bruin and Is'grim, who in prison lie,
The victims of his cursed villany.
Is't not enough my soul to overwhelm,
That the two noblest barons of my realm
Should be so punished, and for no offence,
But my blind trust in Reynard's evidence.
Alas! 'twas in an evil hour, I ween,
I heeded the persuasions of the queen;
She, in simplicity a very child,
By his false tongue was easily beguil'd,
And for his pardon did so warmly pray—
I should have been more firm—but I gave way.
Idle is all regret; advice too late;
For even kings must sometimes bow to fate.”
The Leopard answered, “Sire, though you know best,
Haply I may a useful hint suggest.
Some comfort to the Wolf and Bear 'twould bring
To have the Ram as a peace-offering:
You heard him boldly, as a boast, declare,

'Twas he that counselled killing the poor Hare.
Thus shall you deal him forth a righteous fate,
And thus the injured peers propitiate.
Then will we hunt the Fox through all the land,
And kill him,—if we catch him,—out of hand;
For if he get but liberty of speech,
The very devil will he over-reach.
In fine, until that crafty brute is slain,
No respite from our griefs shall we obtain.”
He ceased; and Noble, King of Beasts, replies:
“Your counsel pleases me, as just and wise.
Hasten and set th’ imprisoned barons free;
In honor shall they take their state near me.
Be all the council summoned: they shall learn
How foully that base traitor is forsworn;
How he and Bellyn killed the gentle Hare;
How he traduced the loyal Wolf and Bear:
And, as you counsel, Bellyn and his heirs
Forever I make o’er to them and theirs.”
Then Leopardus went without delay
To where the Wolf and Bear in prison lay.
Straight from their bonds by his commands released,
In soothing words the twain he thus addressed.
“Hail, noble lords! good tidings, lo, I bring!
Full pardon and free conduct from the king!

By law, you both have been condemned of treason;
And law is the perfection of all reason;
But since 'tis proved you're free of all offence,
You're freely pardoned, for your innocence.
And likewise in some measure to atone
For all the sufferings you have undergone,
Belyyn and all his tribe, the king declares,
Are given up to you and to your heirs:
In grove or green whene'er you chance to meet them,
You have full privilege to kill and eat them.
Further, the king will lend his royal aid
To punish him by whom you've been betray'd;
The Fox and all his kindred, to a man,
You've leave to take and torture, if you can.
These rights, which unto you the king doth yield,
Will all by his successors be upheld;
And, in return, you from your souls will cast
All painful recollections of the past;
Raised to your old estate, afresh will swear
Loyal allegiance to the king to bear."
They took the pardon at the proffered price,
Belyyn the Simple fell a sacrifice:
And all his kindred suffered too with him,
Victims to the fierce clan of Isegrim.
Eternal war was entered on that day;

The Wolves thenceforth made all Sheep their prey;
Hunting and worrying them by day and night;
They had the power, and therefore had the right.
The monarch further solace yet imparts
To Isegrim's and Bruin's wounded hearts,
By ordering a twelve-days' festival,
At which his barons should be present all;
That so his lieges might distinctly see
Those the king loved, should duly honored be



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CHAPTER VII.



THE OUTLAWRY.

THE court was for the festival prepared;
And all who came, the banquet freely shared;
By day and night succeeded endless feasts;
Was never such a gathering of beasts;
All to do homage to the Wolf and Bear,
Who in their present joy forgot past care.
Nor did the guests do naught but feed like brutes;
The scene was varied with refined pursuits;
The charms of music lent their soothing aid;
The big drums thundered and the trumpets bray'd;
The dance enlivened the convivial hall,
The courtly minuet and the common brawl;
While day by day the sports afresh begin,
And day by day new guests come trooping in.
To name them all would too much time engross;
There came the erudite Rhinoceros:
Thick-skinned himself, he flayed the thin-skinned tribe,
A savage critic, though himself a scribe;
In all the gossip versed of former times,

He fashioned hist'ry into nurs'ry rhymes;
Or, told in prose, made it seem all a sham,
By cooking up his facts *à l'épigramme*.
Next the Hyena, the good bishop, came,
His restless zeal forever in a flame;
With his devices the whole kingdom rang,
So mixed they were of piety and slang:
No Bloodhound e'er so quick a scent as he
To track the tainted sons of heresy;
Not Gaul by Roman, nor by Spartan Helot,
Were used as they were by the reverend prelate:
Them with his pen he mangled sore, and would
Have had them burnt by inches, if he could.
He came; but not in over-cheerful mood,
For at this time his thoughts could naught but brood
On that accursed and deadly schism which taught
That *in*, and not *by*, baptism grace was caught.
There was Sir Nibble, too, the long-haired Rat,
Haggard and grim and sworn foe to the Cat;
Though he at one time, unless Rumor lied,
Had wished to 'list himself on Tybalt's side;
Hoped all past differences to efface,
And in his favor to obtain a place.
But when he found his fawning flatt'ry spurned,
His sembled friendship into hate was turned;

Where once he slavered, now he spat his spite,
And showed his rodent teeth and strove to bite;
But Tybalt thought it prudent to determine
To bide his time till he might crush the vermin.
There too was Jocko seen, the long-armed Ape,
Who was in mind ungainly as in shape;
Malice and fun in him so nicely blent,
When playful most, then most he mischief meant;
He chattered nonsense with look so demure,
Most folks would think—he must mean something sure;
His very talents he would twist to ill,
For he could limn and draw with ease and skill;
But, just to prove his power at grimaces,
Caricatured his best friends to their faces.
To count them all, for ages would endure;
But Reynard was not one of them, be sure.
In watchful idleness he lurked at home,
That false pretended Palmer, bound for Rome.
To visit court he was too circumspect;
He knew what welcome he might there expect.
Safely at home himself he might applaud;
But not so safely could appear abroad.
Meanwhile was held high junketing at court;
There all was mirth and jollity and sport;
Feasting and gambling were there, night and day;

And those who came to stuff remained to play.
Full was the royal palace as Noah's ark;
Jousts were there held, and tourneys, in the park.
From his high place the king surveyed the whole,
And the vast tumult filled his mighty soul.
'Twas now the eighth day of the festival;
The king was set at table in his hall,
His peers around, and by his side his queen;
When lo! the Rabbit rushed upon the scene!
Bunny the Mild, his face all smeared with blood;
And thus he spake, as panting there he stood:
"Ah, sire! ah, hear me! lords and gentles all!
Or some such fate may some of you befall;
What murderous wrongs from Reynard I've received;
Too scandalous almost to be believed!
I passed by Malepartus yesterday;
My road in coming hither led that way;
Dressed out in pilgrim's habits there he sate,
Seemed to be reading matins at his gate.
I hurried on, in haste to reach this court,
Deeming your summons, sire, a safe escort.
When Reynard saw me, up he rose to meet me,
Intending as I deemed, to come and greet me:
When lo! he seizes me behind my ears,
And my soft skin with his sharp talons tears;

While to the earth with force he pressed me down;
I verily believed my head was gone.
I struggled hard, and, thanks to Heav'n! being light,
Just managed to get off by speed of flight.
I heard his curses sailing down the wind;
But on I sped and never looked behind;
And here I am, all mangled as you see;
Ah, gracious lord! have pity on poor me!
If thus from court we all may be debarr'd,
Of what avail shall be the king's safeguard?
Oh! on the common ill in time reflect,
Nor let this robber's crimes remain uncheck'd."
Scarce had he ended, when the noisy Crow,
Entering the court, began his tale of woe;
And thus he spake: "Ah, gracious lord and king!
Most melancholy news to you I bring;
For grief and sorrow scarcely can I speak;
For grief and sorrow sure my heart will break.
This morn, my wife and I—my wife, I say;
Alas! my wife that was but yesterday!—
In search of food abroad prepared to fly,
Just as the dawn lit up the watchet sky;—
For scarce need I your majesty inform,
The early bird picks up the morning worm;—
Crossing, near Reynard's home, that blasted heath,

I saw a sight that took away my breath:
Himself lay there to all appearance dead;
Stiff were his limbs, his eyes turned in his head;
His tongue protruded from his open jaws;
Awe-struck I called aloud, with ample cause;
'Alack!' I cried, 'alack! and well-a-day!
He's dead and'—scarcely knew I what to say;
Loud did we both in lamentations join,
For my wife mixed her clamorings with mine.
The body then I cautiously approached,
And with my beak the back and belly touched;
While she, poor soul, perched boldly on his chin,
And, stooping down, his mouth she peered within;
Trusting some trace of life she might detect;
For little did she aught of ill expect:
But the base wretch soon proved he was not dead;
For in a moment off he snapped her head!
With horror rooted to the spot was I;
And deemed upon the instant I should die.
Quick starts he up and makes a dash at me;
I 'scaped, I know not how, into a tree;
Unconscious terror must have winged my flight:
And thence I saw, O heavens! what a sight!
Sooner, alas! would I have lost my life!
I saw the murderer mangle my dear wife;

Her tender flesh I saw his talons tear,
The crunching of her bones too could I hear.
So mad with hunger seemed the cannibal,
That he devoured flesh, feathers, bones and all!
That hour of anguish ne'er will be forgot!
The wretch now satiated left the spot;
And I alighted on that cursed ground,
But nothing there save drops of gore I found,
And these few feathers from my poor wife's wing,
Which here in court, to prove my case, I bring.
"My tale is ended, sire! my talk is done:
I've humbly laid my griefs before the throne.
From his misdoings, all the realm complains
'Tis Reynard rules, and not the king that reigns.
For those who have the pow'r such crimes to stem,
And yet repress them not, encourage them.
Forgive me if too bold in what I say;
But grief is voluble and will have way."
Now all the court had heard these tales of woe,
Both from the gentle Rabbit and the Crow.
And much incensed was Noble, King of Beasts,
Who liked not this disturbance in his feasts,
Thus then he spake in angry tones though sad:
"Much have I borne with; but this is too bad!
In vain it seems that my beliests are spoken;

My laws are outraged and my peace is broken.
This traitor has deceived me once before,
But never, never, shall deceive me more!
Nor my fault is't that such a criminal
Is still at large; the queen has done it all.
I shall not be the last, as not the first,
By woman's idle counsels to be curst.
But if this rebel thief go longer free,
The name of justice will a mock'ry be.
Take counsel then, my lords, and do your best
To rid our kingdom of this common pest.”
Pleased were the Bear and Wolf this speech to hear;
And thought their hour of vengeance now was near;
But prudently were silent, seeing both
The king so much disturbed and deeply wroth.
At length the queen in gentle accents spake:
“Do not, dear lord, your plans too rashly make;
Calm dignity will best assert the right;
Of angry words th' effect is oft but slight.
Men oft blame others their own guilt to hide;
Justice demands to hear the other side;
Of those who're loudest in his absence, some,
If he were present, would perchance be dumb.
For Reynard; skilful, wise and wary still
I knew him, and suspected naught of ill.

All I advised was with the best intent,
Though the result has proved so different.
From all I ever heard or understood,
If bad his deeds, yet his advice was good.
Behoves us to remember in this case
His num'rous followers and powerful race.
With over-haste affairs but badly speed;
But what your royal will shall have decreed,
That shall your faithful subjects execute;
And thus ripe counsels yield their proper fruit.”
Then spake the royal Libbard thus: “My lord,
Permit me humbly to throw in a word;
I own I think that Reynard should be heard.
With ease you can your objects carry out,
When he comes hither, as he will, no doubt.
I think this is the general view; I mean,
We all would take the same view as the queen.”
Then Isegrim spake out: “Forgive me, prince,
Your words, though wise, do not my mind convince.
Put case that Reynard now were present here,
And from this double charge himself could clear;
Yet would I undertake to show good cause
His worthless life lies forfeit to the laws.
But of such matters better silent be
Until we have him safe in custody.

Have you forgot the wondrous tale he told
About King Emmerick's hidden store of gold?
At Husterlow, near Krekelburn, he swore
It would be found, and fifty falsehoods more.
Both me and Bruin hath he brought to shame;
And life we hold less dear than our good name.
And yet at freedom roams the rebel still,
And steals and murders whom and what he will.
If to the king and council this seem fit,
We, howsoever wronged, must needs submit.
Prince Libbard though suggests he may appear
E'en yet at court; but why is he not here?
The royal missive bade all lieges come;
But he, the skulking thief! remains at home."
Then said the King of Beasts: "Why more delay?
Why for the traitor's coming longer stay?
My royal will is, ye all ready be
On the sixth day from this to follow me.
Unless our pow'r shall quite be set at naught,
These ills, my lords, must to a close be brought.
Prepare yourselves at once for battle's din;
Come armed with sword and bow and javelin;
Let each right worthily his weapons wield,
So he may merit knighthood on the field.
My subjects I expect will aid their liege;

The fortress Malepartus we'll besiege;
And all its myst'ries into daylight bring.”
Then cried they all aloud: “Long live the king!”
Thus were the monarch and the peers agreed;
And Reynard's certain doom now seemed decreed.
But Graybeard, at the banquet who had been,
In secret left the gay and festive scene.
He hastened off the wary Fox to find.
And let him know what now was in the wind.
And as alone his weary way he sped,
Thus to himself the grieving Badger said:
“Ah! uncle dear! how I deplore thy case!
Thou prop and ornament of all our race!
With thee to aid us and to plead our cause
We never feared the rigor of the laws.”
Thus he arrived at Malepartus' gate,
Where in the open air Sir Reynard sate.
Two youthful Pigeons he his prey had made,
Who their first flight that morning had essay'd;
But ill-supported by their new-fledged wings,
They fell, and he pounced on the poor weak things.
Soon as he saw the Badger drawing near
He rose and said: “Ah, welcome, nephew dear!—
For dear you are to me 'fore all my kin;—
But what a mortal hurry you seem in!

How hot you are! and how you puff and blow!
You bring some cheerful news for me, I know.”
“Alas!” said Graybeard, panting, “anything
But cheerful, uncle, are the news I bring.
For all, excepting honor, now is lost:
Ne'er have I known King Noble seem so crost;
Deep hath he vowed a shameful death shall be
The doom of Reynard and his family.
He and his barons bold, a doughty band,
Armed at all points,—for such is his command,—
With bow and sword and javelin and spear,
On the sixth day from this will all be here.
Bethink you then in time; for what can you,
'Gainst such an army, single-handed do?
Bruin and Isegrim are with the king
Quite reconciled; their will is everything.
The Wolf of crimes of ev'ry sort and kind
Accuses you, and sways the royal mind.
He has,—as you will but too shortly see,—
Been raised to a field-marshal's dignity.
The Crow and Rabbit have been both at court,
And of your doings made a sad report.
Should the king this time get you in his pow'r,
Your life's not worth the purchase of an hour.”
“That all? Your story moves me,” quoth the Fox,

“As summer breezes do primeval rocks.
As for the king and all his council too,
I'll warrant me they'll have enough to do;
At least to talk about; because, in fact,
They'll prate and prate forever, and not act.
About such trifles, nephew, do not fret;
But just step in and see what we can get.
You see these nice young Pigeons I've just caught;
They are the best of eating, to my thought;
Their bones and flesh like jellied milk and blood:
So light; and I'm compelled to take light food;
My wife too is of the same taste as I;
Come in; she'll welcome you right heartily.
She is not well though, so I would not let her
Know why you come; for trifles quite upset her.
We'll start to-morrow; and I'm naught afraid
But you'll afford me kind and kindred aid.”
Quoth Graybeard, “I would die for you with pleasure.”
Quoth Reynard, “You oblige me past all measure.
And if I live. as well I trust I may,
Be sure that I your kindness will repay.”
“Go,” said the other, “go before your peers,
With that brave honest heart, devoid of fears;
At least a hearing you'll obtain from them.
Even Prince Libbard says they can't condemn,

Until they've heard all you may have to say;
And the queen thinks precisely the same way.
This hint to your advantage you may guide.”
“Be sure I will,” the crafty Fox replied;
“Howe'er the king may storm; in his despight,
I have no doubt to make the matter right;
I know the bait at which he'll surely bite.”
So into Reynard's dwelling now they went;
The housewife welcomed them with kind intent;
The hospitable board was quickly spread,
And on the Pigeons daintily they fed;
Duly divided each one had his share;
Much were they relished and was naught to spare.
They could, for it was but a scanty feast,
Have eaten half a dozen more at least.
The meal concluded, they to chat begin;
And the fond father has the children in;
And as they climb and cling about his knees,
They waken his parental sympathies:



“Are they not charming little rogues?” he said,
“So frolic, yet so thoroughly well-bred.
Russell is such a scamp; and his young brother,

Graykin, will one day prove just such another.
Never will they their lineage disgrace;
Their principles do honor to their race.
One a young straggling Bantam up shall pick,
The other pounce upon a Guinea-chick;
Nor do they rest contented on dry ground,
But plunge for Ducklings in the parson's pond.
To hunt I'd send them oft'ner, if I durst;
But care and prudence they must study first;
Learn never to be taken unawares,
And to avoid all hunters, Dogs and snares.
And when by habit they expert shall grow,
And courage, tempered with due caution, show,
In search of prey then daily shall they roam,
And never shall we want for food at home.
Slow stealthy step, low crouch and steadfast aim,
Sure spring and firm grip; that is Reynard's game;
Thus have we still upheld the credit of our name."
"Ay, children are in truth great blessings, sir;"
Said Graybeard, who was still a bachelor.
"Pledges of holy and of lawful love,
A constant joy and solace must they prove;
Centred in them, the happy parents see
The pleasures both of hope and memory;
And if sometimes they prove a source of trouble,

That makes, no doubt, the latter pleasure double.

Nor are your joys confined to you alone;

I love your children as they were my own."

"Suffice it for to-day," then Reynard said;

"We all are sleepy; let us now to bed."

Then on the floor, soft strewn with leaves and hay,

Their weary limbs adown to rest they lay.

But Reynard could not sleep for haunting cares,

So grave appeared the posture of affairs.

He tossed and tumbled all the livelong night,

With aching eyes he met the morning light.

Then to the partner of his joys and woes

Thus did he speak, as from his couch he rose:

"Be not alarmed; to court I go again

At Graybeard's wish; at home you'll safe remain.

That no one know where I am gone 'twere best;

Be of good cheer and leave to Heav'n the rest."

"What!" cried Dame Ermelyne, "again to court!

Methinks your foes would wish no better sport.

Are you obliged to go? Bethink you well

Of what on your last visit there befell."

"Indeed," quoth Reynard, "it was past a jest,

I ne'er remember to have been so prest.

But nothing certain is beneath the sun;

No matter how a thing may be begun,

None can say how 'twill finish, till 'tis done.

Albeit 'tis needful that to court I go,—

For I have much that's weighty there to do,—

Be calm, I beg you; there is naught to fear;

A week at furthest I'll again be here.

Adieu then, for a time, dear love!" he cried;

Then off he starts with Graybeard at his side.



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CHAPTER VIII.



THE JOURNEY.

TOWARDS King Noble's court without delay,
Graybeard and Reynard now held on their way.
And the Fox said, "My heart feels quite elate,
This journey will, I know, prove fortunate.
And yet, dear nephew, since I last confest,
My life has truly not been of the best.
Hear what fresh crimes I now have to deplore;—
Some too which I forgot to tell before.
"A good stout scrip I've had from Bruin's hide:
The Wolf and his good lady have supplied
My tender feet, each with a pair of shoes;
'Tis thus I've wreaked my vengeance on my foes.
The king too, I confess, I've badly treated,
And with gross falsehoods scandalously cheated.
Further,—for naught will I conceal from you,—
I killed the Hare, and what's more, ate him too:
His mangled head by Bellyn I sent back,
Trusting the king would stretch him on the rack.
The Rabbit too, I tried to make my prey;

Although—thank Heav'n for that!—he got away.
Th' offence of which the Crow doth now complain
Is not without foundation in the main;
For why should I the simple truth disguise?
I did devour his wife before his eyes.
“These my chief sins are since my last confession;
But I omitted then an old transgression;
A trick, for which I hope forgiv'n to be,
Against the Wolf, mine ancient enemy.
“One day we happened to be travelling
The road between Kaktys and Elverding;
When we a Mare perceived with her young Foal,
The dam and daughter each as black as coal;
'Bout four months old the Filly seemed to be;
Said Is'grim, who was nearly starved, to me,
'See, prithee, nephew, if you can entice
Yon Mare to sell her Foal at any price.'
Rash was the venture, I was well aware;
But up I trotted, and addressed the Mare:
'Say, dearest madam, may I make so bold
To ask if this sweet creature's to be sold?
If so, for it belongs to you, I see,
I trust upon the price we may agree.'
Said she: 'Yes, if I get the sum I want,
I'll sell her; and 'tis not exorbitant;

You'll find it written on my near hind hoof.'
I guessed her meaning and kept well aloof.
'Alas!' I cried, as though I naught suspected;
'My education has been sore neglected;
Reading and writing are beyond my pow'r;
My parents have a deal to answer for.
Not for myself the dear child I desire;
It was the Wolf who bade me to inquire.'
'He'd better come himself,' replied the Mare;
Quoth I, 'I'll tell him what your wishes are.'
So where he waited I joined Isegrim:
'The Foal is to be had,' said I to him;
'The price is written on the Mare's hind hoof;
She kindly offered me to see the proof;
But 'twas no use to me, who cannot read;
My life, alas! has sadly run to seed.
But you, dear uncle, soon will make it out;
Approach and read, for you can read, no doubt.'
Said Isegrim, 'I rather think I can;
German, French, Latin and Italian.
To school I went at Erfurt, then to college,
Where I picked up a vast amount of knowledge;
Took duly my degrees and honors too;
I swear I quite forget how much I knew:
All one learns there is wondrously abstruse,

Though not, perhaps, in practice of much use.
I'll go and the inscription read at once,
To prove that, though a scholar, I'm no dunce.'
So off he started to the Mare, quite bold,
Asked for how much the Foal was to be sold;
She gave the answer she had giv'n before;
And down he stooped the writing to explore.
Her hoof she lifted gently from the grass;
Fresh shod and armed with six new nails it was;
And fetched him a full plumper on the head,
That down he tumbled, stunned, and lay for dead.
Then off she galloped with her frisky Foal,
And whinnied as she went, for joy of soul.
For a good hour the Wolf lay on the ground,
Then 'gan to howl, like any beaten hound.
I hastened up to him, and, 'Uncle, say,'
Quoth I, 'what causes you lament this way?
Have you your bargain made with Madam Mare?
And eaten up her Foal? that's not quite fair!
Sure, for my pains, I should have had my share.
And, as you are so learned, prithee, do
Expound to me the writing on the shoe?'
'Ah me! I am derided!' he made moan;
'My suff'rings though might melt a heart of stone.
Never before did I so badly fare.

Oh! may the devil fetch that long-legged Mare!
Six bleeding wounds I have in my poor head.
The only wonder is I am not dead.’
“Thus I’ve confessed, as far as I am able,
And made my conscience clean and comfortable.
Now that is done, I trust to hear from you
Some ghostly counsel what is next to do.”
Him Graybeard answered thus: “’Tis true indeed,
Of ghostly counsel you stand sore in need;
For from your tone I gather that, as yet,
Your crimes you rather boast of, than regret.
’Tis true, regret for past misdeeds is vain;
It cannot bring the dead to life again.
Your sins I must in charity forgive,
Seeing how short a time you have to live;
For certainly the worst results I dread:
You never can get over that Hare’s head.
It was in sooth a most audacious thing
To aggravate the anger of the king!
More mischief to your cause thereby you’ve done
Than in your thoughtlessness you reckon on.”
“Nay, not a jot,” replied th’ undaunted rogue;
“Self-interest will always be in vogue.
Those in the world who live must look to rough it,
And meet with many a kick and many a buffet.

He who would best get on must rant and roister,
Nor think to pass his time as in a cloister.
As for the Hare, I own, he tempted me;
He skipped and sprang about so saucily,
And looked so plump, that howsoe'er I strove,
My appetite proved stronger than my love.
For the Ram's fate I do not care a pin;
His was the suff'ring; mine may be the sin.
'Tis not my worst misdeed by many a one;
My penance otherwise were quickly done.
To love our neighbors we are told, 'tis true;
But most do just what they ought not to do.
What's done though can't be helped; and, as you said,
'Tis worse than useless to regret the dead.
Useless indeed, I think, is all regret;
Save some advantage from it one can get.



“Enough of this! we live in awful times!
No rank or station seems exempt from crimes!
Corruption from the rich spreads to the poor;
Good men the gen'ral ill can but deplore;

And though we dare not speak, we think the more.

“The king himself will plunder, that we know,

As much as any of his subjects do;

And, what he does not take himself, devolves,

As lawful prey, upon the Bears and Wolves.

To speak the truth dares not a single soul,

The mischief may be ne'er so great or foul.

The clergy keep quite silent; and no wonder;

They have a decent portion of the plunder.

If of extortion any one complains,

He only has his trouble for his pains.

If aught that you possess the great allures,

Then may you safely say it *has been* yours.

But few to tales of grievance will attend;

And they are sure to weary in the end.

Noble, the Lion, is our lord and king;

He acts as he were lord of everything;

He calls us oft his children; and, 'twould seem,

Forsooth, that all we have belongs to him.

For let me speak my mind; our gracious king

Loves ever those the most, who most can bring;

And who will dance as he may choose to sing.

The many suffer, though but few complain.

The Bear and Wolf are now in pow'r again;

They steal and rob and pillage, left and right;

And yet find favor in the royal sight.
While each who might have influence is dumb,
Living in hopes that his own time may come.
Let a poor devil, like myself, but take
A paltry chicken, what a howl they make.
They're all upon his back without remorse,
And he's condemned to suffer, as of course.
For those who crimes commit of deeper dye,
No mercy show to petty larceny.
“Such thoughts, I own, have often crossed my mind
When to repentance I have felt inclin'd;
And to myself I've said, in reason's spite,
That what so many do must sure be right.
Conscience indeed within me sometimes stirs,
And says, with that peculiar voice of hers:
'Reynard, why seek thus to deceive thyself?
No good came ever of unrighteous pelf.'
Then deep remorse I've felt for doing wrong;
Deep for the moment, but not lasting long.
Because, look round the world which way I would,
I saw the bad fared better than the good.
Not, as times go, can ev'ry one afford
To cherish virtue as its own reward.
“The people too, save their mobility,
In all their betters' secrets love to pry;

Their faults they will observe and con by rote,
And pick holes e'en in honor's petitcoat.
“But the worst feature of this pinchbeck age,
Which, if my scorn it moved not, would my rage,
Is, that all sorts of public men we see
Merged in the slough of mediocrity,
There will they plunge and wade and flounce and flounder,
Endeav'ring each to keep the other under;
For if one strive, by merits of his own,
To rise, his neighbors pelt and pull him down,
As though 'twere quite agreed that little men
From a dead level had the furthest ken;
That by example might the world be schooled
With what a small amount of wisdom it is ruled.
“In private, too, all paltry vices flourish;
Men are morose and selfish, sly and currish:
Backbiting, malice, lying and false-swearing
Have become matters of familiar bearing.
Hypocrites and false prophets so abound
That truth, save in a well, can ne'er be found.
“If to remonstrate with them you should try,
Quickly and coolly will they thus reply:
'The sins you mention cannot serious be,
Or sure the clergy from them would be free.'
Thus, following those of a superior station,

The people sin, like Apes, by imitation.
Thinking and acting much as Monkeys do,
They often get the same allowance too.
“Truly the priesthood better should behave;
With common care, their credit they might save.
But it quite marvellous appears to me
The slight in which they hold the laity.
Before our very eyes they do not mind
To act in any way they feel inclin'd;
As though we all, like Bats or Moles, were blind.
But ev'ry one, his eyes who uses, knows
What kind of store they set upon their vows.
Beyond the Alps, 'tis said, that ev'ry priest
Holds consort with one mistress at the least;
And what is winked at by the Court of Rome
No wonder should be practised here at home.
The holy fathers, if truth may be spoke,
Have children just like any married folk;
And, with paternal love, take care enough
None of their offspring shall be badly off;
These, never thinking what was their mamma,
To lawful children will not yield the *pas*;
Others they treat with as much slight and scorn,
As they were honestly, nay, nobly born.
Clad in the armor of sheer impudence,

They have of shame or modesty no sense.
Time was, these base-born sons o' th' clergy knew
What was their proper place, and kept it too.
But now they go about as brave and bold
As any lords. Such is the pow'r of gold.
“You see the priest possessed, go where you will,
Of toll and tribute from each farm and mill;
And thus the world is disciplined to ill.
No marvel the poor people go astray,
When, blind themselves, the blind lead them the way.
“Where for that pattern pastor shall we look,
Content to feed and not to shear his flock;
Who the pure precepts of the gospel teaches,
And practises the doctrines that he preaches:
Who, if he suffer wrong, will pardon it,
And turn his right cheek if his left be smit;
Who upon worldly treasures sets no store,
But sells his all and gives it to the poor?
Alas! much readier a priest you'll find
To pride, revenge and avarice inclin'd.
Such set the laity a vile example,
And on all precepts of their Master trample.
“As for their bastards, would they quiet be,
No one on earth would notice them, you see
'Tis but their vanity that we condemn;

For most unjust it were to carp at them.
It is not race that makes us great or good;
Nor shame nor honor come by birth or blood.
Let heralds draw what fancied lines they can,
Virtue and vice alone mark man from man.
The honest priest will ever honored be;
The bad be shunned, whate'er his pedigree;
How good soe'er the sermons he may preach,
Folks will contrast his actions with his speech.



‘What does he for the church?’ they’ll argue thus,
‘He who is ever preaching up to us—
“Be sure you keep your church in good repair,
My brethren, if of grace you wish to share.”
For aught he does himself, while us he fleeces,
The sacred edifice might fall to pieces.’
“In costly fare and sumptuous array
They squander more than half their wealth away.
Engrossed with worldly thoughts, how can they spare
Their time for acts of piety and pray’r?
While the good pastor—so at least I’ve heard—
Devotes his life to th’ service of the Lord;
With modest temperance and sober gayety,

Setting a good example to the laity.

“Full well too do I know the hooded class;

A dirty, frowzy, hypocritic race;

A tribe of prowling, prying creatures, which

Spend their whole time in hunting up the rich.

Adepts in flattery, they reckon most

How they may use it on a liberal host.

If one but get a footing, three or four

Are sure to follow, if not many more.

Who in the cloister only longest prates

Is sure to gain promotion o'er his mates;

Reader he's made, librarian or prior,

Or he may even mount to something higher.

Others, as good as he, are thrust aside;

The prizes so unfairly they divide.

Some pass their time in fasting and in pray'r,

While others sleep or sumptuously fare.

“As for your Papal legates, prelates, deans,

Your abbesses, your nuns and your beguines,

What tales might I tell of them if I would;

Yet little, I regret to say, that's good.

One cry they always have, and one alone;

'Tis, 'Give me yours and let me keep my own.'

But few there are, not ten assuredly,

Who strictly with their founder's rules comply.

'Tis thus the church acquires a doubtful name,
Is brought to weakness, and sometimes to shame."

"Uncle," the Badger said, "I cannot guess
Why you should other people's sins confess.
If they've done ill, what good is that to you?
With your own matters you've enough to do.
Why should you meddle with the priests and nuns?

Sure Mother Church can manage her own sons.
Let each his own peculiar burdens bear;
Let each th' account of his own deeds prepare;
The audit-day will surely come, which none,
Or in, or out a cloister-walls, can shun.

"You talk too much though of all sorts of things;
Scarce can I follow all your wanderings;
I sometimes fear you'll leave me in the lurch:
Pity you did not go into the church.

Great as your lore, you'd there find scope for it;
I should, with others, reap the benefit.
The most of us, I own, are brutes indeed,
And of good doctrine stand in awful need."

Now the court's precincts they approached at last;
Said Reynard to himself—"The die is cast!"
When on the road Martin the Ape they met,
Who off upon a tour to Rome had set;
And both he kindly greeted. "Uncle dear,"

Thus to the Fox, "be of good heart and cheer."

Then questions put he to him, not a few,

Although the state of matters well he knew.

"My good luck seems forever to have fled,"

To Martin then the wily Reynard said;

"Some scurvy comrades, moved by dirty spleen,

Again, I find, accusing me have been.

The Rabbit and the Crow complain, I hear,

That one has lost a wife, and one an ear.

But what on earth has that to do with me?

That would I make them pretty quickly see,

If to the king I could but get to speak;

My cause I know is strong, as theirs is weak.

But still I labor 'neath the papal ban,

A wretched excommunicated man!

There's not a soul, except the prebendary,

Can rescue me from out this sad quandary.

Unhappily, though why I cannot tell,

I don't stand, somehow, with the clergy well.

This and more evils to a vast amount,

I suffer upon Isegrim's account.

"A monk he once became; but one fine day

He from the monastery ran away:

The rules he found too rigid, and he sware

He lost his time in fasting and in pray'r.

I helped his flight; a cause of deep regret,
Which I have ever felt and do so yet;
For naught since then he's done but slander me,
And work me ev'ry kind of injury.
What if I made a pilgrimage to Rome;
How would my family get on at home?
Isegrim then would cause them endless ill;
He'd have the pow'r, as he now has the will.
And many others are there who design
All sorts of mischief both to me and mine.
If from this awful ban I were but freed,
My cause at court were certain to succeed.”
Said Martin, “I am glad 'tis in my pow'r
To do you service in this trying hour.
I am just starting on a tour to Rome;
And may do much t' ameliorate your doom.
You are my kinsman; set your mind at rest;
I will not suffer you to be oppress'd.
I've some weight, as the bishop's secretary;
I'll make him cite to Rome the prebendary;
Against him in your cause will I make fight,
And, uncle, they shall do you ample right.
The doom of ban, reversed shall shortly be,
Your absolution I'll bring back with me,
Your foes their long hostility shall rue,

Losing their labor and their money too.
I know how causes may at Rome be won,
And what is best to do, what leave undone.
My cousin, Simon, has great influence;
For our name's sake he'll favor your defence:
There's Gripeall too, Greedy and Eitherside,
And Turncoat, and I know not who beside.
For I have at the college many a friend,
Who to our cause their able aid will lend;
Or, rather let me say, their aid will sell;
For only those they help who fee them well.
I've sent my money first, for that alone
Will there ensure that justice shall be done.
Loudly they talk of justice, and such cant,
But 'tis your money that they really want.
How crooked be a cause, or intricate,
The touch of gold will make it plain and straight.
With that to find a welcome you are sure,
Without it, closed against you ev'ry door.
"Do you then, uncle, stay at home; while I
Your knotty cause will manage to untie.
To court 'twere best you should at once repair;
Seek out my wife, Dame Ruckenaw, when there;
She's a shrewd soul, and with the king and queen
A special favorite has ever been.

Take her advice, whate'er she recommend;
There's nothing but she'll do t' oblige a friend.
On many a staunch ally you there will light;
Such often help one more than being right.
Her sisters two are sure with her to be,
And my three children, for I have but three;
And many others of our common kin,
Who'll stoutly stick by you, through thick and thin.
Should justice be denied you, send to me,
And what my pow'r is you shall quickly see:
An awful evil on this land shall fall,
On king, men, women, children, one and all;
An interdict shall on the realm be laid;
No service shall be sung, no mass be said,
No Christian grave receive th' unhouseled dead.
The land a heathen desert will I make;
Be of good cheer then, coz, and comfort take.
"The pope is old, nor sound in mind or limb;
But few he cares for, and none care for him.
'Tis Cardinal Wiseacre rules the church,
And crows, as roosted on the highest perch;
To which no doubt one day he may aspire,
For he is full of craft and full of fire.
He is enamored of a certain dame,
Whom well I know, and, if I would, could name.

Her wishes she has only to make known,
And what she wishes is as good as done.
“But many tricks and frauds are played at Rome,
Which to the pope's ears never chance to come.
But no one can get on without some aid;
Friends one must make, or buy them ready made.
Rely on me, dear coz; the king well knows
I will not see you fall before your foes;
'Twere just as well he should remember too
How many kindred claim, with me and you:
For sober counsel, not a family
At court can with the Apes and Foxes vie.
This cannot fail your dangers to allay,
Let matters even take what turn they may.”
Reynard replies, “There's nothing, dearest coz,
Gives me such comfort as your friendship does:
I shall remember it, an I get free.”
Then each the other greeted courteously;
And tow' rds the court, to face his angry foes,
Reynard, with no escort but Graybeard, goes.



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CHAPTER IX.



THE ADVOCACY.

REYNARD had now reached court, and still had hope

With his accusers he might safely cope;

Yet when his num'rous foes he saw arrayed,

All eager for revenge, he felt dismayed;

But, though his heart might tremble, with firm stride

He passed the barons, Graybeard by his side.

Unto the monarch's throne they both drew near,

When Graybeard whispered thus in Reynard's ear:

“Take courage, uncle, for the king is gracious;

And, we know, fortune favors the audacious:

The brave love danger on its own account,

And are more pleased the greater its amount.”

And Reynard answered, “What you say is true;

Sage your advice and comfortable too;

Were you in my place I'd so counsel you.”

With searching eye he glanced th' assembly round,

Where many kinsmen, but few friends, he found;

For at his hands the most but ill had fared;

The Otter nor the Beaver had he spared;

None but he'd played some pranks on, great or small;

Yet with assurance now he greets them all.

And down before the throne he lowly knelt,

And boldly spake, howe'er he may have felt:

“May Heav'n above, from whom no thought or thing

Is hidden, long preserve my lord the king;

And my good lady too and gracious queen,

Whose humblest vassal I am proud t' have been;

And grant you both sound judgment, clear and strong,

The difference to discern 'tween right and wrong.

For falsehood now is rife in ev'ry spot;

Almost all men appear what they are not.

Would each man's thoughts were writ upon his brow,

So that his secret soul the king might know;

Then would it plainly to the world appear

How true and loyal is the heart I bear.

I know the wicked rage together still,

And howl against me, as they always will.

In ev'ry way to injure me they strive,

And of your countenance would quite deprive;

As though I were the veriest wretch alive.

But love of justice is a mighty thing;

None own its pow'r more than my lord and king.

Let men seek to mislead him as they may,

From the straight path of right he ne'er will stray.”

While thus he spake the courtiers round him throng,
All wond'ring at the boldness of his tongue.
His crimes so flagrant and notorious were,
That each was anxious his defence to hear.
"Thou rascal Reynard!" thus the monarch said,
"Thy glossing speech thy cause can little aid;
On thy persuasive arts no more depend;
Thy shameless course at length hath reached its end.
Thy truth and loyalty we all well know,
As witness here the Rabbit and the Crow.
Full is the measure of thy wickedness,
And craft can naught avail thee, boldness less."
Reynard, uneasy at this royal speech,
Feared now the king he might not over-reach,
For he had spoke in terms precise and plain;
Ah! how he wished he were safe home again!
But wishing now could do him little good;
He must get through it the best way he could.
"Noblest and mightiest of kings!" he said,
"Though you decree my life is forfeited,
I fain may hope that you will hear me first;
You've heard but one side, and that side the worst.
When clouds and tempests o'er the State were hovering,
Firm have I stood and faithful to my sovereign,
When some, that I could name, have 'fled their post,

Some who are now esteemed and favored most,
Who bravely take each opportunity,
When I am absent, most to slander me.
Hear only my defence and then decide;
My doom, whate'er it be, I must abide.
“Forgotten is my service to the State?
How I have early watched and labored late?
If of all crimes not quite exempt I were,
Of my free will should I now venture here?
I should have shunned your presence conscience-scared,
Nor my accusers thus to meet have dared.
Nay, the world's treasures, heaped up sevenfold,
Should not have drawn me forth from my stronghold.
Upon my native heather I was free,
And none might touch me with impunity;
But my good Graybeard with the message came
That I was wanted here, and here I am!
I had been counsel holding with the Ape,
How from the papal ban I might escape;
And he had promised to remove the whole
Of that oppressive burden from my soul.
‘I will myself,’ said he, ‘to Rome resort;
Do you, without delay, repair to court;
I'll undertake your character I'll clear.’
Such his advice; he'd own it were he here.

Our bishop knows the truth of much I state;
Five years has Martin been his surrogate.
“And here I find complaint upon complaint;
Enough to wear the patience of a saint.
The ogling Rabbit has, I hear, a case;
Let him stand forth and meet me, face to face!
'Tis a light task the absent to accuse;
But none to hear my answer can refuse.
Scurvy companions are they, by my troth!
My guests they've been, the Crow and Rabbit both.
“’Twas but the morning before yesterday,
The latter tow'rds my dwelling came his way;
He greeted me in passing, soft and fair;
I'd just begun the form of morning pray'r.
He let me know that he for court was bound;
I said, 'Heav'n grant you get there safe and sound.'
He spoke of empty stomach, weary feet;
I asked, 'Will you take anything to eat?'
'I fear I might intrude;' was his reply.
'Oh! not the slightest in the world,' said I.
I fetched some wheaten bread and cherries fresh;
(On Wedn'sdays 'tis my rule to eat no flesh;)
And Master Bunny seemed contented quite,
And ate his bread and fruit with appetite.
My youngest son, a forward little chap,

Suddenly jumped into the Rabbit's lap,
To see if he might chance pick up a scrap.
'Twas rude, I own, but the boy meant no ill;
Children you know, sire, will be children still.
But, making no allowance for his youth,
The brutal Rabbit struck him in the mouth.
Poor little Russell! 'twas too bad indeed;
For the blow made his lips and nostrils bleed.
And then my eldest, Graykin, quick as thought,
Leaped up and seized th' aggressor by the throat;
His game he played and 'venged his brother well!
'Tis thus exactly how the thing befell.
I ran directly that I heard the noise,
Rescued the Rabbit, and chastised the boys.
I do not sympathize with him a jot,
For richly he deserved whate'er he got.
Had I mean ill, I had not interposed;
The young ones his account would soon have closed.
And this is now my thanks! He says, I hear,
'Twas I myself that tore his stupid ear.
A blund'ring tale! I think my pow'rs I know
Rather too well to botch a bus'ness so.
"As for the Crow, he came quite out of breath,
And said his wife had ate herself to death.
Some great fish she had gorged, gills, bones and all,

Had choked her, as her swallow was but small.
The truth he best knows; but the slanderer
Now dares assert that I have murdered her;
May be he did, himself; there's none can tell;
For my own part, it were impossible;
These dingy devils, when they choose to fly,
No spring of mine could reach, however high.
“Those who bring forward charges such as these
Should prove them by trustworthy witnesses.
This ev'ry freeman may of right demand
And on my right I boldly take my stand.
Are there no proofs; another course is clear;
Lo! ready to do battle am I here!
Let both the day and place be now assign'd;
And if a worthy advers'ry I find,
In birth my equal, I'll the combat dare;
And he the honor who then wins may wear.
Such ever was the rule of law of yore;
So be it now, for I desire no more.”
All stood and heard and wondered, Beasts and Birds,
At the audacity of Reynard's words.
The Crow and Rabbit both felt dire dismay,
And secretly from court they stole away;
Nor did they dare another word to say.
They muttered to each other: “'Twere indeed

Unwise against him further to proceed.
Do what we may, no better should we be;
For, after all, what witnesses have we?
The truth unto ourselves is only known,
For with the felon we were each alone.
So in the end the loss on us would fall.
Oh! would the devil seize him, once for all!
And he proposes battle now! To us!
Truly the thought is too preposterous!
So powerful and cunning as he is;
So full of vigor and of trickeries!
'Twould take to face him five as good as we,
And even then he'd beat them easily.”
Both Isegrim and Bruin groaned with ire,
When from the court they saw the twain retire.
“Are any present here,” then said the king,
“Who against Reynard have a charge to bring?
If any such there be, let them advance;
For he stands here on his deliverance.
There were enough to threaten yesterday;
And now their time is come; but where are they?”
Said Reynard, “Ah, 'tis ever the old game;
Those who against the absent most declaim,
Boasting what they could do, would he but come,
When he arrives, stay prudently at home.

These sland'ers vile, the Rabbit and the Crow,
Fain would have brought poor me to shame and woe.
But I forgive, since they are penitent;
Most thoroughly ashamed away they went.
How dangerous it is, you all have seen,
T' encourage those who slander absent men.
They scruple not the truth aside to wrest,
And victimize the wisest and the best.
To others only do these words apply,
Of little moment to the State am I.”
“Hear me!” exclaimed the king, “thou traitor vile!
Say, where is Puss, the gentle and the mild?
My brave and trusty courier was he,
And treacherously slain hath been by thee.
Had I not pardoned thee thy num'rous crimes?
Equipped thee forth to visit holy climes,
With scrip and staff and other pilgrim gear,
Believing thy repentance was sincere?
And thy first act was my poor Puss to kill!
Bellyn thou mad'st thy messenger of ill:
He in thy wallet brought the mangled head;
And here in open court unblushing said,
He brought despatches which you both had framed,
Though he the larger share of merit claimed:
But in the wallet was the head alone!

To make a mock and gibe at me 'twas done!
One though hath suffered for the base design;
Bellyn hath lost his life; look thou to thine!"
"Great heav'ns! What do I hear?" sly Reynard said,
"Puss murdered! Gracious Pow'rs! and Bellyn dead!
O fatal hour! O cursed love of pelf!
Alas! alas! that I were dead myself!
With them the choicest treasures have I lost!
Jewels, such as the wide world cannot boast!
The rarest things by them I sent for you;
For I believed them loyal both, and true.
Of Bellyn who would credit such a thing,
His friend to murder and to rob his king?
Who on this earth could e'er expect to find
Such craft with such simplicity combin'd?"
To hear him out the monarch would not stay,
He rose and tow'rds his palace took his way;
Nor caught distinctly all that Reynard spake:
Determined was he deep revenge to take.
To his own closet did he straight withdraw,
And found the queen there with Dame Ruckenaw;
A special fav'rite had she ever been,
The sly she-Ape, both with the king and queen;
She haply now might do the Fox some good;
For she was wise and wary, sage and shrewd.

Certain was she, wherever she appeared,
To be by all respected and revered.
Marking the angry flush on the king's cheek.
With thoughtful words thus gravely did she speak:
“Whenever, gracious sire, at my request,
You have allowed me counsel to suggest,
Ne'er yet have you had reason to repent;
Nor have you deemed me too impertinent,
If, when my liege was in an angered mood,
A word of warning I have dared t' intrude.
Once more vouchsafe, sire, to extend your grace;
This matter toucheth one of mine own race;
Who would desert a friend in such a case?
Reynard's my kinsman, be he what he may;
But what I think of him I'll frankly say;
Now he is here and stands upon his right,
His cause I view in a more hopeful light.
Had not his father, whose fame still endures,
And who was graced and countenanced by yours,
With evil tongues forever to contend,
And from false charges his good name defend;
But still his foes he baffled in the end.
When thoroughly was sifted the affair,
'Twas found what close inspection it would bear.
Although his sland'ers charged him many a time

With incapacity, as well as crime,
Yet he retained his station to the last,
And, as the Bear and Wolf are now, was grac'd.
'Twould be as well if they themselves could clear
From all that 'gainst their characters we hear.
But of the rules of right they nothing know;
Both what they say proves this, as what they do."
Then the king answered: "Can you wonder, dame,
That Reynard's conduct should my wrath inflame?
My trusty Hare did he not basely slay?
And lead that simpleton, the Ram, astray?
And now presumes in open court, forsooth,
To boast about his loyalty and truth;
When by the gen'ral voice accused he stands,
Of crimes unnumbered as the ocean sands!
'Tis proved beyond the shadow of a doubt,
He breaks my peace and sets my laws at nought.
With robberies and murders, day and night,
My land and lieges doth he vex and fright!
I'll bear no more!" Then answered the she-Ape:
"Not ev'ry one his course can wisely shape.
'Tis hard to please all men, and giv'n to few
Both to deserve success and get it too:
And he who prospers, in his path shall find
Honor before, envy and hate behind;

His foes in secret will his ruin scheme,
When open fight too dangerous they deem.
“And many a time has this to Reynard happed.
It cannot have your memory escaped,
How often to your rescue he hath come,
With counsel sage, when all the rest were dumb.
What fine discernment through his judgment ran
In that late leading case of ‘*Snake and Man.*’
None could decide the issue that was raised,
But he alone: how was his wisdom praised!”
Noble the King reflected a brief space,
Then answered: “Yes, I recollect the case;
But all the details I have quite forgot.
’Twas most confused and tangled; was it not?
I pray you, if you can, the facts relate.”
“Briefly,” said she, “the whole affair I’ll state.
“Two years ago, a Snake of Dragon race
Loudly accused a peasant to your grace.
The man refused her justice, she complained,
Though twice against him she had judgment gained.
The man appearing to defend the wrong,
She entered on her case with eager tongue.
“Through a small op’ning in a hedge one day
The Snake, it seemed, had tried to force her way;
A spring there was before the op’ning plac’d,

Which, as she entered, caught and held her fast.
She must perforce have perished where she lay,
But that a trav'ler chanced to pass that way;
To whom she loudly cried: 'O pity me!
Let me implore thee, sir! and set me free!'
And the man said: 'Well, I will let thee loose;
'Tis hard to see thee strangling in that noose.



Yet ere I do it, thou must frankly swear
From ev'ry mischief tow'rds me to forbear.'
A solemn oath the anxious Dragon vowed,
Ne'er to harm him to whom her life she owed.
Then from the snare the man the Snake released;
All gratitude she was, or seemed at least.
"They travelled on together, but ere long
The Dragon felt the pains of hunger strong,
And in a moment on the man she flew,
Thinking to strangle and devour him too.
With fearful energy he sprang aside,
And 'Oh! is this your gratitude?' he cried,
'Is this the way you keep that awful oath?'
Said she, 'To break it I am truly loath,

But I am positively faint with hunger;
I feel a gnawing I can bear no longer.
I know now shocking is ingratitude;
But cannot perish here for want of food.'
'Spare me a little yet,' the man replied;
'Some people we may meet who shall decide,
Impartial judges betwixt thee and me.'
'Well!' tartly said the Snake; 'so let it be!'
"They journeyed on, till, coming to a pond,
Strongnib, the Raven, with his son they found;
His name was Little Beaky. These the Snake
Begged the abitrement to undertake.
The Raven heard the case with thoughtful care,
And, hoping to himself might fall a share,
Straight gave his judgment that the man be eaten.
'Now,' cried the Snake triumphant, 'I have beaten;
My honest purpose shall no more be crost.'
'Nay,' said the man, 'I have not fairly lost.
How shall a thief on life and death decide?
Or such a case by one sole judge be tried?
I stand upon my right and shall appeal;
A court of four or ten I safe might feel.'
'Come on then,' said the Snake; and off they set;
Ere long with both the Wolf and Bear they met.
The poor man now was seized with mortal terror;

Sure five such judges never sat in error;
A Bear, a Wolf, two Ravens and a Snake;
Well might th' appellant for his safety quake.
The hungry court were soon unanimous;
And the grim Wolf delivered judgment thus:—
'The Snake beyond all doubt the man might kill,
Yet keep her conscience quite unburdened still;
'Twas plain no law necessity could know,
And hunger would release from any vow.'
"Anxious enough the man was, for the five
Had plain made up their minds he should not live.
Then darting forth her forked and pois'nous tongue,
Again the Snake upon the trav'ler sprung.
He leaped aside with prompt dexterity,
Crying, 'Who gave thee power over me?'
'Twice thou thyself hast heard it,' she replied;
'Twice has the judgment been upon my side.'
Then said the man, 'Judges yourselves ye call!
Robbers and murd'ers are ye, one and all!
You and your judgment I repudiate;
King Noble only shall decide my fate;
To him do I appeal; to his decree
Will I submit, though adverse it should be.'
"Then said the Wolf and Bear with jeering grin,
'You'd better try; the Snake is sure to win.'

They thought no doubt that the assembled peers
Would counsel you, sire, just like Wolves and Bears.
Five pressed against poor one, his life to take;
The Wolf, the Bear, the Ravens and the Snake.
The Wolf indeed put in a triple claim;
His sons, Thinpaunch and Greedyguts by name,
Each hoped to have a share of the poor man;
A terrible disturbance these began;
Howling and clamoring in such a sort,
That both were promptly ordered out of court.
“Humbly imploring justice of your grace,
Then did the man begin to state his case;—
The Snake now wished to kill him, heedless both
Of all his kindness, and her solemn oath.
The facts the Snake knew could not be denied, hence
She pleaded, in confession and avoidance,
Th’ almighty power of hunger was the cause,
Which owns no master and obeys no laws.
“Sore puzzled were you, sire, how to decide;
Solution it appeared the case defied;
Hard to condemn the honest man it seemed;
And hard to bear sharp hunger’s tooth, you deemed.
Your council then you summoned to your aid,
Who only more involved the question made;
Most part gave judgment that the man should die,

But gave their reasons too, unluckily;
And these so bad and inconsistent were,
The more they gave the more they 'broiled th' affair.
For Reynard, as a last resource, you sent;
He came and heard afresh the argument;
You the decision left to him alone,
And said as he adjudged it should be done.
“Then Reynard said, ‘Ere I decide the case,
'Tis needful I should go and view the place;
And see the very way the Snake was bound,
When by the traveller she first was found.’
So to the spot they sallied, and when there,
The Snake again was fastened in the snare;
Thus matters stood exactly as they were.
“Then Reynard gave his judgment: ‘Things are now
Just as before the cause arose below;
And neither party can of triumph boast,
For neither now has won, and neither lost;
And, as the circumstances now appear,
The justice of the case to me seems clear:
If the man please to do so, from the noose
The Snake, upon her oath, he may let loose;
If not, then he can let her hang there still,
And go about his bus'ness if he will.
Such are my views: if better here there be,

Impart them; or, if not, use these with me.’
“Reynard’s decision of this weighty cause
Met at that time with general applause,
From you, my liege, and all who knew the laws.
The man vowed better it could not have been;
It even gained th’ approval of the queen.
“’Twas on all hands agreed that fitter far
Bruin and Is’grim were to serve in war;
For they were known and feared in ev’ry spot,
And gladly went where plunder might be got.
Strong are they, big and bold; that none denies,
Yet are their words more bold and big than wise;
And too much of their strength alone they brag,
While in the field behind they often lag.
At home the bravest of the brave are they;
At home too always they prefer to stay:
In sooth the Bears and Wolves eat up the land;
’Gainst their united force there’s naught can stand.
What matters it to them whose house may burn?
To warm them by the flames will serve their turn.
What matters it to them who pine or starve?
While their own meals they take good care to carve.
They gulp the yolk, and leave the shell, and swear
That the partition is most just and fair.
Reynard the Fox, though, on the other hand,

The rules of justice well doth understand;
And if some evil he perchance have done,
Remember, sire, he is not made of stone.
A wiser counsellor you ne'er shall meet;
Hence am I bold his pardon to entreat.
And the king said: "I must awhile reflect.
The judgment I distinctly recollect;
Justice was done unto the Snake, 'tis plain:
Yet still a rogue is Reynard in the main.
Who trusts in him is deceived beyond all doubt;
No bonds so tight but he will wriggle out.
The Wolf, the Bear, the Cat before; and now
Hath he assailed the Rabbit and the Crow;
One of an eye, another of an ear,
A third of life itself he spoils, you hear;
And yet, though why I cannot comprehend,
You seek the odious monster to defend."
"Ah! sire, I cannot from myself conceal
The service he hath done the commonweal;"
Thus the Ape answered; "nor will you deny
How num'rous are his friends and family."
Then rose the King of Beasts and issued straight
To where th' assembled court his coming wait.
Round that vast circle as he cast his eyes,
A host of Reynard's relatives he spies;

To vindicate their kinsman's cause they came,
And in such numbers they were hard to name;
They ranged together close: on th' other side
The num'rous foes of Reynard he descried;
The court they seemed between them to divide.
And thus began the monarch: "Reynard, hear;
Thyself from this one crime how canst thou clear?
By thee, with Bellyn's help, the Hare is dead;
And as a despatch thou send'st me back his head.
'Twas done to mock my pow'r, that well I know;
But Bellyn has atoned, and so must thou."
"Woe's me! would I were dead!" the Fox replied;
"But as you find the truth, sire, so decide.
If I am guilty, let me die, and shame
Fall as a heritage upon my name.
Bellyn, the traitor vile, hath filched from me
The rarest treasure eye did ever see.
To him and Puss 'twas giv'n; and sure I am,
That Puss was robbed and murdered by the Ram.
Oh! could it be but found; though much I fear
It never more to daylight will appear."
"Nay," said the sly she-Ape, "why thus despond?
If 'tis on earth it surely may be found.
Early and late we'll seek and never tire;
Of priests, as well as laymen, we'll inquire.

But, that our labor may not be in vain.
What were the jewels like 'twere best explain."
"Ah, well-a-day!" said Reynard; "but they were
Such wondrous costly things, so rich and rare!
To get them back I have but little hope;
None but an idiot e'er would give them up.
How will it vex poor Ermelyne, my wife;
I fear she'll not forgive me all her life.
For, doubting Bellyn, if not Pussy too,
She begged me not to let the treasures go.
"I would commence the search this very day;
But these false charges force me here to stay;
I'm bound in honor to defend my right,
By the bold ordeal of judicial fight.
If I succeed,—as sure succeed I must,
Since I am innocent and Heav'n is just,—
Unsought I will not leave one spot of ground,
But these lost jewels shall again be found."

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CHAPTER X.



THE SECOND PARDON.

“MY liege!” thus ran the Fox’s crafty speech;

“Before my friends a hearing I beseech;

What treasures let them learn for you were sent;

For though ’twas foiled, yet good was mine intent;

On me the blame falls not, but on the thief.”

“Say on,” the monarch answered, “but be brief.”

“Honor and Faith, alas! from earth have fled!”

With well-dissembled grief then Reynard said:

“The first of these choice jewels was a ring;

Designed a special present for my king.

Of finest, purest gold this ring was cast;

Yet was the substance by the work surpass’d;

E’en the crown jewels ’twould not have disgrac’d.

On th’ inner side, that next the finger worn,

Engraven letters did the hoop adorn;

Three Hebrew words of meaning strange they were;

Few in this land could read the character.

To Master Abryon of Triers alone,

The meaning of those mystic words was known:

He is a wise and very learned Jew,
Skilled in all tongues 'twixt Luen'burg and Poitou;
With stones and herbs is he acquainted well;
Knows of what use each one is capable.
He said, when unto him I showed the ring:
'Concealed here lies full many a curious thing;
These three engraven names, from paradise
Were brought of yore by Seth, the good and wise;
When he, of coming ill to man foretaught,
In Eden's bow'rs the oil of mercy sought.
Who on his finger wears this ring shall be
From ev'ry risk and peril always free;
Lightning nor thunderbolt nor magic charm
Shall potent be to work him woe or harm.'
And furthermore the cunning master said,
Whose finger bore that ring, so he had read,
Should never freeze in winter's direst cold,
And calmly live in years and honors old.
"On th' outer side was set a precious stone,
A brilliant carbuncle by night that shone,
And, with its clear and phosphorescent ray,
All things discovered, plain as it were day.
Great pow'rs too had this stone the sick to heal;
Whoso but touched it free from crime should feel;
Nor grief nor trouble could his mind disturb;

The pow'r of death alone it could not curb.
And the sage master unto me made known
The further virtues of this wondrous stone;
As thus: the proud possessor of the gem
Both fire and water may alike contemn;
Safe from the power of each enemy,
Betrayed or captured can he never be.
If fasting, on the stone he gaze, fourscore
Of foes shall he o'ercome in fight, and more.
The virtues of that jewel can reduce
The strength of poison and each deadly juice.
Hate it at once will quell; nay, e'en will often
The hearts of those you have befriended soften.
"But who could count this jewel's virtues o'er?
I found it haply 'mong my father's store;
And kept it ever sacred for my king:
Myself I knew unworthy such a ring.
Of right it appertained to him alone,
Whose virtues shed a lustre on his throne;
On whom depend our hopes and welfare still,
Whose life I've ever guarded, ever will.
"I trusted also, luckless that I am!
A comb and mirror to that treach'rous Ram.
I hoped that they accepted might have been,
As a memorial, by my gracious queen.

They were, in sooth, most precious works of art,
And formed too of my father's hoard a part.
Covered were they greatly by my wife,
And caused, alas! between us, frequent strife;
She fairly longed for them, she used to say;
But yet I ne'er a single inch gave way.
"Both comb and mirror I, with best intent,
Unto my gracious lady freely sent.
A benefactress kind in her I see;
From evil hath she ever shielded me;
When sland'rous charges 'gainst me were preferr'd,
She oft hath interposed a friendly word.
Royal she is by qualities and birth;
And both by words and works she proves her worth.
None so deserved those treasures as my queen;
And yet their beauty hath she never seen;
And—ah! that I should say so—never will!
To find them now, I fear, is past all skill.
"First of the comb to speak. To fashion that,
The artist took bones of the Civet-cat;
That wondrous beast that lives on flow'rs and spice,
And dwells 'twixt India's shores and paradise.
Dyed is his skin with tints of various hues;
And sweetest odors round doth he diffuse;
Hence do all other beasts his footsteps trace,

And follow him about from place to place;
For they all feel and know, his very smell
Is certain to preserve them sound and well.
'Twas of such bone this precious comb was made;
His rarest skill the artist had displayed;
It equalled polished silver in its brightness,
And e'en surpassed it in its lustrous whiteness;
Its scent excelled cloves, pinks and cinnamon;
For the beast's odor lives in ev'ry bone;
Corruption may his fleshly frame assail,
But o'er his skeleton can naught prevail;
This never knows decay or gives offence,
But keeps away all plague and pestilence.
"Upon the comb's broad back one might behold
A large blue stone engrained with threads of gold;
Where stood in figures, carved in high relief,
The tale of Paris, the young Trojan chief;
Who one day, sitting by a river's strand,
Three Godlike women saw before him stand;
Juno, Minerva, Venus, were they named;
Each for herself had long an apple claimed;—
Though once 'twas common to them all indeed;—
To end this strife, at length they thus agreed:
Paris the golden apple should decree
To her he judged the fairest of the three,

And hers alone it evermore should be.
All three the youth with curious eye surveyed;
'Let me be fairest held,' thus Juno said;
'Let but the apple be decreed as mine,
And riches infinite henceforth are thine.'
Minerva then: 'The prize on me bestow,
And mighty shalt thou be on earth below;
Dreadful thy name alike to friend and foe.'
Last, Venus: 'Why to wealth or might aspire?
Is not King Priamus of Troy thy sire?
Are not thy brethren, Hector and the rest,
Supreme in wealth and pow'r by all confest?
And while their arms still shelter Troy, your sway
Does not this land and foreign realms obey?
If beauty's prize thou unto me award,
Thine the best treasure earth can e'er afford:
That treasure is a woman past compare,
Noble and prudent, virtuous and fair:
Give me the apple; Greece's peerless queen
Thou shalt possess; Helen the famed, I mean.'
To her the apple then awarded he,
Adjudging her the fairest of the three.
He by her friendly aid that lady gay,
The spouse of Menelaus, stole away;
And long did her sweet fellowship enjoy,

Secure within the sacred walls of Troy.

“Carved was this story on a middle field;

Round which, with graven words, stood many a shield;

That whoso took the comb up in his hand,

The fable there might read and understand.

“Next of the mirror hear. In lieu of glass,

A clear and beauteous berylstone there was;

All things were shown therein, though miles away;

And that, by night as plainly as by day.

Whoso upon his face or speck or spot,

Or in his eye perchance a cock had got,

Let him but gaze upon that mirror clear,

And ev'ry blemish straight should disappear.

Who would not, having such a treasure, boast?

Who would not grieve for such a treasure lost?

“Out of a costly wood was made the frame,

Close-grained and shining; shittim is its name;

No worm can pierce it; and men justly hold,

'Tis more than equal to its weight in gold.

The nearest that comes to it in degree,

For its rare qualities, is ebony.

'Twas of this wood, so shining and closegrained,

In days of yore, when King Crompardes reign'd,

A cunning artist framed a wondrous steed,

Of mighty powers and unrivalled speed;

His rider in a short hour's space he bore,
With greatest ease, one hundred miles, or more,
I know not all the facts; but anyhow
A steed like that you cannot meet with now.
"The mirror's border, for a good foot wide,
With exquisite carved work was beautified;
And 'neath each subject an inscription stood,
In golden letters, which its meaning show'd.
"Briefly of each of these will I discourse:
First came the story of the envious Horse;
Who, racing for a wager with a Stag,
Was greatly vexed so far behind to lag.
A shepherd, on the plain, he thus address'd:
'I'll make thee wealthy, do but my behest.
A Stag has hid himself in yonder brake;
I'll carry thee; mount boldly on my back;
Him thou shalt slay, and flesh and horns and fell
In the next market town canst dearly sell.
Mount on my back at once; we'll give him chase.'
'I'll venture,' said the swain, 'in any case;
No harm can come of the experiment.'
So up he mounted, and away they went.
The Stag they saw a little way ahead;
They followed fast, and fast away he fled,
Till the earth trembled under their thundering tread.

Long the chase lasted; but the nimble Hart
Of his pursuers had, and kept the start;
Until at length, relaxing in his speed,
Thus spake, panting, the overweari'd steed:
'Prithee dismount, for I am quite distrest;
Heavy thou art, and I have need of rest.'
'No, by my soul!' the shepherd man replied;
'It was thyself invited me to ride;
I've got thee and I'll keep thee in my pow'r.'
And man's slave has the Horse been since that hour.
Thus evils, which for others had been sped,
Will oft rebound on the projector's head.
'Now further hear, while I with truth allege
What next was carved around the mirror's edge:
How once upon a time it came to pass,
A rich man owned a Spaniel and an Ass;
The Dog was never known to bark or bite,
And was deservedly a favorite;
At table by his master's side he sate,
Fish, flesh and fowl together with him ate;
Or rested in his lap, and there was fed
With dainty morsels of best wheaten bread.
The Spaniel then, who was a Hound of grace,
Would wag his tail, and lick his master's face.
Now Neddy, when he saw the Dog's good luck,

With envy and astonishment was struck;
'With my lord's tastes,' said he, 'how can it suit
To be so partial to that lazy brute?
Up in his lap it jumps, and licks his beard,
As though by such strange antics 'twere endear'd;
While I must toil and travail, in and out,
Fetch fagots home, and carry sacks about.
I wish my lord would think the matter o'er,
And take a dozen Dogs, or e'en a score;
I'd wager, in a year they'd not get through
One half the work that in a month I do.
While with the best his Dogship fills his maw,
Half starved am I, or only stuffed with straw.
On the hard earth my couch has ever been;
And jeered and mocked am I, wherever seen.
I can and will this life no longer bear;
In my lord's favors I will have my share.'
Just as he spoke, his master chanced to pass;
His game at once begins that stupid Ass;
Cocks up his bended tail, lays back his ears,
And o'er his frightened lord curvetting rears;
Brays long and loudly, while his beard he licks,
And strives to imitate the Spaniel's tricks,
Caressing him with hard and lusty kicks.
His terror-stricken master sprang aside;

'Oh! take this horrid Ass away!' he cried;
'Kill him at once!' His servants run in haste;
With show'rs of blows poor Neddy's sides they baste;
Then in his stable lock him up again:
And thus the Ass he was he doth remain.
"How many are there of this self-same brood,
Who, envying others, do themselves no good.
Set these in place or pow'r, and just as soon
Might you feed porkers with a silver spoon.
Let the Ass still his burdens duly bear;
Of straw and thistles make his bed and fare;
Treat him in any other way you will,
The brute retains his former habits still;
And, taking human nature for his guide,
Seeks his own ends, and cares for naught beside.
"Further will I this narrative pursue;
If these long tales, sire, do not weary you.
Around the mirror's border next was placed,
Carved in relief, with proper legends graced,
The story how Sir Tybalt, heretofore,
Eternal friendship with my father swore:
Each vowed to each to prove a firm ally,
And common danger jointly to defy.
Trav'ling along one day they chanced to hear
A cry of Hounds and huntsmen in their rear.

'Hark to those sounds,' cried Tybalt; 'good advice
Were worth, at such a moment, any price.'
The old one said, 'Your terrors, prithee, lull;
Of wiles and shifts I have a budget full.
Let's stick together, nor forget our oath;
And they shall neither of us have, or both.'
(He said this merely Tybalt to console;
He had no shifts or wiles, good simple soul!)
'Bother the oath!' replied the treach'rous Cat;
'Methinks I know a trick worth two of that.'
Into a tree, as fast as he could tear,
He climbed, and left his uncle planted there.
The poor soul stood awhile in anxious doubt;
While near and nearer came that hunter rout.
Then said the Cat: 'Uncle, as you don't climb,
You'd better ope your budget; now's the time!'
Just then the Beagles caught my sire in view;
The huntsmen shouted, and their horns they blew;
Off ran my father; after him the Hounds;
Amid a perfect babel of mad sounds;
Barking and bellowing and bugle-blowing,
Enough to set the very devil going.
My father swate again for very fright,
His fewmets cast, and made himself more light;
And so at length he 'scaped his foes by flight.

Thus by his best of friends was he betray'd,
By him to whom he trusted most for aid.
His life was perilled, for those Dogs were swift;
The hole he fled to was his only shift;
And had he not remembered that in time,
His foes would soon have made short work of him.
“Would of such scurvy scum the world were rid,
Who treat their friends as subtle Tybalt did.
How can I love or honor such a knave,
Who's sinned the more, the more I pardoned have?
All this was figured round the mirror's frame,
With legends fit to mark the moral aim.
“Upon the next compartment might be view'd
A specimen of lupine gratitude.
The Wolf had found a Horse's skeleton,
For little was there left of it but bone;
He gnawed voracious, and, by evil luck,
A pointed fragment in his gullet stuck;
His sufferings were terrible to see,
He was as nearly choked as Wolf could be.
He sent forth messenger on messenger
To call the doctors in from far and near;
But though he promised they should well be paid,
Not one could render him the slightest aid.
At length appeared the learned Doctor Crane,

With crimson bonnet and gold-pommelled cane.

'Oh! help me, doctor!' cries the invalid;

'Oh! help me, I beseech you, and with speed;

But from my throat take out this cursed bone,

And any fee you name shall be your own.'

The Crane of his professions felt no doubt;

He stuck his long bill down the Wolf's huge throat,

And in a jiffy pulled the sharp bone out.

'Zounds!' howled the Wolf; 'you give me monstrous pain!

Take care you never hurt me so again!

I pardon you; had it another been,

I might not have so patient proved, I ween.'

'The bone's extracted,' said the cautious Crane;

'You're cured; so never mind a little pain.

As other patients are expecting me,

I'll go, if you'll oblige me with my fee.'

'Hark to the simpleton!' the rude Wolf said;

'He's hurt me, and yet wishes to be paid.

'Twould seem the stupid idiot cannot know

How much to my forbearance he doth owe.

His bill and head, which both were in my maw,

Unharm'd have I allowed him to withdraw:

Methinks that I should ask for the reward!'

'Tis thus the strong all justice disregard.

"These tales, and others of a kindred taste,

In high relief artistically chas'd,
With legends graved in characters of gold,
Around the mirror's frame one might behold.
Too good for me so rare a work had been,
For I am all too humble, all too mean;
Therefore I sent it for my gracious queen.
To her and you, my liege, I hoped 'twould prove
A token of my loyalty and love.
Much did my children, little dears, lament,
When from their home away the glass was sent.
Before it, they were wont, the livelong day,
To skip about and dance and frisk and play,
And laugh, in childish innocence of mind,
To see their long thick brushes trail behind.
Ah! little did I then anticipate
The Ram's foul treason or the Hare's sad fate!
I thought they both were beasts of honest worth,
And the two dearest friends I had on earth.
Accursed the murd'rer's mem'ry I denounce!
All hope though will I not as yet renounce;
Where'er the treasures are, I make no doubt
To find them still: like murder, theft will out.
Much I suspect that some there present are,
Who know the truth about the whole affair;
Both what befell the jewels and the Hare.

“Full well I know, my liege, what weighty things

Must daily occupy the minds of kings.

It does not stand with reason to expect,

Each trifling matter you should recollect.

Then let me that most wonderful of cures

Recall, which once my sire performed for yours.

“Sick lay the king and dangerously ill;

He must have died but for my father's skill.

Who say then, sire, that neither he nor I

Have e'er done service to your majesty,

Not only speak the thing that is not true,

But utter a gross calumny on you.

“Forgive me, sire, nor deem my tongue too bold.

With your good leave that tale I will unfold.

My sire was known, as far as fame could reach,

To be a learned and a skilful Leech.

All diagnostics of disease he knew,

Judged by a patient's pulse, and water too;

Could heal an injury in any part,

And aided nature with his wondrous art.

Emetics of all kinds he understood,

And what was cool and thinning for the blood.

With skill and safety could he breathe a vein,

And draw a tooth without the slightest pain.

You will not, sire, remember this the least,

For you were then a suckling at the breast.
'Twas when drear winter's pall the earth o'erspread,
Sick lay your father and confined to bed;
So sadly weak that he could not stir out;
They were obliged to carry him about.
All who could medicine were bade to come,
From ev'ry spot between this court and Rome.
Not one of them encouraged any hope;
But all, without exception, gave him up.
Then my poor father they called in at last,
Though not till ev'ry chance of cure seemed past.
He felt the monarch's pulse and shook his head;
'May the king live forever!' then he said;
'Though much I fear he hath not long to live:
To save his life, mine own I'd gladly give.
The contents of yon vase let me inspect,
To see what mischief I may there detect.'
'Do as he bids,' the king said to the nurse;
'Do what you will; I'm getting worse and worse.'
"Upon the mirror's rim was fair engraved
The mode in which your sire by mine was saved.
The contents of the vessel they had brought
My sire examined, with reflective thought;
Then said: 'To save your health is but one way;
And that will not admit the least delay:

Your life is gone, unless, within the hour,
The liver of a Wolf you shall devour;
He must too, at the least, be sev'n years old;
And you must eat it, sire, ere it be cold.
All scruples on the point must be withstood;
The water here is thick and red as blood.'
It chanced the Wolf was standing near the bed,
And with disgust heard all my father said.
To him with feeble voice the monarch spake:
'You hear, Sir Wolf, the physic I must take.
Quick, then, about it! to effect my cure,
You will not grudge your liver, I am sure.'



'Of no use mine would be,' the Wolf replied;
'I am but five years old next Lammas-tide.'
'Nonsense!' my father cried; 'we soon shall see;
For we must lay you open instantly.'
Off to the kitchen then the Wolf was brought;
And out they cut his liver, quick as thought.
'Twas dished up smoking on a silver plate,
And by your royal father eaten straight.

From that same hour he was quite cured and well;
Restored to health as by a miracle.
What gratitude the king, your father, showed;
The style of Doctor he on mine bestowed:
At court none dared this title to neglect,
Or treat him with the slightest disrespect.
Before th' assembled peers he wore a cap
Of crimson velvet, with a golden snap;
His place was ever at the king's right hand,
And honored was by all throughout the land.
"Of his poor son how diff'rent is the lot!
The father's virtues now are all forgot.
The greediest rogues are now advanced to pow'r,
Who only seek for what they may devour.
Int'rest and gain are thought of now alone,
And right and justice but by name are known.
Great lords are those, who servants were before,
And without mercy grind the suff'ring poor:
Blindly they strike their former mates among,
Nor heed the least the ranks from whence they sprung.
Their own advantage their sole end and aim,
They still contrive to win, whate'er the game.
'Tis such as these that on the wealthy fix,
Their flatt'ry choking all on whom it sticks:
No man's petition will they ever heed,

If not by costly gifts accompanied:
By rapine and extortion still they live,
And, like the Horse-leech, ever cry, 'Give! give!'
"Such greedy Wolves as these, the choice tit-bits
Would always keep, as their own perquisites:
When a prompt sacrifice their king might save,
Time for reflection they will ever crave.
You see how, in this case, the Wolf preferr'd
To save his liver, rather than his lord;
And what a liver too! The selfish brute!
For I without reserve will speak my thought.
In aught that danger to the king involves,
What signifies the death of twenty Wolves?
Nay, without loss, the whole tribe might be slain,
So but the king and queen their lives retain.
None seek pure water from a puddled source,
Or from a Sow's ear make a silken purse.
No doubt, sire, you the whole affair forget;
For you were much too young to notice it:
I'm sure though of the truth of what I say,
As though it happened only yesterday.
"Graved on the mirror all this story stood;
For 'twas my father's special wish it should.
Fair was the work and beauteous to behold,
Adorned with jewels, and inlaid with gold.

Oh! for the chance to get that mirror back,
Fortune and life how gladly would I stake!”
“Reynard!” said Noble, “I your speech have heard,
And all your tales and fables, ev’ry word.
Your father may have been both good and great,
And haply did vast service to the State:—
It must have happened a long time ago;
I never heard one word of it till now.
But of your evil deeds I learn each day;
Your sport is death; so all my people say.
If these are but old tales, as you declare,
Strange that no good of you e’er meets mine ear.”
“Sire!” said the Fox, “allow me to explain.
What you have said has caused me deepest pain.
To you no good I e’er have done, you state;—
But not a word will I retaliate:
Forbid it, Heaven! for full well, I know,
To you the service of my life I owe.
“Permit me one adventure to repeat,
Which I am certain you will not forget.
Is’grim and I once chanced a Boar to hunt;
We caught him soon; good saints! how he did grunt!
You came, and much of hunger you complain’d,
And said your spouse was following close behind:—
If we would each give up a little bit,

We should on both confer a benefit;
A portion of our booty we might spare;
And Is'grim answered, 'Yes;'—with such an air;
While all the while between his teeth he muttered,
So that one could not hear a word he uttered.
Said I, 'Sire! have your wish! I but deplore
Instead of one Swine we have not a score.
Say, which of us the booty shall divide?'
'The Wolf!' you then with dignity replied.
Well pleased was Is'grim, and with shameless front,
'Gan to divide, according to his wont.
One quarter, sire, he placed aside for you;
Another, to your royal spouse as due;
The other half he claimed as his own share,
And greedily began the flesh to tear;
My humble part, beside the ears and snout,
Was half the lungs, and that was all I got;
And all the rest he kept himself; to us
In sooth he was not over-generous.
Your portion soon was gone; but I perceived
Your appetite was by no means relieved.
Isegrim, though, just like a greedy beast,
Pretended not to see it in the least;
Continuing still to gnaw and champ and chew,
Nor offered, sire, the smallest bit to you.

But then your royal paws did you uprear,
And smite him heavily behind the ear;
It tore his skin, and swift away he fled,
Howling like mad, with bald and bleeding head.
'Thou blund'ring glutton!' after him you cried,
'I'll teach thee how thy booty to divide:
Hence! quick! go fetch us something more to eat!'
Then I said, sire,—you should not want for meat;
I'd follow quickly upon Is'grim's track,
And I'd be bound, we'd soon bring something back.
And you were pleased to say, you were content;
So after Isegrim with speed I went.
He showed his wound, and grumbled bitterly;
But I persuaded him to hunt with me.
We fell in with a Calf, which we pursued,
And caught him; 'twas, I knew, your fav'rite food;
We brought and laid it at your royal feet;
It was an off'ring for a monarch meet;
You saw 'twas fat, and to reward our toil,
With gracious condescension deigned to smile;
And many a kindly word to me you spoke,
And said my hunting always brought good luck;
Adding, 'Now, Reynard, *you* divide the Calf.'
I answered, 'Sire, to you belongs one half;
That, with your leave, I place aside for you;

The other to your royal spouse is due;
The entrails, such as liver, heart and lungs,
All this to your dear children, sire, belongs:
I'll take the feet, for those I love to gnaw;
And with the head the Wolf may cram his maw.'
Then, did you thus address me: 'Where, I pray,
Learned you to carve in such a courtly way?'
'Yonder my teacher stands, my liege,' I said;
'The greedy Wolf, with bald and bleeding head.
Had I not learned, it were indeed a shame;
For, Swine or Calf, the principle's the same.'
"Thus pain and sorrow did the Wolf befall;
And sure his greediness deserved it all.
Alas! there are too many of the kind;
To sacrifice all else to self inclin'd.
Their constant thoughts all bent in one direction,
They grind their vassals, calling it 'Protection.'
The poor perchance are starved, but what care they?
Ah! wretched is the land that owns their sway!
Far otherwise, mine honored liege, you see,
That you have always been esteemed by me;
All that I ever either reap or glean
I dedicate to you and to my queen.
Whate'er I chance to gain, or great or small,
You surely have the largest share of all.

Think of this story of the Calf and Swine;
Then judge to whom reward you should assign.
But ah! poor Reynard's merits have grown dim;
All favors now are heaped on Isegrim!
All must submit perforce to his commands;
All tribute pass through his tenacious hands.
But little for your int'rest doth he care,
Not e'en content with half for his own share.
You heed alone what he and Bruin say,
While Reynard's wisest words are thrown away.
"But now I am accused and shall not budge;
I know I stand before an upright judge.
Let whoso will, bring forth what charge he please,
Let him bring forward too his witnesses;
And pledge, upon the issue of the strife,
As I will do, his wealth, his ears, his life.
Such were the law and practice heretofore;
To these I now appeal, and ask no more."
"Happen what may," then said the king, "by me
The path of justice shall not straitened be.
Though thou art tainted, by suspicion's breath,
To have a hand in gentle Puss's death—
My trusty messenger! I loved him well;
And mourned his loss, far more than tongue can tell!
How did I grieve when I the Beaver saw

That bleeding head from out thy wallet draw!

His crime the Ram atoned for on the spot;

But thou hast leave to fight the matter out.—

“We pardon Reynard's treasons 'gainst the crown,

For many services which he hath done.

If any aught against him have to say,

Let him stand forth and prove it as he may;

Or by sworn witnesses, or else by fight;

For here stands Reynard to defend his right.”

Then thus the Fox replied: “My gracious lord!

My humblest thanks are all I can afford.

To ev'ry one you freely lend an ear;

And e'en the meanest meet with justice here.

Heav'n is my witness, with how sad a heart

I suffered Puss and Bellyn to depart;

Some strange foreboding of their fate had I;

For, oh! I loved them both right tenderly.”

Thus cunningly did Reynard play his game;

Thus artfully his endless fables frame.

Another triumph thus his wit achieved,

For he again by all was quite believed.

He spake with so much earnestness, in sooth,

It was scarce possible to doubt his truth.

Some with him even for his loss condoled;

And thus once more his sov'reign he cajoled;

The story of the trinkets pleased the king;
He longed to have them, 'specially the ring;
He said to Reynard, "Go, in peace of mind,
Go, and seek, far and near, the lost to find.
Do all you can; more will I not require;
My aid you may obtain, when you desire."
"Thanks, sire," said Reynard, "for this act of grace;
Now, in my heart, despair to hope gives place.
To punish crime, and falsehood to refute,
This is, my liege, your noblest attribute.
Though darkness still the whole affair enshrouds,
Ere long shall light dispel the murky clouds.
The quest forthwith, sire, will I expedite,
Incessantly will travel, day and night;
And when I find the treasures which I seek,
If to retake them I should prove too weak,
Then will I venture that kind aid to pray,
Which you have offered graciously this day.
Ah! let me at your feet but lay them down,
Repaid shall be my toil; my loyal truth made known."
The monarch seemed well pleased to be deceived,
And all the court as readily believed;
So cleverly the Fox his falsehoods wove,
That what he only said, he seemed to prove.
And Reynard's mind was wonderfully eased,

For he was free to wander where he pleased.
But Is'grim could his wrath no more restrain;
He gnashed his teeth, and thus began complain:
“My liege, and can you once more yield belief
To this thrice damned perjurer and thief?
Perceive you not, sire, that in boasting thus,
He but deludeth you and beardeth us?
Truth doth he from his very soul despise;
And all his wit is spent in feigning lies.
But I'll not let him off so lightly now;
What a false knave he is I soon shall show;
Him of three grievous crimes I now indict;
And 'scape he shall not, even should we fight.
He talks of calling witnesses forsooth;—
As though that were the way to get the truth!
They might stand here and witness all the day;
He'd manage to explain their words away;
And there might be no witnesses at times;
Should therefore all unpunished be his crimes;
But who will dare the culprit to accuse,
When he is sure his time and suit to lose;
And from that time forever, wrong or right,
Be a marked object for the ruffian's spite?
E'en you yourself, sire, by experience know,
As well as we, what mischief he can do.

To-day I have him safe; he cannot flee;
So let him look to 't; he shall answer me!"



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CHAPTER XI.



THE DEFIANCE.

THUS Isegrim, the Wolf, commenced his plaint;
Though words would fail his mighty rage to paint;
“My liege, this Reynard is a scoundrel still,
He ever has been one, and ever will.
And there he stands, and dares my wrath defy,
Sland’ring myself and all my family.
My black beast has he ever been through life!
What endless evils has he wrought my wife!
He once contrived the poor thing to persuade
Into a mill-pond through a bog to wade.
He promised she should gratify her wish,
And catch that day a multitude of fish;
She’d but to slip her tail into the pond,
And leave it hanging close upon the ground;
Fast would the fishes fix; she’d soon take more
Than three besides herself could well devour.
Partly she waded on, and partly swam,
Till to the sluice she got beneath the dam:
There, where the waters stood most still and deep,

Should she her tail drop down, and quiet keep.
Tow'rds ev'ning-tide there came a nipping breeze,
And bitterly did it begin to freeze;
She had not borne it long; but, in a trice,
Her tail was fairly frozen in the ice.
She thought 'twas owing to the fishes' weight
She could not move it, and that all was right.
Reynard perceived her case,—the reprobate!—
And then—but what he did I dare not state—
He shall not now escape me, by mine oath!
That outrage costs the life of one or both!
Prate as he will, he'll not impose on me;
Nor shall his lying tongue now set him free!
I caught him in the very act, I say—
It was the merest chance I passed that way—
I heard her cry, the poor deluded one!
Fast was she fixed there, and defence had none.
I came, and with my own eyes saw a sight—
O heav'ns! why did my heart not break outright?
'Reynard! what art thou doing there?' I cried;
He heard me, and away the coward hied.
I hastened to the spot in grief and wrath,
Slipping and slith'ring on the glassy path.
Ne'er had I greater trouble in my life,
Than then, to break the ice and free my wife.

But my best efforts did not quite avail;
She was obliged, poor soul! to tug and hale;
And left behind a fourth part of her tail.
Loudly she howled, and long; some peasants near
Her cries of bitter anguish chanced to hear.
They hurried thither, and soon spied us out,
And to each other 'gan to bawl and shout;
Across the narrow dam in haste they swarmed,
With spades and mattocks, pikes and axes armed;
The womankind with spindles; how they screamed and stormed!
'Catch them and kill them! curse them!' one and all
Thus to each other did they loudly call.
Such deep alarm I never felt before,
Nor my poor Gieremund, till that sad hour.
We saved our lives, though with the greatest pain,
And had to run till our hides smoked again.
There was one fellow,—curses on his soul!
Armed with a long and iron-headed pole,
Who, light of foot, kept foll'wing in our track,
Forever poking at my sides and back.
Had not the night approached with friendly gloom,
We from that spot alive had never come.
And what a hubbub did the women keep!
Swearing, the hags! we had devoured their Sheep.
As they were armed with neither pikes nor prongs,

They tried to wound us with their spiteful tongues.

We tow'rds the water took our course again,

And crept among the sedges in the fen.

The hinds dared not in this pursuit embark,

For luckily it now had grown pitch dark;

So they returned, sore disappointed, home;

And thus we just escaped our threatened doom.

“You see, my liege, how grave was this offence;

A mesh of treachery and violence.

Such crimes your love of justice must condemn;

For none are safe unless you punish them.”

The king heard this complaint with patient ear;

Then said, “Be sure you shall have justice here;

Her rights are ever sacred, come what may:

But we will hear what Reynard has to say.”

The Fox replied: “If true this tale were found,

Much to my credit would it not redound;

The charge is grave; but gracious Heav'n forbid,

I e'er should act as Is'grim says I did.

All I have done was at his wife's own wish:

I don't deny I taught her to take fish;

I told her where they would abound, and show'd

How she might get there by the nearest road.

But soon as ever of the fish I spoke,

With greedy haste away from me she broke;

Without reflection hurried to the spot,
And all my rules and cautions quite forgot.
Then if she happened to get frozen in,
From sitting there so long it must have been;
Had she but pulled her tail more quickly out,
She'd have got fish enough, I make no doubt.
But gluttony, a vice to be abhorr'd,
Like virtue, often brings its own reward.
The heart that never will be satisfied
Must needs oft prove a drear and aching void.
Whoso the spirit hath of greediness
Will lead a life of trouble and distress;
Him nothing satisfies: this, Gieremund,
When frozen in, by sad experience found.
"And thus it is my trouble is repaid!
Thus am I thanked for all my honest aid!
I shoved and strove my best to set her free;
But much too heavy for my strength was she.
While in this charitable act engaged,
Came Isegrim, and furiously he raged;
He had, it seems, been prowling round the shore;
And there he stood, and fiercely cursed and swore;
I never heard such rude and savage tones;
They made my flesh quite creep upon my bones;
Once, twice and thrice at my poor head he hurl'd

The wildest execrations in the world.
Thinks I then to myself, 'It seems to me
My safest course at once to fly will be;
For it were better sure to run away
Than to this jealous madman fall a prey.
And well it was I fled, or, by my faith!
Beyond a doubt I had been torn to death.
When two Dogs fight together o'er a bone,
The victory can but remain to one.
I thought it therefore far the safer course
To flee his anger and his brutal force.
For that he is a brute he can't deny;
Ask his own wife; she knows as well as I;
Ask her, and she no doubt will answer true.
With him, the liar! what have I to do?
"When he perceived his wife in such a plight,
No doubt he went to help her; well he might.
If by the peasant rabble they were press'd,
I guess it happened really for the best;
It cannot but have done the she-Wolf good,
Have stirred her sinews, and have thawed her blood.
'Tis truly infamous, upon my life,
To hear him now so scandalize his wife.
But ask herself; think ye, if truth he spoke,
She would not vengeance on my head invoke.

“Meanwhile a week’s imparlance will I crave,
Means to consult my friends that I may have;
And see what answer it were best to frame,
To meet the Wolf’s absurd and groundless claim.”

“Nothing but rogu’ry,” answered Gieremund,
“In all you say and do is ever found;
Tricks, treasons, treach’ry, stratagems and lies,—
Falsehood, in short, in ev’ry shape and guise.
Who trusts your glossing and deceitful tongue,
For his credulity will suffer long.

This no one better than myself can tell;
Witness what happened lately at the well.
“Two buckets there were hanging; you in one—
Wherefore I knew not—had yourself let down;
And nohow able to get up again,
Of your position loudly did complain.
At morning to the spot I chanced repair,
And asked you what you could be doing there;
You answered, ‘Cousin dear, come down here too;
There’s no good luck I would not share with you.
Get in the bucket and descend with speed;
Of fish I promise you a glorious feed.’

“It was some demon led me, sure, that way,
And made me credit what you pleased to say;
I to your oaths should ne’er have trusted more;

Well do I recollect what oaths you swore:
Not only that of fish you'd had your fill,
But you had even ate till you were ill.
My sympathy my judgment over-ruled;—
Ass that I was to let myself be fooled!
“Into the bucket did I thoughtless get;
And down it went; the other mounting straight;
And we about midway together met.
Astonished and alarmed, I called to you:
‘In Heaven's name, where am I going to?’
‘Here we go up and down!’ you answered thus;
‘So goes it in the world, and so with us.
Nor let it be a subject of surprise;
By our own merits we must fall or rise.’
Safe mounted, on the edge you lightly stepp'd
Out of your bucket, and away you leapt;
While at the bottom of the well I lay,
In sad distress of mind, the livelong day,
And suffered endless blows before I got away.
“Some boors came to the well at eventide,
Nor was it long before poor me they spied;
Piteous indeed was my unhappy state,
As, cold and wet and hungry, there I sate.
Then to each other said the boors: ‘Hallo!
See! in yon bucket sits our ancient foe!

The thief, from whom we nothing safe can keep;
Who eats our Kidlings and devours our Sheep!’
‘Just pull him up!’ said one; ‘I’ll wait for him;
And he shall catch it, when he reach the brim.’
‘He for our Sheep shall pay!’ another said:—
I think the debts of all my tribe I paid.
Blows upon blows fell on me, thick and fast;
A sadder hour than that I never past;
I deemed each moment must have been my last.”
Then Reynard answered: “If you but reflect,
Those blows, you’ll own, had all a good effect.
For mine own part, I honestly admit
They’d not have suited with my taste a bit;
And as the matter stood, you see quite well.
For both to ’scape had not been possible.
To censure me is anything but just:
In such a case you’ll ne’er another trust:
A lesson for the future let it be;—
The world you know is full of roguery.”
“Now,” said the Wolf, “what need of further proof?
From this vile traitor have I borne enough.
Of yet another outrage I complain;
The marks whereof I even still retain.
Through him I got into the worst of scrapes,
In Saxony among a brood of Apes.

Induced by him I went into the lair;
He knew what mischief I should meet with there.
Had I not fled with timely haste away,
Both eyes and ears I should have lost that day.
But with his lying tongue he told me first—
Ah! be that lying tongue forever curst!—
That I should find his lady aunt within:
Dame Ruckenaw I fancied he must mean.
Of me he wished, I doubt not, to be rid,
And grieved I got away, e'en as I did.
He sent me down, the sly and juggling elf!
Into that horrid nest;—I thought 'twas hell itself.”
Reynard replied before th' assembled lords,
Malicious meaning lurking in his words:
“To pity Isegrim I'm half inclin'd;
I doubt if he is in his perfect mind.
If this adventure he desire to tell,
To state it truly would be just as well.
“About three years ago, to Saxony,
With a vast store of booty, travelled he;
I followed; so far truth I recognize
In what he states; the rest's a pack of lies.
And those whose cruelty he now bemoans,
They were not Apes at all, but just Baboons.
With them no kinship have I ever claimed;

Of such alliance I should feel ashamed.
Martin the Ape, and Ruckenaw his spouse,
They are my kin, as ev'rybody knows;
I honor him as uncle, her as aunt;
Of their affinity I well may vaunt:
He is a notary, well versed in law,
Can sign his name, and protests deftly draw.
In what of those vile creatures Is'grim spoke,
Your scorn at my expense he would provoke.
Relationship with them I quite repel;
For they are like the very fiends of hell.
If I then called the old hag 'Aunt,' 'twas done
For prudent reasons to myself best known:
I nothing lost thereby, I fairly own.
Her honored guest, I sumptuously fared;
Or else she might have choked, for aught I cared.
"You see, my lords, Sir Isegrim and I
Left the high road and passed a mountain by.
A cavern in the rear we chanced to mark,
Deep it appeared, and long, and wondrous dark.
My friend complained, as usual, of a sinking;—
He's got a Wolf inside him, to my thinking;
For let him eat as much as e'er he will,
Who ever heard him own he'd had his fill?—
I said to him: 'The inmates of this cave

Will certainly good store of victuals have;
I make no doubt they'll let us have a share;
Most seasonable is our coming here.'
But Isegrim replied, 'Go in and see;
I'll wait for you meanwhile beneath this tree.
Your social talents no one can deny;
You make acquaintance easier far than I.
Go in, good coz; I'm sure you'll be so good
To call me, if you meet with any food.'
He wanted me to face the danger first;
It being more, the dastard! than he durst.
"I entered; nor without a shudd'ring dread
Did I the long and sinuous passage thread;
And what I saw—oh! not for worlds of gold,
Would I again that awful sight behold!—
A nest of ugly monsters, great and small,
And their Dam with them, ugliest of them all.
With long black teeth bristled her frightful jaws,
Her hands and feet with long and crooked claws,
A long and hairy tail behind she bore;
Such a grim wretch I never saw before!
Her swart, gaunt children had the strangest shapes,
And looked, for all the world, like goblin Apes.
She gazed upon me with an evil eye;
'Would I were safe out of this house!' thought I.

Than Isegrim she was a bigger beast;
Some of her young too were as big, at least.
This horrible and hideous brood I found
Bedded on rotten hay on the dank ground,
With filth all slobbered o'er. There oozed a smell
On ev'ry side them, as from pitch of hell.
The honest truth to speak, for I'll not lie,
I felt small pleasure in their company;
They were so many, and alone was I.
With mine own bosom then I counsel sought,
How from this cursed place I might get out.
I greeted them with many a friendly word;
Although such a deceit my soul abhorr'd;
But thought it just as prudent to be civil;—
E'en as I would be to the very devil.
I called the old one, 'Aunt;' the young ones, 'Cousins,'
And gave them tender epithets by dozens.
'May gracious Heaven grant you lengthened days!'
Thus I began; 'and prosper all your ways!
Are these your children? But I need not ask;
Their likeness it were difficult to mask.
I vow my very soul with joy it cheers,
To see them look so well, the little dears!
So fresh and nice do you contrive to make 'em,
Strangers might for the royal children take 'em.

And grateful am I, as I ought to be,
That you should thus augment our family,
And graft such worthy scions on our tree.
Who has such kinsfolk is most blest indeed;
For they may aid him in the hour of need.'
As thus lip-honor forth to her I dealt,
Far different, in truth, from what I felt,
She, on her side, of me made much ado;
Was very civil; called me 'Nephew,' too;
Although the old fool knew, as well as I,
She bore no kinship to my family.
I thought, to call her 'Aunt,' was no great crime;
Albeit with fear I sweated all the time.
With kindest words by her was I address'd:
'Reynard, dear kinsman! welcome, as my guest!
'Tis very good of you, that I will say,
To drop in on us in this friendly way.
From your instructions shall my children gain
The skill how they to honor may attain.'
Her courtesy thus did I cheaply earn;
A trifling sacrifice just served my turn;
Claiming her kin, though she was so uncouth,
And holding back some disagreeable truth.
Most gladly would I then have gone away;
But she entreated me that I would stay;

‘So short a visit surely you’ll not make;
At least some slight refreshment you will take;’
And saying thus, she brought me heaps of food.
More than I might describe, all fresh and good;
Fish, ven’son, wild-fowl, and all sorts of game;—
Much did I wonder whence the deuce it came.
Of all these to my heart’s content I ate,
And heartily enjoyed the bounteous treat.
And even when I’d had my utmost fill,
She kept on urging me to take more still;—
For some there are so over-hospitable,
Would force their guests eat more than they are able.—
A joint of fine buck ven’son then brought she
A present for my wife and family.
I thanked her, as behoved me, for her cheer;
She was all gracious; called me ‘Cousin dear;’
And said, ‘I hope to see you often here.’
I promised all she asked; indeed I would
Have promised anything, as matters stood.
“At length I managed to get safely off,
Without an accident, and pleased enough;
For nothing found I there, you may suppose,
Either to gratify the eyes or nose.
Through the dark gall’ries did I swiftly flee,
And hastened to the op’ning by the tree:

There on the greensward Isegrim still lay,
Sighing and groaning in a grievous way.
'How fares it with you, uncle mine?' I cried;
'Ah! nearly dead with hunger;' he replied.
I pitied him, and just his life to save,
The meat I brought to him I freely gave.
He ate it up with grateful gluttony;
Though now he has forgotten all, you see.
His meal concluded, he desired to know,
Who were the dwellers in the cave below:
'What sort of folk are they down there?' he said;
'And was your entertainment good or bad?'
I told him just the pure and naked truth;
The nest was vile, the inmates most uncouth;
In manners wild, uncourteous and rough;
To make amends though there was food enough:
And if he wished himself to have a share,
He'd naught to do but enter boldly there;
Only he must be mindful truth to spare.
'Though falsehood is almost the worst of crimes,
Truth is not to be spoken at all times.'
This I repeated to him o'er and o'er,
And added sev'ral sage instructions more:
'He who unwisely swaggering about truth,
Has it forever wobbling in his mouth,

Is sure to meet with endless grief and woe,
And persecution wheresoe'er he go;
Others caressed and prosp'rous shall he find;
While he in ev'ry place will lag behind.'
I fully warned him what he might expect,
If he these warnings madly should neglect:
'He who but speaks what others like to hear
Is sure to be respected far and near.'
"These are the very words, sire, that I spake,
Both for his guidance, and my conscience' sake:
But if he chose to act quite contrary
And suffer'd for it, who to blame but he?
His locks with age are grizzled, but 'tis plain
One seeks for judgment under them in vain.
Such stupid brutes on bluntness lay a stress,
And disregard all prudence and finesse;
And, groping underground with mole-like eyes,
Affect the light of wisdom to despise.
The sole advice I pressed on him, forsooth,
Was not to be too spendthrift of the truth:
He rudely answered, 'I should think I know
How to behave, at least as well as you.'
Into the cave then did he boldly trot;
And you shall hear what welcome there he got.
"He finds the frightful Dam within her lair,

Like some old dotard devil crouching there:
The young ones too! With terror and surprise,
'Help! help! what hideous Beasts!' he wildly cries;
'Are these your offspring, pray? Faugh! how they smell!
Worse than the slime-engendered spawn of hell!
Take them and drown them!—that is all they're worth;—
Lest the unclean brood overrun the earth!
An they were mine, I'd have them throttled straight;
To catch young devils they might serve as bait;
One need but take them down to some bog's edge,
And let them hang there, fastened to the sedge.
Bog-Apes indeed! it is a name that suits
Their nature well, the nasty, dirty brutes!
The outraged mother answered with a shriek,
For haste and anger scarce would let her speak:
'What devil sent this bouncing knave to us?
In my own house to be insulted thus!
The vulgar ruffian! My poor children too!
Ugly or handsome, what is that to you?
Reynard the Fox, with fifty times your sense,
A man of knowledge and experience,
Has only just now left us; he avow'd
My young were handsome, and their manners good;
Nay, e'en to call them cousins he was proud.
A short time back, and in this very place,

All this he stated frankly to my face.
If you they do not please, as they did him,
Remember you came here of your own whim;
Nobody asked you, Gaffer Isegrim!’
But he demanded food of her, and said:
‘Bring it at once, or I your search may aid;
I cannot stand your vanity to please.’—
With that he strove upon her store to seize.
Nor prudent was the thought, or wise the deed;
But little did he all my cautions heed.
Upon him, quick as thought, herself she threw,
And bit and scratched him, that the blood she drew.
Her children too were all as bad as she,
And tore and clawed and mauled him fearfully.
He did not dare return their blows again;
But howled and screamed in agony of pain.
He sought,—the only chance his life to save—
With hasty steps, the op’ning of the cave.
“I saw him come, with mangled cheeks and lips,
His torn hide hanging down in gory strips;
One ear was split and bloody was his nose;
He looked, in short, one wound from head to toes.
I asked, for his condition moved my ruth,
‘You surely have not gone and spoke the truth?’
But he replied: ‘I said just what I thought.—

Oh! to what sad disgrace have I been brought!
The ugly witch! Ah, would I had her here!
I'd make her pay for my dishonor, dear!
What think you, Reynard? Have you ever seen
So vile a brood; so nasty and obscene?
I told her so, and surely I did right;
But straight I lost all favor in her sight.
I came but badly off, upon my soul!
Would I had never seen the cursed hole!
Then answered I, 'You must be mad, I swear;
How widely different my instructions were:
"Your servant, dearest aunt," you should have said,—
It never injures one to seem well-bred;—
"The world, I hope, goes ever well with you,
And your sweet darling little children too.
The joy I feel is more than I can tell
To see you looking all so nice and well."—
But Isegrim impatiently broke in:
'What! call that bitch my aunt! those cubs my kin!
The devil may make off with all the fry;
He their relationship may claim, not I!
Faugh! but they are a foul and filthy race!
Ne'er again may I meet them face to face!
"Such were his actions, such was his reward;
Judge then if I betrayed him, good my lord.

He can't deny that what I've said is true;
At least 'twill not much help him if he do."
Then Isegrim replied with wrathful tongue,
His breast with sense of deep injustice wrung:
"What boots this idle war of angry words?
Can we decide our feud with woman's swords?
Right still is right, whate'er the bad pretend!
And he who hath it, keeps it to the end.
Reynard now bears himself as vauntingly
As though the right were his; but we shall see.
"With me you shall do battle; thus alone
On which side truth is marshalled shall be known.
A pretty tale forsooth is this you tell
Of our adventure at the she-Ape's cell;
That I was starving and was fed by you!
But in what manner gladly would I know:
For what you brought me was just naught but bone;
You best yourself know where the flesh was gone.
And there you boldly stand, and flout and jeer—
By Heav'n! but this doth touch mine honor near!
Suspicious vile your false and slanderous tongue
On my good name and loyalty hath flung;
That I, devoid of 'legiance and faith,
Had compassed and imagined my king's death:
While you to him with idle fables prate

Of stores and treasures, at a shameless rate.

Treasures and stores, forsooth! to my poor mind,

Such wonders will be somewhat hard to find.

But what doth most my vengeful wrath arouse

Is the deep shame you've done my dearest spouse.

“For all these grievances, both old and new,

I will do battle to the death with you.



Here to your face do I proclaim you are

A traitor vile, a thief, a murderer;

And I will make it good, life against life;

And thus, and not by chiding, end our strife.

What I avouch, I am prepared to prove;

Whereof in token here I fling my glove;

Thus formally the battle do I wage;

Stoop then, if you have heart, and lift my gage.

My sov'reign liege and all th' assembled lords

Have heard and know the import of my words;

They will assist this trial of the right,

As witnesses of our judicial fight.

But you shall not escape me anyhow,

Until our feud is settled; that I vow!”

Then with himself did Reynard counsel take:

“Fortune and life are now indeed at stake:

For big and strong is he; I, weak and small;

’Twere sad if ill mine efforts now befall;

Vain then were all my cunning and my skill;

Yet will I hope a good conclusion still.

Of some advantage I may fairly boast;

Since his fore-claws he hath but lately lost:

And, in the end, unless his passion cool,

He may perchance be foiled, presumptuous fool!”

Then to the Wolf he boldly thus spake out:

“I stuff the traitor’s name back down your throat!

Charge upon charge against me you devise,

But I denounce them all as groundless lies;

You offer battle now, and haply think

That from the trial I in fear may shrink;

But long I’ve wished this means my truth to prove;

The challenge I accept! Lo! here my glove!”

Then Noble, King of Beasts, agreed to hold

The gages proffered by these champions bold;

And said, “Bring forth your sureties now as bail

That at to-morrow’s fight you shall not fail.

Both sides I’ve heard, but understand no more—

Nay, less I may say—than I did before.”

As Is’grim’s sureties stood the Cat and Bear,

Tybalt and Brum; those for Reynard were
Graybeard and Monkie, Martin's son and heir.
To Reynard then thus spake Dame Ruckenaw:
"Coolness and prudence now must be your law.
My husband, who is on his road to Rome,
Taught me a pray'r last time he was at home;
Good Abbot Gulpall did the same compose,
And gave it, as a favor, to my spouse.
He said it was a pray'r of wondrous might,
A saving spell for those about to fight:
He who, the morning, this should fasting hear,
Nor pain nor peril all that day need fear;
Vanquished he could not be by any foe,
Nor death nor wounds of any nature know.
This pray'r o'er you to-morrow will I say;
Then, nephew dear, be jocund for to-day."
"Thanks, dearest aunt," said Reynard, "for your care;
Deeply beholden am I for your pray'r;
But mostly do I trust, and ever will,
The justice of my cause, and mine own skill."
All night his friends remained with him, and sought
With cheerful chat to scare each gloomy thought.
Dame Ruckenaw, more thoughtful than the rest,
Was ever busied how to serve him best.
From head to tail she had him closely sheared,

And then with fat and oil his body smeared;
He stood all smooth and sleek from top to toe,
That he no grip should offer to his foe.
Then thus she spake: "We must be circumspect,
And on all chances of the fight reflect.
Hearken to my advice: a friend in need,
Who gives good counsel, is a friend indeed.
To-night, whate'er you do, before you sleep,
Of light Liebfrauenmilch drink pottle-deep:
To-morrow, when you enter in the lists—
Attend me well, herein the point consists—
Wet well your brush—I need not tell you how—
Then fly upon your unsuspecting foe;
Lash at his face, and salve him right i' th' eye;
His smarting sight will darken instantly:
This cannot fail to cause him sore distress,
And in the combat profit you no less.
Next must you take to flight, as though in fear;
He will be sure to follow in your rear;
You will take heed to run against the wind,
While your swift feet kick up the dust behind;
So shall his lids be closed with sand and dirt;
Then on one side spring sudden and alert;
And while he stops his smarting eyes to wipe,
Upon them deal another stinging stripe;

Thus, blinded, at your mercy shall he be,
And yours the undisputed victory.
“Yourself to rest now, dearest nephew, lay;
We will be sure to wake you when ’tis day.
But first, as now the midnight hour is past,
Ere yet you slumber, and while still you fast,
Your heart to strengthen, should it chance be weak,
Those sacred words of pow’r I’ll o’er you speak.”
Then both her hands she placed upon his head,
And with a solemn voice these words she said:
“Tiw rof tfo sessap hsir’bbig gnidnuos-hgih!
Now ev’ry adverse charm you may dely.”
They laid him then to rest beneath a tree;
And there he slept both long and tranquilly.
Soon as the morning o’er the hill-tops brake,
The Beaver came his kinsman to awake;
With him the Otter; greeting kind they gave;
Bade him arise, and bear him bold and brave;
And laughing said, he had no need to shave.
The Otter brought with him a nice young Duck,
And, handing it to Reynard, thus he spoke:
“For this I’ve toiled while you were fast asleep;
And it hath cost me many a parlous leap;
I caught it at the mill near Huenerbrod;
Eat it, dear coz; and may it do you good!”

“Gra'mercy for the handsel!” Reynard said,
With cheerful heart as out he skipped from bed;
“So choice a present I would never slight;
I pray that Heav'n your kindness may requite.”
He ate and drank unto his heart's content;
Then to the lists with all his friends he went;
Down to a sandy level near a field,
Where the appointed combat should be held.



artist: carl gehrts.

REYNARD'S TRIUMPH.

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CHAPTER XII.



THE BATTLE.

WHEN Reynard thus before the throne appeared,
Shorn of his hair, with oil and ointment smeared,
The good king was so tickled with the sight,
He could not choose but fairly laugh outright.
“Why, Fox, who taught thee such a trick?” he cried,
“As shave thy hair away, to save thy hide!
Reynard the Fox well may they christen thee,
For all thy life is full of foxery;
No matter how involved may be the scrape,
Thou’rt sure to find some loop-hole for escape.”
Low to the king, with reverential mien,
Bowed Reynard, and still lower to the queen;
Then gayly did he leap the lists within,
Where waited Isegrim with all his kin;
Who prayed the Fox might find a shameful fate,
And showered upon him words of threat’ning hate.
The Lynx and Libbard, marshals of the list.
Brought forth the holy relics in a chest;
The while, bare-headed, stood the champions both,

The Wolf and Fox, and took the wonted oath.
With many angry words and scowling looks,
First Isegrim the Wolf swore 'gainst the Fox:
He was a traitor, murderer and thief;
Guilty of ev'ry kind of crime, in brief;
False unto him and outraging his wife;
This he would prove against him, life for life.
Then Reynard swore, upon the other side,
That Isegrim, the Wolf, most foully lied;
A traitor and a perjurer was he,
While he himself from ev'ry crime was free.
The doughty marshals then, ere they withdrew,
Bade both the champions their devoir to do,
And truly keep the rules of lawful fight;
And Heav'n in justice would defend the right;
The lists then duly cleared of ev'ry one,
They left the champions in the midst alone.
To Reynard though Dame Ruckenaw drew near,
And, as she passed, thus whispered in his ear:
"Remember, nephew, the advice I gave:
My counsel follow, and your credit save."
To her, in cheerful tones, the Fox replies:
"My heart your kindly warning fortifies;
My wiles have carried me through many a scrape,
Through risks of ev'ry kind and ev'ry shape;

Nor fear I but they shall assist me now
To baffle yonder fierce and savage foe.
Shame upon him and his I look to heap,
While all my friends shall fame and honor reap.”
Now stand the champions in the lists alone,
While hushed and still the anxious crowd look on.
Wildly and savagely, with outstretched claws,
With bristling hair, and wide-distended jaws,
Is'grim, the Wolf, the onset first began,
And, swift as thought, at his opponent ran.
The wily Fox dared not the charge abide,
But, light of foot, sprang actively aside;
Nor did he now his aunt's advice forget;
His bushy tail already had he wet;
On ev'ry side this did he whisk and flirt,
And so besmear it well with sand and dirt.
Thought Isegrim, “I surely have him now;”
But Reynard dealt him so severe a blow,
Across his eyes, with his bedaggled tail,
That the Wolf's sight and hearing 'gan to fail.
'Twas not the only time this trick he'd played;
Others this stinging ointment had essayed;
Isegrim's children he half blinded so,
As has been hinted at some time ago;
And now he hoped to blind the father too.

Having to Is'grim's eyes this salve applied;
Again the wily Reynard sprang aside;
And taking care to run against the wind.
He stirred a mighty cloud of dust behind.
This filled the Wolf's eyes, that they smarted sore;
The more he rubbed, they smarted all the more;
And worse he fared than he had done before.
Meanwhile the crafty Reynard did not fail
To ply with vigor his assiduous tail;
Lashing his adversary left and right,
Till wholly he deprived him of his sight,
Faint he became, and dazed, and all confused:
The wary Fox quick his advantage used;
Seeing what tears his straining eye-balls wept.
On his unhappy foe he fiercely leapt;
His hide, with teeth and talons, tore and gashed.
And ever with his tail his eyes he lashed.
While Is'grim, senseless, gropes about, the Fox,
With fleering taunts, thus his opponent mocks:
"Sir Wolf, bethink you well that in your time
You have committed many a heinous crime:
How many a Lamb and other harmless Beast
Your maw have furnished with a guilty feast;
While I have borne the scandal and the blame,
And your bad deeds have sullied my good name;

But your iniquities henceforth shall cease;
And the poor innocents may rest in peace.
A boon as gainful 'tis to you, as them,
Your further guilty progress now to stem;
Your only chance is this your soul to save;
Yet if my pardon you will humbly crave,
And freely own that vanquished now you are,
I will have mercy, and your life will spare.”
He said; and griping hard his foeman's throat,
Again his bleeding cheeks he fiercely smote.
But Is'grim's strength no longer idle lay;
He gave two vig'rous twists, and tore away.
But Reynard at his face once more lets fly,
And sharply striking him, tears out an eye:
A deep and ghastly wound! the smoking blood
Adown his cheek in crimson current flow'd.
“See!” quoth the taunting Fox; “he hath it now;
Avenged am I, and vanquished is my foe!”
But mad with pain and heedless of his wound,
The savage Wolf, with one tremendous bound.
On Reynard sprang, and bore him to the ground.
His saucy courage now began to quail,
His tricks and cunning nothing might avail;
With sudden snap, one of his foremost paws
The Wolf has seized fast in his griping jaws:

And Reynard lay half dead with fear and pain.

While thousand thoughts swarmed darting through his brain;

Then Isegrim with hot and clammy breath,

And hollow voice, thus muttered 'tween his teeth:

“Thine hour is come! surrender on the spot!

Or death, upon the instant, is thy lot.

Thine hour is come! it little shall avail

To scratch the dust up, or bewet thy tail;

To shave thy hair; to smear thyself with grease;

Woe on thee, miscreant! thou'st run out thy lease!

Thou'st wrought me countless ills; told many a lie;

Wounded me sorely, and tore out mine eye;

But now, escape thou shalt not; yield or die!”

Thought Reynard then: “This is an evil hour!

What shall I do on earth t' avoid his pow'r?

Me, if I yield not, will this savage slay;

If I do yield, disgraced am I for aye.

I've earned his hate, for I've abused him still.

With wrong and insult, to my utmost skill.”

Then, with sweet words and accents soft and smooth,

He strove his fierce opponent's wrath to soothe:

“Hear me, good uncle! I with joy will be

Your vassal, I and all my family;

A pilgrimage with pleasure, for your sake.

Unto the Holy Sepulchre I'll make;

I'll visit ev'ry church upon my track,
And endless absolutions bring you back;
Your soul to benefit these cannot fail;
Your blessed parents too they may avail;
Though they may now be in a better place;
Who is there does not need a saving grace?
I'll honor you, as though the pope you were;
The deepest and most solemn oaths will swear,
That I myself and all my relatives
Shall do you homage for our goods and lives;
And suit and service will we yield to you,
More than to our liege king we even do.
"Take then my offer, uncle, while you may;
And all the land shall quickly own your sway:
All that I catch myself, to you I'll bring;
Fish, Fowls, Ducks, Geese and Pigeons—everything!
Yourself, your wife and children, of all pelf
Shall have first choice, ere I will taste myself.
Your safety will I watch with anxious eye,
That harm or danger ne'er approach you nigh.
They call me cunning, powerful are you;
Together what great things may we not do!
What a confed'racy were this of ours!
Wisdom and strength! who could withstand such pow'rs!
To join together *thus* though, but to fight—

That, dearest uncle, never can be right!
This combat I had done my best to shun,
If but it might with honor have been done.
But, as the public challenge came from you,
What, in the name of honor, could I do?
My courtesy I've carried such a length,
I've not put forth one quarter of my strength:
For to myself I said, 'Now, have a care;
It is but right you should your uncle spare.'
Had I but given way to hate or spleen,
How different the issue might have been!
You have not suffered much; if your poor eye
Have met with an untoward injury,
It happened by the purest accident,
For which, with all my soul, do I lament.
I know a simple and a certain cure,
In which you shall participate, be sure:
Or if the hurt be greater than my skill,
You'll have one comforting advantage still:
If you at any time would fain repose,
Only one window will you have to close;
While we, unless we always keep awake,
A double trouble have to undertake.
"Bethink you then, dear uncle; all my kin
Shall kneel before your feet, my grace to win:

Here, in full court, my children and my wife
From you shall pray my pardon and my life.
Here will I even publicly declare,
The crimes I charged you with but slanders were;
That I have grossly lied; nay, I will vow,
That naught against your character I know;
That, for all future time, I never will
Or breathe or think against you aught of ill.
“This freely will I do to soothe your ire:
What expiation can you more desire?
Kill me; and where will be the slightest good?
My friends and kindred will keep up the feud.
Spare me; and think how in renown you rise;
For all will deem you generous and wise.
Prove thus how truly noble is your mind;
Another chance you may not quickly find.
But do your pleasure; for you will, I see:—
To live or die is all the same to me!”
“False Fox!” replied the savage Wolf; “how fain
Thou from my grapple would'st be loose again!
But were the world one lump of fire-tried gold,
And offered here, my vengeance to withhold,
I would not, base dissembler, let thee go:
What value are thine oaths, full well I know.
What for thy friends or kindred do I care?

Their enmity methinks I well may bear.
Well might'st thou at my silly weakness scoff,
If protestations now could get thee off.
Of thy forbearance thou didst boasting speak!
How is't mine eye hangs bleeding on my cheek?
By thine infernal claws is not my hide
In twenty places scored and scarified?
When panting I was worn almost to death,
What leisure didst thou grant to fetch my breath?
Pardon and mercy! That is not the way
That injury and insult I repay!
Me thou hast basely wronged; and my poor wife—
Ah! thou shalt pay the forfeit with thy life!"

Thus spake the Wolf; the crafty Fox meanwhile,
Who saw that nothing could be gained by guile,
Using the other hand he still had free,
Gripped hold of his opponent savagely;
And in so very sensitive a part,
The startled Wolf howled with the sick'ning smart.
Swift then the Fox withdrew his other paw
From the huge chasm of that portentous jaw;
With both his foeman hard and fast he clenched,
And lugged and scratched and haled and nipped and wrenched,
That Isegrim screamed out, till blood he spate,
And brake with pain into a seething sweat.

Glad Reynard deemed his conquest now secure;
Yet, tooth and nail, held firm, to make all sure;
While the Wolf, spent and sprawling undermost,
Stifled and blind, himself gave up for lost.
The sanguine stream in copious currents flows,
Adown his beard, from eyes and mouth and nose.
Oh! not for heaps of wealth and boundless gold,
The triumph of that hour had Reynard sold!
The more his foe grew faint and weak, the more
He griped and pinched and bit and clawed and tore;
I' th' dust the Wolf rolled, with dull, hollow sobs,
Gestures unseemly and convulsive throbs.
With wailings loud his friends the monarch prayed
He would command the combat might be stayed;
The king replied: "E'en so then let it be,
If you all wish it; 'tis all one to me."
Then Noble bids the marshals of the list
To cause the champions from the fight desist.
The Lynx and Libbard quick are at their post,
And Reynard as the conqueror thus accost:
"Enough! the king doth now his mandate send
The combat shall conclude, the strife shall end.
He wills you spare the life of Isegrim,
And leave the issue of the day to him.
If either of the twain should lose his life,

We all had reason to regret the strife.
The vict'ry, Reynard, rests with you; we own
That you right nobly your devoir have done;
And have from all golden opinions won.”
Then Reynard said: “To all my thanks I pay;
And gladly will the king's behests obey;
Too proud to do whatever he require:
Victor! what triumph can I more desire?
But that my cause I may not prejudice
I humbly crave to ask my friends' advice.”
Then Reynard's friends with one accord replied:
“We think it best the king were satisfied.”
And round him gathered in tumultuous flocks
The relatives of the victorious Fox;
The Beaver and the Otter and the Ape,
With Graybeard, wished him joy of his escape.
And many greeted him as friends, of those
Who heretofore had been his dearest foes;
The Squirrel and the Weasel and the Stoat,
The Ermine too, and some of lesser note,
Who formerly would scarcely speak his name,
Kindred with him are now too glad to claim.
In fine, he found no end of relatives,
Who brought with them their children and their wives;
While great and little with each other vie,

To lavish compliments and flattery.
In the world's circle fares it ever thus;
Good wishes rain upon the prosperous;
But the unfortunate or needy man
May e'en get through his troubles as he can.
So fares it now; and all the courtiers strive
How honor to the victor they may give.
Some sing; some play the flute; the hautboy, some;
Some blow the trumpet; others beat the drum;
And his now num'rous friends in chorus cry:
"Hail! happy day of joy and victory!
Hail! conqu'ring hero! unto whom we trace
The honor and renown of all our race.
How did we grieve when wounded there you lay!
How glad we greet the issue of the fray!"
And Reynard answered: "Thanks, my worthy friends;
For all I've borne your kindness makes amends."
Then, while behind in swarming crowds they prest,
Marched onward with the marshals of the list;
And thus with acclamations loud they bring
The conqueror in triumph to the king.
So soon as they arrived before the throne,
The Fox with humble bearing knelt him down;
But the good monarch motioned him to rise,
And then addressed him thus, in gracious wise:

“The day is yours by right of victory;
And from all forfeit we pronounce you free.
With all our barons counsel shall be ta'en,
So soon as Isegrim is whole again:
Then will we judge the cause as best we may.
The matter is concluded for to-day.”
“Your resolution, sire,” with bow profound
Said wily Reynard, “is both wise and sound.
Whate'er be the opinions of the rest,
Yours must prevail; for ever you know best.
“How many here conspired to lay me low,
And lied, to gratify my pow'rful foe!
When I was hardest pressed by Isegrim,
How they all clamored then—‘Down, down with him!’
All to delight the Wolf! for all could see
I stood not in your favor high as he.
They little thought how the affair would end:—
And each of these is now my worthy friend.
“Such knaves are like unto a pack of Hounds,
Whom once I noted in a rich man's grounds;—
For a true story, sire, is this I tell,
Though it commenceth like a parable.—
In groups they waited round the kitchen door,
Where oft-times they had been regaled before,
In eager expectation some stray bone

Might by the scullion's kindness forth be thrown.
A piece of flesh the foremost of the lot
Contrived to pilfer smoking from the pot;
With his rich booty quick he hurried off;
But not, unluckily, quite quick enough:
For the vexed scullion, when the theft she spied,
Flung all the boiling water on his hide.
He kept his booty though, despite the pain,
And his expectant comrades joined again.
They to each other cried: 'Why, only look!
How our dear friend is favored of the cook!'
They cringed to him and fawned in various ways,
And spoke no end of nonsense in his praise.
'All mighty fine!' the scalded Hound replied;
'But ere you judge, first hear the other side.
Worthy of envy you my state may find,
As seen in front; but, look at me behind.'
And saying this his back to them he turned,
And showed his rump naked as though 'twere burned.
Seeing his hairless hide all creased and shrunk,
Great fear fell on them, and away they slunk;
They left him standing there all bare and lone;
And not one ventured back to seek a bone.
"Such is the fate, sire, of the covetous;
They prosper and they perish ever thus:

In pow'r they find no lack of eager friends,
Who fawn upon them for their selfish ends;
With kind indulgence all their foibles treat,
Because their mouths are haply full of meat:
From all they look for and receive respect:
For who will dare the prosp'rous to neglect?
Allies in old and young alike they find,
Until misfortune falls on them behind:
Their enviable lot then alters quick,
Their former friends to them no longer stick;
But right and left fall off, like scalded hair,
And leave them in their sorrow, lone and bare;
Or as that sycophantic pack of Hounds
Forsook their comrade, when they saw his wounds.
"Ah! sire, all humble though he be, and weak,
Shall none of Reynard thus have cause to speak.
I set some value on my honest name;
My friends through me shall never come to shame.
One only mission have I to fulfil:
To learn and execute my sov'reign's will."
"What need more words?" thus did the king reply;
"We comprehend the matter perfectly.
To you as a free baron we restore
All privileges you e'er held before.
Henceforth at court our favor shall you meet,

And at our privy council take your seat.
To pow'r and honor will we raise you up;
And you shall well deserve it, as we hope.
Whatever faults are charged on you, 'tis clear
We never can afford to miss you here.
Of all your peers none can above you rise,
If only you prove virtuous as wise.
No fresh complaints against you will we hear,
No matter what complainants may appear.
Nay, to evince our confidence still more,
We now appoint you lord high chancellor;
And here our seal deliver to your hand;
That what you do or write, throughout the land,
Shall be as writ or done by our command.”
While all th' assembled peers to Reynard bow'd,
And wished him joy with gratulations loud;
Thus to the king he spake: “These honors, sire,
Are more than I deserve, or dared desire.
But by my deeds I'll prove my grateful mind;
For words are, at the best, but idle wind.”
How it with Isegrim meanwhile did fare,
Shall in a few brief words be made appear.
Still in the lists he lay upon the ground,
Faint and begashed with many a ghastly wound.
His wife and friends all hastened to him there;

Tybalt the Cat came with the shaggy Bear;
These to his kin and children gave their aid;
The wounded Wolf they on a litter laid,
Well bolstered round, to keep him warm, with hay;
And bore him, moaning, from the field away.
They search his wounds, and count one score and six;
And Leeches come and bandages affix,
And with rare unguents all his limbs anoint,
For sprained was he and lame in ev'ry joint;
And herbs they rub of pungent qualities
Into his eyes and nose, to make him sneeze.
And they consulted long, and did their best
To calm his friends and give their patient rest.
He slept at length, but not as they could wish;
His slumbers were disturbed and feverish;
And when he woke, 'twas with a burning brain,
Unto a mingled sense of shame and pain.
So poignant and so deep his feelings were,
He howled aloud with anguish and despair.
And Gieremund, his all but widowed wife,
Watched o'er the ebb and flow of her lord's life;
His sufferings stirred up all her sympathies,
And with her sobs and groans she answered his;
And looking at her own and children's doom,
She saw the future shrouded o'er with gloom;

And no bright prospects in the distance loom.
But Reynard's friends loud songs of triumph raise,
Till he is almost tired of his own praise.
In highest spirits then he left the court;
The king had granted him a brave escort;
And, when he took his leave, was pleased to say:
"We trust you will not long remain away."
Then did the Fox before the monarch kneel,
Saying: "Ah! could I speak the thanks I feel
To you, sire, and my gracious lady dear,
And, I may add, to everybody here!
May Heav'n eternal blessings on you shower;
Would to confer them were but in my power.
"And now with grateful, though with humble heart,
I crave your kind permission to depart;
And to my wife and children home return,
Who still with anxious tears my absence mourn."
"Depart in peace!" replied the mighty king;
"And fear not any man or any thing."
So Reynard left with all his kin; two score
There were who with him journeyed, if not more.
All full of triumph and of joy they are,
And in their kinsman's glory hope to share.
While he himself his transports no way veils;
But stalks as proud as though he had two tails;

To think he'd won such honor by sheer wit,
And how the bravest use to make of it.
"This realm henceforth (thus to himself thought he)
On true Fox principles shall governed be,
By members only of my family.
A certain truth the world may thus behold,
How much more wisdom is of worth than gold."
Thus he, with all his friends as an escort,
Reached Malepartus, his domestic fort.
He thanked them for the sympathy they'd shown,
When he in peril's hour had stood alone;
And promised all their kindness to repay:
Then they departed, and went each his way.
His dwelling then he entered, where he found
His wife and children haply safe and sound.
How Ermelyne rejoiced to see her lord
To her fond arms alive and well restor'd!
And earnestly she prayed him to relate
By what good chance he 'scaped his threatened fate.
Reynard replied: "It was not chance, dear wife,
But skill and cunning that have saved my life.
Again with Noble reconciled am I;
Ne'er in his favor have I stood so high.
He's called me to his council as of yore,
And in full court has named me chancellor;

Has given into my keeping the great seal;
And henceforth I shall rule the commonweal.
“The Wolf have I in battle overcome;
In future are his lips forever dumb;
Wounded he lies, disabled and disgraced;
My marks of vengeance on him have I placed.
Her streams of sorrow may his wife unsluice;
Henceforth her husband is of little use.
But nothing shall I grieve on that account;
Vanquished is he, and I, lord paramount.
Be of good cheer, then, love; for happy hours
The future hath in store for us and ours.”
Great was the vixen's gladness; while her boys
Their sire half deadened with their frantic joys.
They frisked and sprang about on ev'ry side;
“O happy day! O joyful hour!” they cried;
“Who upon earth so fortunate as we?
For honored through our father shall we be.
Our enemies we now may set at naught,
And have it our own way, as Foxes ought.”
Now Reynard lives in honor and in state;
Then let us all his wisdom imitate;
Eschew the evil and select the good:
This moral points our tale, when understood.
The truth with fables hath the poet mixed,

That virtue in your hearts may be infix'd;
And you who purchase and peruse this poem
May see the ways o' th' world, and learn to know 'em;
As it has been, is now, and aye will be.—
Here then ends Reynard's life and history;
And with a bow we here lay down our pen.
The Lord preserve us evermore. Amen!

