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Gilbert Norwood.

THE
DRAMATIC AND POETICAL WORKS
OF
WESTLAND MARSTON.

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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OF
WESTLAND MARSTON.



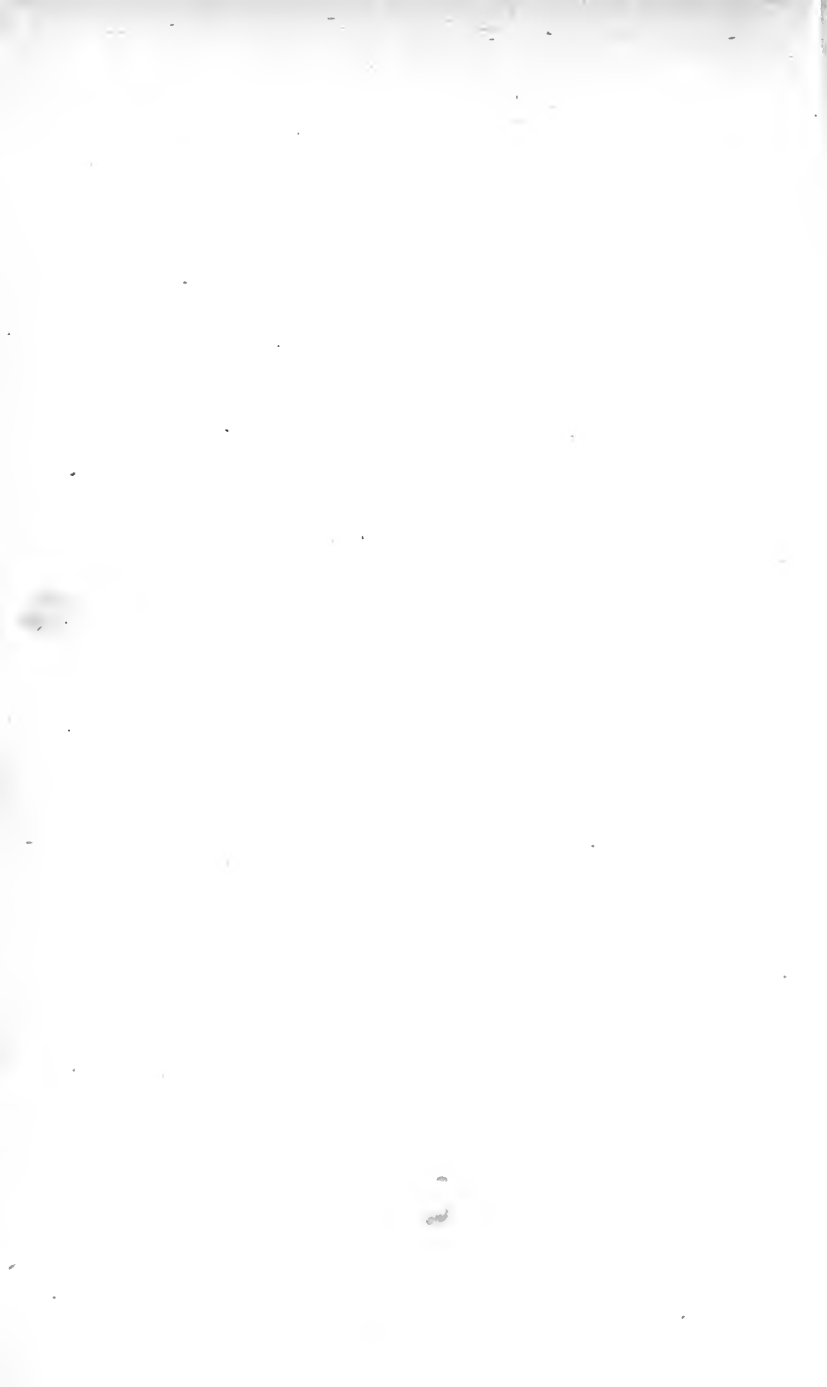
IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

COLLECTIVE EDITION.

London:
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY.
1876.

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*These poor fruits of many years
are offered
to the Memory of one
who had the best claim to any tribute of mine.*



P R E F A C E.

OF the plays included in these volumes, three, though already performed, are now printed for the first time; these are the serious drama entitled "Life for Life," and the comedies of "A Favourite of Fortune" and "Donna Diana." Amongst the dramatic fragments and poems, the scene from "Montezuma," "A Lost Life," "A Dream-Journey," and about half of the Sonnets, have also been hitherto unpublished. The work generally has received careful revision. In the case of one or two plays, that of "Strathmore" especially, considerable alteration has been made, with a view of concentrating action, and giving fuller development to character.

After the lapse of many years since its production, a brief reference may be made to the "Patrician's Daughter," the earliest work of the writer. It would ill become him to forget the generous reception accorded on the whole to that early production, though from the political elements involved in the plot, and from the fact that the action was placed in the very period represented, it was the not unnatural fate of the drama

to excite much controversy, and in some quarters keen hostility. The end proposed was simply to exhibit, as impartially as might be, the conflict between the pride of Aristocracy and that of Democracy, with the evils resulting from their collision. There were not wanting, however, those who sought to identify the dramatist with his "Radical" hero; while some, on the other hand, were found to reproach him with a Tory bias. A little reflection, however, would have shown that if it had been intended to hold up Mordaunt's conduct for approval, he would hardly have been visited with the retribution which befell him at the close. However warmly the writer might have espoused the doctrine that claims derived from human qualities outweigh those of accident and convention, it might have been thought obvious that he had given no sanction to the retaliation (though not unprovoked) by which Mordaunt asserts the doctrine. The hero of the piece, indeed, is clearly represented as a man who, deluded by the sophistry of wounded pride, has unconsciously indulged a passion in the belief that he was vindicating a principle. To one charge, however, that of revenging himself upon his betrothed, this much-erring Mordaunt may fairly plead—Not guilty. It is against the Patrician House, which has wronged and humiliated him—against the daughter of that house—that his retaliation is levelled.

The language of the play clearly shows that Mordaunt

regards Mabel in the proposed marriage as the victim of her father's selfish policy, and conceives that he frees her from a hateful tie by rejecting her alliance. Still, words which suffice for the reader of a drama, will sometimes escape the spectator ; the motives which influence Mordaunt in the fourth act have therefore now received fuller exposition. It may also be borne in mind that the play represents a period when the fierce class animosities excited by the first Reform Bill had by no means subsided.

Passing to the tragedy of "Marie* de Méranie," it should be stated that although some of the most stirring events of a stirring reign are there introduced, much of the domestic interest springs solely from the writer's invention. It is true, for instance, that Philip Augustus forestalled, from motives of outraged pride, the decision of the Church on his marriage ; true, also, that his voluntary repudiation of Marie de Méranie was cruel in its selfish policy. But it is right to say that the dishonouring proposals which he addresses to her in the fourth act have no historical basis, and that the unfavourable light thrown, for the purposes of the story, upon Ingerburge of Denmark (a lady of whom little is known) is equally without warrant.

The exciting struggles of the period are used chiefly to frame a mental interest. It is less the astute politician,

* This lady is by some writers called Agnes ; but *nomine Mariam* are the express words of Rigord.

than the Philip capable of the noblest and most benevolent impulses, yet weak, and even cruel, before his ambition, that is here sought to be portrayed. Marie, who may be said to impersonate for the King the ideal to which his "divided nature" vainly aspires, is purely a creature of the imagination. In a work of this kind the licence* always accorded in a measure to dramatic poets may perhaps be claimed with some confidence.

Some other plays in this collection,† though based on public events, are in their details the mere "coinage of the brain;" their connection with history is too slight to need comment.

So many years have elapsed, so many changes transpired, since some of these dramas saw the light, that the original dedications, if now reprinted, would in some cases be mournful in their suggestiveness; in others even inappropriate. The author, however, may still record the connection with his works of distinguished friends

* As a further example of this licence, I may refer to the independent attitude given in the tragedy to the Bishop of Paris, in order to depict the ecclesiastical domination of the period; though in point of fact nothing could have been more servile than the attitude of the clergy towards the King previous to the interdict.

† Some misconception having prevailed on the point, it may be desirable to state that the acting right in all the following dramas (with some reservations affecting "The Wife's Portrait" and "Borough Politics") is the exclusive property of the author.

and contemporaries, some of whom were his associates in dramatic art. "Strathmore" was inscribed to Sir William Allan, late President of the Royal Scottish Academy; "The Patrician's Daughter" to Mr Macready; "Marie de Méranie" to Miss Helen Faucit; "Anne Blake" to Mr and Mrs Charles Kean; "A Life's Ransom" to Dr Forbes Winslow; "The Heart and the World" to Mr Sheridan Knowles; and the dramatic poem entitled "Gerald" to the late Mr Charles Dickens. The two latter efforts were, it must be confessed, too immature to justify reproduction; they are represented in these pages only by a few extracts.

W. M.

LONDON, *January* 1876.



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1721

STRATHMORE;

OR,

LOVE AND DUTY.

A Tragedy,

IN FOUR ACTS.

Strathmore.

*First performed at the THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, 20th of
June 1849.*

CHARACTERS.

SIR RUPERT LORN, <i>a Loyalist,</i>	.	.	Mr H. HUGHES.	
HENRY LORN, <i>his son,</i>	.	.	Mr H. VANDENHOFF.	
HALBERT STRATHMORE, <i>a gentleman of loyal family,</i>	.	.	Mr CHARLES KEAN.	
JOHN BALFOUR, <i>of Burley,</i>	}	<i>insurgent Covenanters,</i>	{	
ROBERT HAMILTON,				Mr ROGERS.
CRAIGBURN,				Mr STUART.
BRYCEFIELD, <i>an English gentleman of decayed fortunes, in league with the Covenanters,</i>	.	.	Mr HOWE.	
ROLAND, <i>his servant,</i>	.	.	Mr BUCKSTONE.	
ALLAN, <i>servant to Hamilton,</i>	.	.	Mr COE.	
KEITH, <i>an aged minister,</i>	.	.	Mr BLAND.	
ROBERT,	}	<i>retainers of Sir Rupert,</i>	{	
SIMON,				Mr CAULFIELD.
			Mr BRINDAL.	
<i>Other Retainers, Soldiers, Covenanters.</i>				

KATHARINE LORN, <i>betrothed to Strath- more,</i>	.	.	Mrs CHARLES KEAN.
ISABEL LORN, <i>wife of Henry Lorn,</i>	.	.	Miss REYNOLDS.'
JANET, <i>her maid,</i>	.	.	Mrs FITZWILLIAM.

Scene, Scotland. Time, 1679.

STRATHMORE.

—o—

ACT I., SCENE I.

A room in HAMILTON'S country house, near the mountains.

CRAIGBURN, BRYCEFIELD, and HAMILTON discovered.

Bryce. The night is bitter.

Ham. Heap the fagots higher,
Let's have a glow as fierce as the brave hearts
That kindle at the stroke of wrong, to fire !

Craig. Was that the tramp of horse ?

Bryce. No ; but the roar
Of the swoll'n torrent in the pausing wind.

Ham. How long, just Heaven, wilt Thou forbear to smite
These sons of Belial ? In the book of time
No page of bloody tyranny is writ
More foul than theirs. Our people hunted down,
Put to the sword, or from the cruel rack-
Borne to the scaffold ! Why ? Because they cleave
To Scotland's ancient faith, and will not brook
The claim of England's Church to bind their souls.

Craig. Woe to these wolves of Edom ! Double woe
To this licentious king, who desolates
The sanctuary he swore to spare !

Bryce. To spare !
Nay, to defend. But what to Charles are oaths ?

False to his friend as to his land, what boon
 Requites the wealth my father lost for his?
 Our home, seized by his foes, Charles repossess'd
 But not restored. A wanton and a flatterer
 Divide our fief between them!

Ham. Peace, John Brycefield!
 Too much thou broodest on a private wrong,
 Too little on a suffering Church.

Bryce. My injuries
 Are warrant for my truth. [*A distant report of carbines.*
 Ah! now your ears,
 That was no brawl of rivers. [*Another and nearer volley.*
 There again!

Mars, sirs, is up! I've known his strain from boyhood.

Ham. Put by this heathenish lingo.

Bryce. Heathen names
 Consort with heathen deeds. The ring of hoofs—
 They come!

Ham. [*Drawing.*] Then death to him who enters first!

Craig. Too hasty, Robert! What are cloaks for?

See! [*He snatches his cloak, and conceals his sword
 under it; the rest do the like.*

Bryce. The tramp grows fainter—now it dies away;
 They hawk at other quarry.

Ham. Footsteps!

[*A low knocking is heard at door, and twice repeated.*

Craig. Hist!

'Tis Allan's signal. Quick! unbar the door.

[*BRYCEFIELD opens the door, and admits JOHN BAL-
 FOUR of Burley, and ANDREW KEITH.*

Ham. Burley!

Bur. The same.

Ham. [*Giving his hand.*] You're welcome, and your
 comrade—

What, Andrew Keith! More outrage!

Bur. [*To KEITH.*] Speak thou, pastor,
 And be thy speech the trumpet which proclaims
 The pouring forth of vials.

Keith. To the vale
 Our scatter'd children, eager for the food
 Which more than bread sustains, their footsteps bent ;
 A strain of supplication blent with praise
 Rose with one voice from hundreds, when a cry
 Rang from the hills—"The foe!—the oppressor!—hence!"
 Unarmed, we fled ; but malice, swifter far
 Than love of life, pursued. From throats of fire
 The deadly missile leapt. Some sank in flight :
 Others with upraised hands, whose happy souls
 O'ertook their mounting prayers. Then midst our band
 Plunged the destroyers. With fierce yells they cried,
 "The Test, the Test!" The lifted sabre fell
 On all who spurned that oath ; the goodly youth—
 The old man's prop—dropped from him and expired ;
 The mother's arm, locked round her boy, relaxed,
 And left the orphan to the orphan's God !

Ham. And how escaped you ?

Keith. Their impetuous haste
 O'erleaped the spot I stood on, and the thirst
 Of carnage drove them onwards. When they passed
 Ey the ravine, I sought for shelter here,
 And so encountered Burley.

Ham. Have we hearts,
 And hands, and bear this ? Shall no blow be struck
 To tell the oppressors we are men ?

Craig. There shall :
 But yet be wary, learn our strength. How stand we ?

Bur. Hundreds await my signal, humble folk
 The most part ; but in resolution fixed,
 By trial bred to patience. Most we need
 Wealth and high names to aid ; and yet I count
 On Cochrane, Mowbray, Hume, and you methinks

[*To HAMILTON.*

A convert pledged whose aid outweighs them all.

Craig. Whom ?

Bur. Halbert Strathmore.

Craig. Strathmore ! are you mad ?

You never broke this enterprise to him !

Ham. I did—why not ?

Craig. He's of a line whose boast
Is fealty to the Stewart—the near friend
Of that malignant Rupert Lorn, betrothed
Unto his daughter !

Ham. Grant this, and then add
What Strathmore is himself. I know him best,
So best can speak him—generous, firm, and just.

Keith. My much-loved pupil
While he was yet a child. He still hath been
Temperate and mild, and though by birth allied
To the oppressors, oft hath curb'd their hate.

Bur. What answer made he ?

Ham. That he needed time
And thought for his decision. In deep strife
'Twas plain his spirit travailed. Custom, name,
The ties of kindred and of love—that sense
Of nearer kin than blood—together leagued
Against his struggling conscience.

Bryce. Of such war,
Too clear the issue. Strathmore will disown us,
Perhaps betray.

Ham. Betray ! You think of Brycefield
And speak of Strathmore. [*A low knocking, as before.*
Allan ! Hush ! [*He admits ALLAN.*
Your news ?

Allan. A messenger from Strathmore ; he brings
letters. [*He goes out.*

Ham. From Strathmore ! Did you heed ? He has
decided :
The issue shall condemn, or free me. Come,
Our frugal meal is spread ; while that recruits
Our bodily strength, I trust for news shall fire
Our souls with hope and vigour !

Keith. Peace prevail
If peace consist with duty.

[*All go out but BRYCEFIELD, who lingers behind.*

Bryce. So, so, friends,
 'Tis thus ye guerdon service! Hamilton
 Distrusts and taunts me; Craighburn just endures;
 The vengeance that I bear to ingrate Charles
 Had need be deep, that I should brook these taunts
 And write my soldier name upon the list
 Of these fierce bigots. Yet, will I be true
 For my own ends. Oh, bitter curse when pride
 Is slave to want, and crawls; but crawls to climb!
[He goes out.]

SCENE II.

A spacious apartment in Lorn Castle.

KATHARINE LORN *seated at embroidery; on the opposite side,* ISABEL. HENRY LORN *stands by his wife's chair.* SIR RUPERT *paces the room in thought.*

Hen. And you knew Grammont?

Isa. The dear Count! These eyes
 Have brightened in his glance, this hand has lain
 Within his own a good half-hour—don't frown;
 We danced together at the Court, the dance,
 That dear cotillon! *[Rising as if to practise it.]* I've
 quite lost the step.

'Twas said in London I'd a well-turned foot;
 It did look fairly in tight amber hose,
 With sky-blue cloaks. Ah me! I dance not now!
 And what's the worth of a fine instep here,
 With no one to admire it but one's husband?
 London, rare London! Oh, what days, what nights,
 What dresses, what gallants! Think—Buckingham,
 Rochester, Robert Sydney, Jermyn, Russell,
 The peerless Hamilton!

Hen. *[Laughing.]* Add fifty more,
 And ask if all be worth one husband, Bell;
 Am I not constant to thee?

Isa. Yes, in sooth.
Your love's the proper pattern ; but one dress
Makes not a wardrobe.

Hen. Jilt !

Isa. I wore my lovers
Even as my robes—a change for every mood.
To-day I put on scarlet—in a soldier ;
A courtier—for my purple velvet, next ;
The third, a skirt of spangles—in a wit.
You frown again ! nay, love, for common wear
There's nought like that drab constancy of thine !
You'll not be angry ?

Hen. Can I, when you smile ?
Oh, what a vassal is this despot—man,
Ru'd by a smile, his sceptre but the sign
Of an imperial slave !

Isa. That's the true faith
Which, prythee Kate, teach Strathmore when you wed.
Dost mark me, girl ? He has long been a truant,
And must be punished.

Kath. [*Looking up.*] Punished ! That might make him
Still more the truant.

SIR RUPERT *appears at door at back.*

Isa. Well, you bear it meekly !

Kath. Bear what ?

Isa. His absence, which in other maids
Would waken doubt.

Kath. Doubt ! Do we doubt the sun
When he is absent ? Know we not he shines,
Though unbeheld awhile, and will return
In his bright course, to cheer us ? So will Strathmore !

Sir R. [*Coming forward and breaking in.*] Heaven grant
it, and in time to save his honour !
Myself, your brother—all true hearts go forth
To serve the king, while only Halbert Strathmore,
The royal trumpet sounding in his ear,
Forbears a soldier's answer.

Hen. Pardon, sir !
You judge my friend too harshly.

Isa. So I think.
Strathmore's of noble lineage, and in him
Sedition were more treason to his blood
Than to his monarch.

Sir R. So it should be. Yet,
He shows too fair a front to schism, hints
At mediation and redress—redress
For this base swarm of canters gendering wrong
From their own spleen to charge it on the law !
Oh, I'd redress them !

Hen. I own Strathmore lenient,
But not disloyal.

Sir R. What withholds him, then,
From us—from me, his father's friend—from her
His late betrothed ? She is the fairest shoot
Of this rude trunk ; yet would I rather blight
Should canker root and bough, than see one leaf
Plucked for a traitor's garland.

Isa. Katharine,
You love this man ; defend him !

Kath. You have said
I love him.

Isa. Well ?

Kath. That's my defence. I'll not
Assert in words the truth on which I've cast
The stake of life ! I love him, and am silent.

Sir R. These doubts torment me. He, brave Strath-
more's son !
I'll to his house at daybreak, and extort
His hidden purpose.

STRATHMORE enters behind, unperceived.

I'll be answered ; nought
Shall serve but yes or no. Speak, Strathmore—thus
Will I demand him—friend or foe ? true man,
Or recreant ? You shall not evade me, Strathmore !

Strath. [*Coming forward.*] And did I ever? You'll not take my hand?

Sir R. First tell me, can it grasp a sword?

Strath. [*After a moment's pause.*] It can,
When duty bids it.

Hen. Ah, I said so.

[*KATHARINE rushes up to STRATHMORE.*]

Strath. Wait,

Wait, Katharine! I said I never stooped
To subterfuge, nor will I. What is duty?

Sir R. We owe it first to Heaven; next to the powers
Which Heaven ordains on earth.

Strath. When these conflict—
The earthly with the heavenly—where points duty?

Sir R. Serve you the king?

Strath. I'd shed my blood to guard him.

Sir R. Your father did.

Strath. I'd guard his life, but still more guard his justice.

When cruel impious men in the king's name,
As I believe without his gracious will,
Slaughter his subjects for no crime but this,
That they would worship Heaven as conscience prompts,
I hold him loyal who takes heart to say—

“This blot on the king's honour goes no further.”

Sir R. Enough, you stand a traitor by my hearth,
And yet I draw not! Sir, I cannot pledge
This temperance long; the path of safety's there.

[*Pointing to the door.*]

Strath. He who has dared your anger and her grief
Can meet all after-perils.

Hen. Strathmore—friend,
You are deluded: these mad hypocrites
Provoke their fate. The Government exacts
No heavy tribute—a mere change of form
And ritual in the Church. How little then
Submission costs.

Strath. It costs no gold, no sweat

Of brow, no toil of limb. It costs the man.
What is man without conscience?

Sir R. Talk no more!

Hen. Misguided, lost, farewell for ever!

Kath. Stay!

[*To SIR RUPERT.*] Will you surrender thus the only son
Of your lost friend? Let me plead with him; leave us!
You'll not refuse me, Halbert, some brief words,
Perhaps our last! [*To SIR RUPERT.*] Oh, by your ancient
love,

Permit this intercession!

Sir R. Be it short.

So much I grant his father in the grave:

Resolve you soon, I shall return anon.

My gallant boy! My precious Isabel!

[*He leads her out, followed by HENRY.*]

Kath. [*After a pause, laying her hand on STRATH-
MORE'S arm.*] Halbert, speak to me! You'll not
speak, shall I?

Strath. Yes, speak.

Kath. Then answer; but not rashly, for my doom
Is in your breath—you love me?

Strath. Katharine!

Kath. You do, and know what love is—that it draws
Into itself all passion, hope, and thought,
The heart of life, to which all currents flow
Through every vein of being, which if chill'd
The streams are ice for ever?

Strath. Even so.

Kath. Was this your love for me?

Strath. Was it?

Kath. It is!

Thanks for that dear rebuke. You'll not renounce me?
No, I defy you, Strathmore!

Strath. Ah! you may;

Discords may sever, pathways may divide,
'Midst all God's creatures I may never more
Gaze on that unit which could fill for me

A vacant world—yourself! And you may learn—
 I do not think you will, but you may learn—
 The strain of bitter tongues, reproach or scorn
 For him who quits you now ; but through all change,
 Time, distance, suffering, shall this tide of love
 Sweep ebbless to your memory !

Kath. Yet you quit me !

Love speaks in deeds, not words ; you never loved me.

Strath. I never loved you, Katharine !

Kath. Oh, forgive me !

My anguish spoke.

Strath. And would there not befall

A keener anguish, could the man you loved

Prove false to right ? [*Taking her in his arms.*] So, on
 my shoulder, sweet,

The old way yet once more. We know that grief

Must try true hearts ; but from its fire they're plucked

Here or hereafter, and the stamp of God

Is set on them for ever. All is well

At last for those who do well ; nothing well

For those who, to be well, would shrink from duty.

Kath. From duty ?

Strath. Katharine, duty. I have seen

Men pious, loyal, brave ; do I say men ?

Nay, wives and children perish, gashed by stabs,

Or pierced by ball, or drop into the grave

A-swoon from the rack's torture, their sole claim

To serve in freedom Him who made them free.

Could I see this, and know that gallant hearts

Were leagued against such wrong, and stifle mine ?

I struggled, for I loved ; but everywhere

My conscience tracked me. In the woods the leaves

Quivered reproaches ; the peaks frowned ; the stars

Gleamed down in wrath, and life with every tongue

Cried, " Man, do right ; be worthy of thy world ! "

I turned in thought to thee ; thine eyes of truth

Rebuked my swerving spirit, " Man, do right ;

Be worthy of thy love ! "

Kath. Delirium
Has warped thy reason. Halbert, strive, oh strive
Against this madness! It will pass, but think
That it may pass too late!

Strath. Farewell!

Kath. Be silent!
I will be heard. Perhaps I might have borne
To lose thee; but thou leav'st me for dishonour,
And that's past sufferance! Base and traitorous men
Must henceforth be thy comrades—shouldst thou fall,
I cannot weep a hero!

Strath. Katharine!
Life rarely knows its heroes. Obloquy,
Like dust, defiles the champion; still he strives,
And at the grave, the sullied vesture falls
From his worn limbs, his memory takes its stand
Upon the tomb, and the world shouts—"A HERO!"

Re-enter SIR RUPERT.

Sir R. Have you decided?

Kath. [*Clinging to STRATHMORE.*] Oh, no—no!

Strath. I have.

Sweet, we must part! What strength is in the clasp
Of these soft arms? I must unwind them, love,
These fibres of my heart that bleeds to rend them.
There, gently! Take her, sir! Farewell—farewell!

[*He rushes out; she sinks into SIR RUPERT'S arms.*]

ACT II., SCENE I.

The interior of a hut, in which BRYCEFIELD is discovered in his horseman's cloak, asleep. The open door admits a view of the field of battle. A solemn strain of voices in the distance, and occasional acclamations.

Enter ROLAND, Brycefield's servant.

Rol. Ho! my good master, Master Brycefield! Faith,

He's sound asleep, and well has earned the rest
 Our sour-faced captains grudge!—It irks my will
 To rouse him; but then orders! What, your honour!

[*Waking him.*]

Bryce. [*Who springs up and snatches his sword.*] Who's there?

Rol. A friend!

Bryce. You, Roland!

Rol. Even myself!

Here's Hamilton and Craighburn, sorely pricked—
 That's pricked in conscience—that you were not seen
 At the thanksgiving.

Bryce. For their victory!
 What, if I called it mine? But for my brain
 They could not wag their envious tongues—these churls!
 Who forced them, who, but I, a soldier bred,
 To keep their vantage-ground? They else had rushed
 Into the marsh, and, overwhelmed by Claverhouse,
 Have choked it with their bodies? By my aid
 They won their triumph, drove the foremost troops
 In Scotland from the field, and thus they thank me!

Rol. To hear them talk this morning! One would guess
 They'd king and country under lock. Cried some—
 "We'll treat with Charles!" Then others—"No, the Kirk
 Alone shall rule in Britain!" Some were hot
 To march on Babylon; some to pull down
 The carved work and the idols; but all swore
 That Claverhouse should be hung;—that's when they
 caught him!

Bryce. Silence! Was't thou not snatched from the
 Philistines
 To be a chosen vessel?

Rol. Maybe so.

I know I've often been an empty vessel,
 For our new masters, whew! their diet's thin,
 And their she vessels—by which I intend
 The covenanting damsels—are not comely.
 No, sir; give me the days, the good old days

When your brave father rode in arms for Stewart
 In merry England, when the cup and song
 Filled up the pause of cannon, and bright eyes
 Rained blessings on our march !

Bryce.

Ah ! fix my belt.

Those times are over.

Rol.

Not forgotten, sir.

A can to those old times ! It's ill going forth
 Without your draught ; good wine's the soldier's porridge,
 And here's your meal-cask.

[*He produces a flask, fills two drinking-cans, and presents one to BRYCEFIELD.*]

Bryce.

Varlet ! Well the years

That chill the blood mature the grape. [Both drink.

Rol.

And that

Thaws the chill blood, and makes us young again,
 As young as when we sang—how runs it ?—so ! [Sings.

“ Here's an arm for my king, and a curse for old Noll,
 And a smile for all danger that chances ;”

Fall in, sir !

[Both sing.

“ Here's an arm for my king, and a curse for old Noll,

And a smile for all danger that chances ;

Here's a throat for my glass, and a lip for my lass,

And a bright eye to pay back her glances !

Merrily ! merrily ! shall my life pass—

Hurrah for my king, and my glass, and my lass !”

[*They repeat the chorus, “ Merrily ! merrily !” &c.*]

Rol. Hist ! here come no friends to mirth.

Bryce. Hamilton, Craighurn, and that recreant, Strathmore !

Why do I prate of recreants ? Little guessed
 Our fathers we should wear this livery. Yet,
 In one point, Strathmore justifies his stock,
 No coward he ! He fought as if the fray
 Hung on his single arm.

Enter HAMILTON, CRAIGHURN, and STRATHMORE.

Ham. [To BRYCEFIELD.] We've waited for you,

Whence rose those sounds of revel? Ill befit
Such strains our sober camp.

Rol. Just a wee crow,
My masters, over Moab!

Craig. Hence! begone!

Rol. Well, well! Ye're not such pleasant company.

[*Goes out, muttering the chorus, "Merrily! merrily!" &c.*

Ham. It is the hour for council. For you, Strathmore,
Who helped this great deliverance, and whose post
In our victorious ranks we might have known
Best by its peril—in acknowledgment
Burley has named you captain in our host,
Next to himself in power.

Strath. Methinks to-day
Our Scotland hails her children, that their praise
Breaks from her torrent tongues and to the plain
Leaps down exulting, that this morning's sun,
Rending the mist, pressed on her mountain brow
His warmest kiss, for he found Freedom's there—
Heaven send with Freedom—Peace!

Craig. See, here comes Burley!

Enter BURLEY.

Ham. With so dark a brow,
When Ammon flies our arm!

Bur. It is a race
Must be chastised with scorpions. Our main force
I lead towards Glasgow; but some choicer few
A nearer duty summons. Covenant blood
Again hath flowed, and asks a separate vengeance.

Craig. Speak! what new horror?

Bur. Cruel in their flight,
As in their strength, the foe who 'scaped the sword
Came on a handful of our people, met
By a burnside for worship. Mark, our friends
Were met in peace, unarmed; all, all were slaughtered,
Save two who bore the tidings, and amongst them
Fell Keith, the Pastor!

Strath. Andrew Keith !—The good,
The venerable man ! He was my friend,
Preceptor, almost father ! In my breast
There springs no grain for good, but he did sow it.

Bur. What doom pronounce you on his murderer ?

Strath. A stern one. We are bound to warn these tigers
From further havoc. For a deed so foul,
Earth's law and heaven's have but one sentence—death.

Bur. Thou sayest well ; and now, be firm ! Whose,
think you,
Was the fell hate to which that gentle mein,
Those silver hairs, appealed in vain for life ?
Who murdered Andrew Keith ?

Strath. Why ask of me ?
Am I the mate of wretches ?

Bur. No, thy feet
Now shun their path of blood ; yet, didst thou walk
Consenting for a season even with him
Who wrought this deed accursed.

Strath. His name ?

Bur. Again,
I say, be firm ! The hand that slaughter'd Keith
Was Rupert Lorn's.

Strath. Sir Rupert Lorn's ?

Bur. I said it.

Strath. Man, you profane that name if but in thought
You slur it with such charge. You know him not.
Sir Rupert is a soldier—no assassin !

Bur. He was your friend ; you therefore may be blind.

Strath. He is my foe ; I therefore would be just.

Bur. As we would. Though I little doubt his guilt,
Strict proof alone shall harm him. Public weal
Requires, meanwhile, we seize upon his hold—
The hilly towers of Lorn, by nature girt
With rare defences ; thus, if beaten back,
We gain a strong retreat and time for succour.

Craig. An enterprise of peril.

Bur. No ; the castle

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Is slightly guarded. Its chief strength has marched
Under young Lorn to Claverhouse. Sir Rupert
Lies, aidless, in his fortress. Ere remanned
We must surprise and take it.

Craig. Such a post
Some few determined men might hold from thousands.

Bur. A secret path winds rearward to the heights,
And one who knew the route might thereby gain
An unsuspected entrance.

[*All turn their eyes on STRATHMORE.*]

Ham. [*After a pause.*] Strathmore!

Strath. Speak.

Ham. Familiar from your boyhood with this pass,
'Tis you must lead us.

Strath. I!

Bur. Do we demand
More than a leader's duty?

Strath. You have said
Sir Rupert was my friend!

Ham. Have you not sworn
To be your country's?

Strath. 'Twas my oath—I'll keep it!
Give me the van of some most desperate hope,
Some breach to force even in the cannon's mouth;
Or bid me singly breast the tide of war,
With honour beckoning on the further shore,
And I will plunge! But do not arm my conscience
Against my will, and make my truth to duty
A treason to my heart!

Craig. [*To BURLEY.*] You see his bent.
To choose such guidance were to risk our end.

Bur. [*Apart to him.*] Peace! None but he, who
knows each separate step,
So well can thread the passage. Hamilton,
With Brycefield and yourself, shall share his march;
So, if he falter, justice rests with you.
[*To STRATHMORE.*] I grieve to find thee in the snare
emeshed

Of creature yearnings. Howbeit, we yoke
 No doubting spirit to this work. You, Craighburn
 And Hamilton, must undertake the task !
 If Lorn be guilty of this crime, he dies.

Strath. He dies !

Bur. Decreed you not his death ?

Strath. But how,
 If he prove innocent ?

Craig. A slender hope.

Strath. Why, see ! You do prejudge him. In your
 face

I read his doom already.

Bur. You have shunned
 A leader's office ; else your hand had borne
 The scales of judgment here.

Craig. A partial hand
 Should never hold the balance.

Strath. [*Apart.*] It is fixed—
 The old man's fate ! To their impatient eyes
 Film'd with a brother's blood, all evidence
 Will take that sanguine colour. He will perish !

Bur. Time speeds ; I part for Glasgow ! You——

Strath. Stay, Burley !

[*Aside.*] My presence would ensure him justice ; this
 At least, he claims ; for this his child appeals,
 His Katharine—once my own !

Ham. See, he is racked
 By a sore conflict.

Bur. Note him not ; he'll yield !

Strath. [*Still apart.*] But say what yet I hold in-
 credible

Were true, that Lorn were guilty, and had dyed
 His soul in stains more crimson than his sword's,
 Shedding the pastor's life ! say this were proved,
 And I the judge, Heaven's eye upon me, men
 Exacting righteous sentence, while old love,
 Plucking my heart-strings, cried for mercy !

Bur. [*To CRAIGHBURN and HAMILTON.*] Forth

With faces set like flints against the slayer ;
Blood only expiates blood !

Craig. We will not fail.

Strath. Mad with the thirst of vengeance, faintest hints
Will read like damning proof ! no arm but mine
Can save him innocent ; if guilty, why
Even that risk of horror for his sake
Must be encountered.—Burley, Hamilton,
I take my office—I will head this charge.

Bur. You'll march on Lorn ?

Strath. I will.

Craig. Ere you resolve—

Dare you fulfil this task ?

Strath. Dare I assume it ?

See, Brycefield, that our force be straight equipped !
We march at noon.

Craig. We need the mask of night
And will not stir till sunset.

Strath. Heed my orders,
Brycefield ! we march at noon. Your captain wills it.

[STRATHMORE and BRYCEFIELD go out.]

Bur. He's right ; delay might give them time for aid.
Come, friends. You know your duty should he fail.

[They go out.]

SCENE II.

Before Lorn Castle. A terrace with ramparts overlooking an extensive prospect bounded by the hills.

Enter KATHARINE and ISABEL meeting. KATHARINE is passing on without perceiving ISABEL, who intercepts her.

Isa. No, no, sweet Kate, you are my lawful prize,
Won dearly, not to be relinquished soon !
These lonely walks and indoor solitudes
Fit meditative age ; but you are young.

Kath. Ay, by the kalendar !

Isa. Ill suit such moods

With loyal maiden's pride—this grief for him
Who in one breath disowned his double oath
To you and to his king. For shame—abjure him !

Kath. Idolatry abjures not ! It despairs.

Isa. Tut, tut ! despair's a word, a good broad phrase
To signify the heartache or weak nerves.

All women have it ere they wed. It means
That epidemic of young blood called love,
And only asks time's lancet for its cure ;
It takes a thousand shapes ! The schoolboy has it
At close of holidays ; the maiden feels it
When her pet pigeon dies ! Sometimes it comes
As a November fog ! Count Grammont had it—
And sharply, when his valet brought not home
His suit for the Court ball ; but—he recovered !

[*Aside.*] Poor Katharine ! I know she thinks me heart-
less,

And yet, to humour were to feed her grief.

Here comes your father !

Enter SIR RUPERT.

Dear Sir Rupert—smile !

Sir R. In times like these, when the king's flag retires
Before a horde of rebels !

Isa. Your defeat,
If such it may be termed, chanced, as you said,
From inconsiderate zeal. So strong a post
The foe secured. You fought at desperate odds.

Sir R. 'Tis a disaster we shall soon retrieve.
What can a wild, ungoverned mob effect
'Gainst the trained force of kingdoms ?

Isa. Well then, smile !

Sir R. [*Taking her hand.*] There, there !

Isa. Your lips smiled, not your eyes.

Sir R. I know it.

A foolish thought distracts me! Long inured
To the stern trade of war, I've seen armed men
Fall in a heap before me, and then slept
Unvexed by conscience; but that aged face
I spake of—haunts my sight. I never drew
Before on the defenceless!

Isa. Not a heart
But mourns the old man's fate; but still reflect
'Twas in an act denounced by law—— [*Hesitates.*]

Sir R. The law
Required, at least, that we should warn ere strike.
I struck and warned not, and my sword became
A knife for shambles. Keith had been my friend,
Sat at my board, clasped hand with me. Girl, girl,
As I rode thence, I felt as feels a murderer!

Isa. [*Aside.*] How hard to strive with self-reproach
when just.

Sir R. Stung by defeat, we found them in our path,
And ere reflection cooled our boiling rage,
It overflowed in fury.

Isa. It is done,
Repented, and must be forgotten.

Sir R. Come;
Some other theme then! [*They walk up the terrace.*]

Kath. Does my father stand
Thus self-condemned of cruelty? My kind,
My generous father! Who shall vouch for pity.
In sterner hearts, or that the cause is just
Which casts it out? O Halbert! Were you right?
Have those whom—tutored in a loyal faith
My heart denounced as traitors, been indeed
Ground down by injury? O, were you right?
So noble, so discerning, could you arm
In a base quarrel? No; it is a thought
To soothe my anguish. If thou wert deceived,
'Twas by misconstrued duty. So thy worth
Shines through my gloom, and, though for ever gone,
Thou art not lost while I can still adore! [*She goes out.*]

SIR RUPERT and ISABEL return to front.

Isa. Brave Henry ! Worthy of his name and sire
My gallant husband !

Sir R. Should the royal troops
Be duly reinforced, we may expect him
The traitors who infest us to dislodge.
Our garrison is scanty, and we need
Some score stout fellows yet.

Isa. These girding hills
Are a sure rampart.

Sir R. True ; we may defy
The knaves for weeks, and mock them till they starve.

[*Shouts are heard, and the bell of the Castle sounds
an alarm.*]

What mean those shouts ? 'They ring the alarm !

Enter several RETAINERS.

How now !

Simon. The castle is surprised.

Sir R. Who kept the watch ?

Robert. Each man was at his post ; the enemy
Assailed us under cover of the woods.

Sir R. The bell is silenced ; 'sdeath, they've forced the
gates !

Ring round me, lads, for honour and your king !

Isa. I'll with you.

Sir R. No, to Katharine ! If I fall
Bear her a father's blessing. On, brave hearts !
Stone bulwarks yield ;—brave hearts are adamant.
On, cheerily, Lorn, for the king !

[*He rushes out, followed by* RETAINERS. *Discharge
of musketry, and shouts of conflict without.*]

Isa. Heaven speed you !

Would I were of them ! Yet our Katharine's safety ?
The clamour's at its height. [*A pause.*] Now conflict's
thunder

Mutters itself away ; the bolt has fallen.

On whom ? Dear Katharine ! What, beset !

As she is going, enter SOLDIERS, headed by BRYCEFIELD.

Bryce. [*Advancing to her.*] Fear not !
Sir Rupert, lady, is our prisoner ;
But his fair daughter—such I deem you are—
Needs dread no violence.

Isa. We do not dread, sir,
The thing we scorn.

Bryce. Harsh payment for harsh duty.
Isa. Fulfil it without words.

Bryce. That you are safe.
Accept this proof—our band is led by Strathmore.

Isa. By Strathmore !

Bryce. Once your father's friend.

Isa. Is't true ? [*He signifies assent.*]
Why then forgive my scorn. Your treason's white
Beside his foulness.

Bryce. [*Aside.*] She is wondrous fair !

Isa. A something in your mien
Denotes you foreign to these boors : you learned not
This courtly grace from them.

Bryce. [*Aside.*] By heaven, a wench
Of rare discernment ! Beauty's presence, lady,
Can civilise the savage.

Isa. Speech so bland
I fain would couple with a name, and yours is—

Bryce. One that was honourable till I bore it ;
My name is Brycefield.

Isa. You were ill baptized ;
That name is writ in loyal annals.

Bryce. Ay !
And by my father's sword.

Isa. If this be so,
You bear within more keen reproach than mine.
Is't possible ? Your escort to the castle !

Bryce. Way, there ; fall back ! I am your beauty's
debtor. [*She gives him her hand ; martial music
heard behind ; he conducts her out.*]

SCENE III.

Corridor in Lorn Castle. A small table, with writing materials, and lighted taper, chair, &c.

Enter HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.

Ham. Thus far no signs of flinching. By his guidance
We've gained the fortress, seized the man of blood,
And straight proceed to trial.

Craig. Yet I fear,
Lest creature pity should in Strathmore's heart
O'ermaster duty. It devolves on him,
As chief in rank, to be the prisoner's judge.

Ham. Let's to him.

Craig. And remember, if he fail,
We must assume his office. Lorn must die.

[HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN go out.]

Enter ROLAND, followed hastily by JANET.

Janet. Not that way, Master, Master—what's your name?

Rol. [Clasping his hands with a Puritanical air.] In the flesh, Roland : and thy name, young damsel?

Janet. [Imitating him.] In the flesh, Janet. If a saint like you

Can e'er feel hunger, there's good beef and ale
Waiting your pleasure.

Rol. I've no creature wants.

Janet. [Aside.] Now must I ply him as my mistress bade.

[Aloud.] I prythee come ; I find such benefit
In devout company ; and grant one favour.

There are, 'midst Strathmore's followers, some brave hearts

My mistress knew of old, and fain would speak with.

Rol. She'll bring me into trouble. Hence, avoid thee !

See'st thou not I'm a vessel? [*Aside.*] Of a surety
The damsel's comely.

Janet. Nay, thou'lt not refuse?

Rol. [*Aside.*] I fear the carnal man is strong within me.
Lo, I will testify! Thou shalt no more
Entice me with thine eyes, which are a snare.

Janet. I will not.

Rol. Nor entice me with thy lips,
Which are a net.

Janet. I say I will not.

Rol. Neither
Shalt thou gaze in my face unlawfully;
Nor take my hand thus. [*Taking her hand.*]

Janet. You surprise me.

Rol. No;
Nor, worst of all——

Janet. [*Struggling.*] I will not, sir——

Rol. Do this. [*Kisses her.*]

Janet. [*Breaking away.*] Shame! shame! you have
forgot you are a vessel. [*JANET goes out.*]

Rol. Faith, I half like the jade; and little like
The work that brings me here. I saw the old man
Torn from his children's arms. I fear the worst.

Enter BRYCEFIELD.

Bryce. This is a sorry business.

Rol. Sorry, sir;
It takes away all relish for my food.
'Twill break my sleep. Think of the old knight's
daughters.

Bryce. [*Musing.*] So fair, 'tis strange that neither yet
are wed.

Rol. There's Lady Isabel. What eyes! Their flash
Half blinds you, till a hazy sorrow comes
To let one see their brightness. Then her voice!
'Tis the proud sad smile speaking. Time has been
'You would have risked your life for her least whisper.

Bryce. What say you, rogue?

Rol. That she's a helpless woman,
And you a soldier.

Bryce. [*Aside.*] Does he read my thought?
I have drunk in her beauty till it floods
Each vein and pulse. To call her mine—to grasp
At once both love and fortune—'twere a prize
Indeed for the spurned beggared cavalier!
She comes! Withdraw, sir.

Rol. Hey, they're winsome dears!
[ROLAND goes out.]

*Enter ISABEL and KATHARINE; the latter sits apart
absorbed.*

Isa. How, Master Brycefield! We entreat a boon.

Bryce. You grant one if you grant the right to serve
you.

Isa. [*Aside.*] I like not those smooth tones. My sister,
too.

Bryce. [*Bowing low.*] Lady, she is your sister.

Isa. [*Aside.*] There again!

I took him for a friend; but ours, I fear,
Must be a game of wits; we'll say, a game
At chess.

Bryce. [*Aside, catching her last words.*] A game at
chess! What does she mean?

Isa. You have the ordering of Sir Rupert's guard.
Our prayer is this—that you set over him
Strathmore's own followers. They're of better nurture
Than their rude comrades, and at least will show
Sorrow, respect.

Bryce. 'Tis done.

Isa. [*Aside.*] So the game opens.
That's move the first.

Bryce. Your next command?

Isa. Request—
That privately you send for and admit
Sir Rupert's chaplain. The good man dwells near.

[Shows a letter.]

Bryce. That letter's for him ?

Isa. Read it.

Bryce. If you insist. [*Reads, then aside.*] No danger.

This concealment

Is against my captain's orders ; but——

Isa. Well, friend ?

Bryce. [*Significantly.*] I obey yours.

Isa. I thank you. Shall I seal

The letter ? [*She takes it to the lighted taper, and, watching him narrowly, drops the seal—a ring.*]

The seal's fallen.

Bryce. Madam ! [*He stoops for the seal.*]

Isa. [*Aside.*] Now,

To drop these lines in. [*She takes from her bosom a note, and places it in the letter, which she quickly folds.*]

BRYCEFIELD rises and gives her the seal.] Sir, I

trouble you.

[*Aside.*] He has not seen it. Move the second !

Bryce. Trouble !

And to your friend !

Isa. [*Sealing the letter, and giving it to him.*] Who saved my father's life

Were more than friend—a brother !

Bryce. That's a joy

Beyond my hope. And yet, I would outwear
My brain in plots, my knee in prayers to Strathmore,
If that might save Sir Rupert. Meanwhile, duties—
In which I rank your interest chief—demand me.

[*Offers his hand.*]

Isa. [*After a pause, giving him her hand.*] Farewell !

I will not thank your zeal with words.

Bryce. [*Who bows and retires, aside.*] No ! not with words, bright siren, save they pledge
A richer payment ; not thy gifts, but thee. [*He goes out.*]

Isa. [*To KATHARINE.*] He deems your father mine,
and, as I think,

Suspects not I am married ; these thick gems
Have hid so well the slender marriage pledge.

It might be well to fix him in his error,
I see his selfish game. Had he been worthy,
I'd trusted all with him ; being false, I'll use him.
I stoop but for your father.

Kath. Ah, my father !

Isa. Laments are vain. When danger threatens, they
hinder ;
Should the worst chance, yourself must plead with Strath-
And when it bursts, avail not. Katharine,
more !

Kath. Nay, not that name !

Isa. Remember, though you loathe him,
He holds your father's life.

Kath. My father ! Strathmore !
My sense drifts helpless on this tide of horror !
Loathe him ! loathe Strathmore ! Why ? He's here,
you say ;

Why came he ?

Isa. Well you know—with bloody men
In league against your father.

Kath. To destroy him ?

Isa. Why ask ?

Kath. And Strathmore was his friend ?

Isa. His friend !

Kath. And knew their purpose, yet he came !

Isa. To aid it.

Kath. Wait—wait ! Ha, ha ! The blackness bursts,
'tis day !

Isa. What mean you ?

Kath. That he came, a friend with
foes,

Knowing their hate to curb it. He is here
To save my father ! Loathe thee, loathe thee, Hal-
bert !

I trust and bless thee.

Isa. This is madness !

Kath. No,

'Tis reason's safeguard, the last hold it grasps ;

Uproot it, and I perish. In, dear sister,
Wait but this hour's event!

Isa. Alas!

Kath. Remonstrance
But kills where it would save. Come, come, let's in.
[*They go out.*]

SCENE IV.

*A room in Lorn Castle, as in Act I. The apartment
arranged for the trial of SIR RUPERT. An antique
elbow-chair is placed near the front.*

STRATHMORE *alone, and seated.*

Strath. There was no way but this. My comrades
bent
To find him guilty, thirsting for revenge,
His fate was certain. Either I must judge,
If guilty doom him; or, to 'scape that pang,
A dastard, yield him to their blind tribunal
And murder by my silence. Could he slay
The meek and pious Keith? O friend beloved,
First fosterer of my thought! as thou didst stand
On Time's far brink, and Death forbore to snatch thee,
Was he than Death less pitying? This foul charge
He can refute—he will! If—that *if* wrongs him.

Enter HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.

Ham. Already here! you're prompt in your commission.

Strath. Justice delayed is half denied.

Han. Most true.

The guilt that's late avenged is almost sanctioned.

Craig. Strathmore, be warned and hear me! If you
hope

Disproof of crime will free the prisoner
And make your office light, your hope is vain.
Most clear and certain evidence convicts him.

Strath. Am I judge here?

Craig. You know it.

Strath. Then, if judge,
I take no counsel with the accuser while
The accused is absent.

Ham. Mark, our people cry
For vengeance on the murderer ; if withheld,
Thou wilt provoke revolt, and stab the cause
Which thou hast sworn to guard.

Craig. If I but thought
He dared to tamper with his trust, I'd——

[*Approaches STRATHMORE menacingly.*]

Strath. [*Stamping twice.*] Ho, there !

The door opens. Enter BRYCEFIELD ; SOLDIERS are discovered in waiting.

[*To BRYCEFIELD.*] Your guard's in waiting ? I may
need you, sir.

Craigburn, you stand too near—fall back. [*To BRYCEFIELD as CRAIGBURN obeys.*] Not now.

Bryce. The prisoner, Sir Rupert, waits without.

Strath. [*After a pause.*] Conduct him hither. [*BRYCEFIELD goes out. Apart.*] Oh, the time is sudden ;

Sustain me, Heaven ; let proof like thine own beams

Shine on his innocence ; for sake of him

I thought to call a father, for her sake

I dare not name, scarce think of, hear me, hear me !

Ham. They come ; prepare !

[*STRATHMORE motions them to the table, and sits.*]

Enter SIR RUPERT, preceded by GUARDS ; BRYCEFIELD walking by his side ; a number of the Covenanting SOLDIERS follow, uttering menacing exclamations, and line either side of the apartment.

Sol. Justice ! we will have justice !

Death to the murderer !

Ham. Peace !

Strath. Sir Rupert Lorn !

Sir R. [*Aside.*] It is the face in which I once read honour.
Still frank, no covert glance, no craven bend.
Thou forgery on nature !

Strath. Pray you, sit !

Sir R. In your illustrious presence and your colleagues' ?
My modesty forbids ! What would you with me ?

Strath. The chance of these stern times, when savage
power
Tramples on life and freedom, makes us foes,
Not to yourself, but wrong which you abet.
That wrong to curb, we have possessed your castle,
And held you in restraint. No penalty
Harsher than this impends, if you confute,
As I must hope you will, a crime so black
Your name denies it credence ! You are charged
That, not in heat of war or private feud,
By you and yours, unarmed and simple men,
In exercise devout, were foully slain.
No warning given, no order to disperse—
A right which even your cruel laws demand—
And, chief, that by your hand fell Andrew Keith,
The gracious shepherd of this ravaged fold !
What answer make you ?

[SIR RUPERT *regards him in stern silence.*

Craig. He is dumb.

Strath. Produce
Your evidence.

Sir R. Hold there. [*To HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.*]
I speak
Not to this man—perjured to king, name, friend,
Whose baseness Heaven permits that men may know,
And loathe a traitor ;—but to your more human
And moderate infamies. Hear this ! I mourned,—
A sickly fool !—because his locks were white,
The death of Andrew Keith ; but now, beholding
The pestilent harvest of his seed, rejoice,
Both that I mowed the ear and slew the sower.
The deed was mine,—I slew him !

Ham. He avows it !

Craig. Justice !

Sol. Ay, justice ! we'll have justice !

Strath. Who

Calls upon justice, and with clamour wakes
Her sacred halls, that should be hushed as heaven,
Ere doom's dread book be opened ? Peace !—Sir Rupert,
If, guiltless of this crime, it be avowed
In hasty scorn, or from security,
Since I have been your friend—reflect, recant !
My heart is frozen—and it cannot beat ;
My memory stifled—and it cannot plead ;
I am a pen in the great hand of Conscience,
To write its bidding merely !

Sir R. [*To HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.*] Pray interpret

Me to your master. Tell him that we rate
Gifts by the givers ; that could he give me life,
I would not own it, branded by his pity !

Bryce. Pshaw, pshaw, you rave !

Sir R. Place me upon the heath,
My good sword in my gripe ! The deed I've done
I'll do again, and grind beneath my heel
This brood of canting priests and armed revolt !

Sol. His sentence ! Quick, his sentence !

Ham. By his own lips

Is he condemned. For further proof we hold
This letter, written by the prisoner,
And found upon his servant. 'Tis addressed
Unto that man of wrath, Ralph Malcolm ! Listen !

[*Reads.*] "These, good friends, shall bring you to know
that I have been entrapped by a gang of Puritan traitors.
If you can give the alarm, and send help, well. Once free,
on the faith of a loyal man, I will show the knaves no
mercy. I will hunt them down, whether they bear sword
or psalter, by the hearth or in the field, in conventicle or
by the hill-side.—Yours in the king's cause—RUPERT
LORN."

[*Gives letter to STRATHMORE.*

Sol. Vengeance! Tear him to pieces! Judgment!
Sentence!

Bryce. Sheer lunacy! You would not heed a maniac;
Try fasting and the dungeon.

Ham. Ay! and wait
Until some rescue, mightier than our stop,
Loose him to carnage. We are weak; our foes
Are strong, and may redeem him. Strathmore, think;
'Tis not alone the life that he has quenched,
But those his cruel purpose yearns to strike,
That claim his death? If they through him expire,
Thy voice that frees him—murders them! Then, stand
Between this black soul and thy brethren's lives,
And tell us which shall perish!

Sol. Justice! Death!

Strath. That shout again! [*To SIR RUPERT.*] List
to that shout, old man!

I hear it and I live; but do not check it!
Who dares? Who stays the planets or arrests
The wheels of destiny? They roll, they roll!

[He rises and comes forward.]

Ham. [*To CRAIGBURN.*] He's rapt as in a trance. [*To
STRATHMORE.*] What hear'st thou, brother?

Strath. [*To SIR R.*] The cry of thy great sin, per-
formed and purposed,
Has entered heaven, and space reverberates
Thy doom in thunder! Murder's doom is death!

Craig. [*To SIR RUPERT.*] Thy sentence! [*To STRATH-
MORE.*] And it's hour?

Ham. He does not heed thee.
Remove the prisoner. Thy farewell take
Of earth to-day! Thou diest on the morrow!

*[SIR RUPERT goes out guarded, followed by BRYCE-
FIELD and SOLDIERS. STRATHMORE remains
standing in abstraction.]*

Ham. [*To STRATHMORE.*] My friend! my brother!

Craig. Pray you, speak not to him.
Leave him to silence.

Ham. Oh, this sacrifice
 Outweighed a thousand lives ; my friend ! my friend !
 [HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN go out.]

Strath. Where am I ? Is this earth, or has the world
 Swerved from its path in terror, and recoiled
 To the first chaos ? Is yon light the sun ?
 Are those green hills ? And is yon roar that swells,
 And sinks and swells, the sea ? That's the oak roof ;
 A slanting sunbeam strikes it. I stand here,
 Alone ; yet do not turn, lest fearful shapes
 Should give the lie to sense. Alone ! ah, see,
 That old man stalks before me ! Speak ? I'll answer.
 He's dumb. And now from the quick-breeding air
 There looms another form—dark, stern—my father's !
 He points to him, and asks me for his friend !
 And 'twixt the two there glides a cold face, blanched
 With a child's agony ! Katharine, away !
 I cannot bear those eyes ! [*Rallying himself.*] Nay, gaze !
 I'll front them.—

Dim spectres of the living and the dead
 Cite me, impeach me ! As I then shall answer,
 When Heaven waits breathless, and its shining ranks
 Fix me at once with their demanding eyes,
 I answer now. Truth has no choice : it must
 Be true or not be ! Duty claimed my heart ;
 I plucked it forth and gave ! . . . Ah, now ye
 fade—

I am alone—alone with fate and heaven !

[*He stands motionless. The curtain slowly descends.*]

ACT III., SCENE I.

Ante-room in Lorn Castle, opening on terrace.

BRYCEFIELD and ROLAND discovered.

Bryce. P' faith, rare wine.

Rol.

You're merry, sir.

Bryce. Such juice,
 Drunk in Elysium, would make nectar cheap
 And all the gods forswear it.

Rol. Ah ! you laugh ;
 You could not if you thought that brave Sir Rupert
 Would die to-morrow.

Bryce. Humph !

Rol. [*Significantly.*] You head the watch.

Bryce. How, sirrah ?

Rol. For his children, for the sake
 Of Lady Isabel, whose grateful smiles
 Nail you as her deliverer, you will save him ?

Bryce. Humph ! Is that sure ?

Rol. Why did you bid her hope ?

Bryce. Concerns that you ? For my own ends.

Rol. A brave man,
 Who sees a woman's grief, can have no ends—
 None of his own, I mean—he acts for her.

Bryce. Away, sir !

Rol. [*Aside.*] No ; he cannot be a man,
 And deaf to grief like hers. [*He goes out.*]

Bryce. So for her sake,
 I shall corrupt the watch. By my connivance,
 Nay, special aid, Sir Rupert shall escape—
 That's if none scent the plot, while for my thanks
 There's gratitude, a curtsey, and good morrow !
 Not so. Her spells have charmed me—the proud carriage
 And quick eye battling with reverse, the smile
 That breeze-like ripples her still face, and flits
 'Twixt love and scorn, her hand, whose lingering touch
 Can make its farewell kinder than its clasp !
 She must be mine ! Yet if she spurn me—me,
 Though kindly born a thriftless outcast now ?—
 No, no, her father's life at stake, she dares not.

Enter ISABEL, looking cautiously round.

Isa. My friend, preserver !

Bryce. 'Tis a title, lady,
As yet unearned.

Isa. But gratitude and faith
ForeSTALL thy deed, and pay it in intent.

Bryce. [*Aside.*] There, gratitude! You're liberal, but
not prudent.
Intents are known by acts; intents may change—
Mere vanes to winds of humour!

Isa. Good intents
Are fixed like goodness: you did give me hope
That by your means Sir Rupert should be free—
A bless'd intent!

Bryce. Still, a mere vane!

Isa. Where points it?

Bryce. To summer, if the wind be southerly.

Isa. Southerly?

Bryce. Ay; what brings the South Wind, lady?

Isa. Pray tell me!

Bryce. Warmth and odour! Her soft arms
Twine round the vigorous Spring, a perfume steals
Upon him from her locks, her glowing breath
Fires his cold cheek with blushes, while she weaves
A chain of garlands round him, and he sinks
Before her feet—a slave!

Isa. 'Tis a deep riddle.
I pray you solve it.

Bryce. Be thy love this wind
To my bleak life, which then shall teem with acts
Obedient to thy will. Bright Isabel,
I love thee, and would wed thee!

Isa. Wed me, sirrah!—[*Restraining herself.*]
How if my hand were pledged?

Bryce. Had it been given,
Ay, to a husband, he should lose his clasp.
Consent—your father's free.

Isa. If I refuse?

Bryce. Why, then, the wind sets northerly; I'm
ice!

I've solved the meaning of your words to-day,
You'd play a game at chess ! 'Tis my move now.

Isa. [*With indignation, immediately repressed.*] Oh,
thou—

Bryce. Nay, speak it, madam !

Isa. Oh, thou soldier ! [*With assumed laughter.*
Which fit thee best, thy tactics or thy valour ?

Bryce. Make me thy soldier, and with those ripe lips
Seal my commission. Even now I've dared
Much peril for you, tampering with the guard.
Come, we rough soldiers capture hearts like forts—
By storm !

Isa. Sir, for the credit of the fort,
I'd make a show of conflict. Grant me time !

Bryce. Have you so much to spare. But be it so ;
In an hour I will return. I do but deal
By the world's commerce, lady. All men fix
Their price on service. For my own, I ask
Yourself, your hand. If you deny me, say
Why I should venture aught for her that scorns me.

[*He goes out.*]

Isa. Ay ! scorns thee, wretch, the more that terror choked
Scorn's utterance ! But that I did control
My struggling heart, he had betrayed our hope—
Our hope on such conditions ? There's no hope.
Stay—Katharine ! She must at once to Strathmore !
Heaven aid the wrestling of a child's despair. [*Goes out.*]

Enter ROLAND and JANET.

Rol. Poor lady, in what haste she went !

Janet.

What grief !

Thy master bears himself unkindly to her.

Rol. [*Musing.*] It may be so.

Janet. It may be so ! Where is thy wit to help ?
You say you love me ; where's the proof of love ?

Rol. What can I do ? Sir Rupert's too well guarded.

Janet. Entice the guard away.

Rol.

Impossible !

'Twere death to quit their post.

Janet. I'll drug their drink.

Rol. They dare not drink on duty.

Janet. Be valiant, then. Provide my master's men
With swords, and use thine own.

Rol. My master's men
Would use their carbines, then. I should be shot.

Janet. Well, I should weep for thee.

Rol. I should not see thee.

Janet. Jest on ; I was mistaken ; you've no heart.

Rol. Exactly so.

Janet. The brave knight will be murdered,
My ladies—orphans ! What is that to thee ?
Thou'lt sleep as soundly.

Rol. Mistress, you have ta'en
My very measure.

Janet. Thou'lt be rid of me.
What matters that ? There'll still be ale and beef,
And thou'lt be merry with the cup and trencher.
Why talk to thee of courage, love, or glory ?

Rol. Thou hast it ; yes, thou hast it ; I am just
The thing thou say'st I am. Oh, shame on me,
To let the light lash of thy tongue draw tears !

[*Wiping his eyes.*]

Janet. Forgive me, Roland !

Rol. Set me some plain task.
Talk not to me of glory. Say but this—
An old man's life in danger ; two young hearts,
Just breaking for his sake, implore your help ;
Show me the way to save them—any way
That's likely, possible—and though the odds
Be such as risk my neck, I'll take that way,
Vile trencherman as I am !

Janet. I see too well,
However brave, thou canst do little here.
Yet grant the boon I asked before. Conduct
My mistress, in disguise, to Strathmore's followers,
Sir Rupert's guard.

Rol. And what will that avail?

F Janet. Nothing, I fear ; but still, 'tis her desire.

Rol. I'll manage it, this hour.

F Janet. You have a heart.

Forgive me!

Rol. And have you a heart?

F Janet. [*Archly.*] Ah, Roland!

[*They go out hand in hand.*]

SCENE II.

Spacious room as before.

An armed SOLDIER waits with despatches. Enter HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.

Craig. Comes Strathmore hither?

Ham. Yes, you see despatches

Await him from the camp.

Craig. Has he yet eyes

To spell the text of war with, or does grief

For yon malignant, who to-morrow dies,

Blind his friend's sight?

Ham. Shame, shame, thou ruthless man!

No vain laments express his mighty woe;

But a calm reigns, like the immovable heavens

When they look down on earthquake. Peace, he comes!

Enter STRATHMORE.

Despatches wait you, sir, from Burley.

Sol. [*Presenting despatches to STRATHMORE.*] Ay,
From godly Burley.

Strath. [*In a low level tone, and with passionless dig-
nity.*] Hold you ready then

For prompt return. No, stay, you're worn with travel.

Bid young Moncrieff with some six more to horse,
Then ask my orders here.

[SOLDIER goes out, STRATHMORE sits and reads
despatches.

Craig. What's Burley's news?

Strath. He wishes reinforcements.

Craig. And should have them straightway.

Ham. Can you grant them?

Strath. No;

Our slender force would weigh but as a grain
In the great balance, and would nothing stead him,
While foes would seize on these deserted walls,
And our retreat spread panic through our friends.

Ham. 'Tis well resolved.

Strath. [Writing.] Are yet those stores arrived
Of corn and cattle?

Ham. Not yet.

Strath. Hasten them.

Ham. I will betimes to-morrow, sir.

Strath. [Dropping the pen, and sitting motionless.] To-
morrow!

Ham. I know what that dread morrow brings; yet
think

Even had you wavered, you could not have saved him;
The attempt had roused rebellion through our band.
Your truth as man, your oath as judge, your duty
As chief enforced, and Heaven ordained his death.

Strath. [Rising.] Then leave it, friend, to Heaven to
grant the strength
For that which Heaven ordains.

[He again writes; beckons to SOLDIER who has re-
entered; seals and gives him despatch.

Straight to the camp! [SOLDIER goes out.

Enter ROLAND.

Rol. [To STRATHMORE.] Your pardon, noble sir! [Sees
HAMILTON—he hesitates.] I bear a message.

Ham. Speak it!

Rol. 'Tis only for your captain's ear.

Craig. A mystery !

Strath. Friend, your business ?

Rol. Nay, sir ;

'Tis with yourself in private.

Craig. [*To HAMILTON.*] Marked you that ?

Strath. Declare your errand to these gentlemen.

Rol. [*Reluctantly.*] The Lady Katharine would see your honour.

Strath. See me !

Craig. It cannot be : go.

Rol. Friend, I'll take

Your answers when I ask them, [*To STRATHMORE.*] Sir,
she pleads

Most weighty reasons.

Craig. Are you gone ?

Rol. Such reasons

As touch her father's life !

Strath. Say you, his life ?

Rol. [*Doggedly.*] 'Twas thus she charged me—say, by
Strathmore's oath,

As upright judge, as he would 'scape the curse
Of needless blood, I claim to speak with him
Alone, and instantly.

Strath. [*To CRAIGBURN.*] You hear !

Craig. Again

I do deny her suit. What afterproof
Can clear the self-condemned ?

Strath. We know not that

Until we know the proof. What if her father
Vaunted in rage an uncommitted deed,
Or hid its provocation ?

Craig. Do you hope it ?

Strath. I dare not ; but as little dare refuse
The right to prove it. We must meet alone.

'Ham. Alone ?

Strath. It is her will.

Craig. Her will !

Strath.

Then mine.

[*To ROLAND.*] Say that I wait the Lady Katharine.

[*ROLAND goes out.*]

Ham. [*Aside.*] Is he true?

The waves of Ashdod poison those of Canaan

Whene'er they mingle. [*To CRAIGBURN.*] Fear not,
we'll observe him;

Ere night I will compel him change the watch.

[*HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN go out.*]

Strath. [*Alone, dropping into a chair.*] See her! . . .

See Katharine! . . . Katharine! . . . That name

Comes to my ear as though I long had passed

Into the realm of souls, and caught, perplexed,

A sound once dear on earth. . . . Katharine! . . .

A face

Gleams on me as through mist—brows wide and white

'Neath rippling auburn; eyes like springs, that hint

Love's soundless depths! . . . Speak, speak! . . .

do I not hear

That voice which was thy heart made audible

Answering to mine—to mine, as when we stood

Last by the scutcheon'd gate while tremulous love

Broke through the hush as through the dusk—the
star!

Again, good night! we clasp, part, linger still.

Now she glides homeward; but her low farewell

Sums all the unseen sweetness of her face,

And follows me in blessing. Ay, 'tis she,

My joy incarnate, self of self, love, life.

Katharine, my Katharine! [*He pauses, overwhelmed with
emotion, then suddenly restrains himself.*] What if
she should come,

And find me thus swept down by this wild flood

Of bursting grief, and from that sight draw hope,

When hope there's none, and I should so delude her!

[*Starting up.*] Freeze, freeze, ye naked heavens, and keep
me stone—

For her sake, freeze!

Re-enter ROLAND, *followed by* KATHARINE.

Kath. Retire ! [ROLAND *goes out.*
'Tis he—he moves not, speaks not ! [*Advancing to him*]
Strathmore !

Strath. What would you with me, lady ?

Kath. Is it thus
That Halbert speaks to Katharine ?

Strath. Hush ! those names
Belong to a past world.

Kath. False ! there's no past
To fates so knit as ours. Thou may'st stab love,
But not love's ever-haunting ghost, remembrance.

Strath. Your errand ?

Kath. I'm a child : my father's life
Hangs on your breath. My errand !

Strath. Hark ! yon sea ;
You hear it break ?

Kath. Ay, on a rock.

Strath. A rock
That shivers it and dashes it to spray.
Still the tide flows ; 'tis ocean's law. So man
Obeys his law—the conscience. Though it drive
On ruin, he obeys.

Kath. On ruin ! Ay,
You feel it such. You'd save my father ; but
Your comrades hem you round and force your hand—
Your shrinking hand—to strike. It is not Strathmore
Who with a double murder stabs the sire,
And, through the sire, the child !

Strath. No, 'tis not Strathmore.
You look on Justice.

Kath. [*Softening.*] Halbert, no ; thou still
Art human. Human woe has ploughed thy cheek ;
Thine eyes crave human tears. Before them glides
A dream of our past love—perchance that sunset
When on thy breast I leaned and took thy ring—

The ring which pledged us ! [*Showing a ring which she wears.*] Ah ! thou know'st it—start,
And feel thou art a man !

Strath. [*Involuntarily.*] I am, I am !

Kath. Then save my father.

Strath. Can I ?

Kath. Yes !

Strath. Oh, cruel to ask that question of thee.

Kath. Yes !

Strath. Mistake not—

His innocence must save him. Dared I dream
That thou couldst prove it—that his pride belied him
When he avowed the crime ; or that, withstood,
He smote but in defence—aught that disproves
Or can excuse the deed—how would I clasp
Thy feet in transport ! Not the cry, “ A sail ! ”
To gasping swimmers ; not the shout, “ Reprieve ! ”
When gleams the axe ; not the wife's sudden face,
From far-off home, beside the dying exile—
Oh, I but mock my joy, comparing it !
Give earth a new bliss, give my dead hope life,
By one word—“ Innocent ! ” Speak, if thou canst.

Kath. Why you have spoken. Since you will his life,
Effect your will.

Strath. Your evidence ?

Kath. 'Tis here.

You were almost his son.

Strath. Your evidence ?

Kath. [*Desperately.*] I have none ! Wilt thou save
him ? There are means

Which yet you guess not—we can balk the hounds
Even at their spring. Defer Sir Rupert's fate
A week—nay, grant three days ; ere then my brother—

Strath. Ah !

Kath. Now you guess. My brother may return
Head of a force with which your scanty band
Must cope in vain. As you would spare their blood,
Preserve this secret.

Strath. That the enemy
May find us unprepared ?

Kath. Your followers few—ill-armed, undisciplined—
Must perish in the conflict. But submit,
No hair of theirs shall suffer ! 'tis my oath.

Strath. [*Aside.*] Another moment, and I'm lost !
Right, conscience,
Like lapsing earth, slip from me ! Ere three days
The foe may be upon us ! even to-night !
The storm may gather while we dream of safety,
And wake us with its bolt ! Scouts, scouts, forthwith
On every road, bid others watch the coast,
And each man sleep in arms ! Ho, Hamilton !
Craigburn !

[*He rushes towards the door.*]

Kath. [*Intercepting him.*] You shall not pass !

Strath. I must !

Kath. My arms are frail ;
They cannot bar thee ! Canst thou pass these eyes
Once lit by thine ?

Strath. I pass !

Kath. [*Still confronting him.*] Thou canst not ; Nature
Revolts against the deed ! Thy feet are fixed
To the detaining earth ; thy face is stone ;
A cry peals from these shuddering walls to pierce
The vault of Time ; and, lo, the shrouded years
Leap from their graves ! [*Grasping his arm.*] Here, by
the old man's side,

Thy boyish steps have pattered ; by yon hearth
He held thee at his knee—his playful hand
Entangled in thy hair—and stooped his ear
To catch thy prattle ! Dost thou still advance ?
Then over me ! Look, by that chair we knelt
To plight our troth before him, while his voice—
A soldier's voice, weak with the weight of love—
Faltered his blessing ! Come, be bold ! Fulfil
Thy work ! Stand on my father's hearth, and there,
There where he blessed us, speak his doom !

[*Dragging him to the hearth.*]

Strath. [*Breaking from her.*] Craighburn !

[*He extends his hands towards the door, and falls senseless.*]

ACT IV., SCENE I.

Ante-room in Lorn Castle, opening upon terrace as in Act III. Moonlight.

Enter ISABEL and ROLAND.

Isa. How shall I thank thee—how repay this debt ?

Rol. With one of your kind smiles.

Isa. And Janet's love ;
Is it not so ? Though generous hearts like thine
Find in themselves reward. Yet, if Heaven help me,
Thy lot shall match thy worth. Now to my sister,
And bid her join me.

Rol. Straight. [*Going.*] Stay, I'd forgot
In our discourse this letter. [*Gives it.*]

Isa. Ah, for me ?

Rol. One, whom I think his peasant's garb disguised,
Gave it me at the gate. His suit was urgent
That it should reach you.

Isa. [*Aside, opening letter.*] From my husband !
'Tis precious news, my Henry comes. Speed, speed !

Rol. Madam, your sister ! [*ROLAND goes out.*]

Enter KATHARINE.

Isa. Well, your face tells all.
You sued to Strathmore, and in vain !

Kath. He swooned
In anguish at my feet—his frame a reed,
But, oh ! his honour—rock !

Isa. His honour, girl !

Kath. 'Tis not for minds like ours to judge of Strath-
more.

Isa. You love him !

Kath. Peace, I say! You speak to one
Frenzied by grief!

Isa. There may be hope.

Kath. Hope!

Isa. Ay!

Strathmore's dependants form Sir Rupert's guard—
Men whom your father did of old befriend.
I've seen them, thanks to Roland, moved their hearts
By memories of past kindness. Let but Henry
Appear before the walls, my life on't, these
Go over to his banner!

Kath. O my brother!
If he could guess our strait!

Isa. He does, and waits
But to collect his force;—here's tidings from him.
See, by the date, with those in his command,
He should be here already!

Kath. If he fail!
Ah me! an inner voice knells in my heart.
My brother vanquished—where's my father's life?
Victorious—where is Strathmore's? Not a wind
But drives me on the rock:

Isa. Your gloom infects me. Forth upon the terrace;
There watch you; 'tis a balmy night. Nay, sweet,
I'll have it so, for I must plan alone.

[*She leads KATHARINE to the terrace, and returns.*
To gain delay. How best to compass that?
Who comes? Brycefield, the caitiff who would trade
With a wrung heart! Must I dissemble yet?

Enter BRYCEFIELD.

Bryce. Rebuke me not, fair sorceress, with a frown,
That I o'erstaid my time.

Isa. Sir, I most freely
Forgive your absence.

Bryce. [*Approaching her.*] Scorn! I must woo
Those lips to seal my bliss, must hear them pledge

The prize my own for which I venture life—
Your hand, your love !

Isa. But love, sir, has its duties,
And these ask time to learn.

Bryce. No need of time
To teach thee how to love.

Isa. Oh, it needs much
To love you after your desert ! So brave,
So stamped with honour are you, modesty,
Summing your riches, is abashed to claim them.

Bryce. What ! do you trifle, lady—do you mock
My flag of amity ? Then I hoist war's !
If that fond siege be war which would subdue
Only to cherish thee. I know your wiles—
That you have practised on my guard ! A word
Of that—suspicion roused—your father's fate
Waits not for dawn : he dies this hour !

Isa. O heartless—

Bryce. Madam, the game at chess grows critical.
I move again.

Isa. [*Aside.*] On what a brink I stand !

[*She moves to terrace and returns.*]

Fly, Henry, fly ! [*With feigned gaiety.*] So you play
boldly, sir.

Bryce. You dally with me, while each moment lost
Doubles our risk. I have provided all
For instant flight. Be thou but kind, the bolt
Falls from Sir Rupert's dungeon ! In his name
I seize that beautiful hand !

Isa. [*Turning to the terrace.*] How looks the night ?

Bryce. Sweet, 'tis a night for love !

Isa. The moon doth wear
Her full-orbed crown, and through a special court
Of stars, moves queenlike.

[*Intently gazing from the terrace.*]

Bryce. Turn thee to the earth,
Thy glance makes brighter ! gaze not at the stars !

Isa. Of old, men read their fate there. I seek mine.

Bryce. What dost thou ask them?

Isa. If it be my lot

To find a husband.

Bryce. And with one accord

They answer—

Isa. Hush! [*Aside.*] Methought I heard a sound.

[*A pause.*]

'Tis but the far sea flowing.

Bryce. Are the skies

Dumb, or thou blind? Thou canst not read their
speech!

Isa. Canst thou?

Bryce. Plainly; why, look! love's radiant star—
Bright Venus—laughs reply; and all the spheres
Around her echo—Thou shalt find a husband!
Say they not so?

Isa. [*With sudden transport.*] They do—they do!

Bryce. [*Sinking on his knee.*] Behold him!

Isa. Up, up, and give him welcome! See, he comes
First in a tide of plumes! a thousand swords
Flash in his wake! He will requite your love,
Doubt not!

KATHARINE *rushes in.*

Kath. 'Tis Henry—my brother!

[*Martial music heard in the distance.*]

Bryce. How!

Isa. My husband!

Bryce. Husband!

Isa. Summoned by you. That letter to the chaplain,
By you despatched, contained another scroll!
'Twas superscribed, "To Henry Lorn; ride, ride
For life!"—he's here. I won on you to change
Sir Rupert's guard, and you unwittingly
Placed friends for gaolers. The game's won—check-
mate!

Bryce. I like thy spirit, wench! but I have yet

A pawn to move perchance may queen the board ;
The game's not over. Tremble if I win.

[*Rushes out by the terrace.*]

Kath. He may devise some evil to my father !

Isa. Well thought of, girl ! Let's seek out honest
Roland.

Fear not ! the guard are ours.

Kath. Quick, to Sir Rupert !- [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

Spacious room in Lorn Castle, as before.

Enter HAMILTON and CRAIGBURN.

Craig. I tell thee, I mistrust him ! He gave audience
To the malignant's daughter ; yea, we found him,
When she went forth, prone on the very ground !
Thence, being raised, there struggled through his speech
Vague hints of coming rescue.

[*Artillery heard without, repeatedly.*]

Han. 'Gainst which he had provided. See, he comes.
That head erect, and frank eye, speak no traitor !

Enter STRATHMORE, his sword drawn.

Strath. Forth, brothers, forth ! the foe is at the gates !

Craig. Is there no foe within the walls ?

Strath. What mean you ?

Enter BRYCEFIELD.

Bryce. Revolt and treason ! Your dependants, Strath-
more,
Throw off the yoke of fealty, and join hands
With the invaders ! Terror strikes the rest.

Han. Have you betrayed us ?

Craig. Answer, at what price
Is Israel sold to Edom ?

Strath. Craigburn ! [*Restraining himself.*] No,

'Tis not for thee at such an hour to move me.
Think of our cause !

Ham. Your cause ?

Strath. Have we not staked
Name, home, love, life—the sum of all our being—
On freedom's ransom ?

Craig. Heed him not, retreat !
Retreat, I say ! As yet the rearward path
Lies open.

Strath. Quit your ground of vantage ? 'No,
Forth with me to the ramparts ! Those who doubt
Shall trust again, and our live torch of honour
Rekindle those in ashes, till the walls
Blaze with one glory !

Ham. He says well.

Craig. Beware !

Strath. Alone I'll meet them !

Bryce. I'm your mate.

Ham. Nay, follow. [*All go out. Alarums.*]

Isa. [*Without.*] Forth to the fray ! Then to me with
your tidings.

Enter ISABEL.

Still they contend. Would that the fight were o'er,
And Henry safe. A lull ! ah, many a wreck
That sanguine tide shall leave upon the strand !

Enter ROLAND.

What news ?

Rol. Brave news. They yield !

Isa. Who yield ? the rebels ?

Rol. Panic has seized them, and your husband's
troops

Force easy passage. Brave Sir Rupert's free !

Isa. Where is my sister ?

Rol. At her father's side.

By her command I brought her where he is.

[*Hurried steps and voices heard without.*]

Isa. The tramp of hurrying steps. That voice !

Rol. Sir Rupert's !

Isa. My husband with him !

Enter HENRY LORN, SIR RUPERT, and KATHARINE
leaning on her father. ROLAND *goes out.*

Hen. Isabel !

Isa. My hero ! [*They embrace.*] Dear Sir Rupert !
[*Taking his hand.*]

Sir R. So, lass ! my brave boy's succour has postponed
Your heritage awhile. But for that aid,
Another sun had seen him Lord of Lorn !
How went it with the knaves ?

Hen. Some few were slain,
Some taken ; but their leaders, by the steeps
Where horsemen might not follow, have escaped—
Save one I shrink to name.

Isa. Strathmore !

Hen. Yes, wounded.
Our force had beat him down : he must have perished
But for my rescue.

Sir R. Though he merits death,
Yet am I glad he fell not by our sword.

Hen. Alas ! his doom is but delayed. Fierce Dalzell,
Who, under Monmouth, through a bloody field
Has chased the rebels, hither hastes his march.
He will demand the prisoners at our hands.

Kath. My father !

Hen. Dalzell bears a heart of flint
That ne'er knew pity ; I have heard him name
Strathmore with those whose doom, when seized, is
death—

Without reprieve or trial.

Kath. Do you hear ?

Sir R. My child ! I would not cloud this day with
grief,
Nor can thy father stoop to base revenge.

Yet, mark ! I will not shield persisting treason.
 If Hálberty Strathmore formally subscribe
 Such recantation of his guilt as I
 Will forthwith frame, and, to atone it, pledge
 A loyal future, by our tried allegiance
 I will beseech his life. I think even Dalzell
 Will grant that boon to service proved like ours.
 But heed me, Katharine, if Strathmore spurn
 These terms of mercy, though he were my son,
 I would not waste a breath !

Hen. His party crushed,
 Persistence now were madness.

Kath. One more boon—
 That your conditions I may bear to Strathmore.

Sir R. Be it so, girl ! He may prove obdurate.
 Remember, though, this meeting is your last.
 You parley with the rebel, not the friend !
 Come ! I'll prepare the bond.

Kath. I'll follow you.

[SIR RUPERT, HENRY, and ISABEL go out.]

Rebel ! what means that word ? Fear for my father
 Has blinded me to truth : now I see all !
 Right trampled on—pure conscience counted crime—
 And hatred banqueting on good men's groans !
 My brother owned it ! And the man who beards
 This wrong's a rebel ! Sure, the courts of heaven
 Are peopled with the outcasts of this world !
 My Halbert ! Oh, he will reject these terms !
 I dare not think on that. One last farewell—
 One prayer to save him ends my dream of life !

[*She goes out.*]

Enter STRATHMORE, wounded, supported by ROLAND.

Rol. Lean on me, sir ; lean on me ! You are faint,
 I saw you struck. Your wound needs rest and quiet.

Strath. [*Sitting.*] Good friend, I feel it not !

Rol. So sharp a hurt
 Asks better surgery than you afford.

Strath. Dalzell, you say, comes hither ?

Rol.

Ay, sir !

Strath.

Then

Each captive's fate is sealed. Beseech Sir Rupert
To give me audience. [*Aside.*] My offence being chief,
My death should free the rest.

Rol. I'll do your bidding. [*He goes out.*]

Strath.

Could I save the rest,

I'd know no other care ! My soul breathes freely—

Leaving all with God. As through half-open gates

Of Death's grim arch, I catch the fields of day.

Yet, Katharine ! there earth's fond, last weakness
clings.

To her my name must be a thought to shrink from.

I shall not have a tomb in that fair realm

Where I had once a home.

Enter KATHARINE, with a paper.

[*Rising.*] Has my heart's cry

To look on thee been heard ?

Kath.

We meet once more—

To part for ever !

Strath.

With a faltering voice

You say it—not in hatred !

Kath. Hatred ! [*Looking mournfully in his face.*] Oh,
how fierce

Has been thy struggle !

Strath.

Can you feel

That I have struggled ?

Kath.

Nobly ! Yes, I know it.

Strath. You know it, and absolve me ! You will bear
To think upon my memory !

Kath.

Thy memory !

While I can bear to think.

Strath.

I did not hope

For this. I shall die smiling !

Kath.

Die ! thou shalt not !

My father and my brother, who have served
 The royal cause so well, will plead with Dalzell.
 Sign but this scroll ! [Gives it to him.]

Strath. [*Feebly, after perusing it.*] Ah ! know'st thou
 what conditions

The bond demands ?

Kath. I do.

Strath. That I confess

My treason, and abjure it, never more
 Further my righteous cause by tongue or sword,
 In act become a traitor—to escape
 A traitor's sentence !

Kath. But your cause is crushed !

Strath. Crushed ! No, it triumphs still. Though free-
 dom's hosts

Bleach the green earth with death, that cause is safe
 That has its Chief above ?

Kath. You will not sign ?

Strath. And canst thou ask me ?

Kath. Ay, while I have breath.

Who gave thee right to quench my life in thine ?
 Though we must part, 'tis comfort still to think
 One world contains us. I should curse the sun
 If it could light a world that held not thee !

Strath. My Katharine !

Kath. 'Twas you upheld my steps
 When we were children. On the hill-side flowers
 The golden gorse, from which you plucked the thorn
 That else had harmed me. In the brook still float
 Lilies like those we wove. Another spring
 Will find them there—but thou ! [Falling on his neck.]

Strath. My truth ! my truth !

Kath. I will not let thee go. Ere see thee perish,
 I'll burst all ties of duty, dare all shame,
 Renounce all kindred ! They are gone ! Be thou
 Friend, father, brother, home, and universe !

Strath. Forbear, forbear ! [Sinks into chair.]

Kath. Whate'er I know or feel

Of good, you taught me. You relent ; you'll sign ?

Strath. [*Feebly, but with increasing energy as he proceeds.*] You shall decide. [*She kneels by his side.*]

Two paths before me lie,
The one through death to honour——

Kath. Halbert !

Strath. Nay,

There are but two ! First, say we choose the nobler—
Then wilt thou think of Strathmore as of one
Who, by his last act, fitly sealed a life
He would bequeath thee spotless.

Kath. Ah, bequeath !

And I shall never see thee more !

Strath. [*Pointing upwards.*] Yes, Katharine !

Kath. The other path ?

Strath. It leads to life through shame.

Wouldst have me take it—live to own no bond
But with dishonour ; when I catch the tale
Of heroes, vainly groan—“ Such once I was ! ”
And when the coward's shudder—“ Such I am ! ”

Kath. This gloom will melt in a bright future.

Strath. No ;

He has no future who betrays his past.

Kath. Still live !

Strath. To give the lie

To my true youth ; find every stream of joy,
When I would drink, reflect my branded brow,
And so recoil ; shrink, when thy straining breast
Throbs to a traitor's ; read in those dear eyes
The temptress, not the wife !

Kath. Cease, Halbert ! cease !

Strath. [*Rising.*] Speak, shall I sign ?

Kath. [*Starting to her feet.*] No—die !

Strath. [*Embracing her.*] My wife ! my Katharine !
we are one for ever.

Kath. Teach Fate that truth, that we may die to-
gether.

Strath. Fount of my peace ! my own !

Kath. I am at rest.
How is it with thee?

Strath. Sweet, sharp care has mined
The bulwarks of my life, and thy great sea
Of love doth overflow it!

Enter HENRY LORN, SIR RUPERT, and ISABEL.

Hen. Where's the confession? Dalzell comes; your
judge!

Kath. Help, Henry!

Hen. Strathmore! [*Supporting him as he sinks.*

Kath. You are come too late!

Strath. No, love is ne'er too late. Harry! old play-
mate!

Is that Sir Rupert?

Hen. Speak to him!

Sir R. A night

Deepens upon his face. Halbert, this hour
Blots all our rancours, and I but behold
Thy father in thee!

Strath. We're at peace—all, all!
I pray you to deal gently with my brethren.

Isa. Lean on my bosom, sister!

Kath. No; 'tis well!

Strath. Where art thou, Katharine? [*She kneels, and
places her hand in his.*] So—I turn my life
To the bright East, where all its beauty rose,
And sleep beneath its beam—we do not part!

[*Dies.* ISABEL and SIR RUPERT advance as if to re-
move KATHARINE, who motions them away.]

Kath. I am his now—I am his own in death!

[*She falls prostrate on the body.*]

END OF STRATHMORE.

MARIE DE MÉRANIE.

A Tragedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

Marie de Méranie,

First performed at the OLYMPIC THEATRE, November 1856.

CHARACTERS.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS, <i>King of France,</i>	Mr	G. V. BROOKE.
GUÉRIN, <i>a Knight Hospitaller—his</i>	}	Mr DIDDEAR.
<i>Chancellor,</i>		
ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS,	Mr	G. COOKE.
DE FONTAINE,)	}	Mr HENRY FARREN.
DE TOURNET,)		
DE LA ROCHE,)		
<i>Nobles secretly dis-affected to Philip Augustus,</i>		Mr NORTON.
<i>Augustus,</i>		Mr KINLOCH.
BISHOP OF PARIS,	Mr	JAMES JOHNSTONE.
SIR LUCIEN DE LARRANTE, <i>attached</i>	}	Mr W. FARREN, Jun.
<i>to the household of Marie de Méranie,</i>		
ADOLPHE, <i>page to Marie de Méranie,</i>	Miss	ISABEL ADAMS.
BRIORN, <i>Danish envoy,</i>	Mr	C. BENDER.
OFFICER,	Mr	GEOFFREY.
USHERS,	}	Messrs HENRY and BRADY.
CITIZENS,		
		Messrs CLIFTON, HAR- RIS, and TANNER.

*Bishops, Priests, Nobles, Citizens, Guards, Retainers,
Attendants, &c.*

INGERBURGE, <i>Queen of France,</i>	Miss	ADAMS.
MARIE DE MÉRANIE,	Miss	HELEN FAUCIT.
ANNE DE VIGNOLLES,	Mrs	LEIGH MURRAY.

Period, end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries.

MARIE DE MÉRANIE.

—o—

ACT I., SCENE I.

Paris. A public place in the vicinity of the Palace.

FONTAINE, LA ROCHE, and TOURNET standing apart.
Citizens, youths, and maidens dancing at back ; occasional acclamations.

1st Cit. Long live King Philip !

2d Cit. And Queen Ingerburge !

1st Cit. I say, long live King Philip ; and the Queen
May live too—till she tires him !

3d Cit. Ill for her
Had she wed thee on such conditions !

1st Cit. Truly,
'Twere ill for both had I wed her on any !
Pardie, a white-faced Dane, with yellow—

2d Cit. Friend,
Beware my cudgel ! Faith, a likely knave
To prate of a queen's hair !

1st Cit. Well, all I say,
Poor lady, of her Danish face, is this—
If her heart be not cold and sour, the wine
They drink in Denmark must be very thin.

3d Cit. Not so is that which all to-day hath flowed
Along our streets, in honour of her marriage.
Pity a king can't marry every day !

*[Several Nobles pass through the crowd with a
haughty carriage.]*

2d Cit. Hush, masters ! doff your caps ! Ay, there they go !

Now there's a mouth would fall into a sneer,
After the draining of a well-brimm'd cup.

1st Cit. Ay,

Because the king forbids them hang their serfs
For a morn's pastime, they grow sullen. Would
They'd kindly feed our mirth that way themselves !

2d Cit. Always except the brave Fontaine, and those
His loyal comrades of the household. See,
He stands, a knightly pattern !

3d Cit. Well, let's on—
Long live the King !

2d Cit. And Queen !

3d Cit. And song !

1st Cit. And dance !

[They join the dancers in the background, and rush out with cheering and music.]

La Roche. Where fall thy musings ?

Tour. Faith, on loyalty.

Fon. Now, what is loyalty ?

Tour. Once in an age,
A people's echoed love ; oft but a vent
For the national superfluity of sound.
The essence of this ardour towards the king
Is his despite to us.

La Roche. Ay, the appeal
He gave our vassals from us to himself.
One may not scourge, or chain, or hang one's serfs
Without the king's good pleasure. That's to rate
A peasant's life as richly as a noble's.
Our cattle soon shall have their justice-halls,
And fine the herdsman for his blows !

Tour. Fontaine,
Shall we thus tamely yield our rights and honours ?
Thy kinsman rose 'gainst this unnatural wrong !

Fon. And lost his head. You see, I'm tame.

Tour. Thou art !

Fon. Had I been king, he should have lost his head.

Power, when assail'd, must sternly strike or die.

La Roche. Dost praise the king ?

Fon. Yes.

Tour. Dost forgive him ?

Fon. No.

Yet do I hate him not ; but must wipe out
By my necessity the stain wherewith
His own necessity disgraced my house.
Besides he hath despoiled us of our rights—
Perilled our very order ; and my aim
Slackens no whit, under this guise of love,
To work his downfall. Still I like the man—
I like him for a foe. Though wily, brave,
And bounteous like heaven.

Tour. Ay, sir, to those

Who rate him as a god ; but cross his pride——

Fon. And he's a demon. So the brightest torch
Flings deadliest glare on the opposing wind.
Let's own the quarry noble that we fly at—
I would he had not slain my kinsman, though.

Tour. What must be done ?

Fon. Nothing.

La Roche. Nothing? Be sure

Much always hides in Fontaine's nothings.

Fon. Friends !

The king—just wed with Ingerburge—has girt
His throne with a new bulwark, Denmark's aid.
His foes abroad put up their half-drawn swords,
And wait their season : we must do the same.

La Roche. A bitter physic for his kingdom's ills,
Finds Philip in his wife !

Tour. 'Twas a strange union ;

No note of preparation. In one week

They were betrothed and wed !

La Roche. Fontaine, didst mark

His bearing at the altar ?

Fon. It scarce spoke
The bridegroom an idolater.

La Roche. The lady,
Thou knowest, was his kinswoman. That staled him.

Fon. His kinswoman ! Ay ! near ?

La Roche. So near, indeed,
That your wits jest and cynics frown distaste.

Tour. They are so close akin, 'tis said their marriage
Borders upon offence to Holy Church.

Fon. Borders upon it ?

Tour One or two degrees
Had made the bond unlawful.

Fon. Good ! degrees
Are what construction makes them, and construction
Is a most pliant servant to the will.
Borders ? humph !

La Roche. Speak !

Fon. Don't shake the vat wherein
The liquor should ferment. I will——

Tour. What ?

Fon. Join
These loyal revellers.

Citizens and others re-enter.

Saints, what an eye
That dancing nymph hath ! ankles, too, that gleam
Like two mad stars at play !

Tour. And can thy brain
Stoop to these follies ?

La Roche. 'Tis his whim.

Fon. Sage Tournet !
Thy moody face too well reports thy heart.
Jovial La Roche ! thy wits too oft escape
Through that wide, ever-open gate—thy mouth.
And so I quit ye both. Why, life's a game
Whose zest's variety ! Plots, festivals,

Rose-wreaths and lances, council-chambers, bowers
Alternate bravely. Nay, look, what an ankle!

[He breaks from them, and joins the throng in the background.]

SCENE II.

An apartment in the Palace.

Enter PHILIP, INGERBURGE, GUÉRIN.

Guér. Your royal consort, sire, has cause for speech.
Forgive me if, as priest still more than knight,
I here uphold her claims.

Ing. Sir! if in aught
I have displeased you, name my sin. If not,
Use me as innocent, and as your wife.

Phil. What lacks your grace? A larger retinue?
More liberal pomps or pleasures? They are yours,
Though our exchequer fail.

Ing. These are my due:
Yet, more—your countenance, society,
Public respect. Why do you shun my sight,
And make my lofty station void of honour?
Courts quickly learn to slight whom kings despise.

Phil. Whate'er was mine to give is yours already.
We cannot take hearts in our hands and give them.

Ing. Yours is not mine then?

Phil. Did you give me yours?

Ing. I claim at least the decent shows of honour.
Nor is King Canute's sister so unfriended
That she should brook contempt of just demands.
Sir! see my ladies wait.

[To GUÉRIN. She makes a profound reverence, and quits the apartment.]

Phil. Claim, said she? Claim!
For this cold prudence whose ambition, even,
Voyages by map, not starlight—have I thee

For ever lost, my Marie? To this ruin
Thou didst persuade me, Guérin !

Guér. By your marriage,
Austria and Flanders, who, with English John,
Stand leagued against your peace, are held in awe ;
So, too, your disaffected nobles here.

Phil. Ay, true. The crafty Canute saw my strait,
And that crown'd usurer proffer'd Denmark's aid
Provided Philip made his sister queen !

Guér. The Lady Ingerburge is now your wife.
Brood on the past no more ; improve the present !

Phil. Cold-hearted priest ! That past enfolds a Marie.
She was my chosen : we were wed in heart.

[*Aside.*] Mariè, thou know'st not yet thy wrong ; thou
know'st not

Thy Philip perjured ; but confiding still,
Still loving, dost await him.

Guér. Sire, bethink you,
Monarchs are born for thousands, not for one ;
For duties, not affections.

Phil. Ay, wise craft !
With kings 'tis war with Nature from their birth.
Cold form sits by their cradles ; childhood's trust
And impulse curbed, a boy-prince rarely knows
Boy-fellowship, nor princely youth a friend.
And when, surviving still, the sense he drew
From heaven of beauty doth expand to love
Of some bright form of goodness ; when he yearns
In honour of the worshipped one to rear
That stateliest column, a great life ! when most
He feels his Nature's grandeur, strength, and joy,
A courtly custom intercepts his path
To the bright goal—love was not made for kings !

Guér. Great ones must crush their hearts to pave their
power.

Phil. 'Tis false ; the crushed heart's powerless. Stifling
that,

We stifle ardour, hope, and enterprise ;

And what God means for man dwarfs to a form,
A feeble puppet with a golden rim,
That doses life away, and dies unmissed !

Enter FONTAINE.

How, sir ! We're private !

Fon. Pardon, sire ! methought
I had your gracious privilege—if not,
My tidings might atone me.

Phil. Leave us, Guérin,
Bear with thy master, Stephen.

[*Apart to him, and taking his hand. GUÉRIN goes out.*
Well, speak on !

Fon. The insurgent nobles in the south submit
Unto your grace's arms, which news to crown,
From Otho—late your foe—have envoys sped
To hail you on your nuptials.

Phil. [*Bitterly.*] To the queen !
The might of Denmark quells these foes, extorts
These novel courtesies. Think'st thou not so ?

Fon. From your own seed hath sprung this harvest,
sire !

The glorious issue of his acts whose fame
Unwearied echo sounds, and to whose robe
Cling widowed majesty and orphan right ;
Whose very wards are monarchs !

Phil. Bid them fling
A cushion for me to the foot of the throne !
Is't meet that I should sit with her who gave it ?
Well, friend ? That glance has meaning ; speak your
thought.

Fon. Ah, my liege, pardon me, and bear with her !
I grieve 'tis noted that division lives
Between your princely hearts ;—but I presume.

Phil. Of all men have we singled thee for love.
Fear not.

Fon. Then till you chide I speak. Your consort holds

A double claim on duty ; first, as queen,
Then as your kinswoman. O sir, 'twere well
Those slanderous tongues were checked which dare im-
peach

Her title to that name you deigned confer.

Phil. Ah ! what name ?

Fon. Wife, my liege.

Phil. Wife ! say you, wife ?

They question that ?

Fon. Pretending, sir, that bonds
Of such close kinship knit you, ere you wed,
That marriage did invade their sanctity.

Phil. Is't said so ! Dare they.

Enter TOURNET *and* LA ROCHE.

Fon. Here come two, my lord,
Whose swords, incensed by men's audacious jests,
Have blushed to keep their sheaths.

Phil. Can I believe
Licence has grown so bold ?

Fon. As though a king
Were bound within the limits priests prescribe
The commonalty.

Phil. What ! you have heard this marriage
Laughed at, discussed, reproved ?

[*To* TOURNET *and* LA ROCHE.

Tour. [*Apart to* LA ROCHE.] What shall we say ?

La Roche. Oh, travel by the light of Fontaine's eye.

Fon. Forgive them, sire, if awe restrain their tongues.
Friends, witness for me that my words are true !

Phil. Speak frankly all.

La Roche. In every point, my lord,
Must I confirm the words of brave Fontaine.

Tour. So humbly I repeat, can I with grief
That reverence for your grace forbade my hand
To smite the scoffers.

Phil. [*Sternly.*] Well, you did refrain !

Judge not in the king's quarrel, nor revile
 Those whom you count his foes, more kin perchance
 Than meddlers, to his pleasure. Sirs, retire !

[TOURNET and LA ROCHE go out.

Fontaine, we need thee still. We'll breathe the air.
 Walk by our side. We rate thee highly, friend ;
 And honour thee with fullest trust.

[Extends his hand to him.

Fon. [Kneeling.]

Your grace

Is rich in bounty and in confidence
 To your poor vassal ; [Aside.] tendering him this hand
 Red with a brother's blood !

[FONTAINE rises ; PHILIP motions him to follow.

Fon. [Bowing deeply.] Sire, I attend you.

[The KING goes out, followed by FONTAINE.

SCENE III.

Gardens adjoining the Château of MARIE DE MÉRANIE, some leagues from Paris. The garden is laid out in grass plots, bordered with trees. Rustic seats are placed here and there. Entrance to Château, which is visible at side.

Enter ADOLPHE, CÉCILE, and other retainers of MARIE DE MÉRANIE'S household, including women and children. They sing as they enter.

SONG.

*To our noble lady hail !
 Now from every hill and vale
 Let our prayers and praises sound ;
 Be her years with blessings crowned,
 All earth's choicest gifts attend her,
 All Heaven's gracious powers befriend her.*

Adolphe. [To the rest.] Now for a dance, a blithe dance ; let the foot

Bound lightly to the pulses of the heart,
For 'tis our lady's birthday.

Cécile. Brightest fête
Of all we keep ; to-day the Princess Marie,
So loved by all, so well deserving love,
Attains her twentieth birthday.

Adolphe. Her first birthday
Since she left Méranie ; the duke, her father,
Desired that she should learn the life of courts
In polished France, and at King Philip's prayer
Did send her hither.

Cécile. Ah ! life's gay enough
When she's at court ; but this, her country home,
Where no news travels, six long leagues from Paris,
Is dull as gaol or convent.

Adolphe. We'd make merry
Even in gaol upon her birthday.

Many Voices. Ay !

Adolphe. 'Twould be no gaol if she were there. The
dance !
Your hand, Cécile ! [*A rustic dance, in which all join.*
Adolphe. See, see, the princess comes !

[*Enter MARIE DE MÉRANIE, attended by ANNE DE VIGNOLLES.*

All. Long live the princess !

Cécile. Long live the Lady Marie ! Now, Elise !

[*ELISE, a child, led by CÉCILE, advances from the group, kneels, and presents flowers to MARIE.*

Marie. [*Graciously receiving them, and embracing ELISE.*] Thanks, thanks, my sweet Elise ;

Thanks, thanks, kind friends ;
This is a happy birthday. She, indeed,
Has right to count it such who year by year
Finds old friends still more loving, and new friends
To ripen into old ones. Follow now
The Lady Anne. There is a feast prepared ;

And ere you quit the board, myself will join you.
Conduct them, Anne ; you too, Adolphe, go with them.

[She makes a gracious inclination, which the group answer with obeisances, and retire into the Château, conducted by ANNE and ADOLPHE. As they retire, they resume the song with which the scene opens.]

Marie. *[Who has sunk into a rustic chair.]* A happy birthday ! Ay, the happiest !

Past years seemed bright ; but oh ! how wan appears
Their brightness set by this ; just as, at eve,
The early stars seem bright, until the moon,
Like a new birth in heaven, breaks forth and drowns them.

So my past joys fade in a rarer bliss —

A bliss so pure, I scarce dare whisper it—

I love and I am loved ! Am I not, Philip ?

[Draws a letter from her bosom.]

Here are thy words. *[Reads.]* “ Marie, my life, having thee,

I were earth's richest man ; earth's poorest man,
Having earth itself without thee. Doubt me not,
Though I delay. The acts of kings must wait
On policy, and on their people's need.

Yet, sure as rivers, howsoe'er they wind,

Tend to the sea, my love shall find thee out,

And claim thee of thy father ; doubt me not ! ”

Doubt thee ? Not while thy Marie is thy Marie !

[She sits absorbed, her eyes riveted on the letter.]

Re-enter ANNE.

Anne. *[Aside, observing her.]* Still wrapt in dreams—
in happy dreams of love,

Hid in joy's very core, as is a bee

In a rose's heart. O cruel task to wake her !

Yet she must wake. 'Tis months now since King Philip
Pledged her that love which she has secret held

From all but me. He vowed ere many days

To ask her of her father, but forbears
 To claim his prize. One letter, which she wears
 And hoards as 'twere some life-protecting charm,
 Is all since then that she has heard of Philip.

[MARIE turns and sees ANNE; then, as if waking
 from reverie, replaces letter in her bosom.]

Marie. So, Anne; how goes the feast?

Anne. O, gaily, madam!

On this your birthday every face puts on
 Its happiest smile.

Marie. Except, dear Anne, thine own.
 How comes it that to-day thy lively wit
 Deserts thee, and thy clear, smooth brow grows clouded?

Anne. Is it so, madam?

Marie. [Taking her hand playfully.] Ah! I guess the
 cause:

Our knight, Sir Lucien, stays too long in Paris.
 Thou'dst have him home?

Anne. Have Lucien home? for what?
 To tire my eyes by day with love-sick looks,
 And break my rest at night with serenades!

Marie. Perverse one! Hide thy secret from thy friend,
 Who tells thee all? Thou long'st for his return.
 Yet, faith, scarce more than I. He may bring tidings—
 Thou know'st of whom?

Anne. You mean he may bring tidings
 From Paris of the king.

Marie. He may.

Anne. [Aside.] Fond heart,
 That harbours not a doubt; so unprepared
 For the stern blow I dread! [Aloud.] Dear mistress,
 He may, indeed, bear tidings of the king;
 But is't not strange?— [Hesitates.]

Marie. Go on.

Anne. That months should pass
 With no word from the king—no little message
 Or sign of memory?

Marie. [Smiling.] Dost thou doubt him, Anne?

Anne. Dost thou ne'er doubt?

Marie. I love; love cannot doubt.

Anne. His silence and his absence then——

Marie. Are tests

That prove my faith. What! Think'st thou, when this king——

The pride of Europe, Champion of the Cross,

The serf's deliverer, the people's friend——

Deigned proffer of his love to one like me,

I should requite his love with base suspicion?

He pledged me in himself the sum of all

That man could give. Shall I not give him trust?

Anne. Heaven make him worthy of it. You might choose

Less grandeur with more peace. Report gives out

This king for stern and crafty——

Marie. Envy still

Defames the life above it——

Anne. And, at least,

The king's not young.

Marie. The great are ever young.

Anne. [*With a sad smile.*] We make things as we will them. [*Breaking off.*] Hush! a voice.

Sir L. [*Without.*] My lady here, you say?

Marie. [*To ANNE.*] Ay, and a step!

And by that blush thou knowest whose. 'Tis Lucien.

Enter SIR LUCIEN.

Said I not so?—You're welcome, friend; we long

Have looked for your return. What news from Court?

Sir L. Events both strange and sudden, gracious lady.

I come from Amiens, where three days since

The city, dressed in banners, with a shout

Of mingling bells, that pealed from dawn to midnight,

Proclaimed the royal marriage.

Marie. [*With unsuspecting interest.*] Royal marriage! Who were the bride and bridegroom? Came the king there?

Sir L. [*Surprised.*] How, madam !

Marie. Came the king there ?

Sir L. Surely, princess.

Methought I told you that the king himself

Was married three days since at Amiens.

Anne. [*Aside.*] Worse than I feared ! Rash blunderer !

[*Apart to him.*] Hold, Sir Lucien !

Marie. Married ! The king ! What king ?

Sir L. King Philip, please you,

To Princess Ingerburge, great Denmark's sister.

Marie. [*After a pause, mastering her emotion by a great effort.*] You know this—saw it. 'Tis not mere report ?

Sir L. I know and saw it, madam.

Marie. [*Forcing a smile.*] So 'twas sudden.

Sir L. 'Twas most unlooked for.

Marie. And the bride, you say—

Sir L. Is Princess Ingerburge.

Marie. A gracious lady,

As I have heard. We'll not detain you, Lucien.

Some other time we'll ask you of the pageant.

[*SIR LUCIEN bows, and goes out.*]

Anne. Sweet mistress : she is tranced. O, speak to me !

[*After a pause.*] Break, break this silence.

Marie. [*Rousing herself.*] Anne ?

* *Anne.* Your faithful friend,

Who knows your grief.

Marie. Then, if thou know'st it, speak not.

Anne. Shame on this forsworn king, this recreant knight !

Marie. Is this thy comfort ?—Peace !

Anne. Thy trust in him

Was thy soul's life, and he has slain it !

Marie. Then,

Respect the dead, and leave it to its silence.

[*ANNE is about to speak.*] I'd be alone ; retire.

[*ANNE, anxiously observing her, withdraws to back, but still remains on the scene.*]

Marie. [After a long pause.] Dead! Would it were—
 this heart that he has crushed!
 But ah! though crushed, it beats, and must writhe
 on,
 Trailing a wounded life out. Philip false!
 Do I so brand him?—I who, on his breast,
 Have drunk his vows, and from one smile have spun
 A life's whole sunshine—I who, had one said
 But yesterday—O Heaven! how many lives
 Is yesterday from this! He has been tempted,
 Driven to this marriage. Some stern need of State
 Has forced him on, while his resisting heart
 Still yearned to Marie. 'Twere a keener pang
 To think him faithless than to know him lost,
 Though lost for ever. Lost! in that one word
 My life is henceforth written. Lost! still lost!

[*She totters forward. ANNE, who has observed her
 emotion, hastens to support her.*

Anne. Sweet lady, gentle friend, 'tis I!

Marie. [Falling on ANNE'S neck with a cry.] Anne,
 Anne! [As ANNE supports her, and slowly leads
 her out, the drop-curtain falls.]

ACT II., SCENE I.

*The Palace. An ante-room leading to the
 Council Chamber.*

FONTAINE, TOURNET, and LA ROCHE. Nobles and others
 occasionally pass across the stage at the back.

Fon. [Bringing TOURNET and LA ROCHE forward.]

See, they go in to council! Not so loud.

La Roche. And so from that poor hint, that casual
 breath,

Thy art is like to work the queen's divorce!

Fon. Ay, if the council be but the king's clerk,
Crying amen to what he prays for.

Tour. Count not on that. The Churchmen whose advice

Is like to sway the synod may not strain
The law to such extremes. Divorce the queen
Because she was akin to Philip's wife,
Betrothed in boyhood! Thou dost prop our hope
On basement fine and frail as spider's line.

Fon. A most substantial bridge—that spider's line.
The iron wills all earth can scarce roll on,
Are zephyrs when themselves elect to move.
Our spider's line will do. The queen's divorce
The king wills, and the bishops will to please
The king's will, save the reverend Lord of Paris,
whom

The rest must overrule.

Tour. I doubt the issue.

Fon. Sir, the king's hate is threefold; in it blend
Jealousy of the Dane, disrelish fixed
Of Ingerburge, which she by threats and coldness
Has more inflamed, and passion for another.

La Roche. How will this serve us?

Fon. How? Art thou a mole,
That cannot see the daylight? Philip breaks
His oath to Ingerburge, and lays his crown
At Marie's feet. They wed. The incensed Dane,
His sister thus disgraced, withdraws his aids;
Nay, turns them to offence! John, Otho—seize
The auspicious hour! The Pope has been o'er-
looked

By these impatient prelates. Ingerburge
Appeals to Rome. Rome, glad to arbitrate
In royal feuds, her quarrel doth espouse.
The Pope is Philip's foe. What penal fires
Sleep in those words!—what crushing consequence!
Then is our time for action and revenge.
Then slaughtered kinsman, then dishonoured line,

Your retribution quickens ! Well, Sir Mole,
Dost thou yet see ?

La Roche. I see.

Fon. The council waits.

Come, come, the game proceeds ! Craft matched with
craft !

O conflict nobler far than sword with sword !

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

The Council Chamber.

PHILIP *on the throne.* GUÉRIN ; ARCHBISHOP OF
RHEIMS ; BISHOP OF PARIS *and other Bishops ;*
TOURNET, LA ROCHE, FONTAINE ; *other Nobles,*
Officers, &c. &c.

Guér. My gracious lord !

As counsellor, priest, soldier, friend, and man,
Do I abjure this deed. 'Twill shake your throne,
Stain your religion, blot your knighthood. What !
On this unheard-of cause ere scarce the sounds
Of marriage-bells have ceased—divorce your queen !
Sire, hear your servant !

Phil. Guérin ! Not with us

These issues rest. The king is passive here,
Waits sentence, doth not give it ; but obeys
In all the synod's voice.

Fon. [*Aside.*] Apt policy !

On others lights the odium whom his will
Governs unseen. Great king !

Guér. I turn to you

Whose mitred heads pledge justice. Sanction you
The queen's dismissal from his grace's arms ?
Will you confirm a deed whose startling shame
Grows ranker if you gloss it ; a vile deed
In all its aspects, unredeemed by pleas

Of precedent, necessity, or gain ;
 A deed whose nature but one question bears—
 Whether its madness or its sin exceed ?

B. of Paris. I think with you. Yet must our private
 wills

Yield to the force of numbers.

Guér. Not when numbers
 Would counsel majesty to fraud and wrong.

A. of Rheims. My lord, this vehemence denies respect
 Unto the general voice o'erruling yours.

Phil. Kind father ! deem not harshly of his zeal ;
 None hold we dearer.

Fon. [*Aside.*] A sagacious prince !

Arch. Reason is oftener the will's instrument
 Than ruler. It doth gloss the act we wish,
 But ne'er persuade to undesired conclusions.
 Therefore, from argument I little hope.
 I hold the marriage void, and shall record
 My oath so in due time.

B. of Paris. [*Coldly.*] I yield submission
 To your more reverend wisdom.

Arch. Then why tarry ?
 We with our holy brethren have conferred
 And are as one agreed.

Enter OFFICER.

Officer. In Denmark's name,
 Ambassadors crave audience.

Phil. Shoals so near port ! [*Aside.*
 In very season ! Straight conduct them hither.

*Enter BRIORN, the Danish envoy, and others, preceded
 by a HERALD.*

Speak ; your lord's errand, Briorn !
 [*HERALD sounds his trumpet.*

Bri. Denmark's king
 Greet's thee, King Philip, with accustomed love,

No credence deigning to the fame that tells
Thou wouldst divorce and shame his royal sister.

Phil. How if this fame speak truth?

Bri. Then princely Canute
Recalls his succours, and disowns his pact,
Holds thee, till death, worse foe than Death himself,
And bids thee know he hath appealed to Rome,
Whose mandate, disallowing thy intent,
I but some hours outspeed.

Guér. Thank Heaven! the Pope
From this black deed shall save us!

B. of Paris. [*To the Bishops.*] Rome! methinks,
'Twere best deliberate. Her supremacy
We peril by this act.

Phil. Wavering! [*Aside. To BRIORN.*] Return!
Tell Canute, who would play upon our fear
With Rome's dread wrath, our cause already seeks
Judgment from Rome's sworn ministers—our bishops;
Who, though we may augment, reduce, or wrest
From them entire rank, profit, and revenue,
As vagrant friars would rather beg than sell
Their conscience for reward.

Fon. Sagacious prince!
Most aptly put; their all depends on him. [*Aside.*

Arch. [*To BISHOP OF PARIS.*] We do but ill to dread
the morrow's storm

When the fire-gendering cloud o'erhangs our heads,
The king's displeasure! [*Other Bishops signify assent.*

B. of Paris. Even as you will.
Lay not this servile weakness to my charge.

Arch. This embassy, that threatens the Pontiff's wrath,
Bears no credentials from him. We maintain
Our purpose here. [*To BRIORN.*

Guér. Oh madness—infamy!
Defy the Pope? Our buckler cast away—
The Dane's alliance? while on every side
Foes draw their arrows headward! Rome, insulted,
Applauds each shaft, and lends her arm to crush!

O valiant nobles ! save us from this doom.—

I see you heed.

Tour. [*Apart to FONTAINE.*] By heaven, they quail !

Our stake

Is one with Philip's. We shall lose.

Fon. [*Apart to TOURNET and LA ROCHE.*] Mark, mark !

His brows contract and ope : his hands unite,
And straight unclench ; the torrent bursts. I said it.

Phil. No word to sway your sentence ; but, brave lords,
Let not the menaced loss of foreign aid

Weigh on your thought unduly ! I was wrong

To trust this land's defence to alien hands.

'Tis in itself a State is strong. No foe

Can sap such strength ; no friend its want repair.

O grey-haired warriors, who fight again

Your battles, in the young your memories fire,

And ye, of their renown the heirs, who burn

Their great bequest—undimmed to leave your sons,

Witness how legions fled your lonely brands ;

Conquest is child of hearts that trust themselves !

So with a State. 'Tis that life-blood called faith—

Faith in itself—that floods its frame with might !

No hireling arm for us ! Our own we raise

In our own war. [*Rises.*] Wake, France, thy crutches
fall ;

Thou towerest singly in thine inborn health,

Match for the banded world's dependencies !

Whose bosom echoes mine ?

Fon. Long live the king !

Nobles. Long live the king ! Long live the king !

Phil. Pronounce

Sentence !

Arch. The queen's divorce.

[*Chorus of Nobles and Bishops.*

Phil. Break up the council.

This sentence, Briorn, to thy lord report.

On, sirs !

[*The KING goes out, followed by Bishops and Nobles.*

Guér. [*Aside.*] The seeds are madness—death the fruit!

Fon. [*To LA ROCHE and TOURNET.*] Brave, brave! how zealously he fought for ruin!

His brain an engine turned against himself.

Our swords may rest. We need not strike to win.

[*All go out.*]

SCENE III.

Apartment in the Chateau of Marie de Méranie.

Enter SIR LUCIEN and ANNE.

Sir L. Nay, trust me; change so sudden and extreme Springs not from light occasion! She—a lady Of charity, more prompt than need was urgent; So patient, kind, serene—observe her now: Imperious oft, secluded, well-nigh stern; Capricious, fitful, motiveless in mirth!

Anne. Why, that's to say she's woman. Women change Sea-like, to show their rich variety.

To-day there's scarce a ripple, and to-morrow The waves are mountains. Now they're sober grey; Now brightly blue, they laugh and chase each other; Now, a black, moving wall, they crash in thunder. Sweet saints, how stale that man or woman were Who could not change. I've known such.

Sir L.

You evade me.

Some cruel stroke of fate has thus transformed her. It may be loss of friends, or trust betrayed, Or hopeless love.

Anne.

Or it may be the toothache.

Hopeless love! Good! [*With laughter.*]

Sir L.

You jest, not knowing love.

Anne. Prythee, set not

Thyself to teach me.

Sir L.

Why not?

Anne. Why not, Wisdom?
 Because to me love means a smiling face,
 While thine is rueful,—the brave march of life
 To clashing cymbals or the ring of steel,
 While thou dost drone on lute and mope in chambers.
 Why, thou wouldst woo in sermons, wed in black,
 And celebrate thy marriage by a fast!
 Nay, lay aside the sword and don the cowl;
 'Tis sad the Church should lack one skilled like thee
 In framing homilies!

Sir L. They shall not tire you.

[*Aside.*] Anne has no heart. 'Tis pity she is fair;
 More pity I should know it.

[*He bows coldly, and goes out.*]

Anne. He would pierce
 The silent mystery of the heart she shrouds,
 Or would shroud, from my love, and then, perchance,
 As he hath caught the minstrel's craft, regale
 The ears of languid knights and curious squires
 With my dear lady's story. Ah! she comes.

Enter MARIE.

Anne. [*Aside, regarding her.*] Beneath pride's robe
 grief hides its throbs in vain:
 The fluttering folds betray the heart beneath.

Marie. [*Suddenly turning and observing her.*] Well,
 mistress! What offence?

Anne. Madam! Offence?

Marie. Ay; where's the flaw? Where fails my tire-
 woman?

See'st thou my robe awry, or hair unbound?
 From head to foot, where's my defect?

Anne. Indeed,
 I mark none, madam.

Marie. What has made me, then,
 So curious in your sight—Lucien's and yours?
 Why meet and follow me your constant eyes?

My face is not a dial. If it were,
It lacks the sunshine !

Anne. They who seek its face
In sunshine—use the dial ; but who bends
O'er it in cloudy hours is won to gaze
By gratitude alone.

Marie. [*Sitting.*] A fair conceit !
My footstool ! And who taught my joyous Anne
These grave moralities ? Be blithe, my girl !
Thought comes with sorrow ; sorrow comes with years.
Alas ! sometimes with few. For me, I'm vowed
To mirth so deeply, no calamity
Shall e'er make me less happy than I am.

Enter SIR LUCIEN, hastily.

Sir L. News, Lady Anne ! The king—

Marie. The king ! Well, sir ?

Sir L. Madam, 'tis said between his majesty
And his new queen such difference hath grown
As rends the solemn ties that lately bound them.
'Tis rumoured that their marriage is annulled
By order of the Council ; on what ground
I know not yet.

Marie. On any, friend ; for power
Is its own argument. Unhappy lady !
My heart bleeds for thee. [*Aside.*] Lucien, thou hast
found
Our hall too like a prison. Forth and join
The city's pageant.

Sir L. Ah ! the day is lost
That sees me from your service.

Marie. Thanks ! But go.
So wilt thou serve me. 'Tis my wish.

[*SIR LUCIEN goes out.*]

He's gone !

I have a partner in calamity

In this wronged queen. I could not weep till now !

[*Falling on ANNE'S neck.*]

Anne. 'Tis strange I should be glad to see thee weep ;
And yet I am.

Marie. The bitterness is past.
I've too much strained thy patience. Thou'lt forgive
me ?

To-morrow we return to Méranie ;
And there, if Marie midst her sire's dependants
Their humble lot may cheer, their burthens ease,
Her life may yet have use. What mean those sounds ?
[*Trumpets heard without.*]

Re-enter SIR LUCIEN, followed by the KING.

Sir L. Madam, the king craves audience.

Phil. Whose the lip
But his to ask that boon ? Marie !

Marie. Your grace !
Wherefore ?—Nay, sir, 'tis granted.—Friends, retire.

[*SIR LUCIEN and ANNE go out.*]

Phil. How poor are thanks for payment. Thou wilt
hear,
Perchance—oh ! dare I hope it—pity ?

Marie. Both.
If you endure a grief unmerited,
I pity much ; and if deserved, still more.

Phil. Severer than rebuke is this forbearance.
Goes thy heart with it ?

Marie. Comprehend me, sir.
I do not feign that you have used me well,
Or that I have not suffered. But the wrong
Heaven strengthened me to bear, it bids me pardon.
As these are parting words, believe their truth.

Phil. Speak'st thou of parting ?

Marie. To my father's land
The morrow lights me.

Phil. Sooner be it quenched !
I come to atone the madness which awhile
Shut out thine image. To the throne of France

I bear thee. There no haughty rival towers :
Her chains are rent !

Marie. [*Sternly.*] How rent ?

Phil. She stands divorced.

Marie. And thou hast done this ! King, one woman's
heart

Glows not with triumph at another's fall ;
But shivers 'neath the warmest robe of love
Rent from a sister freezing in her woe,
And naked to the insult of the world !

Phil. She loves me not ; our differing wills recoil.

A grant in land to compensate her dower
Will medicine all her grief. Besides, in this,
I but obey the Church. Say, can thy voice
Cancel our prelates' judgment, or recal
Whom they have exiled ? No ; on me alone
Thy vengeance falls. Alas ! I have deserved
Thou shouldst forget or scorn me.

Marie. I forget !

I scorn, whose memory has no other wealth
Than those blest hours which, diving in the past,
She bears me back—dear relics of Hope's wreck !

[*Aside.*

I scorn ! No, Philip ! It will make my pulse
Beat quicker in its silence, when I hear
That you are happy ; and should perils come,
The faltering prayer your ear will never know,
May yet reach Heaven's. And so we do not part
In anger. From my inmost heart I bless you !

Phil. What words are these that bless me in their
sound,

And curse me in their sense ? O Marie, hear me !
Thy love is not alone my fortune's crown ;
'Tis Nature's need ! not to my branch of life
An added blossom, but the vital essence
Replenishing the root ! You changed my being !
I measured glory once by daring deeds,
Extended empire and prostrate foes.

You taught me, first, to think Deliverer
 A holier name than Victor ; that the rod
 Of terror rules but shrinking clay, while love
 Sits throned in living hearts ! I thought of thee,
 And from the captive dropped his chain ; of thee,
 And pardoned, rose the traitor at my feet ;
 Of thee, and bade the tyrant-stricken serf
 Look up, and greet a father in his king !
 O saint of mercy, I have built thee shrines
 By happy hearths through France ! It is thy life
 That thrills in every pulse, thy soul that floods
 Each artery of my own ! Each thought of good
 Is but thyself reflected ! Spurn not, crush not,
 That which thou didst create ! *[Sinking on his knee.*

Marie. *[Aside.]*

My feet are fixed.

I would depart, but cannot.

Phil. *[Rising.]*

Listen, heed !

Thou seest me contrite, pardon ; weak, sustain ;
 Erring, direct me ! Snatch me from the toils
 Of selfish brains, the chill of frigid hearts,
 The infected air that stifles and corrupts
 The soul that pants to live ! Unpitying still,
 Still silent ! Then farewell ; but when the years
 Of woe unshared, of struggles with the base
 Who taint even what resists them, aims unguided,
 Have frozen impulse into apathy,
 Mercy to rigour ; when the man, whom once
 You might have raised, bless'd, saved, becomes—Well,
 well,

Whate'er I may become, think what I was,
 And what I might have been had Marie loved me !

Marie. Had Marie loved thee ?

Phil.

And I dreamed she did.

Marie. O Philip ! I am thine.

[Throwing herself into his arms.

Phil.

Mine ! 'tis a sound

I could repeat for ever. Mine, mine, mine !

ACT III., SCENE I.

A public place in the neighbourhood of the Palace.

Groups of Citizens and others, including women and children.

1st Cit. This way he passes.

3d Cit. Who? the king?

2d Cit. To-day,

The king; to-morrow, what the Pope thinks fit.

4th Cit. [*Who has recently entered.*] 'Tis true: he meets the legate's threat with scorn,

Mocks holy counsel!

2d Cit. And upon us all

Draws the dread curse of Rome.

3d Cit. Ay, sirs, ourselves!

There lies the point.

1st Cit. We're cursed because the king,

For love of Lady Marie, his new queen,

Resists the Church's will, and takes not back

His lawful wife.

Many voices. Most true; we are, we are!

Enter FONTAINE, TOURNET, and LA ROCHE.

Tour. What mutter these base knaves?

La Roche. Their highnesses

Seem anger'd with the king.

Fon. [*Turning to the crowd.*] Impossible!

The king who freed the serfs, abased the nobles!

Ye're not such ingrates!

2d Cit. 'Tis my thought he freed

The serf from other tyrants, that himself

Might bear the rod alone.

3d Cit. [*To FONTAINE.*] Say, knightly sir,

How shall we 'scape the interdict? What means it?

Fon. More woes than tongue can speak or reason bear.

The pair who love, no pious rites shall join ;
 The penitent, no absolution find ;
 The living, no religious office bless ;
 The dead, no consecrated earth receive ;
 The purgatorial fire, no prayers nor alms
 Avert or shorten ! But your loyalty
 These ills affright not ?

3d Cit. Shall we bear the doom
 This impious king provokes ?

1st Cit. We'll not endure it.
 We'll cross his path, and tell him so !

The Crowd. Ay, tell him !

2d Cit. [To 1ST CITIZEN.] Thou shalt be spokesman,
 brother ! See, he comes !

1st Cit. Pardie ! 'Tis later than I thought. That
 dial——

La Roche. Let him not hence. Thou'lt gain promotion,
 friend !

3d Cit. They're here.

*Enter PHILIP and GUÉRIN, preceded and followed
 by Retainers.*

Budge not, stand thus [*Folding his arms*] ; none doff his
 cap.

Come forth ; give thy lung play.

[*To 1ST CITIZEN, whom he drags to the front. Cries
 of "Long live Queen Ingerburge !"*]

An Officer. Back, sirs ! The king.

Back, citizens, I say !

Phil. Why halt we ? How !

Hew us a pathway through these brambles, straight.

[*Officers drive back the crowd.*]

1st Cit. Back, back !

[*The KING, GUÉRIN, and retainers pass out.*]

I kept my cap on though he frowned.

2d Cit. We are too few ; let each man seek his friend,

And his friend's friend ; which done, let all assemble
Before the palace. *[Citizens rush out.*

Fon. Long ere then the knell

Ye dread to hear shall boom along your streets.

I marked the legate's face this morn. 'Twas calm

After he left the king. Beware such calm !

*[FONTAINE, TOURNET, and LA ROCHE go out on the
opposite side.*

SCENE II.

*An apartment in the Palace. An oratory, with crucifix
at back.*

MARIE, engaged on embroidery, ANNE, SIR LUCIEN. SIR
LUCIEN sings, playing an accompaniment on his
lute, the last notes of which are heard as the scene
opens.

Marie. Thanks, thanks, good Lucien ; break off to-day,
To-morrow thou shalt end the poet's tale.

In truth, a moving lay ! What think'st thou, Anne ?

[Smiling.

Anne. I may not contradict your grace.

Marie.

Dissembler,

Thou may'st, and oft thou dost. Come, come, your
judgment !

Anne. These love-tales tire me. I like not minstrels.

Marie. Thou art most thankless, then ; is she not,
Lucien ?

Sir L. Truly, I think so, madam ; for the minstrel
Makes woman's beauty known, and sings the deeds
Her love inspires.

Anne. A woman knows her beauty well enough
Without a minstrel, and would have deeds,
Not songs, to celebrate it.

Sir L. *[Aside.]*

Does she taunt me ?

[Bows, and turns away.

Marie. [*Apart to ANNE.*] Your jests offend him.

Anne. [*Apart to MARIE.*] Would that they could strike
One spark of spirit from him !

Marie. He is brave
No less than gentle, trust me ; do not gamble
With love, for thou dost love, nor slight the chance
Of joy like mine !

Anne. Art thou so happy ?

Marie. Am I Philip's wife ?

Anne. Yet thou hast cares.

Marie. True ; for my sake the king
Braves vengeful Denmark and imperious Rome,
And oft I fear his love conceals from me
Impending danger ; yet this selfish heart
Too oft forgets his danger in his love !

[*Tumult is heard without, and cries from crowd of*
"Long live Queen Ingerburge!" "Away with
Marie!"

What mean those angry shouts ?

Sir L. [*Going to window and looking forth.*] A
clamorous mob,
Frantic and desperate, has forced its way
Even through the palace gates !

Marie. Methought I caught
My name ! [*Renewed cries from crowd of "Away with*
Marie!" "Dismissal!" "Banishment!"] It is so.

Sir L. Heed not, royal lady,
The fickle crowd.

Marie. Sir, I must heed the crowd ;
For I am Queen of France, and they her children !

Sir L. [*From window.*] The king's guard drives them
back, and now the king
Himself approaches.

[*Tumult and cries renewed without, but more*
distant.

Marie. And they greet him thus !
Come !—Till I clasp him once more in these arms,
I shall not know him safe. Follow me ! Follow !

[*She goes out, followed by SIR LUCIEN and ANNE. Cries from the crowd, "Long live Queen Ingerburge!" Counter cries from guard, "In the king's name!" "Fall back, fall back!" As the guard drive back the crowd, the cries become fainter, and subside.*

Enter, on side opposite to that by which MARIE left, PHILIP and GUÉRIN.

Guér. Still ran the cry—*Long live Queen Ingerburge!*

Phil. [*Throwing himself into a chair.*] Queen!—dar'st thou with that title yoke her name!

Speak! was she not divorced?

Guér.

The bishops own

They did exceed their province to declare

Your marriage void without assent of Rome.

Phil. Let them own what they will—exhaust the breath

In their confessions, they may after need

To absolve less reverend sinners! They shall not

Include me in their penitence. They've erred,

They say. Sir, grant it. Shall they, then,

Retrieve their errors at my cost? Go to!

What they have done—is done; and if remorse

Will goad them—let it goad!

Guér.

Alas! my lord,

The Pope's authority o'errules their voice.

Your banished wife commands he you restore.

Obeys, you're saved; refuse, the interdict.

Phil. [*To himself, walking apart.*] Forsake thee,

Marie! No, what'er betide,

To thee I cleave! My love—if prodigal,

Unreasoning, wild—is sworn to thy defence.

As I'm a knight, I'll shield thee, though I cope

Alone with ruin! When this priestly wrath

Has scathed me, when my knightly robes are doff'd

For leper's sackcloth, and the potentate

Dwarfs to the outcast, own that I was true!—

[*After a pause.*] You wed a prince ;—or, say, a princely heart,
 Not less thy portion, though thy rival shared —
 My pomp and title. Is it heart for heart ?
 Oh, couldst thou love the man, if lost the king,
 What blest deliverance.—Saints ! I were no man,
 But recreant, to shame thee ! Misery,
 To what perdition dost thou tempt the soul !
 She's here, and the fiend flies her ;

Enter MARIE. GUÉRIN *withdraws to back.*

Wife !

Marie.

My Philip !

At last thy Marie knows at what dear cost
 She bears that name of wife. The people rise,
 And bid thee cast her from thee.

Phil.

Do they so ?

Modest to ask no more !

Marie.

Methinks I'd bid

Farewell to life this moment for thy sake ;
 Too happy were my tomb a hidden stone
 In thy joy's fabric.

Phil.

Hear me, Marie ! Witness

All that confirms an oath——

Marie. Thou shalt not swear.

Love that needs oaths to bind it—is forsworn
 Before it takes them.

Enter USHER.

Usher.

Good my lord, the Council

Even now assemble.

Phil.

Wait without, and bid

My train attend me. [*Officer goes out.*] Sweet, our conference

Will be but brief ; trust me, it bodes no evil.

Nor priest nor the leagued crowns of Christendom

Shall wrest thee from thy Philip. [*Embracing her.*] Fear not, Marie.

Guér. [*Aside.*] Then all is lost!

Phil. [*Turning to GUÉRIN.*] Now, Guérin!

Guér. Sire, I'll follow. [*The KING goes out.*]

[*Aside.*] Fate's on the moment; there's one desperate hope.

She, and she only, can save king and people!

[*Advancing to Marie.*] Your grace!

Marie. Why wait you, sir?

Guér. I am not welcome,

It seems; you hold me not your friend.

Marie. My lord,

The king's friend must be mine.

Guér. 'Tis as the king's friend

I dare to speak.

Marie. [*Sitting.*] Speak on.

Guér. 'Tis right you know

What peril threatens the king.

Marie. I know already.

Guér. Ay, but you know it vaguely, deem it distant; You think the cloud far off; 'tis black above you, And charged with ruin.

Marie. Hold! had the king wished I should know more, he had told me more.

Guér. The king

Cannot to you speak of this peril.

Marie. Why not?

Guér. Because you cause it. Deign to hear a man Whose task is harder than his bent; your lord For you defies the Pope, neglects his summons, And braves his edict. Wherefore Rome at last Rises to punish. Ere 'tis night, her curse, Her awful curse, may sound, and France and Philip Be outcasts from heaven's grace and earth's communion.

Marie. Oh, terrible! Yet thou art cruel, priest, To taunt me thus. Can I avert this doom?

Guér. You can avert it. You can rescue France

And him who rules France. You can save your lord—
His power, his fame, his perilled soul.

Marie.

You mock me.

How can I do this?

Guér.

'Tis for you he madly

Contentends with Ronie. Your fatal beauty absent,
Your claim resigned, he were no longer tempted.

Marie. What do you ask?

Guér.

Things hard but possible.

Give place to Ingerburge, your lawful rival;

Fly from the king; resign your name of wife.

Marie. [*Starting up.*] Resign my name of wife! Lord
Hospitaller,

Turn to me. Dar'st thou—thou, a holy priest,

Counsel a godless act? That name of wife

I at the altar took; shall I forswear it?

It made my lord's fate mine; shall I desert him

In this dark hour? Of his free choice he gave it;

Shall I fling back his gift? By law he gave it;

And shall I brand the deed that made him mine

As lawless shame? Good night.

Guér.

The name you bear

The Church denies you. Yield it, and the king

Is saved; refuse, you drag him to perdition. Choose!

Marie. I—I—

Guér. No other choice. [*Kneeling.*] Now, lady, pardon

The king's friend, if your foe.

Marie.

Up, up, thy tongue

Has sheathed its poison here! Thy very look

Is deadly to me.—Stay, 'twas for my lord

Thou wast so cruel. [*She extends her hand to him.*] I
forgive thee. Go!

[*GUÉRIN kisses her hand, and with a profound reverence goes out.*]

Marie. Philip on ruin's brink, in peril both

Of life and life to come, and I can save him!

How? Wrench from him myself, the engrafted branch

That springs from him, lives by him ! And if I do,
 Will he not bleed ? Yet if my noxious graft
 Infect his goodly stem, 'twere better severed
 And withered at his foot ! O strife ! when love
 Must stifle love's wild yearnings for love's sake.
 Heaven, through this blinding grief I grope my way,
 And call on thee for light ! Save, save my Philip !

*[She totters to the crucifix in oratory and sinks on
 her knees in supplication. The scene closes.]*

SCENE III.

*A corridor in the Palace, leading to grand staircase and
 Council Chamber.*

Enter GUÉRIN, meeting Officers of the Guard.

Guér. *[To 1ST OFFICER.]* Stay, stay, sir ; you're of
 the king's guard ?

1st Officer. Even now,
 My lord, we're summoned to conduct his grace
 Unto the Council.

Guér. The Pope's legate, then,
 Is here, and waits the king ?

1st Officer. Not yet ; indeed,
 'Tis rumoured that his eminence denies
 His presence to the chamber.

Guér. So ! *[Aside.]* 'Tis like.

[He bows ; Officers bow in return, and go out.]
 Refusé to meet the Council ! Then the storm
 Will surely burst full soon. I'll seek the legate.

*[GUÉRIN goes out on side opposite to that taken by
 Officers.]*

SCENE IV.

Council Chamber in the Palace.

Bishops, Nobles, &c., &c. Torchlight.

B. of Paris. [*Apart to other Bishops.*] If me to this stern office ye depute,
I claim support most absolute.

A. of Rheims. You have it.
I speak for all.

B. of Paris. No fear, no compromise, but be your port
As dauntless as the bane ye would avert
Is quick and awful. Firm, united stand !
I doubt the laity, and know the sway
This subtle yet rash king doth exercise
O'er martial spirits. [*A flourish of trumpets.*]

Enter PHILIP, with Attendants. He ascends the throne.

Phil. Greeting kind to all.
'Tis late ; but ever should a people's need
Make a king's season. To the issue, friends !
I know that peril threatens.

B. of Paris. It may strike,
Sire, while we plot to shun it. Let the knell
Of Rome's dread wrath but sound, and France is lost !
Her guardian saints desert her ; in her streets
A curse alights on labour ; in her plains
Withers her harvest ; warps her policy ;
In war makes her sword edgeless, and her shield
'Gainst the first lance to break ; chokes in her fanes
The very breath of prayer ; unto her dying
Denies the rites and solace of the Church,
And burial to her dead ! Sweet Providence—
When daily sent by Heaven to bless the world—
Shall make her pilgrimage circuitous
Rather than cross this kingdom ! Wrath divine,

Like doom, hangs o'er the realm, upon whose brow
Earth shall write infamy, and God—despair!

Phil. 'Tis well : the woes ye so much lay to heart
Ye will be prompt to remedy.

A. of Rheims. Alas !

With us no succour rests.

B. of Paris. 'Tis the king's task.

Phil. The king's and yours. The marriage you annulled
Upon your oaths—the Pontiff would enforce
By spiritual menace. He commands ;
Obedience rests with you. Disown his sentence ;
Abjure his unjust vengeance ; let the Church
Through you her holy offices dispense
Spite of his edict ! Then his ban falls harmless.

B. of Paris. What ! Wouldst thou have us, prelates
of the Church,
Defy the Church's head ? 'Twere vain as impious ;
We may not question Rome's prerogative.

Phil. You may not palter with your sworn allegiance.
Your oaths !—I have your oaths.

B. of Paris. All bonds are void
That Rome annuls ; allegiance' self is void
In this behalf.

A. of Rheims. Sire ! Your late union—— [*Hesitating.*

B. of Paris. Your cancelled union with the Lady
Marie——

Phil. Paris ! The foe has been held bold who broke
His lance on Philip's buckler ; yet he's bolder
Who'd snatch from Philip's arms the love he clasps
Unto his naked breast !

B. of Paris. Even that love
Must thou renounce ! 'Tis Rome that speaks through
me.

A. of Rheims. My liege, the Pope——

Phil. The Pope, my lords ! Four letters !—things, not
names !

The Pope ! Did earth receive him from the stars ;
Or sprang he from the ocean ?—Did the sun

Wake earlier on his birthday?—Will eclipse
 Turn the skies sable at his death? He came
 Into this world by nature's common road,
 Needs food to succour life, is chilled by cold,
 Relaxed by heat, would drown in a rough sea
 Soon as a serf would!—Let him ban the fields,—
 The grass will grow in spite of him!

B. of Paris. Impiety!

Bear'st thou that front so boldly?

Phil. I will speak.

Man's love—the growth of heaven—of nought below
 Admits control. Heaven's ministers should know it!

1st Noble. True; by the Oriflamme!

2d Noble. Upon my knighthood,

We shame ourselves to see this lady shamed!

3d Noble. Than whom did none more gracious e'er
 tread earth.

My lords, you are miscounselled! [*To the Bishops.*]

B. of Paris. What, are you

Revolters too? Then—

[*Bells are heard to toll, and continue to toll at short
 and regular intervals throughout the scene.*]

Hark! The time is past,

The time for duty. King! those sounds declare
 Thy land cursed for thy sake. With it and thee
 The heavens break off their league. Wherefore on earth
 We lay the sacred symbol of our faith
 In token of the grace profaned and lost!

[*They lower the crucifix.*]

Submission and repentance—deep, entire—

Are all that now remain.

[*A long pause, during which the tolling of the bells is
 alone heard.*]

An Officer. Way there; the queen!

Enter MARIE, followed by her ladies.

Marie. Philip, my lord! What mean those fearful
 sounds?

Like echoes of pale Death's advancing tread,
They drove me to thine arms, and I am safe.

[*She rushes to the steps of the throne; at a sign from
PHILIP, she takes her place at his side.*

But thou?—Speak! Has my love provoked the curse?
The lone tree that would yield thee grateful shade
Attracts the lightnings now!—Is it so?

B. of Paris. Ay;

For thee he stands accursed.

[*A pause; the bells are again heard.*

Phil. Peal on! we hear.

Mark me, ye mitred oath-breakers! But raise
One finger, move one step, or breathe one word
In furtherance of this curse—and ye shall beg
For leave to beg. Of rank, revenue, power,
We dispossess you, cast you forth from France,
Wherein found against command, you die!
Nobles, ring round the throne!

B. of Paris. Back from that chair!

Marie. Philip!

Phil. On your allegiance!

B. of Paris. To the Church!

Phil. Mayenne!

I flung thee knighthood's spurs ere well thy neck
Had lost the page's pliant curve. Dumont!
I knew thee when thine arms and steed composed
Thy sum of fortune. De Latour! we fought
Abreast at Palestine. [*Shouts and tumult heard without.*

Enter GUÉRIN.

Guér. My liege, all Paris
Shrieks wildly at your gates!

B. of Paris. [*To the Nobles.*] Hear, gallant sons!
On your souls' love, break up that fatal ring.

[*They fall back from the throne.*

Phil. [*To Nobles.*] And you desert me? Traitors!

B. of Paris. Thou art left

Alone, lost man ; know haughtier crests than thine
Have crouched to Rome.

Phil. [*Passionately, and descending a step.*] Crouched,
vassal? [*With scornful laughter as the Bishop falls
back.*] Guérin, look,

Yon pale-faced monk talks to the king of crouching !
[*To Bishops and Nobles.*] Deem ye my sires, whose
tombs were glory's shrines,

Have left their sceptre to a bastard hand,
That I should crouch?—Speak ! plains of Asia, speak !

That saw me singly cleave through paynim hordes,
As I had wrung Death's truncheon from his gripe !

Speak for me, rescued bondsmen ! speak for me,
Fierce vassals who have knelt to take my yoke,
You, you, and you !—No, perjured priest ! had Fate

Lent her polluted lightnings to your hands,
Even as you boast, I'd bid you rain your fires

On an unshrinking front. I'd fall a king !

Way, there ! Sweep back this tide of yeasty froth,
That where we pass no spray profane our robes.

Way there, I say—THE QUEEN OF FRANCE would pass !
Come !

[*To MARIE.*]

Marie. Not a step.

Phil. How ?

Marie. Not to thy ruin.

B. of Paris. Away ; all to your homes ! His doom is
sealed.

Who stays to parley with his guilt, partakes it.

Marie. Yield, Philip, yield ! Stay, I command you
stay !

[*To the Bishops.*]

The king is saved—is saved ! You little knew

The queen you would degrade. Take back thy crown.

[*Takes off the crown, and, kneeling, lays it at PHILIP'S
feet.*]

Take back the oath thou gav'st me ! thou art free,

And I no more thy wife ! [*She descends from the throne.*]

Phil. [*Following her.*] What hast thou said ?

Marie forsakes me ! Canst thou ?

Marie. Yes, to save thee.

Phil. To save?—to crush me.

Marie. Philip, grant one boon.

And I remain. Unto the Pope appeal,
Or those he shall appoint, to judge our cause.
Plead with them thy divorce, thy right to wed me,
Owned by these prelates. Then, whate'er the sentence,
Thou must abide it. Pledge thy word.

Phil. I pledge it.

My lords, you stand dismissed.

B. of Paris. My liege——

Phil. Dismissed!

[*Impetuously embracing MARIE, as the rest retire.*
They soon shall kiss thy feet! [*Bells are still heard to toll.*] Ay, clamour on,

Vain tongues of doom! Marie is still——

Marie. [*Clinging to him.*] Thy wife!

ACT IV., SCENE I.

Soissons. Ante-room leading to the chamber of the
Ecclesiastical Council.

*Enter, at opposite sides, FONTAINE, with LA ROCHE, and
two Ushers of the Council.*

Fon. Sirs, are their reverences yet prepared
To hear his majesty?

1st Usher. Indeed, I know not;

I've no commission.

Fon. Two hours hath the king
Attended on their summons.

2d Usher. Very like.

The Court knows its own season; by your favour.

[*Ushers withdraw into the chamber.*]

Fon. Delay and insult still from these proud priests,
Elate to see a monarch at their bar!

Day after day to his impatient suit
They pledged decision which, still day by day,
They have withheld : while he impatient frets,
And the rage boils which dares not overflow.

La Roche. The wonder was the king abased himself
To plead at their tribunal.

Fon. Therein lay
His only hope still to preserve his wife,
And from the Papal curse deliver France.

La Roche. A fruitless hope ; they will annul his
marriage
And Ingerburge replace in Marie's seat.

Fon. No ; this indignity shall turn to grace
If meekly borne. Rome sought to sit in judgment
On Philip's cause, and thus maintain her sway
O'er Europe's crowns. By secret means I know
The king's submission has assuaged her wrath ;
Awhile she'll scourge him to assert her power,
Then take him to her bosom. All is plain.
Denmark's to be appeased ; Marie pronounced
The queen of Philip ; Flanders, England—all
With whom our rights and vengeance to secure
We've secret league—must harm no single hair
Of the good boy hid in the Pontiff's mantle !

La Roche. That's sorry comfort : Philip reconciled
To Rome, were proof against our enmity.

Fon. But they must not be reconciled. Already
He writhes beneath her yoke, and deems, like thee,
The Council will decide against his suit.

La Roche. What profit springs from this ?

Fon. Mark ! I have moved him
To do himself the deed he fears from them—
Restore his Danish queen ; which act dissolves
The interdict, and sets at nought their power.
Their arbitration thus disdained, will breed
A bitterer hate than sprang from past defiance.
A head has schemed to thwart your holiness,
Your child may prove refractory. See, he comes !

Enter PHILIP, followed by TOURNET and Attendants.

Phil. [To TOURNET.] Again, sir, to the Council ; say we wait. [*Exit TOURNET. Attendants retire to back.*]
 Yes ; what is love that will not prove its truth
 By needful sacrifice ?—Names, empty pomp,
 Weigh with devotion nought. The faith I pledged
 Their loss impairs not, and their transfer rends
 These festering links of shame, gives my soul play,
 And wipes the abject stain from my renown.
 In form a little do I wrong thee, Marie,
 For my essential good. Thou'dst have it so.
 Why then, when reason offers cordials,
 Shuns my sick heart her chalice ?—Oh, 'tis conscience
 That doth rebuke my treachery ! I have gazed
 So long on guilty thoughts, they lose their horror.
 Hither, Fontaine ! Did they not say at noon ?
 For weeks we've paced their ante-room to feast
 The eyes of curious lackeys with our fall.

Fon. I may not censure whom your grace endures ;
 Yet, when we last spoke——

Phil. Thou didst strike a chord
 Of evil that now sleeps. Tempt me no more !

Fon. I grieve to find my loyalty offence.
 How have I sinned ? I did but say that Rome,
 By these delays was bent to humble you,
 And, through you, all the wondering crowns of Europe,
 Who seeing—pardon me my honest boldness—
 Who, seeing your subjection, dread their own !

Phil. I know it.

Fon. Which presumptuous end you crush,
 And from the Papal curse your realm set free,
 If of your own inclining you take back
 The Lady Ingerburge.

Phil. My own inclining !

Fon. The deed is then your own, not Rome's enforcement.

'Tis Philip's sovereign act, not the Pope's mandate,

That restores Ingerburge to throne and wedlock.
You thus defeat his power and yours uphold.

Phil. [*Aside.*] It were sweet, most sweet vengeance !

Yet my Marie !

Man, thou hast looked into my heart, and seen
Whose image it enshrines. Shall I rend from her
The sacred name of wife, yet bid her share
A lawless bed ? Like a saint's faith in heaven
Is hers in me. In smiling innocence,
With love-stirred lips her faith sleeps on my breast ;
Shall I, her providence, look on and stab ?

Fon. What path is open then ? Reflect—no less
You yield her by submission to the Council ;
You cannot doubt they purpose your divorce.

Phil. It may be so ; but, if her peace must perish,
I need not deal the blow.

Fon. If so you deem,
Submit ; crave peace of Rome——

Phil. And kiss the rod !
I was not born for this. I lived to make
My people great, my reign august,—to pile
My monument on triumph till it towered
To beacon Time with glory !—Now to shrink
Into the thrall of monks, and to infect
With my abasement the proud blood of kings ;
Who, when they crouch beneath the priestly yoke,
Shall plead—*So first did Philip !*

Fon. Trust me, sir.
You wrong your queen ! How poor were pomp to her,
If wrung from your disgrace !

Phil. Ay ; if she saw
My struggle with thine eyes !

Fon. And so she would.
Man cannot master fate. You strive in vain
To save her hope from shipwreck, but preserve
Your honour in the storm. She'd have it so.

Phil. By heaven,
I think thou reasonest well ; she would !

Re-enter TOURNET.

Tour.

My liege!

To-day the Council do refuse you hearing.
They will forthwith adjourn, and still suspend
The hour for sentence.

Phil. [*With bitter laughter.*] Sentence, sentence!

What,

Yet more delay! My patience has stood bare
In their fierce noon of pride until the blood
Leaps to my brain like fire!

Re-enter USHERS.

Sirs, in good time!

Fling wide the doors.

1st Usher.

My liege, the Court breaks up.

Phil. [*Imperiously.*] Lead on! I bid them stay. Fling
wide the doors!

[*He goes out, preceded by Ushers and followed by
Attendants.* FONTAINE, TOURNET, and LA
ROCHE remain.

Tour. [*To FONTAINE.*] Brave, brave! With skilful
breath hast thou revived

The ashes of this feud. I see his power
Melt in the conflagration.

La Roche.

Sage, or wizard—

Whate'er thou art—our cause owes all to thee.

Fon. We have not speared the lion in the woods,
But strewed the pit with rushes, and entrapped him.
Well, well, the hour may come.

Tour.

What mood is this?

Fon. Even let it go. The time for action's ripe.
We yet may meet him front to front as men.

Enter GUÉRIN, followed by Retainers.

Guér. Recruit your strength. See that your steeds be
fleet,

And on the instant ready. [*Retainers go out.*] To the
king. [*To FONTAINE.*]

Fon. Most urgent matter holds him with the Court.

Guér. [*Drawing FONTAINE apart.*] More urgent
matter claims his ear through me.

The blast of war rings out ; and, swift from England,
John—leagued with Otho and the Flemish count—
Has landed at Rochelle. I know thee frank
And unsuspecting ; keep a wary eye,
For disaffection lurks in many a breast
That wears a loyal front.

Fon. You'll find me watchful. [*GUÉRIN goes out.*]
Now with our vassals to enforce the foe !
His unjust arm shall work our just revenge.

[*They go out on the opposite side.*]

SCENE II.

Corridor in the Palace.

Enter SIR LUCIEN and ANNE.

Sir L. She had been bless'd beyond compare if fortune
Obeyed desert !

Anne. You'd weep to look on her ;
Her patience touches more than could complaint.
When first I seek her chamber, she'll discourse
Awhile on trivial things, as if to veil
Grief at her heart ; yet, what her words would hide,
Her faltering step and flitting smile reveal.
Alas, dear mistress ! [*Weeps.*]

Sir L. Why, these are tears !
I honour thee for this. Now is thy soul
Well mated with thy beauty !

[*Attempting to take her hand.*]

Anne. [*Withdrawing it.*] Possibly.
But that concerns you little. [*Aside.*] Stay, I'll try him !

Now, say the Church decree the queen's divorce,
Should not the king resign her?

Sir L. Having sworn

To love and shield her? Never!

Anne. Then Rome's curse

Still rests on France.

Sir L. Not if he yield his throne.

Anne. How, yield his throne?

Sir L. The throne of earth were poor,

Save a royal spirit filled it. 'Tis not needful

For any man that he be styled a king;

But that each man be true to his own manhood,

That is most needful.

Anne. Good; then, wert thou Philip,

How wouldst thou act?

Sir L. If truth to her I chose

Brought ruin on my realm, I yield my realm,

Unclass my kingly robes, cast off my crown,

Take my wife's hand in mine, and trust the soul,

That falsehood ne'er had flawed to win me fame.

Anne. [*Aside, with delight.*] So, so—the flash breaks
out; a man, by heaven!

That's rightly said. My hand upon it, sir.

Sir L. And may I keep it?

Anne. Yes; until we reach

Her grace's antechamber. 'Tis your due. [*They go out.*]

SCENE III.

An apartment in the Palace.

MARIE *alone.*

Marie. Another night, and yet no tidings come.

Day follows day to mock me in its round.

O Time! that to all senseless things dost bear

Succour and comfort—the reviving heat
 And freshening dew to tree and flower and weed—
 Why dost thou pass the famished heart and smile?

Enter ANNE.

Anne. Dear lady!

Marie. [*Eagerly.*] Anne! Well? No; your face is void!

You have no tidings for me.

Anne. Alas! none.

Marie. We must be patient, Anne. I cannot think
 The Council will bereave me of my lord.

Anne. Heaven touch their hearts with gentleness!

Marie. Amen!

Anne. And keep the king— [*Faltering.*]

Marie. Why falter? Prayers should breathe
 Trust, and not fear.

Anne. Heaven keep King Philip faithful
 And worthy of your love.

Marie. I will not say
 Amen to that. To pray he may be faithful
 Were to misdoubt he is so.

Anne. All men, being tempted,
 Are prone to fall; most prone, ambitious kings.

Marie. What dost thou mean?

Anne. By thoughts on ill that may be
 To shield your heart from worse.

Marie. Worse? What were worse
 Than treachery in my lord? Rash girl, that word
 Stretches to woe so infinite, it fathoms
 An ocean of despair! Uncrown me, slay me,
 Honours and life must end. Not love! The grave
 Is as a port where it unlades its wealth
 For immortality. But rob or taint
 The merchandise of love—then let the bark
 Drift helmless o'er the seas, or strike the shoals!
 They can but wreck a ruin.

Anne

Pardon, madam.

I would not thus have moved you ; but——

Marie.

Be silent !

Thy look doth herald thoughts my soul repels.

He did desert me once. You see I read you.

No, Anne ! His love was changeless, but he quelled it

For duty and his country. O shame, shame !

Listening thy treason, I adopt it. Go !—

Nay, not unkindly. This suspense disturbs me.

Leave me awhile. There, there !

[*Taking her hand.* ANNE goes out.]

Another night !

It cannot last for ever. Even now

The unregarding messenger despatched

To bear my doom his onward course may speed.

They could not part us, Philip, had they seen

Our happy solitude, our inner world

Of secret, holy, all-sufficing bliss.

They guess it not, nor feel it. At their knees,

Locked in my arms, I should have told them this,

And forced my heart an avenue to theirs

Through all their wiles, for hearts must answer
hearts ;

But mine was dumb, and how could theirs reply ?

Woe's me ! Who comes ?

Enter PHILIP.

Philip—my lord !—Say, say,

May I embrace thee ?—may I call thee mine ?—

Am I thy wife ?

Phil.

Yes ; in the sight of Heaven.

Marie. And not of earth ? A doom told in a breath ;

Brief, but so cold that it hath froze the fount

Whence sorrow gushes !

Phil.

I am dear to thee ?

Marie. What ! is there hope ? If not, encourage
none.*Phil.* Why should we be the slaves of Rome ?

Marie. Thou wilt
Resist his mandate? Yet thy kingdom, love?

Phil. Dearest, most faithful! We may still remain
Bound to each other, and the Papal curse
Pass from the realm.

Marie. How?—Haste thee to disclose.

Phil. The Council has pronounced no sentence.

Marie. Yet
Thou art returned!

Phil. Like to a criminal
I stood before the conclave. Every day
Brought some new contumely. The weight I bore
Of strained suspense and nice indignity
Was pleasant pastime for them; and they lingered,
Protracting their enjoyment, and inviting
The universe to look on haughty Philip
Crouched at their stools, and learn from thence how
Rome
Would deal with rebel kings!

Marie. And yet you bore it?

Phil. It was the Church's aim to judge my cause,
To plant its insolent foot upon my neck,
Humbling all crowns in mine. I looked for this;
I bore it long. At last scorn heaped on scorn
Turned patience to revolt.

Marie. [After a short pause.] And then? How then?

Phil. [Avoiding her look.] Marie! I said within my
soul, my pomp,
My title, all my gilded shows of power,
Were not the links that bound thy love to mine.
Was I right there?

Marie. Can Philip ask that question?

Phil. Her trust doth sting me more than could
reproach.
Too late, too late! all must be told! [Aside.]

Marie. What followed?

Phil. I will not hear your judgment, lords, I cried:
Not moved by you, but of my sovereign will,

I have resolved that Marie shall resign
 The throne and empty state she never prized,
 And Ingerburge to her lost dignities
 Be straight restored. 'Tis all that Denmark seeks ;
 Therefore dissolve the interdict !

Marie. *Thou saidst this?—*

Heard I aright ?

Phil. [*Confused.*] Marie, thou didst.

Marie. *And Philip*

Could of his proper will cast Marie out !

I thought—I thought you said we should not part.

Phil. Part—never, never ! Part !

Marie. But have you not owned Ingerburge your
 wife ?

I am no longer queen.

Phil. *But for all this,*

We must not part.

Marie. *Husband—I pray your pardon ;*

I can't forget you were so—torture not

My mind with this perplexity ! How is't

I can be thine, and Ingerburge thy wife ?

Phil. [*After a pause.*] She is but so in name ; thou
 wilt retain

The empire of my heart.

Marie. *Ha ! how the light—*

The cruel light I could not see before—

Bursts on my sight ! No ; 'tis some hideous dream.

Although I see, I shall not touch thy hand.

[Takes his hand, as if to assure herself.

It is reality ! And yet—forgive me !

A subtle tempter through my o'erwrought brain

Would stab my trust in thee. He shall not, love !

Even now I'm calmer. Pray, repeat the words—

The words you spake but now.

Phil. *I said, my own,*

Though Ingerburge might bear the name of queen,

Thou only shouldst rule Philip—

Marie. *Pause awhile.*

Though Ingerburge might bear the name of queen,
I only should rule Philip— [Signs to him to proceed.

Phil. Thou shouldst share
His hours of love—thou only ; thou shouldst be—
[Hesitating, and averting his head.

Marie. His paramour ! O God ! although his voice
Was shamed from speech, this is the thing he means.

[She turns from him.

Phil. Thou wouldst not go ?

Marie. I am already gone !
We measure distance by the heart.

Phil. Yet hear me !

Marie. The Duke de Méran's daughter listens, sir.

[She sits.

Phil. [About to kneel.] If this humility may aught—

Marie. No knee !

Respect so far my woe's reality,
As to put by these pageant semblances.

Phil. Oh ! has this grief no remedy ?

Marie. None, none.

The faith of love no hand can wound but that
Was pledged to guard it. Then what hand can staunch ?
We strive no more with doom ; the sad mistake
May be endured, but not retrieved. No, no !

Phil. By heaven, you do me wrong ! 'Tis not in man
To conquer destiny. I made you queen.

Marie. You made me queen ! I made you more than
king.

When my eyes raised their worship to thy face,
I saw no crown. I asked not if thy hand
Closed on a sceptre ; but mine pressed it close,
Because it rent the shackles of the slave.
'Twas not thy grandeur won me. Had the earthquake
Engulfed thine empire—had frowning fate
Lowered on thine arms and scourged thee from the field,
A fugitive—if on thy forehead Rome
Had graved her curse, and all thy kind recoiled
In horror from thy side—I yet had cried,

There is no brand upon thy heart ; let that
In the vast loneliness, still beat to mine !

Phil. [*Falling at her feet.*] You had ; you had ! the
dust is on my head !

Sweet saint ! thou'rt of a higher brood than we,
Hast right to spurn me from thee.

Marie. Rise ! The feet
By thorns on life's rough path so often pierced,
Are little like to spurn a stumbling brother.

Phil. Forgive, forgive me, Marie ! [*Rising.*

Marie. You repent.

'Twas but delusion. You will be again
The Philip I adored ! That hope shall bless me
When we are far apart. And now for ever
In this dark world farewell. Another land
I seek, but ne'er shall find another home.
Shield him, all holy powers ! Philip—

[*Extending her hand.*

Phil. Go, go ;

I was not worthy thee !

Marie. Not thus, not thus !

Phil. But one embrace. It is the last, the last !

[*They embrace.*

Go, Marie !

[*MARIE goes to the door. She reverts her head. They
regard each other in silence for a few moments,
after which MARIE slowly disappears.*

Phil. [*After a pause, sinking into a chair.*] I'm alone
on earth ! She's gone,
And what is left me ?

[*The roll of drums is heard without. He suddenly
rises.*

Ha ! that clamour speaks
In stern reply ; a summons to the field !
Fate, that denies me love, has left me vengeance.
Friends fail me, foemen swarm my coasts. 'Tis well !
Now, fiend of war, I am devote to thee ! [*He rushes out.*

ACT V., SCENE I.

The French tent near Bouvines. Soldiers stationed at the entrance. Intermitted and distant alarms.

Enter GUÉRIN and SIR LUCIEN, the latter attired as from a journey.

Sir L. Is it indeed so? has this mighty league,
Whose frown eclipsed the light of France, dissolved,
And left no sign in air? What, Otho fled!

Guér. He scarce escaped with life. The Count of
Flanders
Lies captive, with a hundred meaner names,
Yet all renowned.

Sir L. Then was the rout complete?

Guér. Long as his steed upbore him, chased the king
The flying remnant, vengeance still his cry.
His foes will rue this day.

Sir L. And I have lost
The fame of it, though but an hour too late.

Guér. Thou art misfortune's herald, and he comes
Always too soon. Thou bear'st a woe so vast
'Twould weigh down empire in the opposing scale.

Sir L. Nay, had my foot been heavy as my heart,
I ne'er had borne these news of my dear lady;
Nor had I, save at her express command,
Ever resigned her service for the king's.

Guér. Sweet patience keep him! Is there then no
hope?

Sir L. None; or a hope so sickly that it smiles
In mockery of itself. Those who have seen her
Report by slow advance her fate draws near;
Most like the shades that deepen over day
So softly that we start to find it gone.

Guér. Awhile retire.

[SIR LUCIEN joins the solâiers at the entrance of the tent.]

King, had thine ends been true
 Either unto thy people or thy love,
 This grief had never been ! Oh, better ne'er
 To know the good, than knowing—violate !
 High thoughts, which touch but do not rule the soul,
 Shall turn their light to fire.

[*Martial music heard without.*]

Ah ! 'tis the king.

*Enter PHILIP, preceded by soldiers, with banners, Nobles,
 &c. Martial music from the troops without.*

Phil. [At the entrance of the tent.] Again !

[*Triumphant music and acclamations.*]

And yet again ! [The same sounds renewed.] This swelling strain

Salutes ye, Flanders, Austria, England. Dumb !

Oh, this is victory, Guérin ! [Advancing to the front.

-*Guér.*

He who rules

The fate of kings hath bless'd you.

- *Phil.*

The brave heart

Makes its own fate ! What, wouldst thou grudge this arm

The glory of this day ? Like autumn leaves

Whirled by the eddying blast ; like spars of wrecks

Tossed shorewards by the seas, they fled before me !

My lifted arm was doom, my steps were graves !

I chased them still ! With every stroke I mowed

A separate host for death ! My steps were graves !

Kings are my captives, home revolters quelled ;

Fontaine, the traitor, measures the red plain

Whereon I stretched him. Well, prate on, prate on !

Guér. And sleeps that restless brain ? Is Fontaine dead ?

Phil. Ay ; and his issue, friends, abettors, all

The baneful offshoots of this traitorous stem

Will we uproot, even to the infant germ

That knows not yet the poisonous life it folds.

Guér. I cast a shield over a vanquished foe
When I recall the Lady Marie's name.

Phil. I've won her by the sword, and so will guard her.
Report again these glorious news from Rome ;
The war's dread thunder clamoured in mine ear
And shut out half thy tidings.

Guér. Ingerburge,
Your queen, thereto persuaded by the Pope,
Has to the shelter of religious walls
From worldly strife retired, to thee resigned
Her royal throne and bed, and sought divorce :
Rome thus would win back thine offended power
Whose aid she needs to curb rebellious John.

Phil. What ! Rome hath learned to need, then ?

Guér. Meekly say it ;
Your patron saint has blessed you.

Phil. [*Raising his sword.*] Patron Saint !
I thank thee. Marie, Marie, where dost hide
Thyself from bliss ? Not seen in Méranie !
Fled weeks since, and not sought her father's arms !
Was it not yesterday that we despatched
Our envoys in her quest ?

Guér. It was, my liege.
Your messenger already is returned.

Phil. Returned ?—his errand unfulfilled ?

Guér. Not so ;
But some leagues from the field, this very spot,
An ancient castle stands. Willing, perchance,
To shun familiar scenes and questioning tongues—
Yea, aught that might recall her bitter past—
Your wife has fixed her rest there !

Phil. He has seen her !
Summon him hither.

Guér. Sire, he waits ; Sir Lucien,
Stand forth ! [*SIR LUCIEN advances*]

Phil. Thy stars, young sir, did yestermorn
Rain fortune on thee as thou gott'st to horse.
'Thou hast found the Lady Marie ?

Sir L. Sire, I found
Her place of sojourn.

Phil. Well, say on !

Sir L. My king ! [*Hesitating.*]

Phil. Say on ! By Heaven, that clouded brow affronts
The favour we design thee ! Thou hast seen her,
Spoken with her, bear'st her answer ? Quick, unfold !

Sir L. Pardon, I saw her not.

Phil. What ! at her gates,
And yet not seen her. Hadst thou not credentials
From us unto her presence ?

Sir L. Sire, most true.

Phil. And she denied thee audience ?

Sir L. Nay, she knows not
Even that I sought it.

Phil. Thou art fond of danger
To dally with impatient majesty !

Sir L. My lord !

[*He again hesitates, and turns to GUÉRIN.*]

Phil. My lord ! What means this juggling ? Why
Bend thy regards on him, and with thine eyes
People the air with terrors ? Set before me
Some actual mischief which, being known, my soul
May fix and grapple with, lest, mad with doubt,
To snatch the truth I plunge into thy life !

Sir L. You need all patience, sir, the queen is found ;
But in such case I rather would report
My mission fruitless. If as yet she live,
'Tis nigh the verge of death, her flame of life
So flickering, that a breath might quench it. Hence
Did they refuse me audience, and withhold
My errand, nay, my presence, from herself.

Phil. I would have slain thee to compel these words
Which, being uttered, slay my peace for ever !

[*SIR LUCIEN retires.*]

Guér. My gracious master !

Phil. Had the heavens no bolt
In all their armoury but this ?

Guér. Bethink you——

Phil. Perdition on all counsel !

Guér. Hear me, sire !

Phil. Hear thee ! When thou canst say to sceptred
Death,

“ Fall back,” and he obeys, I’ll hear thee then.

For her I bore, schemed, fought ; yea, singly breasted

The raging tide of war, and dashed to land !

I’ve staked with fate, and lost !

Guér. Are you a king ?

Phil. A king ! Ay, that’s the name

For which I bartered love, and ruthless stabbed

The trusting heart that drew its life from mine.

Yes, by this glory shining on the tomb,

This banquet of renown that palls the taste,

This wealth upon the desert where I famish,

I am that empty sound—I am a king !

Guér. Find medicine for the sorrows of this day
In thinking of its triumph.

Phil. Hence ! Ye heavens !

Abase me if ye will ; pluck from me pomp,

Scorch my green laurels with your jealous fires,

Drain on my abject and discrowned head

Your vials of derision, want, oblivion !

But spare her, spare her ; she is like yourselves !

Guér. My sovereign, Providence is merciful
To contrite hearts. Say that the queen declines

From grief that you resigned her : what if now,

Freed from all other bonds, your union

Allowed by Rome, you hasten to her side,

Bearing these news for cordial ? Perchance,

For love is strong and joy miraculous,

You yet may save her.

Phil. [*Grasping his hand.*] Ah ! to horse, to horse !

I hold thee as a brother for these words.

Summon our host ; awake the trumpet’s breath

To speed our flight, for we must outride Death !

[*All go out with flourish.*]

SCENE II.

An apartment in an old Château near Bouvines.

MARIE and ANNE.

Anne. [*Seated at MARIE'S feet.*] No, no, sweet mistress,
I cannot bear
The intrusion of these thoughts !

Marie. Kind, faithful girl,
Marie's last solace !

Anne. Last ! What, must your life
Thus wither in its spring ? I could not live
In this harsh world and lose you !

Marie. Hist ! what sound
Was that ?

Anne. I heard none.

Marie. 'Twas the tramp of horse ;
Look forth. [*ANNE goes to window.*] What see'st thou ?

Anne. But the village hind
Leading his team from field.

[*She returns to her place at MARIE'S feet.*]

Marie. [*Taking her hand.*] Heaven's benison
Rest on thy head and Lucien's. He is brave,
Honoured, and constant. Will the matron's coif
And braided hair become thy face ? Methinks
I see thee in the light of coming summers,
Thy happy children bounding at thy side,
Or clustered at thy feet. Should one fair girl
With glance of playful love reflect thine own,
Thou'lt call her Marie for my sake ?

Anne. I will.

Marie. I wished to see thee wed, Anne, and bestow
This bauble at thy bridals ; but ere then—
There dearest !

[*Takes a chain from her neck, and with visible effort
places it round ANNE'S.*]

Anne. You will break my heart. [MARIE *sinks back.*]

Dear Heaven,
She swoons! Her life is passing!

Marie. [Rallying.] Do not fear,
I shall not die yet. I shall first see Philip.

Anne. [Aside.] Still, still that feverish hope dispels
her rest.

[Aloud.] He knows not where thou art.

Marie. Heaven will direct him.

Anne. The foeman's camp divides you.

Marie. Heaven will guard him
Through hosts of foes; he'll come. [Restlessly.] Your
hand, sweet, raise me;

I breathe with effort. [ANNE *props her with cushions;*
as she does so, MARIE'S ring drops off.] See! my
ring is fallen,

The ring that pledged me his. [Rather excitedly.] Re-
place it, quickly.

I would not he should miss it when he comes.

[ANNE *replaces the ring, and kisses MARIE'S hand.*
So; thanks! [A horn is heard without. MARIE *starts*
forward.] Hark, hark! a trumpet. Now, look
forth!

Anne. [Going to window and returning.] 'Tis but the
horn of the returning huntsmen.

Marie. Not Philip! Still, he'll come!

Anne. [Aside.] To see the wreck
His falsehood made. [Aloud.] Compose yourself: rest,
sleep!

Think not of him.

Marie. Then must I cease to think.
He'll come; but strength may fail me. Thou must tell him
All that I leave unsaid.

Anne. You task me hardly,
Has not his treachery poisoned all thy joy?

Marie. Ah me! his love first taught me what joy
was.

Anne. What can'st thou give him more than life?

Marie.

My death ;

The hope that I may bless him from the grave.
Have not some said our spirits minister
To those we loved on earth, guide them from wrong
And draw them nearer heaven ?

Anne. [*Turning away.*] My friend, my friend !

Marie. [*Drawing her back.*] Come closer, sweet ;
O, hoard each accent now !
When all with me is over, seek the king :
He may be racked with grief, perhaps remorse,
For this slight fabric's fall. Thou'lt bear him comfort ?

Anne. [*Aside.*] I bear him comfort !

Marie. Tell him that I passed
In peace from earth ; that, in my closing hours,
I thought of those made precious by his love,
And shunned all harsher memories ! Tears !

Anne. No more !

Marie. [*Earnestly.*] Thou'lt see the king—thou'lt not
deny me ?

Anne. [*With irrepresible emotion.*] Yes ;
I'll see him, and demand him where he cast
The first gem of his crown—why filched from earth
Its holiest saint—my best, best friend from me.

[*She bursts into tears.*]

Marie. Anne, Anne !

Anne. I'll haunt him through the world ; I'll burst
The serried war to reach him ; in the pomp
Of courts appal him with my agony,
And cry, "Thy wife ! Where, traitor, is thy wife ?"

[*Starting to her feet.*]

Marie. No, no ! Thou torturest me ! Silence ! The
queen
Commands.

Anne. O for a voice to curse him !

Marie. [*Rising.*] Anne,
Thy hand [*seizing it*] thus link'd, almost from infancy,
We have trod life's path together. Nought we met
On the long journey sever'd us. The clasp

Each step grew closer. Now for me the way
Winds to the grave—disjoin we now?

Anne.

No!

Marie.

Yes;

My travel's end so near, we're twain at last,
And I go down unfriended to the tomb,
Save thou renounce thy purpose. Promise, speak,
Or I let go thy hand! Shall I?

Anne.

No, no!

I promise all.

Marie. [*Falling upon her neck.*] That's my own faithful Anne!
[*She sinks into a chair.*]

Now leave me, sweet one! I would muse in peace.

Anne. And may peace keep thy soul! [*After a pause, watching her.*] At last she rests;

Her eyelids lay their fringe on her pale cheek.

Visit her, gentle sleep; on thy soft wing

Bear her from this harsh present back to youth—

Perchance to her green home in Méranie,

Where guardian mountain rise, and singing streams

Leap down in laughter, where the chamois bounds

From steep to steep, and shepherd's pipe or horn

Make glad the valley. There did we partake

The sports, the innocent hopes and loves of childhood,

Nor guessed the fate to come. . . . Does she yet sleep?

Her eyes are sealed; but those parched leaves, her lips,

Stir with a wind of thought, and all her look

Seems strained and listening. Ah! she speaks.

Marie. [*Grasping at ANNE'S hand.*] Anne, Anne!

Anne. Ay, sweet.

Marie. [*Raising herself.*] Didst hear?

Anne.

Hear what?

Marie. He comes, he comes!

Anne. 'Twas but a dream.

Marie. Dream! From Death's opening gates
Those sounds recalled me. Dost thou hear them now?

Anne. [*Listening.*] She's right—the clang of hoofs!

[*Rushes to window.*] Troops, lady, troops!

Marie. Do they make hither?

Anne. Ay, at speed.

Marie. What troops?

Anne. French, if the twilight do not cheat mine eyes.

Madam, the power of France!

Marie. Of France! I knew it.

My dimming gaze will reach him—his farewell

Close on my ear, the music of this world!

Come they not nearer, Anne? Look forth!

Anne. They pause;

But for a moment. He who seems their chief

Motions them forward. They pass on—

Marie. They pass!

My lord is with them, yet they pass. Stay, Philip—

'Tis Marie calls—I shall not see thee—death

Knocks at my heart, and all that was my life

Swims from my eyes! Stay, stay in mercy! Philip!

[*She rises, and rushes to the window.*]

Anne. Thy prayer is heard; they cross the moat, they enter.

Marie. Ha, look, that knight!

Anne. His visor's closed.

Marie. To thee.

My soul looks through it. 'Tis the king! Come, come!

Anne. Await him here.

Marie. Time will not wait, nor death.

[*She pauses as if overcome. ANNE supports her.*]

The shadows press around me: all is dim;

He comes too late.

Anne. Hark! footsteps!

Marie. Ah!

Phil. [*Without.*] My Marie!

My wife!

PHILIP, *who has laid aside his helmet, rushes in.*

Marie. Ah, Philip, Philip! on thy breast!

Phil. She lives—she stands! This is no couch of death!

Marie. I hold thee, see thee; thou art safe, victorious!

Phil. Three realms are at my foot. My throne is fixed,

Rock-like for ever; thy throne, Queen of France!

The conqueror is thy slave.

Marie. [*Faintly.*] Use well thy power,
Dear lord, when I am gone. Be thy sway bless'd,
Thy memory revered!

Phil. When thou art gone!
What mean those cruel words? Thy looks affright me!
The shadows of thine eyes eclipse thy soul!

Marie. The angel tarried for thy coming. Now
My head is on his breast;—I die!

Phil. Not now,
Thou must not, shalt not! I will cling to thee,
And round thy mounting spirit twine my clasp
Till the huge weight of misery drag thee down.

[*Supporting her to her chair.*]

Avaunt, pale phantom! 'Tis the victor king
Waves off thy shadowy dart and guards thy prey!
Speak, Marie! speak to me!

Anne. Alas! her touch
Shoots to my heart, and chills it.

Phil. Ay, the skies
Do envy earth its bliss, so call her back.
O God! the brows are growing marble cold
To which I bear a crown. Marie, my wife!

[*ANNE, who has been kneeling by MARIE'S side, utters
a faint cry, and rushes up to PHILIP.*]

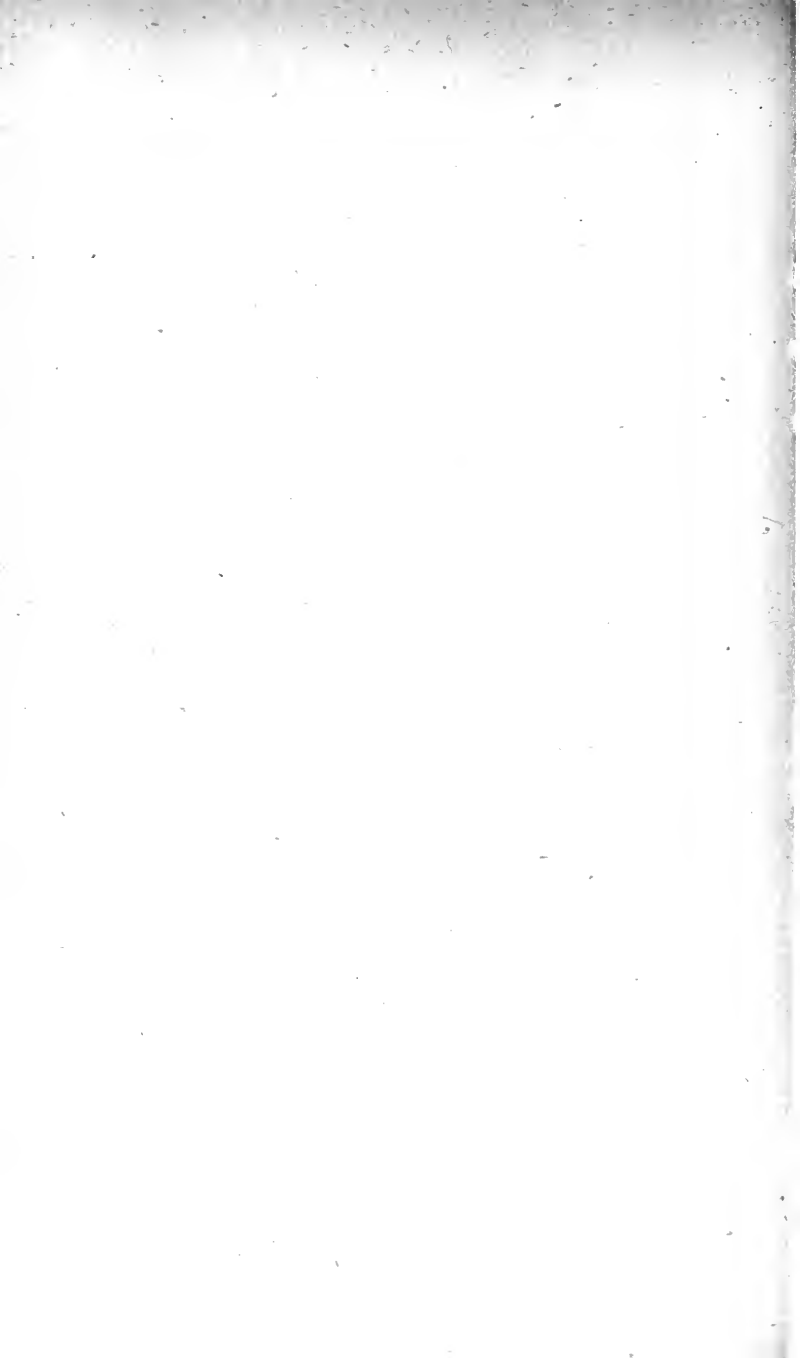
Anne. She bless'd thee ere she died!

*Enter GUÉRIN and several Nobles with Attendants.
At a sign from ANNE they stand fixed and silent.*

Phil. And this is fame !

[He sinks before the body of MARIE, which still occupies the chair. The rest stand in attitudes of awe and dejection. The soldiers veil their lances. The curtain falls to solemn music.]

END OF MARIE DE MÉRANIE.



LIFE FOR LIFE.

Life for Life.

First performed at the LYCEUM THEATRE, 6th March 1869.

CHARACTERS.

SIR OSCAR, Mr CHARLES COGLAN.

Of the Clan Macronald.

MALCOLM MACRONALD, *subsequently
chief of the Clan, and nephew of the
chief Angus,* Mr F. WATSON.
RODERICK, *an aged Clansman,* Mr GEORGE JORDAN.
HECTOR, Mr T. J. ANDERSON.
TORQUIL, Mr KENDRICK.
URSULA, *sister of Angus,* Miss LE THIÈRE.
LILIAN, *daughter of Angus,* Miss NEILSON.
MARGERY, *attendant upon Lilian,
and grand-daughter of Roderick,* Miss MARION.

Of the Clan Mackane.

MURDOCH, *chief of the Clan,* Mr HERMANN VEZIN.
KENELM, *son of Murdoch, in first
act a boy of 14,* Miss MINNIE SYDNEY.
MICHAEL, Mr WEST.
COLIN, Mr W. ROBERTS.
DOUGAL, Mr EVERARD.
ALLAN, Mr OSMAN. †
EFFIE, Miss TUDOR.
ROSE, Miss WILSON.

*Squire and Page of Sir Oscar. Other Clansmen of both Clans,
Women, Children, Retainers, Servants, &c.*

Scene, The Highlands of Scotland.

Period, Early in the fifteenth century.

*An interval of nearly a year is supposed to elapse between first
and second acts, and an interval of two or three days between
second and third acts.*

LIFE FOR LIFE.



ACT I.

SCENE.—*Hall of a castle in the Highlands of Scotland. An oaken staircase on one side of the hall leads to the open door of a corridor. The hall is hung with banners and old Scottish weapons. Pointed windows. Through the high and spacious archway of door open at back, placed towards side, almost diagonally, are seen, first a narrow stretch of land, then a lake which it borders. The slopes of mountains descend beyond the lake on each side. Within the hall URSULA is at her wheel spinning. A group of hunters approach, and are heard singing the following chorus—*

We followed the stag o'er strath and hill,
From the breaking of the day ;
We chased him through covert, up crag, until
At noon he stood at bay.
He stood at bay in the torrent's foam,
And ere the sunset we brought him home.

As the singing becomes audible, URSULA ceases to spin, and remains motionless. The hunters then appear, some of them bearing the slain stag upon their shoulders. They pass the archway repeating the chorus till their voices are lost in the distance. Sunset is visible through the archway.

Urs. [Rising and placing her wheel on one side.] Again the sun, like a spent warrior, drops

His flag of fire on the lake's breast, and dies.
 The fifth night, yet no news. They must have met
 Ere this—my brother, and his brave Macronalds,
 And Murdoch, who leads on our mortal foes,
 The fell Mackanes.

Enter RODERICK, an old Clansman.

Roderick, are those returned
 You sent for tidings to the pass?

Rod. Returned
 From a vain quest.

Urs. Still vain! 'Tis now five days
 Since the Mackanes hung on yon mountain's slope,
 Scarce an hour's march hence. In a night my brother
 Summoned his force to meet them—must have met them
 In strife ere this.

Rod. Spoke I not truth to Angus?
 I said, "Beware of the cat's stealthy windings.
 Those posted on the slope are but decoys
 Who seek to lure you onward to their land,
 Where toil and hunger, fighting on their side,
 Shall harm you more than steel." Your brother reck'd
 not;

The lion's heart, with a child's brain to guide it,
 Still urged him on; and now, perchance, ensnared,
 He vainly struggles, while I, I—grown old—
 A toothless mastiff dozing in the sun—
 Must no more from the loosen'd leash bound forth
 On my chief's foe, and shake him by the throat!
 No; I'm no longer Roderick!

Urs. Nay, staunch heart!
 The watchdog, like the bloodhound, has his use.
 I know, did danger threat your chief's sole child,
 My fair niece Lilian, you would find your tusks.

Rod. Thou say'st it, honoured dame. Methinks for her
 Even these old gums would bite. Our Lady Lilian,
 Our pride! nay more, our help! who, with the skill

In herbs and surgery she early gained,
Nursed me when wounded, tending all my needs
As she had been my daughter !

Urs. Ah ! she loves

Better to staunch a wound than pay its due
To the bold hand that gave it.

Rod. Ay ; she has lived

Till lately in a convent, where the sisters,
As is their pious trade, feed scrupulous souls
With saws of peace and mercy ; wholesome fare
For mewed-up women, and sick, bedridden men.
Yes, there's a time for all things, for repentance
And mercy 'mong the rest. They're good, no doubt,
When the priest mumbles shrift, and one about
To quit this world must give up his old likings
To earn the next. Nay, nay, this mood will pass.
Our eaglet, 'scap'd her nun's cage, will by instinct
Learn the great swoop that fits Clanronald's brood !
Look, look ! her barge makes land even now.

[A boat is seen at back, gliding up the lake. The boat stops in centre of archway, and LILIAN and MARGERY come on shore. The boatmen doff their bonnets to LILIAN, and row on out of sight. RODERICK advances to meet LILIAN.]

Lil. *[Divesting herself of her mantle.]* Good Margery,
Take thou this mantle.

[She gives it to her. MARGERY curtsies, and passes out at a side door.]

Rod. Daughter of Macronald,
Welcome ! thrice welcome !

Lil. Thanks, thanks, Roderick.
What tidings of my father ?

Rod. None.

Urs. None.

Lil. Strange !

You to the glen sent, and I now return
From where the witch's craig commands the lake.
Heaven guard my father and the clan of Ronald !

Oh, had I been his son, still to be found
At his right hand in danger !

Urs. A daughter, though she fight not, well may aid
Her father's cause. You are of age to marry.
The nephew of the Cameron sought your hand ;
If you had wed him, you had gained your clan
A strong ally.

Lil. A crafty one, who sows
Strife 'twixt his neighbours that himself may thrive
Upon their loss. Well for us if the Camerons
Prove not our peril one day !

Rod. Shrewdly said.

Urs. There's young Macleod, the cousin of the chief,
Him you repulsed.

Lil. Macleod ! He has flaxen hair
And a hand like a woman's ; then he plays
The harp. The hand I take shall never finger
Harp-strings, but do the deeds that harp-strings echo.

*[The sunset has disappeared. A rather misty twilight
comes on. A servant enters with a lighted torch,
which he strikes into floor by mantel-piece : he
then goes out.]*

Rod. Thou hast a face to win men, and thou know'st it.

Lil. Ay, Roderick, ever since a child, I saw
That face reflected in your polished shield,
And to myself said, "Lilian's a beauty !
She's very much like dear Aunt Ursula."

[Throwing her arms round URSULA'S neck.]

Urs. Yes, you know how to fool one. But say, Lilian,
If you refuse all strangers, why not wed
One of your clansmen ? Malcolm long has wooed you.

Lil. My cousin ? Oh, he's grave beyond his age.
I do not like a year without a spring,
Nor manhood without youth.

Urs. You scorned no less
Your distant kinsman Hector.

Rod. Oh, she scorns
Them all in turn. Yet Hector's handsome.

- Lil.* Fierce
And handsome—tiger-like. I want a man.
- Urs.* What fault has Duncan ?
- Lil.* Duncan has red hair.
- Rod.* Is that a fault ?
- Lil.* A grievous fault to have
The roof of his brain in conflagration, yet
Within no spark of light or fire to cause it.
Duncan's a simple fool.
- Urs.* Well, then, young David ?
- Lil.* [*With a laugh.*] Oh, David has black hair.
- Rod.* [*Drily.*] You like not black,
Nor red, nor flaxen—nor the shades between ?
- Lil.* Ah, Roderick ! 'tis the wearer, not the hair,
That's hard to fancy. Give me, then, a man
Who has the love of song like young Macleod,
Yet knows war's trade like Hector ; fresh with youth
Like David, yet in counsel sage as Malcolm ;
With Duncan's faith, and yet without his folly ;
And that particular shade of hair that suits me ;
And then——
- Rod.* Well, then ?
- Lil.* I'll look at the man twice
Ere I say, Go your way ; but would he win
My heart, indeed, let him be brave, as is
My father, yet respect a noble foe ;
And, if he vanquish, spare him.
- Urs.* Spare a foe !
Next to her hope of heaven a chieftain's daughter
Should love her clan ; next to perdition, hate
Its enemies !
- Lil.* I hate all wrong, and all
Who work wrong while they work it.
- Rod.* While they work it.
No "whiles," child ! Hate's the cordial wine that
warms
The heart ; but "whiles" and "ifs" are the mere
water

That mars the draught and thins the drinker's blood.
Give me hate neat ! I like not drink diluted.

Lil. Nay, Roderick, well did Abbess Hilda teach
That we, who all offend, should mercy show
To those who share our taint. [Sits at table.]

Urs. The convent's prate
Where thou wast bred.

Rod. [To LILIAN.] Think of your cause to loathe
The clan Mackane !

Urs. [To LILIAN.] A husband's death I owe them ;
And you a mother's ! she my brother's wife.
[Severely.] Have you forgot the tale ? Recall and muse
on it.

In such a month as this, when such a twilight
As deepens now had fallen, your father absent
With all brave hearts that rallied to his war-cry,
These wolves his warrior eye had like a torch
Scared back into their woods, besieged our hold.
Your mother, then about to bear that name,
Lay helpless in her chamber, when the glare
Of flames (for with a belt of fire Mackane
Had girt our walls) laughed redly at her casement !
By Mary's grace, a royal force on march
Drove back the assailants ; quenched the spreading flames !
But she, who shuddering in that chamber lay,
Hands clenched, lips locked in fear, her upturned gaze
Fixed on the reddening sky, with scarce a moan
Gave to our house a new life—Lilian, thine—
And breathed her own to heaven ! Recall that tale !

Lil. [Absorbed.] What had it been to have known a
mother !

Urs. [With awe.] It was not so to be. Before she passed,
Thou know'st she saw distinct the fatal shape
Of that fierce Graham whom your ancestor
In sudden quarrel slew ; since when, the phantom
We know as Graham's wraith has still appeared
To tell our race of danger or of death !

Lil. I would you had not named him.

Urs.

Why,?

Lil.

Because

But three nights since I saw him !

Urs.

Saw him ?

Lil.

Ay,

As you have oft portrayed him ; by my bed
 He stood, or seemed to stand, with gaze intent,
 And long black hair that like a half-rent veil
 Disclosed the fearful secret of his brow,
 Frowning and pallid ! From his bosom gashed,
 One hand drew down the plaid and bared to sight
 His gory wound ; the other bore his sword,
 Which pointed back, as beckoning me to follow ;
 While o'er his death-struck aspect flitted slow
 A smile of triumph which, having passed, the shape—
 As though it lived but in the evil light
 Of that strange smile—passed with it !

Urs.

Nay !

[The spectre of GRAHAM'S wraith appears dimly through the archway in the mist which has deepened, and which now dissolves and shows the light of the moon. The moonlight is soft and subdued. The spectre becomes gradually distinct, and in all respects resembles the description given of it in preceding dialogue.]

Lil. *[Rising.]* I saw it,
 Plain as that wall, that shield, or yonder—

[Turning to archway, she perceives the spectre, and stands arrested. URSULA and RODERICK, to whom the spectre remains invisible, also rise.]

Urs.

Lilian !

Rod. Has fancy
 Raised to her o'erwrought sense, the thing she feared ?

Lil. *[To spectre.]* I know thee, phantom ! If, dread
 shape, thy summons

Be unto me, fresh chapleted with hopes
 And half-blown joys of youth, may heaven forgive
 The victim's blemish, and accept her life !

If for those near unto my heart thou com'st,
 Or other ill dost to our house portend,
 Heaven's mercy shield us! To its will, not thine,
 Spirit of vengeance, I commit myself!
 See, see! the smile fades from his face, and with it
 He fades! [*The spectre vanishes.*] Gone! all is air!
 He was, and is not! [*Faintly, and sinking on a chair.*]

Rod. Courage! you looked on nought.

Urs. Imagination

Is wont to breed such shows.

Lil. And you saw nothing?

Urs. Nothing.

Lil. 'Tis strange! most strange! [*Suddenly.*]

What sound was that?

Hark! hark! It comes again! It swells! The tumult
 Of fight, the clash of arms, the clansman's war-cry!

Urs. There's no such sound.

Rod. [*Goes up to archway.*] I hear none.

Lil. You will hear.

HECTOR *appears at archway, followed by two armed
 Clansmen guarding KENELM, and by two or three
 Retainers.*

Hec. [*To Clansmen.*] See to that boy, my prisoner,
 straightway guard him.

[*Clansmen bear off KENELM by side door. The
 Retainers remain in the hall.*]

Urs. You, Hector? say, what tidings?

Hec. The Mackanes—

Near you, and poised to swoop upon your nest—

Are by your brother and our clan o'ertaken;

Almost within your hearing they contend.

I through the fight cut way to bear you warning.

You, Roderick, for the women's safety care;

For me, my place is in the field; farewell! [*Rushes out.*]

Rod. [*To Retainers.*] Follow him, you, and with what
 speed you may

Bring tidings of the fight !

[*Retainers hurry out after HECTOR. Huntsmen and servants pass the archway, and follow them with torches.*]

Let's hope the better fate ; but for the worse
Be still prepared. A boat lies by the shore ;
At once, then, cross the lake and 'scape your foes !

Lil. [To *URSULA.*] Heed him, and follow ! Haste !
my almost mother.

Farewell !

Rod. [To *LILIAN.*] And you ?

Lil. [Apart to him.] Macronald's child, when foes
invade his hearth,

May die there, but not quit it !

[*She takes her stand upon the hearthstone.*]

Urs. That's my place !

You are young, and, should they conquer, you brave
death,

Or worse than death !

Lil. For death I am prepared ;

And worse than death I can prevent.

[*She takes a dagger from old armour which surmounts mantel-piece, and conceals it beneath her plaid. The shouts of the combatants, mingled with the notes of the pipes, are now heard faintly in the distance.*]

Rod. Hist ! Now

You catch the shout ! [After a pause, sounds repeated.]

Strike home, brave Angus ! would

I could strike with you !

[*The shouts and notes of the pipes, though still distant, become more distinct. At length the cry, "Craig Eagalach !" "Craig Eagalach !" is remotely heard.*]

Urs. 'Twas a single war-cry.

Lil. Whose ? Again !

[*The cry, "Craig Eagalach !" "Craig Eagalach !" becomes still more distinct.*]

Rod. It is but one shout, and that shout our own!

“Craig Eagalach!”—the Rock of Terror—yes,
The fight is o’er. [To LILIAN.] Your father comes a victor!

[Triumphant music from the pipes of the Clanronald is now heard near. Suddenly the notes of triumph are exchanged for low wailing music.]

Urs. Why sink those notes of triumph to a wail?

Rod. They come! they come!

Enter, preceded by servants with torches and others, the pipers and standard-bearer of the Macronalds, the latter bearing a flag with the crest, device of a castle, surmounted by a hand grasping a sword, and having above the motto, “My hope is constant in thee.” They are followed by MALCOLM, HECTOR, TORQUIL, and many other of the Macronalds. MALCOLM, HECTOR, TORQUIL, and one or two others, as kinsmen of the chief, wear each an eagle’s feather in his bonnet. The general body wear in their bonnets heath the badge of the Macronalds. Some carry double-edged swords, targets, and daggers, others the same (targets excepted) with the addition of bows and arrows. The low wail from bagpipes continues till all have entered.

Urs. Speak, Malcolm, Torquil, speak!

Victory is yours we know, but at what cost?

[HECTOR retires, and goes out at side door. Musicians retire at back, and await the body of ANGUS.]

Mal. What woe these sounds lament too soon, too soon

Shall grieve your ears. But take our whole brief story.—

As you guessed, Roderick, the foemen’s line,
Seen on yon hills, was meant but to decoy.

The scanty band retreating, lured us on

Into their hostile land! At length young David—

Hector's dear foster-brother—with the ardour
Of nineteen summers, darted from our ranks
And neared the foe, who then, with sudden onset,
Closed round and seized him! Not his youth nor
courage

Touched their fierce hearts. A dozen daggers gleamed,
And in the stripling's bosom found their sheaths!
Heaven forget me, if ever I forget
That white and beardless face!

Lil. O wolves, not men!

Mal. Still hold you firm; this grief a greater heralds,
That bids all listeners stand unbonneted
For a dead king on his bier! O, ask not words;
Think what our clan holds its best strength—its pride—
Even that we lack!

Rod. Cease, raven! Say thou speak'st not
Of Angus, of our chief?

Lil. Not of my father?

Mal. [To LILIAN.] Cousin, too true, too true, your
father's dead!

Lil. Dead, say you? Then of his fate, not of mine,
The spectre warned me. Father!

[Sits absorbed in grief.]

Urs. Say, how fell he?

Mal. With feet by vengeance winged, on David's
murderers

We rushed, and at the sword's edge forced confession
That their chief strength was marching on our home.
Swift we pursued, and where the misty moon
Showed our old tower, o'ertook them, when a shaft—
A cursed shaft—struck noble Angus down!

Rod. My chief! And I live on!

Urs. Farewell, my brother!

Thou diedst as should my brother!

Mal. We avenged him;
For like a crag, that, loosened from its height,
Rings down the echoing slope, we burst upon them!
Before the shock they fled. To us returned,

Falls the sad task to tell you of that loss
Which we share with you.

Urs. Nephew, thanks! For me,
I'll to my chamber. Lilian!

[*LILIAN rises. RODERICK takes a torch from an attendant, and ushers URSULA and LILIAN, whom URSULA supports, to the foot of the staircase leading to corridor.*

Mal. [*To URSULA and LILIAN.*] May all saints
Have you in keeping! Upon me unworthy
Now lights the state of chief; command me ever.
Cousin and aunt, good night!

[*MALCOLM and Clansmen bow with deep reverence, while URSULA, preceded by RODERICK with torch, and followed by LILIAN, begin to ascend staircase.*

Re-enter, from side door, HECTOR, dragging KENELM, who wears the Mackane plaid and a sprig of holly in his cap.

Hec. A prize! a prize!
My prize!

Mal. What slip is this,
That in our sight doth bear the holly badge
Of the Mackanes?

[*URSULA, preceded by RODERICK, disappears in corridor. LILIAN, arrested by the sight of KENELM and by the tumult, remains on staircase.*

Hec. While through their land we pressed,
I, smit with thirst, entering a cottar's house,
Chanced on this boy, charge of a crone with whom,
For more concealment while his kin were absent,
His father placed him! But his look and garb
Spoke the lad's rank. I bore him off; but when
I and my fellows following gained our rear,
The fight was hottest. Natheless, through the strife
We held the boy in guard, and hither brought him.

'Tis Murdoch's son, chief of the clan Mackane :
He has confessed it.

Tor. and Clansmen. [*Fiercely.*] Murdoch's son !

Mal. [*Sternly to KENELM.*] Thy name ?

[*KENELM shrinks back.*]

Hec. He weeps. His father has caused tears enough.

Mal. Quickly, thy name ? [*KENELM is silent.*]

Tor. He fears or shames to speak it.

Ken. Thou liest ! I am the son of Murdoch, chief
Of the Mackanes. 'Tis thou, not I, would fear,
Dog of Macronald, were my father by !

Hec. There spoke his father's son. Malcolm, remember
Young David murdered, my loved foster-brother,
Whose fresh wounds cry, "Revenge !" Let that
revenge

Reach all Mackanes through him !

[*Pointing to KENELM.*]

Tor. Ay, son for son !

And blood for blood !

Clansmen. 'Tis just !

Mal. Ye say so ?

Tor., Hec., and other Clansmen. All !

Lil. [*Who has descended staircase, and advanced to the
front.*] Malcolm, what horror's this ?

Mal. Thou here ? retire !

This is no place for women.

Lil. Yes ; where'er
The helpless cry for mercy, and man heeds not,
There is the place for women !

Hec. Did his tribe
Show our young David mercy ?

Mal. No ; he fell
A living target pierced with daggers ! Cowards !
A score against a boy !

Hec. [*Pointing to KENELM.*] He dies !

Tor. and other Clansmen. He dies !

Ken. [*To LILIAN.*] Can pity for my fate flow in thy
veins ?

Mal. Wouldst thou, an orphan, spare their ruthless seed

Who made thee such? Your father, girl, had crushed it.

Lil. Thou dost defame him, Malcolm; and his blood,
Which flows direct in me as doth a stream
From a hid spring, doth tell thee thou defam'st him!

[*She seizes KENELM'S hand. Clansmen on each side advance to obstruct her passage.*]

My father, didst thou say? With him a man,
Armed to the teeth, ran danger; but a woman
And child were safe, being helpless.

[*These words produce some impression on all except HECTOR.*]

So with you;

[*To MALCOLM.*]

So with you all.

[*To Clansmen.*]

Macronalds, hear your sister!

Hec. Fall ye to doubt? Lady, our chief has spoken.

[*He advances to seize KENELM.*]

Lil. [*Withdrawing KENELM.*] Back! I am daughter
of your dead chief Angus!

Command him back!

[*To MALCOLM. HECTOR turns to MALCOLM as for orders.*]

Mal. [*To LILIAN.*] Thou know'st my will. Retire,
Let go that hand.

Lil. Not till some savage grasp
Wrench it from mine! There's no such here! [*Taking
flag from standard-bearer.*] See, Malcolm—
See all—the banner of our race! Who looks
Upon these folds, nor feels a clansman's pride?
These folds, that, ever first in danger's track,
Waved heroes on! If by this deed ye stain
Your glorious flag, no more wear swords, but henceforth
Whet knives for shambles. I, for one, abjure
Macronald's name, and at my shrinking feet
Cast your loathed colours! Shall I? Speak?

[*Seeing RODERICK, who descends staircase with torch.*]

Ah, Roderick !

Thou art a soldier. Take and shield this boy !

[She gives KENELM to RODERICK and confronts Clansmen.]

Mal. [With admiration.] A true Macronald !

[TORQUIL and most of the Clansmen, but not HECTOR, signify assent, exclaiming, 'Tis Angus' daughter !

Mal. Yes ; her father's soul

Looks from her eyes ! *[To Clansmen.]* Brothers, I may not spurn

A prayer so urged ; the first prayer from the lips

Of Angus' child. *[To HECTOR.]* Doubt not we'll take revenge,

Signal, it may be nobler, for slain David.

[To LILIAN.] Cousin, you have prevailed, the boy shall live,

But on these terms, or else he forfeits mercy,

That he no longer bears his people's name,

[A movement of indignation from KENELM, which LILIAN represses, and again takes his hand.]

Who shall not deem he lives ; and that he rest,

Guarded within our power, so to be dealt with

By us as we by them. Thus much we grant

Your father's child.

[A wail of the pipes is heard from musicians at back.]

List ! from the field they bear

His corse, the clay that once was Angus !

[The wail is renewed. RODERICK takes flag from LILIAN. A friar advances by torchlight through archway at the head of a few clanspeople and domestics, including women and children of both sexes, who precede and surround the body of ANGUS. The group divide in front, and discover the body of ANGUS on a bier, the arms folded on the breast, the hands closed on a sword. The wail continues. All Clansmen uncover and bend in reverence.]

Lil. [*Advancing in solemn grief to the body and kneeling, her arm round KENELM, who also uncovers and bends.*] Father!

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Convent of St Catherine. An apartment overlooking at back, through open window, a terrace practicable, and garden doors on each side.*

LILIAN, *dressed in slight mourning, and working at embroidery, is seated; she pauses in her work, and sits awhile abstracted.* MARGERY, *who stands by her side, draws skeins from a work-bag.*

Mar. Surely the hand of imp or fay has ravell'd
The skeins here, red, gold, blue; one tangled knot!
[*To LILIAN.*] Did you say blue next? was it blue or gold?

You have not heard me, madam! Gold or blue?

Lil. Oh, either. [*Correcting herself.*] Gold; then blue.

Mar. There's gold, then. [*Laying gold skein on table.*]

Yes,

'Tis true—that which I told you—all is stir
And preparation. The young knight departs—
Madam, there's blue. [*Laying blue skein on table.*] That
he departs at all
Is due to you who healed him.

Lil. [*Mildly.*] Margery,
You've said that oft.

Mar. Well, I shall scarcely miss
The good knight or his followers. All kind powers
Be praised, we quit this convent! Not a word,
Or even a look, allowed 'twixt us Macronalds
And those who serve Sir Oscar! True, they're French,
And, had we met, we scarce by words had guessed
Each other's thoughts. But then one's eyes can speak,
Though one's tongue fail.

Lil. Thy tongue, dear Margery,
Will scarce break down. I love to hear thee talk ;
But now my task needs pains, and I must fix
My thoughts on it. Leave me, good Margery.

Mar. [*Laying down work-bag, and glancing at LILIAN'S work.*] You must work hard to end it ere 'tis Lammas.

[*MARGERY goes out by one of the side doors.*]

Lil. To-day ! He goes at noon—an hour and all
Will be as though it had not been. Not so ;
Things we call past live on in their effects.

Enter RODERICK and KENELM from garden. KENELM wears no plaid or tartan of any kind, nor badge in his bonnet (which is a different one, as should be seen, from that of 1st Act), but a blue scarf. He is nearly a year older than in 1st Act.

Ken. [*Who carries a foil rebated at the point.*] Now,
Roderick, to't again ; up with thy staff !

[*Menacing him in sport with foil*]

Rod. Give breathing-time ; remember that my joints
Are rusty. Now then !

Ken. [*Who, attacking, is parried by RODERICK'S staff.*]
By St David, thou

Hast eye and arm yet ! What ! thy joints want oil ?
They're lithe as mine. Again ! [*KENELM again attacks,*
and is again parried.] Once more ; have at thee !

[*He again attacks, and this time touches RODERICK with foil.*]

Rod. So,
Well planted ! there you hit.

Ken. [*Laughing.*] You let me do it.
But I am now fifteen. Come three years more,
I'll hit without your letting.

Rod. Whipster ! [*Laughs, and pats him on the head.*]

Lil. [*Looking up.*] Roderick !

Rod. I came for your commands. Do you still propose
To quit St Catherine's and your friend the abbess
So soon—to-morrow ?

Lil. Yes ; my cousin Malcolm
Sends, as you know, to urge my swift return.
'Tis thought the Camerons will soon break forth
In open strife.

Rod. Ay, now their chief unmask
And shows a threatening front, both to our clan
And the Mackanes.

Lil. Did I not tell thee once
'Twas Cameron's art to thrive on other's loss?

Rod. As the wolf bears the prey from two spent
lions.

Ken. Does Cameron threat my clan?

Rod. Not less than ours. [KENELM sits moodily.
'Tis fixed, then ; at what hour do you set forth,
To-morrow? [To LILIAN.]

Lil. At an hour past dawn. Sit, Roderick.

[RODERICK sits. LILIAN aside, falling into reverie.
He goes at noon. Were his brief words last night
Meant for a farewell? Shall we meet no more?

Rod. [To LILIAN.] I' faith, I shall be glad to see once
more
Our castle walls. [In a louder tone, observing that she
does not reply.] I say these few weeks spent
'Neath Abbess Hilda's roof will stay my hunger
For convent life.

Lil. [Who has roused herself.] To me they have seemed
brief.

You know that I was bred here, and the abbess
Was loved of my aunt Ursula.

Rod. A lady,
Most mourned and honoured, who too early joined
Your father in the grave.

Lil. Ay, aunt and father
Lost in one year. This month it counts a year
Since my brave father fell. Then Ursula,
To others stern, to me most gentle, followed.
Thus pass the friends of old ; and new friends ! They, too,
Come but to vanish ! [Again in reverie.]

Ken. [*Impetuously to RODERICK.*] Dost thou say the
Cameron
Threatens my father. Hence, toy ! [*Throwing down the
foil.*] Vain to learn

The sword's use, if I draw it not for him !

Rod. Wouldst thou be safe, forget him.

Ken. At that price
I'd not be safe. Mark, Roderick ; dog my steps
And mesh me as you will, I'll some day 'scape,
For I will see my father.

Rod. Peace ! such words
Might risk your life. Those in your lady's train
Assigned to guard you have quick eyes and ears.

Ken. [*Again impetuously.*] Would I were free !

Lil. What, wouldst thou leave me, Kenelm ?

Ken. Lilian, you know I love you. I would make
You and my father friends. I'd tell my tale ;
And then, if stern to all Macronalds else,
He'd let me call you sister. I'd return
Of my free will. Free ! How I envy all things
That no chain binds—birds lessening up the sky,
And winds that sweep on shouting ! Would I were hawk,
Or horse, or hound. Ah ! would I were the knight—
The stranger knight Sir Oscar ! I had borne
His wounds and sickness if, like him restored,
I might to-day ride forth.

Rod. He goes to-day ?

Ken. Knew you not that ?

Rod. And he goes sound and whole,
Thanks, lady, to your skill ; though scarce a month since
Borne to this convent, faint with wounds, he lay
In sorest peril. To your healing hand
And patient care this stranger owes a gift
No less than life.

Ken. [*To LILIAN.*] Sets he not forth at noon ?
Was't not at noon ?

[*Aloud to her, with mischievous significance.*]
But say, what keeps you thus so grave and brooding ?

Lil. Brooding! I, Kenelm?

Ken. You.

Rod. The lad is right. [*Scrutinising her.*
Methinks you should be blithe and proud to know
Your patient leaves you cured.

Ken. Ay, there's the riddle.
When the knight lay in danger, Lilian's step
Was quick, her eye was bright; but as he grew
In strength, so she in gloom. Her hands are idle
Even as her tongue; see how she plies her needle!
[*Glancing at her work.*] On Monday she began the
Greek chief's helmet.

'Tis Thursday now, and there the needle rests
At Monday's point. For some good cause, I trow,
The knight was cured too soon: that chafes her.

Lil. [*Vexed.*] Kenelm!

Ken. Nay, you're not angry, Lilian?

Lil. No, not angry.

Ken. [*To RODERICK.*] I'll prove it further. Yesterday
I asked her,

How fares Sir Oscar? Is he well? Whereto
She answered, Well; yes, well; but with a sigh
And look and tone so doleful, you had thought
The man's last hour had come, and not his cure.

[*Laughing.*]

Now say, is't not a riddle?

Lil. [*Displeased.*] You forget
Yourself, to speak so.

Ken. [*Penitent.*] Lilian!

Lil. [*Giving him her hand.*] There, all's well.

Rod. [*Aside, regarding LILIAN earnestly.*] So! is it
thus?

Come, Kenelm, find your bow, I'll see you shoot.

Ken. Not now! Mark you yon cloud; there'll be a
storm.

SIR OSCAR and PAGE *pass by window.*

Rod. The knight, Sir Oscar, passes down the walk.

[To LILIAN.] If he should enter, child, still heed my warning—

Let him not know your name or birth.

Lil.

Why not?

He'd not betray me?

Rod.

No; not by intent,

He might by chance. Our foes still threat the district;

Wherefore the abbess from the knight has hid
Your name and true estate, and lodged his train
Beyond her walls.

Ken.

Now speaks he to the page;

Now to the window looks. He will come in.

Rod. Then come thou forth with me!

Ken. Good faith, not I! [*With a mischievous glance at LILIAN.*] I'd see this knight more closely.

Rod. [*Rather impatiently.*] Dost thou heed?

Thou'lt anger me!

Lil.

Roderick, what wait you for?

Ken. To see this wondrous knight, for he's a wizard.

And deals in spells. [*To RODERICK.*] Look you, his health restored

Hath wrought her sickness. But I'll stay and foil
His evil charm.

Lil. [*Displeased.*] Go, Kenelm: heed commands;

I'm not in tune for this. [*KENELM hurt, and a little indignant, takes up his cap.*] Nay, I spoke harshly;

[*Winding her arm round him.*]

But thou know'st, Kenelm, there are times with all
When no jests please—when one would be alone.
When thou dost bend thy bow, another's shadow
Would spoil thine aim. When thou dost hold thy
wrist

For the falcon's perch, another voice would fright
The bird from settling.

Ken. [*Archly.*]

Oh, I guessed not that;

If that you mean to draw your bow and aim,

Or lure your falcon down, I'll go ; I had gone
Before if I had dreamed thou'dst have me go.

Lil. [*Kissing his forehead.*] I do not love thee less.

Ken. [*Taking up his foil.*] Now, Roderick !

[*At side door.*]

Dear Lilian ! mind your aim. Allow for wind ;
And shoot not towards the sun. Adieu !

Rod. [*Playfully shaking his hand at him.*] Thou mischief !
[*They go out by side door.*]

Lil. [*Looking after them.*] Ah, light of heart ! [*Sinks into a chair.*] He comes to say farewell.

What should he else ? Strange how one little day
Can change our world ! The sun will rise for years
And we wake, toil, feed, sleep, and nothing miss,
Till one day dawns that with it brings a sense
As of a life new-born ! No hours gone by
Have known that thrill ; no hours to come—nor grief,
Nor joy, nor change—can wake that thrill again !

Shortly before this speech concludes SIR OSCAR reappears at window, ushered by an elderly man, attired as a servant of the Convent. This attendant, by a gesture, indicates to SIR OSCAR to enter the room. Attendant passes on, and disappears.

SIR OSCAR enters. He wears the dress of a knight of the period, with the exception of the helmet, and wears no plaid, tartan, or any Scottish badge.

Sir O. [*Whose face shows some slight traces of recent illness, advancing to LILIAN.*] Deign, dear lady,
pardon

For this intrusion. 'Tis a sweet, sad duty
To bid you farewell.

Lil. You too much presume

On your new strength ; pray sit.

Sir O. [*Sitting.*] Nay, I'm once more
Myself, ready for tourney or campaign ;
And yet, methinks, I'm half ungrateful.

Lil.

You ?

Sir O. Yes, since the health you gave me back I scarce Prize at its worth. I think of the dim chamber In which the sick man lay ; of the bright presence That lit its gloom, and of the gentle hand Whose touch was balm. At first, in fever's dream, I thought some heavenly form that stooped to earth Bent o'er my pillow ; and I said with joy That Heaven was kind ; then soon your look and voice Proclaimed you human, and, with deeper joy, I said, She lives ! she lives ! she's of our world ! Then all our world grew fairer.

Lil. [*After a short pause.*] I beseech you, You speak not thus of one so little worthy ; Or I may deem my cure but half complete, And say his fever talks so !

Sir O. Nay, delirium Fashions no shape of perfectness like that I gaze on now. As day by day I grew In strength, and in the sense of all that's fair, The more you fill'd that sense. Whene'er you spoke Or sung, or with your harp beguiled my hours, Each act revealed your nature. Pardon, therefore, If less I prize the strength regained that parts us Than those blest days of weakness when I learned To know her whom I now must but remember.

Lil. [*Aside.*] To hear such words, yet ne'er again to hear them !

[*Aloud, with suppressed feeling.*] I lack skill To make due answer and to tell my thoughts ; But wish you may be happy.

[*She extends her hand to him, which he kisses. The sky grows gradually darker.*

Sir O. [*Retaining her hand.*] So, farewell ! Farewells must come. Forgive me that, being loth To say the word, I linger ; for the eyes That look their last on joy may well look long.

[*LILIAN turns aside, gently withdraws her hand, and betrays emotion.*

[*Aside.*] Did she in anger turn? not so. [*Aloud.*] Sweet lady,

You chide not with your lips that I remain ;
Does your heart chide me? Would it chide me,
dared I

To linger still? [*A pause.*]

Lil. [*Glancing at window.*] You have good cause to
linger ;

The sky grows black with storm.

Sir O. And is it for that—

For that alone you'd wish me tarry? Ah!

If in an hour hence, in a day, a month,

You could say farewell with no more regret

Than your sweet courtesy gives to all at parting,

Bid me go now ; but if the thought presumptuous

That, yet in bud, dares scarce unfold itself

Into a hope, might live ; then would I say

This strength you have given back, this frame, this
heart—

All that I am is yours ; in every pulse,

And nerve, and thought, is yours ; and at your feet

Would cast the life which you preserved in vain,

Save your love crown it too ! [*Throws herself at her feet.*]

Lil. I pray you, rise.

Sir O. Have I too far presumed? Dost bid me go?

Lil. I bade thee rise ; I did not bid thee go.

Sir O. And dost not now?

Lil. Not if you wish to stay.

Sir O. Do I but dream of joy? Is it thy will

I stay? Speak! Nay, I ask not words ; but reach

Thy hand for sign. [*She gives him her hand.*] Thou
dost! Oh! half I doubt

That Heaven to this harsh world can be so kind

And remake paradise. [*Rising.*] Quick to my heart,

And seal this true ! [*They embrace.*] Thou'rt mine!

Lil. Ay, thine—thine ever! [*Pauses.*]

Sir O. And we but late were strangers!

Lil. [*Sits.*] Ah! to me

Thou wast no stranger. I had seen thee oft
Ere my eyes met thee.

Sir O. Seen me!

Lil. Know'st thou not
How oft our minds, when earth seems fairest, shape
Some being fit to tread it? Thus at sunset,
When in the lake's pure floor the circling peaks
Beheld their jewelled image, and entranced,
I asked if heaven above or heaven below
Did ravish more with beauty; or in autumn,
When through the woods, sighing with tremulous leaves
Of gold or crimson, like a conscious life
The brook pulsed on, then would I cry, O earth!
How fair thou art! Give me a man to match thee!
In mien let him be noble, brave of heart,
To rule so bright a realm; in war, his voice
Dread as the sea's; in peace, as soft as winds
That roam in summer 'mid the pines, and teach
The dim green twilight tunes. Be such my lord!
And when I met and knew thee first, I felt
That what my heart imagined Heaven had clothed
In mortal form, and that I saw my prayer!

Sir O. Thy love shames my deserving; yet 'tis true
We loved as in a dream—no thought of self,
No thought of state or fortune. To this hour
I know thee but as lady and as Lilian;
And thou too know'st me but as knight and Oscar.

Lil. Yet since the very raiment that love wears
Pleases the eye, tell me in what apparel
Has Fortune dressed thee? What's thy name? thy
birth?

Thy serving-men are French, and yet thou speak'st
Our tongue.

Sir O. [*Sitting.*] My native tongue; I never lost it.
My father, dwelling some brief while in France,
Did choose his bride there, and with her returned
Unto the Scottish glen, where I was born.
I, still a child, my mother's health grew frail,

And, pining much to see her land again,
 With me, her youngest born, did she repair
 To France, and there amid her kinsmen died.
 Those kinsmen loved her child, and one—a noble
 Of the French Court—prevailing with my father,
 Made me his page. At length, high tales of war
 And soldier's fame, recounted by the hearth,
 Woke martial longings in me, and I joined
 The French king's service ; in the which till now
 My life has passed. Years since I, sorrowing, learned
 My father's death. Now, during war's brief lull,
 To Scotland am I come to seek my brother
 And mine own people.

[*Thunder and lightning faintly heard and seen.*]

Lil. Well, thy race ? thy name ?

Sir O. Knowing what feuds my clansmen wage, and
 loth

To peril my few followers, I concealed
 A name that oft wakes strife. Thou know'st the rest—
 That a marauding band, in hope of plunder,
 Assailed us ; that with spur and sword we forced
 Our passage and rode on, till, near this spot,
 Faint with my wounds, I reeled, and here was borne,
 Blest in what seemed disaster.

Lil. Yet not finding

More blessing than you brought.

Sir O. [*Taking her hand.*] Thou mak'st my joy
 Too full. For this one hour I'll pardon fate
 All frowns hereafter. Lov'st thou, what can rob
 Oscar Mackane of thee ?

Lil. [*Agitated.*] Mackane ! Of whom
 Speak'st thou ? Oscar Mackane !

Sir O. My name, which thou
 May'st proudly bear. The son of Fergus I,
 Brother of Murdoch, chief of the Mackanes.

Lil. [*Withdrawing her hand, and recoiling.*] Thou
 Murdoch's brother !

Sir O. He still lives ?

Lil.

He lives.

[*Thunder and lightning somewhat more vivid and audible than before.*]

Would that he ne'er had lived, or thou not sprung
From the same stock!

Sir O.

Wherefore?

Lil.

In me thou see'st

The child of Angus, late Macronald's chief. [*Both rise.*]

Sir O. [*Recoiling.*] Macronald! our hereditary foe!

Lil. In fight with the fierce tribe thy brother led
My father fell.

Sir O. [*With horror.*] Not by my brother's hand?*Lil.* Not by his hand,

But by his followers; and, beside the hate
Instinctive towards thy name, that with the stream
Of life we draw even from our mother's breasts,
Know that, where'er I turn, our gaping ranks
Show the fell shafts of thine. My uncles perished
Stemming their onset; my young kinsman David
They snared and slew; that I stand here an orphan
Is due to them, thy kin. Away! a gulf
Between us yawns, and every wave is blood!

Sir O. Not more thou shrink'st than I. Upon thy
breast

That tartan, [*Pointing to her plaid*] unbeheld since child-
hood, grows

Familiar to me—the abhorrèd emblem

Of a loathed race! [*A short pause, during which he
gazes at her, as if bewildered.*] Loathed, did I
say; and thou

Sprung from that race! [*Thunder and lightning still
more vivid and audible.*] By heaven, two natures
strive

Within my breast! One for my kinsmen's wrongs
Prompts me to hate, the other pleads, Forget
All wrongs for her!

Lil.

Obey the sterner voice;

For I could deem my father's spirit rose

Frowning that still I listen. [*Softening.*] Oscar, go !
I may not love thee, and I cannot hate.

Sir O. Thou canst not hate ! Nor I. If enemy's
blood

Flow in thy veins, it flows not in thy soul,
Which has its kin in heaven.

Lil. [*Sadly, with a gesture of rejection.*] Hence !

Sir O. Look on me,

As I on thee ; I love the thing thou art,
And ask not whence it sprang.

[*Thunder loud, and lightning vivid.*]

Lil. Oh, thou dost strain

My being to its root. I might for thee
Brave living kindred's wrath ; but the mute frown
Of the dead who cannot plead, who sleep in trust,
Their child will ne'er be traitor to their blood—
This, this appals me. [*A loud and long crash of
thunder and vivid lightning.*] Hark ! 'tis heaven's
own voice

Uttering its prohibition ! If thou seest
The fierceness of her struggle whom love tempts
And duty warns ; if thou wouldst have me 'scape
My people's curse ; by thine own love for me,
Help me ; save, save me from myself, and go !

Sir O. Harsh doom ! but I obey thee even in this.

[*SIR OSCAR bends his head low in acquiescence, then
slowly retires, and goes out by door opposite to
that by which RODERICK and KENELM went
out.*]

Lil. 'Tis well. I have been true to name and clan.
I have slain my happy youth, and made its grave
An altar to my race. To-morrow's sun
Will fall where we two stood ; on us together
Will fall no more. And he, alas ! will not
My doom be his ? Duty ! Had I no duty
To him who taught me first what life might be,
With love's strong arm broke for my sake the chain

Of deadliest hate? No more to hear the voice
That woke my heart to life, to bear within
This ceaseless yearning widowhood of soul
For him who lives, but lives no more for me!

[*The sound of a horn is heard.*

That horn! his train set forth! [*The Squire and Page
and other followers of SIR OSCAR pass at back.*]

They pass! Even now

The gates are opening! [*SIR OSCAR is slowly passing.*]
Oscar, Oscar, stay!

[*He approaches some steps towards her.*

By all I bear, I know what thou must bear.

I might have doomed myself to appease my race,
Not thee, not thee! Oscar, canst thou forgive,
Canst thou accept this heart, which, for thy sake,
Bursts all the chains of hate, tradition, clan?

Sir O. [*Advancing, and extending his arms towards
her.*] Thou art my clan, my fate, my all in all!

[*She throws herself into his arms.*

ACT III.

SCENE.—Noonday. *A valley in the Highlands. A wood of oaks at back. Mountains in the distance. On one side an arched gateway, leading to an old tower. Rude rustic benches, with the massive felled trunk of an oak, are scattered about. An old rough stone of some size, which serves for goal in the race, is seen on side of stage opposite to gateway. As the curtain rises, it discovers the clansmen of the Clan Mackane, with other men and women of various ages, including children of both sexes from the neighbouring glen and village. MICHAEL and COLIN, as near connections of the chief, wear each an eagle's feather in his bonnet. Other Clansmen wear each in his bonnet a sprig of holly, as the badge of the Mackane. As the curtain rises, shouts*

*from some of "Allan! Allan!" From others of
"Dougal! Dougal! Dougal!" All are looking
off scene towards side at back.*

1st Chorus. Allan!

2d Chorus. Dougal!

1st Chorus. Allan!

ALLAN *enters, running rapidly towards the stone, the goal, amidst the applause of the greater part of spectators, who exclaim, "Well sped, Allan! Allan!" DOUGAL enters almost instantly after ALLAN, and runs after him to the goal.*

Col. [*Clapping DOUGAL on the back.*] Take heart, good Dougal! He need nothing boast; You'll beat him yet. You're the chief's thirteenth cousin, And, by my reckoning, he is but the twentieth.

Eff. [*Soothingly.*] Indeed you ran him hard.

Doug. [*Panting.*] A minute more I'd past him—see, he pants, while I—I'm fresh And sound of wind—scarce breathed! [*They laugh.*]

Eff. Ay, ay, we know, But that some sorry chance still plays you false, You'd always be his master.

Doug. Am his master. Jest on. You're jealous that I danced with Rose.

Rose. My next dance is with Allan.

Doug. [*To EFFIE.*] Let him take My cast-off gear and wear it.

Allan. Your cast gear! Braggart!

Doug. Braggart!

[*They lay their hands on their sword-hilts.*]

Mic. No strife! What! strife to-day, When, till our scouts report the foe, we hold High festival to welcome the return Of Oscar, our chief's brother, long deemed dead

Rose. [*To ALLAN.*] Hear you?

Eff. [To DOUGAL.] Take hands!

[DOUGAL and ALLAN somewhat sulkily shake hands.

Mic. Be the time henceforth spent

In Oscar's honour.

[All but MICHAEL and COLIN disperse themselves over the ground. Some converse in groups standing, sitting, or reclining on the grass. Others examine the hammers which have been brought back. Others take up bows and arrows and prepare to shoot. Clansmen who went out return and join the rest.

Mic. [To COLIN, who has remained with him in front.]

But 'tis strange he comes not,

To share these sports with which our people greet him.

Col. Oscar? He's still with Murdoch.

Mic. 'Tis not wise

In Murdoch to delay him.

Col. You forget;

Murdoch's your chief.

Mic. No more the chief he was.

Since that dark hour when by Macronald's band
His son, young Kenelm, was borne off and slain,
But one thought holds him, and his fitful will
Scarce brooks restraint of reason. Even here,
Where we have marched from home, that in this glen,
Our thinned force may the better cope with Cameron—
Here on Macronald's borders has he spurned
His offered peace, and challenged double strife,
Though weak to meet it single.

Col. He's your chief.

Mic. And leads us to our ruin.

Col. He's my chief;

I'll follow him to ruin.

Mic. Follow madness?

Col. If madness be his humour, 'tis his choice,
Not mine. He's still my chief.

Mic. Silence! he comes—

He and his brother Oscar.

Enter MURDOCH and OSCAR from archway. Followed by SIR OSCAR'S squire and page, they advance to front, SIR OSCAR still wearing his dress of 2d Act, and no Scottish plaid, tartan, or badge. The various groups come to front to meet them. The squire and page mix with the Clansmen and others, and converse. MURDOCH stands a minute silent and absorbed, then sits abstracted on felled trunk of tree.

Sir O. [To Clansmen and others.] Kinsmen, friends,

Pardon if I, a seeming laggard, come
To thank your welcome of me, who went forth
A child, and am returned to you a man.
Beseech you make not my delay offence,
For I was held in counsel with my brother
On what concerns us all.

Mic. [Taking SIR OSCAR'S hand.] Thrice welcome,
Oscar,

The brother of our chief!

Chorus of Clanspeople. Ay, long live Oscar!

Col. A welcome for the chief too; long live Murdoch!

[Waving his bonnet.]

Some Clanspeople. [With a fainter cry, in which the rest do not join.] Ay, long live Murdoch!

Sir O. [Aside.] Cold greeting for their chief! [To MURDOCH, who still sits abstracted.] They greet you, brother.

I say your people greet you.

Mur. [Half-rousing himself.] Greet me? Thank them. ay that I thank them. [Relapses into gloomy reverie.]

Sir O. [To Clanspeople.] To the full, we both
Exchange our love with you—your chief and I.
But let your sports proceed. Here on the strath
Let each man draw his bow, and he whose shaft
In three encounters strikes the nearest home,

Shall for his trophy wear a jewelled sword,
Which from my foe in deadly fight I plucked,
Warring for France!

Col. A costly prize! [*To Clansmen.*] Put forth
Your best skill to deserve it.

All. Ay! ay!

Sir O. [*To MURDOCH.*] Brother, you
Will witness this contention?

Mur. [*Looking up.*] I? not now.
I have no humour for't.

Sir O. [*To Clanspeople.*] Affairs of weight
Engage my brother still. Some later hour—
Say two hours past the noon—shall you contest,
And he award, the prize.

Mic. [*To other Clanspeople.*] Even now our meal
Lies spread on yonder slope. Follow! To Oscar,
So late restored, we'll drain our cups.

Clanspeople. Ay, full ones!

Mic. You from the glen and village will partake
Our feast. Sweet, by your leave.

[*To EFFIE, who proudly takes his arm.*]

Doug. [*Surlily.*] By my leave, Michael.

Mic. By yours when she is yours.

Doug. [*Turning to ROSE.*] Come, Rose!

Rose. [*Who slides her arm into ALLAN'S.*] Too late!
I promised him the next dance. [*Going up with ALLAN.*]

Doug. [*Angrily.*] So!

Mic. [*Looking back on them as he is about to go out.*]

Remember,

No strife, 'tis Oscar's day; a health to Oscar!

Eff. Ay, ay, we'll all drink that.

Various Clanspeople. A cup to Oscar!

[*All Clanspeople and others, MURDOCH, OSCAR, and COLIN excepted, rush out gaily, the men with their partners; the squire and page amongst the rest.*]

Sir O. [*To MURDOCH, who still sits in gloomy abstrac-*
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tion, COLIN reclining near him on the grass.] Murdoch, their feast lacks its best grace, if you, Our chieftain, hold aloof. With me, and join them!

Mur. [Looking up.] Join them in what? their mirth?

Sir O. Their chief should make Their mirth his own.

Mur. 'Tis well; you lesson me, My new-found brother.

Sir O. And your younger brother By some ten years, I grant; I'd not offend. [*Going.*]

Mur. [Softening.] Nay, Oscar, go not. If the wide earth hold

Aught dear to me—the which I doubt—'tis thou.

[*Looking earnestly at OSCAR, then speaking to COLIN, and laying his hand on COLIN'S arm.*]

Mark you not in his look a something—something That hints the face we miss?

Col. Our Kenelm's face?

Mur. [In a low, fierce tone.] Peace! Did I bid thee name him? Speak not!

[*He again falls into deep and gloomy abstraction.*]

Sir O. [Seating himself on a bench by COLIN, and speaking to him apart.] Pray you, What cause has moved him thus?

Col. [Apart to SIR OSCAR.] Sir, 'tis a wound That I did ill in probing. See! again He's lost! [*Pointing to MURDOCH.*] His mood is on him. When it falls,

He shuns all converse, breaks not fast, nor gives His nights to sleep, but sits in moveless gloom.

And yet, I have at times the luck or skill

To rouse him and dispel his evil hour.

I will essay it. Mark! I speak to you.

[*Then addressing SIR OSCAR in louder tone, that MURDOCH may hear.*]

If you demand of me what deeds in fight Your brother wrought, my task is hard to choose

What I shall note, or where begin. The growth
 Upon his chin was down, not hair, when first
 He drew claymore. When was it—when—say, chief,
 [Turning to MURDOCH] when first blood dyed your
 steel?

Sir O. [Who, with COLIN, turns and observes MURDOCH.] He heeds you not.

Col. [Musing.] When, when? [Again addressing MURDOCH.] Was't not that far-off night
 (What years have flown since then—'twas early spring—)
 When our brave lads drove off the foeman's herds,
 And we, belated, followed far behind?
 See'st thou that night?

Sir O. [Who, with COLIN, still watches MURDOCH.]
 He's rapt; you squander breath.

Col. [Still to MURDOCH.] That night of misty moon-
 light, when, like dogs
 That track the boar, they with deep-chested yell
 Strained on our path? [Apart to SIR OSCAR.] Now
 mark!

Sir O. [Observing that MURDOCH still sits motionless.]
 You rouse him not.

Col. [Still addressing MURDOCH.] Who were they
 that pursued
 With yells and opening jaws? The accursed Mac-
 ronalds!

Mur. [Suddenly kindling into interest, and grasping COLIN'S arm.] Ay, the Macronalds! Colin, thou
 say'st well.

Go on; what did I then? what then?

Col. Thou knowest.
 Some five, whose speed outstripped the rest, o'er-
 took
 And hemmed us round. Then stood we twain at
 bay.

Mur. [Excitedly.] At bay, and, like the boar you spoke
 of, rent them
 With tusks of steel. A living wall they stood;

We smote, and like a shattered wall they fell !
Thy axe made breaches there !

Col. The more part sank
Beneath your arm.

Mur. [*Pleased.*] Thou say'st so !

Sir O. At great odds
Did you contend !

Col. [*Exultingly to SIR OSCAR.*] And he, young hawk,
first struck

His quarry there ! You had been proud to wear
His tartan later on Glen Allan's field.
Thrice at the Glen's mouth, with a shout that mocked
The ocean's roar, the fierce Macronald beat,
While with a scanty force your brother thrice,
Rock-like, repelled them——

Mur. [*Interrupting with glee.*] Till 'twas turn of
tide,

And the roar sank, and all that sullen sea,
Moaning, ebb'd out, nor left a trace behind
But the white surf of dead ! Among their dead—
Ay, ay ; say on ; say on ! [*To COLIN.*]

Col. Among their dead,
Three of Macronald's race—their bonnets bore
The eagle's plume—lay stretched.

Mur. [*Springing up exultingly.*] I had dealt on them !
I, only I !

Col. Thou only, chief.

Mur. [*Laughing.*] Ha, ha !

Thy words are wine, brave heart ! As I had known
Their ruthless tribe should one day from his lair
Hunt my poor whelp to death, I took revenge
Beforehand ; but my heart, unslaked, could drink
Revenge as sand drinks water. I am parched
[*Raising his hands to heaven.*] More rain ! more rain !

Col. [*Joyfully to OSCAR.*] He's roused at last.

Sir O. [*Aside.*] By hatred
To Lilian's race ! [*To MURDOCH.*] That you have borne
dire wrongs

I may not doubt. Still prudence, not revenge,
Should sway a leader. If I hear aright,
The Camerons, counting on your wasted strengths,
Are now no less Macronald's foes than yours.
Against this new foe should you turn your swords
Forgetting former feud.

Mur. Forget our debt
To the Macronald? I'd as soon forget
My mother's last kiss, or my dead wife's first,
Or my slain boy's parting clasp. To him and his
We owe our shorn strength, ravaged land, crushed
pride—

Fuel enough for hate. But if in you
It smoulders, I'll throw oil on. [*Motions SIR OSCAR to
trunk of felled tree, while COLIN makes a deprecating
gesture. MURDOCH and SIR OSCAR sit. A short
pause.*] You came back

This morn as from the dead, and yet I smiled not.
You have seen my face light up—as the scarred cliff
Beneath the storm-flash—while a laugh more bitter
Than groans broke from me; but you have not
seen—

You will not see me smile.

Sir O. My brother!

Mur. Yet

I once could smile, and, strange! for joy could weep,
I had a boy, in whose soft brow, clear eyes,
And trick of speech his mother lived again.
And often when he spoke a sudden echo
Surprised me from the ruins of my youth;
And when he trod the heath my fancy leaped
The years to come, and saw the eagle's plume
Stream from his bonnet, as, with drawn claymore,
And our wild war-cry on his lips, he led
Our van to battle, as a comet leads
The trail of light behind it!

Col. Ay; he ne'er
Had shamed his stock, chief!

Mur. [Continuing to OSCAR.] Well, this boy, my Kenelm, Who was to me—guess what an only son, His mother in the grave, is to a father!— Going forth to fight, I left him in the care Of humble folk, whose lowly roof I deemed Would be a safe and less suspected shelter Than my own walls; but there the hunters tracked him, Seized, bore him off, and doubtless dyed their hands In a child's blood. My Kenelm! [*Pauses in paroxysm of grief.*] Ask you still Why for one hope I live, and only one, Revenge upon his murderers?

Sir O. [*Giving his hand to MURDOCH.*] My heart, brother, Bleeds at this deed abhorred. Not less than you Would I pursue the doer.

Mur. [*Half suspiciously.*] Sir, I thank you; I had so much believed.

Sir O. But could Macronald, Or kin of his, be privy to such horror? No, 'twas some caitiff follower!

Mur. [*Withdrawing his hand, and speaking bitterly.*] You can weigh this! You're nice in right! What hunted creature asks Of the pursuing throng *whose* spear transfixed it? It turns and rends the foremost. Save you, sir, I was a father, and your temperate virtue Offends my too rash blood. Farewell, just brother!

[*Going, he turns to COLIN, who is following him, and waves him back.*
Not now, I'd be alone.

[MURDOCH goes out by gateway into tower.]

Sir O. [*Aside.*] When he shall learn That to Macronald's child I stand betrothed, What bounds will curb his fury?

Col. Look you, sir, The chief went hence in anger; you do ill To cross his mood.

Sir O. How if his mood go wrong?

Col. Your part is still submission. If I bid
My dog to leap a chasm, though the plunge
Be death, he takes it. What your chief has willed
Is your will; or it should be.

Sir O. And it might be,
Were I his dog.

Enter MICHAEL hastily.

Mic. Kinsmen, I bear grave news.
Those we sent forth have learned by sure report
That Cameron, whose advance we deemed was near,
Falls back towards England.

Sir O. England!

Mic. Whence by bribes
And pledge of Scottish spoil he gains allies.
Thus reinforced, he bends his swollen strength
At once against Macronald's clan and ours.

Col. Then but one choice is left, to sell life dearly.

Sir O. Were it not wisdom if, with your old foes,
You now made league 'gainst new ones?

Col. League! no league
With the Macronalds!

Mic. Others say not so.

[*To OSCAR.*] Know you not then that three days since
their chief,

Young Malcolm, proffered peace and his alliance
Unto your brother?

Sir O. [*Joyfully.*] Was this so?

Mic. Albeit,
Old rancours in our breasts at first prevailed,
To both clans had this union been safety,
To ours existence. That we were most rash
To spurn it, hour by hour grows clear to all.

Sir O. Then it *was* spurned?

Mic. Almost before 'twas utter'd.

Col. By Murdoch, who with scorn drove back the
envoy.

Sir O. All this admits of cure. Murdoch, a Scotsman,
No less than chief and clansman, when he hears
That Cameron fees English swords against us,
Will join with Malcolm!

Col. [*Aside.*] Will he so? 'Tis fit
He learn your scheme betimes.

[*He goes out by gateway towards tower.*]

Sir O. I'll seek my brother.
How takes Macronald this?

Mic. Even as befits
A name we hate but honour. He prepares
To leave his castle, and pursuing Cameron,
Engage him ere by English succour joined.

Sir O. Would Murdoch did the like. [*Going.*]

Mic. 'Twere well.

[*A shout without of "A dance! A dance!" Some
of the Clanspeople are here seen entering at back,
and motioning to the rest.*]

But see our people,
Now from the feast press in for song and dance.
Stay for their sport; so shall you win their love!

Sir O. Sir, I am theirs. 'Tis thus they show me welcome.

[*Other Clanspeople re-enter, accompanied by men,
women, and children from the neighbourhood,
also SIR OSCAR'S knight and page. The two
latter take seats to witness the dance. Foremost
Clansmen, with cries of "Clear, clear the
ground!" remove off the stage the trunk of
felled tree, benches, &c. Others shout, "A
song, a song!"*]

Sir O. [*To MICHAEL.*] Their mirth well pleases me.
These hearts so light

In danger's front are just the hearts to face it.

Eff. [*Who has overheard SIR OSCAR.*] Sir knight,
your speech smacks of the song we dance to.

Sir O. Fair maid, let's hear that song.

[*All approach their partners except SIR OSCAR and
MICHAEL, who sit at side in front, and SIR*

OSCAR'S knight and page, who sit at back. Pipers, dressed as clansmen like the rest, enter with bagpipes, also a harper with harp, and other musicians. DOUGAL advances to EFFIE, who, after coquettish hesitating glances at ALLAN, takes DOUGAL. ALLAN advances to ROSE, who, after similar glances at DOUGAL, takes ALLAN. Song sung to music, in which the notes of the bagpipes are distinctly heard.

SONG.

*Let every laddie take his lass,
And dance while yet he may ;
For a clansman's life doth quickly pass
From song and feast to fray.
His arm round her waist and her lip to taste,
What time for care and sorrow ?
The hours are fleet and her smile is sweet :
Dance to-day and fight to-morrow !*

[A Highland dance, the dancers repeating the last four lines as chorus, reaching their plaids one to another, and swaying them gently in their hands from side to side. The dance, as it progresses, should in this and subsequent chorus, be also accompanied by excited cries and gestures on the part of those engaged.]

2D VERSE.

*Let every lassie take her lad,
And love him while she can ;
Be this day bright, though the next be sad
When goes her own braw man ;
His arm round her waist and her lip to taste,
What time for care or sorrow ?
The hours are fleet and her kiss is sweet :
Dance to-day and fight to-morrow !*

[Before the dance is resumed, SIR OSCAR advances to EFFIE ; MICHAEL advances to ROSE ; EFFIE withdraws her hand from DOUGAL, and gives it to SIR OSCAR ; ROSE withdraws her hand from ALLAN, and gives it to MICHAEL. For a moment DOUGAL and ALLAN turn away sulkily ; then each seizes the disengaged hand of his former partner. SIR OSCAR'S squire and page now each take the disengaged hand of a female dancer. The dance is resumed, the dancers again repeating the last four lines as chorus, and using their plaids as before. When the dance has reached a certain point, scene closes.]

SCENE II.

A rude hall in the tower. Early afternoon.

Enter from inner door MURDOCH and COLIN.

Mur. How say'st thou? He would have me league with Malcolm!

In friendship clasp the hand our blood has stained,
Forego the sole sweet joy that life has left.
A retribution matchless as my wrongs!

Col. Such is your brother's purpose. *[Looking off.]*

But he comes,
Doubtless to speak it.

Enter SIR OSCAR from without, through open door.

Mur. *[To SIR OSCAR.]* Tell me what's thy name?
You brought me seeming proof you were my brother.
'Twas false; if through your veins my blood did course,
You could not be at heart so alien.
Has Colin slandered you, or dare you tell me—
Me, chief of the Mackanes—you counsel friendship
With Malcolm of Macronald?

Sir O. Strife in brothers—
If they must strive—brooks no observer's eye ;
I'll answer you alone.

Mur. Go, Colin. [COLIN goes out.

Sir O. Yes, 'tis true ;
I counsel union.

Mur. [With a tone of significant menace.] Bold, even
in a brother !

Sir O. You grant your followers, worn by feuds, too weak
Singly to cope with Cameron ; yet your force,
With Malcolm's joined, might brave him. You'll not
doubt

What course befits you when you hear that Cameron
Leads English mercenaries 'gainst you both,
And, with the spoil from bleeding Scotland wrung,
Pays hireling stabbers ! Murdoch, you'll protect
Scotland—ourmother !

Mur. Kenelm was my son.
Much I love Scotland, more I hate Macronald.

Sir O. You stand here chief and leader. With your
honours

Accept your duties. When the time admits
Of private vengeance, then be only Murdoch ;
But now, when clan and country call on you,
Be Scotsman, chief, and gentleman.

Mur. And cry
To Malcolm, *I repent, I sue for aid !*

Sir O. You give as well as sue, if, following him,
You march towards England on the foe.

Mur. [Eagerly.] Has Malcolm
Set forth towards England ?

Sir O. So our tidings run.

Mur. [Musingly to himself, but heard by SIR OSCAR.]
Then his main force goes with him, and his castle
Defenceless lies. We're near it, on his borders !

Sir O. What mean you ?

Mur. [Still to himself, but still heard by SIR OSCAR.]
Yet he has nor wife nor child ;

No crevice in his armour where the shaft
Envenomed might pierce home; he mocks my ven-
geance.

Had Angus lived, he was a father; he
Had felt the pangs I bear. [*As struck with a sudden
thought.*] If a child's cry

Could reach him, 'mid the fiends', and startle hell
With a new torment! He has left a daughter.
Last night, 'tis said, she to Macronald's home
Returned—now dwells there! [*Exultingly.*] Ay, we're on
his borders!

Sir O. [*Fiercely.*] Hold, Murdoch;
What dost thou plan?

Mur. [*With a sinister laugh.*] You rouse me from a
dream.

Methought I played a game, and rose no winner;
But still with equal fortune, child for child!

Sir O. Speak! what's your thought? Heaven grant
my fears have wronged you.

Plott'st thou against the freedom or the life
Of Lilian of Macronald?

Mur. Ha! you're quick
To solve a riddle, brother.

[*Laying his hand on SIR OSCAR'S shoulder.*]

Sir O. Take thy hand
From my stained person, and unteach thy lips
That name of brother. If thou practise ill
On her, or by connivance suffer it,
'Then look not to Macronald's line or Cameron's
For thy worst enemy, but find him here,
In me who own thy name and share thy blood,
But scarce forgive my mother that thou sprang'st
From the same womb that bore me!

Mur. Does my sense
Serve or delude me? Do I hear or see?
Thou beard'st me! [*Restraining himself.*] Go! the fire is
in the cloud,
But bursts not yet. To shelter, boy; to shelter!

[*With a sudden change of tone.*] What is the daughter of
my rival's house

To thee—a stranger?

Sir O. Stranger is she none,
To her I, sick and wounded, owed my life ;
To her the love that crowns life. Know in her
My late preserver, and my wife betrothed !

Mur. Betrothed ! Thou ! she ! [*Aside.*] I much suspect
my thoughts
Of wandering. [*After a pause, to him.*] Say it, if thou
canst, again ;

Thou wedd'st with a Macronald ?

Sir O. Not more sure
That yon sun shines than, if we live, we wed.

Mur. Thy words smite on my brain, as on a door
Foemen with sword-hilts knock in time of war,
While those within, half-drowned in sleep, rise staggering,
And let in murder ! To my wakening sense
So dost thou stand. False, not to me alone,
But to thy sires and clan ; false to the dead
And to the living ; false to tomb and altar ;
To nature's instinct false, as if life's stream
Within the veins should roll back on the heart
That was its source, and choke it ! False as—nay,
Thou'rt not this thing ; say I but charge on thee
My fancy's monstrous growth ; say thou'rt my brother,
And crush not him who called thy father, father !

[*Throws himself in supplication at SIR OSCAR'S feet.*]

Sir O. [*Compassionately.*] I pity thee.

Mur. Ay, thou wert ruthless else ;
But dost thou yield ? Thou dost !

Sir O. I cannot yield
When only fury pleads.

[*Turning from him.* While SIR OSCAR speaks these
last words, enter MICHAEL, COLIN, and several
other Clansmen.

Mic. [*On entering.*] Murdoch, these tidings
Should lead to prompt resolve.

Mur. [*Starting up, to SIR OSCAR.*] Then meet that
fury! [*Drawing his sword.*
Words have no power to blast, be this my tongue.

[*Rushes with sword on SIR OSCAR, who seizes his
arm, wrests sword from him, and throws it
aside. COLIN takes it up.*

Mic. His sword drawn on a brother!

[*All but COLIN look menacingly at MURDOCH.*

Sir O. [*To MICHAEL.*] In brief madness,
Which cooler thought rebukes.

Col. [*Reaching MURDOCH his sword, and speaking sig-
nificantly apart to him.*] Though all else frown,
I'm still thy hand to do the thing thou bidd'st.

Mur. [*Feebly.*] You say well, Oscar. [*Pressing his hand
to his forehead.*] All here's storm and darkness.
[*Significantly.*] If ever light break in, I'll better pay
The dues I owe you, brother! [*To COLIN.*] Lead me
forth,
I'm feeble, and want rest.

[*He goes out, leaning on COLIN, who, as he goes
out, turns and regards the rest with a look of
fierce reproach.*

Mic. Oscar, our hope
Is fixed on you. He whom his frenzy rules
No more rules us.

Other Clansmen. No more, no more!

Mic. To counsel then, for all
Await your voice.

Sir O. In what befits a brother
You shall command me. He is still my brother.

[*All go out by open door, opposite to that by which
MURDOCH and COLIN went out.*

SCENE III.

Sun fast declining; about an hour from sunset. An upper apartment of MALCOLM'S Castle. A door at side. Two large painted windows at back. Between them a narrow door (open), which commands a Gothic terrace, and gives a glimpse of a lake beyond. Another door at side. Three or four portraits of former Macronald chiefs, in their Highland and clan costume, on the walls; amongst these, conspicuous to audience, is a portrait of LILIAN'S father, Angus. Another portrait opposite side-door conceals a sliding panel. An oratory, with altar and plain crucifix, surmounted by a small lamp, not lighted in this scene, is also conspicuous to audience. Old armour, swords, shields, battle-axes, &c., grouped on walls.

Enter LILIAN, still dressed in slight mourning, and RODERICK.

Lil. What say'st thou, Roderick? The clan Mackane
Are on our frontier!

Rod. Ay; from where they muster
They see our battlements. We from the convent
Returning, barely missed them. By heaven's grace
You're now 'neath Malcolm's roof; at home once more.

Lil. [*Involuntarily referring to SIR OSCAR, and overheard by RODERICK.*] Then is he near?

Rod. Who? Malcolm! Well, you know
He with his followers pursues the Camerons.
He has left you thinly guarded; but fear not.

Lil. What sound was that? [*The panel slides open.*

KENELM enters. Closes the panel, and advances.

LILIAN. *Sportively.*] Ah, mischief! art thou here?
Why by that panel enter like a thief,
When all else use the door?

Ken. Because I choose
To do what others do not, and I love
Things curious and forbidden.

Rod. Then Dame Nature
Erred in thy sex ; thou shouldst have been a woman.

Ken. [*Affecting despondency.*] Alas, I'm not a woman !
Yesterday,
Descending by the secret stair whereto
That panel leads, I strove to thread the maze
Of winding vaults below ; I'd torch in hand,
But lost my way. Now had I been a woman,
I'd found my way, for women are like cats :
They see best in the night, and are at home
In all that's dark and crooked. [*Laughing.*] 'Tis so,
Lilian !

[*To RODERICK.*] 'Twas she that taught me first the
panel's trick. -

To-day I'd better luck ; kept straight my path
Through the oozing walls of stone, till mounting steps
Upbore me to a grate, which, pushed, gave way,
And I was in the sunlight—none to watch—

[*With a sudden change to bitter sadness.*

As free as when I trod my father's hills !
Lilian, I tell you, I will see my father ;
Not all my love for you can stop the hunger
For home that gnaws me.

Lil. [*Placing her arm round him, compassionately.*]

My poor Kenelm !

Rod. [*To KENELM, emphatically and sternly.*] Boy !
Must you again be warned ? Remember well
The vain attempt at flight might prove your death.
[*Softening.*] Poor petted fawn ! keep in thy lady's bower,
And thou art safe.

Lil. [*To KENELM.*] Chide not ! 'tis nature's self
Prompts his desire. Kenelm, though you must bear
This durance, still you know that Lilian's heart
Would beat even with your joy if you were free.
And yet she'd miss thee much.

Ken. [*Taking both her hands.*] I do believe
You would have all free as you are—hold none captive—
[*Archly.*] Except some wounded knight too early cured.
Well, wounded birds, uncaged, will oft fly back,
And so may he. [*LILIAN turns from him rather sadly.*]

Rod. [*Admonishingly to KENELM.*] Peace! peace!
[*A horn is heard without, followed by the tramp of
a horse.*] A horn! And now

The tramp of horse! Perchance 'tis news of Malcolm.

Lil. Perchance a foeman's summons. The Mackanes,
You say, are near?

[*KENELM, who is listening, slightly starts, then con-
ceals his emotion.*]

Rod. But humbled, and too weak
To brave your cousin's wrath.

Ken. [*Aside.*] How! The Mackanes
Are near—my father near! [*Aloud, after a short pause.*]

'Tis now the hour

When Randolph comes back with his hawks. I'll meet him,
And ask him of his sport.

Rod. And to the hall
Will I, and find what stirs. 'Tis nought, dear lady,
To cause you fear: I will report full soon.
[*To KENELM.*] Come, lad!

Ken. A moment. [*To LILIAN, with earnest tenderness.*]
Lilian, if now

Or ever I have angered you—and oft
I've given you cause for anger—you'll forgive me?
The madcap always loved you.

Lil. [*Touched.*] Ne'er did Lilian
Doubt that, dear boy. [*Kissing him.*] Heaven's blessing
rest on thee!

Rod. [*Festingly.*] Enough, enough! This sugar spoils
the teeth.

Come, come, pet fawn!

Ken. Say rather prisoned fawn.

Rod. There's much to give and take, boy; the pet fawn
Is tethered and shut up; but the wild fawn—

Ken. [*Interrupting.*] Is free—is happy !

Rod. Humph ! he's shot and roasted.

[*RODERICK and KENELM go out by side door.*]

Lil. [*Sitting.*] Dear, hapless boy ! His name was on my lips

When Oscar left me. I had almost said,
Your nephew lives ! Well that I checked my tongue !
That knowledge then had led to new assaults
From Murdoch, which resisted, in the strife
The lad perchance had fallen ! For his safety
I must be secret still ; but when a bride
I fly to Oscar, he shall share my flight.
'Twill crown anew the royal hour we wed,
To say, Thy brother's son by me preserved !
Ah me ! when comes that hour ? Is all a dream ?
Did he indeed lie wounded at St Catherine's ?
Did I there tend him ! And oh ! did we part
But three days since ? He promised on the third
To send a trusted friar, by whose report
I should our time and place of meeting learn.
The sun declines, and yet he has not sent.

Sir O. [*To RODERICK without.*] She is within, alone ?

Re-enter RODERICK, followed by SIR OSCAR, who still wears no plaid or other tartan, or any badge of the Mackanes.

Rod. So please you, lady,
The stranger knight. [*Goes out.*]

Lil. Thou, Oscar !

Sir O. My heart's heart ! [*They embrace.*]

Lil. Thou'rt here indeed ; but in this house, in peril !

Sir O. No peril, love. None here surmise my birth.
I'm but a stranger and a knight from France,
By you befriended. No, sweet Lilian,
'Tis you who are in peril. In this fortress,
Feebly defended, you but court attack,
While enemies, if few, yet subtle, plot

Against your freedom—life. Hear me, who know
Your danger, and in you would save myself.
Ere dawns to-morrow's sun, give me such right
As none else have to guard you. Be my wife!

Lil. Thy wife to-night!

Sir O. To-night.—I, with my train,
Will come and bear thee forth. A league from hence
A wayside chapel stands. There shall the priest
Await us; and, the rite performed, I'll lead thee
To the safe shelter of his sister's roof,
Where thou shalt bide till I returning claim thee.

Lil. This night! Doubt not my love, but in that
step
A girl takes passing from old life to new—
There's awe as well as joy! Grant time.

Sir O. Thy danger
Of time admits not. Further know, my brother,
For gravest reasons, stands awhile deposed
From his command, and by the more part I
Am named his deputy. At break of day
I lead our clansmen to the aid of yours,
Who singly strive with Cameron.

Lil. [*In wonder.*] Your Mackanes—
They league with us—with Malcolm!

Sir O. You shall learn
Hereafter how this fell; now hold it true.

Lil. May this blest union ever bind you friends.

Sir O. Heaven grant it, sweet; but to my suit. Once
more

I say thou art in peril. Ere I don
A soldier's harness, let me bear thee hence
To a sure refuge. If thou still dost fear
These hurried nuptials, I obey thy will
And leave thee there unwed. But if—

Lil. Stay, Oscar:
Thou goest to battle. He who gives the victory
Alone foreknows the end. I shrink no more.
Be it so. Ere thou goest, join our fates—

Claim me for thine! [*Extending both her hands, which he takes.*] Then, com'st thou back a victor,
This swelling heart shall hail thee all my own;
And if—

Sir O. If fate be darkest?

Lil. Ay, even then
I should be blest, for I should join thee soon.
Till then, oh! dearer far thy memory
Than any hope surviving. I should know
That for some blessèd hours I called thee mine.
And, cleaving to that thought, look grief in the face
And say, I once was his! Take, take me, Oscar!

[*She falls on his neck.*]

Sir O. Perfect in trust as goodness! At thy word
I take thee. See, the sun goes down apace;
Ere it has set two hours, I will return.

[*They turn towards door, which is open. MURDOCH, disguised in the travelling garb of a minstrel, looks in at door. He wears a cloak with a hood, which partially conceals his face and quite disguises his identity.*]

Lil. [*Starting.*] Ah, look! who's he that on us bends a gaze
So strange and fixed?

Sir O. Some pilgrim, by his garb. [*Smiling.*] Why
dost thou start?

[*Advancing to door, and speaking to MURDOCH, who is retiring.*]

Who art thou? What's thine errand?

Mur. [*Who assumes the gait, manner, and voice of an aged man, returns.*] A travelling minstrel I, who, on
my way,

Have tidings for this house.

Sir O. [*To LILIAN.*] Shall he approach?

His news may be of import.

Lil. Ay, but go not.

Sir O. [*At door to MURDOCH.*] Enter. [*To EVAN without.*] You, fellow, bear his harp.

Enter MURDOCH followed by EVAN, bearing harp.
EVAN, who is one of Macronald's domestics, wears the Macronald plaid.

Mur. [To LILIAN.] Fair lady,
 See I in you the daughter of the chief?

Lil. Of him who was the chief—my father's dead.

Mur. [*Aside.*] 'Tis she. [*Aloud.*] These woful words
 must I repay
 With sounds as harsh. As minstrel late I served
 The young Monteith. Your father loved him well.
 A rival of my lord in maiden's love
 Slew him in strife o'er wine. These news I bear
 To Monteith's distant kinsman, and was bid,
 When journeying to him, to acquaint Macronald
 With our dire grief.

Lil. My father was the friend
 Of the brave house you serve. I, as his child,
 Lament its loss.

Mur. Lady, a hapless house !
 A century since, its head, in heat of youth,
 Espoused the daughter of his enemy ;
 Since when the wrathful hand of heaven has pressed
 Upon his line who broke the holy laws
 Of pact and race. All that were heirs to him
 Have come to ends untimely.

Lil. [*Aside.*] Strange ! his tale
 Sounds like a warning.

Sir O. [*Apart to her, smiling.*] Can this move thee ?

Lil. [*In a low tone apart to him.*] No.
 Thou art my fate. Whate'er betide, thou'rt mine.

[OSCAR bends to her, and whispers reassuringly.]

Mur. [*Aside, observing them.*] Ay, whisper, whisper !
 Let your amorous lips
 Grow glued even in my sight. [*Aloud, as LILIAN and SIR
 OSCAR turn to him.*] My errand told,

I of your goodness, lady, would entreat
Short rest and shelter. Then I take my way.

Lil. Take freely all you need ; I ask not now
That you should prove your skill upon the harp,
Your journey's solace, doubtless. Ere you go
I may demand a lay.

Mur. Whate'er you ask,
I am obedient. If the lay be harsh
And the strings jar and crash, bethink I'm old,
And my hand lacks its cunning. [*Half menacingly.*] Else
I'd win

Such music from the chords, the strain should dwell
On your charmed ear till life itself lapsed with it.

Lil. I take your will for deed. Your name?

Mur. 'Tis Uric.

Lil. Evan, conduct the minstrel to his chamber.
[*To MURDOCH.*] May food and rest refresh you.

Mur. [*Bowing low.*] I'm your debtor.

[*EVAN, bearing MURDOCH'S harp, goes to door.*
MURDOCH slowly follows him.

Sir O. [*To LILIAN.*] Time speeds, and bids me haste ;
remember, sweet,
Two hours past sunset I return.

Lil. [*Observing MURDOCH, who at door turns and
gazes on her intently.*] Again
That fixed, mysterious gaze !

[*MURDOCH follows EVAN out by side door.*

Sir O. [*Smiling.*] What dost thou fear?
Is't strange that minstrels' eyes, alive to beauty,
Should feed on thine ?

Lil. [*Smiling, and trying to rally.*] 'Twas folly, and
'tis past.

Sir O. Then for brief while farewell. [*Kissing her
hand.*] When next I come
'Twill be to claim in thee a joy so sure
Nought can unbase it, and so absolute
It cannot know increase !

[*Going.*

Lil. [Following him to door.] Thy voice, dear lord,
Doth speak for both our hearts. Till night farewell.

[SIR OSCAR goes out by side door. LILIAN gazes
after him.]

Lil. [Returning from door, and sinking into chair.]
The hour is fixed, the hour that seals my bliss ;
Yet bliss is solemn, and my heart lies hushed
Like earth before the dawn. Strange, joy should wear
A look that chills me. I could almost deem
Again yon minstrel's gaze, that, like a cloud
Enfolding thunder, veiled what still it showed,
Bent, moveless on me. Lilian, shame ! art thou
The child of Angus ? [Rising.] Angus ! [Arrested by her
father's portrait.] From the wall
His darkening mien upbraids me, that I blend
His foeman's blood with his. I'm fancy's sport.

[She again gazes on the portrait of Angus, her father,
which gradually fades away, and changes slowly
to the spectre of Graham's wraith, which is pre-
cisely the same in appearance, expression, and
attitude as when seen in first act. LILIAN con-
tinues to speak while this change takes place.]

And yet a horror broods in all the air,
Some spell still holds my sight. Ha ! now it fades,
The pictured semblance fades ; and now puts on
Some ghastly change ! No more my father, there
It stands—again the vengeful spirit stands
That warns our house of danger. Is it death
That now impends ? [After a pause.] Stern phantom,
when before
Thou cam'st in thy mute terror, I was firm,
Firm even to death ! but now I love and fear.
If in thine awful, un conjectured home
Old thoughts of human love can reach thee still,
[Sinking on her knees.]
Claim me not yet ; have pity !

Enter KENELM by open door at back, cap in hand.

Ken. [*Apart to himself.*] One last look!

She knows not 'tis the last. [*Aloud, perceiving LILIAN, rushing to her, and placing his arm round her.*]

Why, Lilian!—

[*As KENELM rushes to LILIAN, the spectre of Graham's wraith suddenly vanishes from the frame, in which the portrait of her father Angus resumes its place.*]

Lil. 'Tis gone!

[*She reclines almost fainting in KENELM'S arms.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Same as last scene of last act. Night. A lighted torch on each side of mantelpiece. The lamp suspended over the altar-piece is also now lighted. Door at back closed. Vivid moonlight seen through windows; some clouds, however, are also visible. The scene discovers LILIAN seated and MARGERY. LILIAN wears a tartan scarf of the Macronald pattern over a white dress, the skirt of which is long for riding. MARGERY is engaged in placing a rose in LILIAN'S dress.*

Lil. Thanks, thanks, dear Margery; you have laid out My riding-cloak—your own too?

[*Pointing to riding-cloaks and head-dresses laid near.*]

Enter RODERICK from side door. His face wears a look of anxiety.

Mar. Madam, all

Lie here prepared.

Lil. 'Tis well; when once our summons Comes, it will ask despatch. We must ride far Ere midnight, Margery.

Rod. Ride far to-night?

Forgive me, lady, but this sudden humour
Holds not with reason.

Lil. Have I not possessed you
Already of the cause? The knight, Sir Oscar,
Has learned that danger threatens me.

Rod. Humph! 'Tis well
To guard you from your foes, but who shall guard you
Against your guarders? How shall I answer Malcolm,
That you, at stranger's bidding, quit his walls?

Lil. How answer Malcolm? With my heart's dear
thanks
For past protection. He's my friend and cousin;
No parent to command me.

Rod. He's your chief
And guardian of your honour.

Lil. Not so, Roderick.
I'm guardian of my honour. Malcolm lives
His proper life. 'Tis well; but I live mine.

Rod. These matters are beyond me. I but know
Our chiefs by their own arms protect their women,
Nor leave that care for strangers. I must tell
Sir Oscar that Macronald's walls best guard
Macronald's child, and that you stir not hence.

Lil. Roderick, you'll ne'er say that.

Rod. Shall I be plain?
'Tis love, not danger, prompts you to this folly.
Ride you not to your bridal?

Lil. [*Calmly.*] If it were so?

Rod. What say'st thou?

Mar. If it were so, says my lady—
If she did ride to church, why 'tis a journey
That most maids of her age are apt to take,
And one I plan myself—what then?

Rod. What then? [*Trying to assume a decisive tone.*]
Then should I act and speak.

Lil. Like Lilian's friend,
[*Motioning him to sit, which he does. She bends
over his chair.*]

Who from her childhood made her whim his law.
 What did I ask and you not grant? To ride?
 You led my palfrey. Would I hawk? 'twas you
 Who trained my falcon; and you oft would laugh
 Because I wept in sudden penitence
 To see the heron struck. Or would I sail?
 'Twas you who, smiling on me from the helm,
 Held in the veering sheet; and will you now,
 Old playmate—now I venture all life's freight
 Upon the deep, and take the voyage whose end
 Is Eden or a quicksand—now I love—
 Will you now first be froward to your Lilian?

Rod. My duty, girl!

Lil. Thy duty is to love
 And help the child who loves thee. Would she 'scape
 To happiness, 'tis thou shouldst aid her flight—
 Raise bars, not fix them; and thou wilt! Dear Roderick,
 Thou shalt go with me and thy grandchild here—
 This very night stand by me at the altar,
 That I may feel the hand that led my father
 When he was yet a child, in my joy's hour
 Rest on my head and bless me. Say thou'lt go!

Rod. Strive not with women: 'gainst them man's
 resolve

Is straw, his sternness wax. Ay, what thou wilt.
 Thou art old Angus' daughter. To the last
 I'll follow where thou lead'st, and bless my fate
 That I, in extreme age, have lived to see
 Love's crown upon thy youth.

Lil. Nought shall divide us.
 My home be henceforth thine. But we must haste
 Our preparations. Where is Kenelm; seek him,
 For he must with us.

Rod. Kenelm! You have touched
 On what disquiets me; though now 'tis night,
 He still is absent; where, with whom, unknown.
 I've strictly questioned; none within have seen him
 Since fall of sun.

Lil. [*With an effort to disguise her anxiety.*] Why, then, he has gone forth
 With Donald to the herd, or else prevailed
 Upon our oarsmen to put out and row
 In the clear moonlight. [*Going to window.*] Ah, how
 fair a scene! [*She watches from window.*
Mar. [*Apart to RODERICK.*] Your look is grave; the
 boy's safe?

Rod. [*Apart to MARGERY.*] Would I knew it.
 I've fears for him. The scarf and cap he wore,
 As I but now have learned, were found by Donald
 Some half league from the Castle. Do these signs
 Augur no deed of violence? You know
 The hate that some here bear him, and how swift
 A death might reach him did he purpose flight.

Mar. You'll keep this from my lady.

Rod. Ay, 'twere ill
 At such a time to grieve her, unless proof
 Confirm the doubt; and yet my heart is heavy
 For the quick step that comes not.

Lil. [*Returning from window, which she closes if
 open.*] On the lake
 Or on the shore he must have wandered far;
 Or else—how think'st thou, Roderick?—his great
 yearning
 For home and kindred has at length o'erpowered
 him,
 And he has fled. When last we met, his arm
 Clasped me in such a long and fond embrace
 As now seems like a farewell. If it were so,
 Heaven's love preserve him!

Rod. Thrice amen to that;
 But I've an errand by this chance delayed:
 'Tis from the minstrel who to-night arrived,
 And soon goes hence—well that he should—a stern,
 Unsocial, silent man, whom none will miss.

Lil. I thought him what you say; but oft we err.
 He doubtless mourns his chief untimely slain,

And we have ta'en for sternness in his mood
What was but sorrow. Well, what is this errand?

Rod. Ere leaving he would see you—pay his thanks.
He has a suit too—some most private suit,
Meant for your ear. So much he importuned,
That I have let you know this.

Lil. [*Aside.*] Poor and old,
'Tis like he has such need as pride unbare
Only to few. [*Aloud.*] Say that I'll see the minstrel,
That I await him here. [*To MARGERY.*] Retire; and,
Roderick,
Press instant search for Kenelm.

Rod. I'll not fail.
[*Aside, in grief.*] Would that the lad were found.

Mar. [*Warningly apart to him.*] Hush, hush! she'll
hear.

[*RODERICK goes out by side door, followed by MARGERY, who takes away her own riding-dress, leaving LILIAN'S.*]

Lil. Yes, let him come. I, on the verge of joy,
Should nought deny to others. Much I've wronged
him.

If still his aspect blends with boding thoughts
Of Kenelm, and that fearful shape I saw,
Or deemed I saw, 'tis but the lingering trick
Of heated fancy. That full noon of bliss
I else had known, too strong for mortal eyes,
Heaven tempers thus with shadows. I'm as one
Named for a queen, who in her ante-chamber
Waits summons to the lordly presence-room.
Through curtains sees the softened torchlight steal,
In whose blaze stands the throne, and hears already
The rising anthem; yet, her train expectant,
Her foot advanced, fears lest some sudden form
Should cry, Thou may'st not enter!

Enter EVAN by side door, followed by MURDOCH, who still preserves the same disguise of dress as before, and still retains the gait, manner, and voice of an aged man.

Evan. Madam, the minstrel whom you bade attend.

Lil. Let him approach—withdraw. [*EVAN signals to supposed minstrel to approach. MURDOCH approaches LILIAN. EVAN goes out by side door.*]

Have I heard right,

You leave us? [*MURDOCH bows deeply in assent.*] You have ta'en but short repose ;

Were it not well to bide here till the dawn ?

Mur. My mission, lady, asks despatch.

Lil.

I'm told

You have some suit to me.

Mur. A suit most urgent.

Lil. Speak freely.

Mur. Pardon, if my words be strange.

Lil. You've far to travel ; sit. [*Both sit.*]

Mur. I see in you

A maid betrothed—a maid who takes to-night

The name of wife.

Lil. How knew you this ? who told it ?

Mur. The power which to these aged eyes reveals
The sight of things to come.

Lil. [*With awe.*] Hast thou that gift,
That awful gift some in our land possess,
Which bids the future cast its shadow forward,
And things unacted yet grow visible ?
Hast thou the second sight ?

Mur. That gift I have.
And scarce an hour since, in my trance, I saw
The knight Sir Oscar lead thee to the shrine.

Lil. Thou saw'st this ?

Mur. In my trance : ay, proud he stood,
And stately as the topmost pine that soars

Above its fellows ; and no parasite
 Did round a trunk with closer tendrils wind
 Than thou round him : and yet I knew him false,
 And that you clasped a traitor ! [*They rise.*]

Lil. Traitor ! Nay.

I were a traitor did I let thee move me
 Even to scorn. What is thy suit, man ? Speak it,—
 And go unpunished.

Mur. That you hear me still,
 And, having heard, judge me for what shall follow.
 Brief is the sequel—to the shrine he led thee.

[Gradually resuming his natural voice.]

There, still in trance, I saw the priest disguised
 In minstrel's robes like mine. Strange, he approached
 The pair, but not to join them ! Who are ye,
 He cried, that come to wed ? Your sires, yet babes,
 With mutual curses lipped each other's names ;
 And if, in manhood's strife, on any field,
 They mixed in death, their very bones would stir
 With life's recoil.

Child of Macronald ! child of the Mackane !
 Hatred has drawn your ties as close as love's,
 And made your union incest !—Then I saw
 The priest was DEATH—not gaunt and spectre pale,
 As women feign him, but a warrior armed
 To execute his mission !

[He throws off his minstrel's dress, and discovers himself in the garb of his clan. He wears the plaid of the Mackanes, and lays his hand on the dagger in his belt.]

Lil. Whoe'er thou art,
 If I but raise one cry, thou diest ; thou'rt mad !

[Pointing to his plaid.]

Thy tartan—a Mackane's—would doom thee here.
 There lies a secret passage *[Pointing to panel]* ; take that
 torch

And fly. I pity thee, and give thee life.

Mur. Life ! I have staked it ; ere thy cry were heard,

This steel were in thy heart. [*Half drawing dagger, which again he drops into sheath.*] Thou art to die.

Lil. For what?

Mur. Thy purposed and abhorred union
With a Mackane. [*Looking through window.*] See yon
dark ridge of cloud

Bears onward to the moon? Until its light
Be veiled, make peace with heaven.

[*Sits at table, and averts his face from her.*]

Lil. [*Apart to herself.*] To die to-night—
My marriage-night! To think when Oscar comes
He'll find the lips that bore his kisses cold,
And dim the eyes that cannot bend on him
Their setting light! [*Suddenly to MURDOCH.*] Whatever
hate thou bear'st

My kin, I have not wronged thee; thou art human!
I am Macronald's child, and yet I tremble.
I would not die—I love. Ah! canst thou strike
A heart that loves—slay double life, even then,
When earth seems likest heaven, and, ruthless, cast
A dead joy at the gates of paradise?
Hast thou loved never?

Mur. Girl, your time is short.

Lil. If thou hast loved, oh! think the form that blest
Thy youth now pleads for mine. If still she live,
By thy first joy; if lost, by present grief,
Look on me; kill me not! I do not hold
To life as simple life, but since I love,
For love's sake, spare me! [*Throws herself at his feet.*]

Mur. [*Somewhat moved, but resolutely.*] 'Tis your love
that's fatal.

I cannot spare you, would I.

Lil. [*Rises.*] Spare thyself!
Thou art no common stabber. If my blood
Be on thy hand, remorse, that ever bleeds
And never dies, and vain self-loathing soon
Shall be thy portion. Never shall this night
Fade from thy brain; but thou shalt shuddering see

My image at thy feet. My voice, that sues
 For pity now, shall ring within thy ear
 Like judgment's peal. Ay, even unconscious things—
 Yon torch that, flickering, saw the act ; yon moon,
 That looked in mute, and passed with its report—
 This sight, through life, shall haunt thee, yea, shall
 line

The curtains of thy bed when Death undraws them !

Mur. Think not to move my fears : thou may'st my
 pity.

Less thy poor life I seek, than to avert
 The horror of this marriage. [*She rises.*] Thou hast said
 There is a secret way that from this chamber
 Leads to the plain. [*The moonlight is now lost behind
 the cloud, and the windows grow darker.*] Disclose
 it ; share my flight,

And live. I've friends without ; their watch and mine
 Shall strictly guard thee ; yet I'll have thine oath.

[*Seizing her arm, and drawing her towards altar in
 the oratory.*]

Swear at that altar—by thy soul's weal, swear—
 Never by craft, nor flight, nor force, to wed
 With Oscar of Mackane. As thou dost ask
 Heaven's judgment on thee, swear it !

Lil.

Swear to what ?

That I forswear myself ! Thou hast seen how love
 Could humble me : now know that love can scorn
 As well as tremble. At thy bidding swear
 To renounce Oscar ! Hadst thou power to hold
 My soul in torment, save I took that oath,
 I would not take it. I would dwell in bale
 And keep my truth. Off ! [*Shaking off his grasp.*] Is it
 at the altar—

Life's holiest place—thou ask'st me to disown
 Life's holiest good ? I will not ; I invoke
 A Power Divine to shield me. If it hear,
 Thou still art baffled. If it hear me not,
 Its altar is a spot where I may die

A victim ; where I will not stand a perjurer !

I refuse ; do thy worst.

Mur. [*Drawing his dagger.*] Thou hast sealed thy doom.

Lil. Then strike ; if thou can'st slay a girl—if thou, Perchance, a father, canst smite down a child.

Mur. A father ! By that word thou shutt'st out mercy. In me see Murdoch, chief of Clan Mackane, The father of a son thy kin have butchered !

Lil. Hold, hold ! That son I snatched from death. He lives.

Mur. Lives ! Where ?

Lil. Beneath this roof ; alas ! he's fled,

Mur. Fled ! To preserve thy life, thou coin'st a lie. Summon him ; bid him burst the grave and stand

Before me, or thou diest ! [*Raising the dagger.*]

Lil. [*Struggling with his uplifted arm.*] He lives ! I swear it.

Is there no hope ? [*Her eye falls on the panel door, which is seen opening.*] Ha ! see, it slides—it slides !

The panel slides !

Mur. [*Again raising dagger.*] Where is my son, my Kenelm ?

KENELM enters through panel, which he closes. He no longer wears his blue scarf, but, as in Act I., the Mackane plaid and the holly badge in his cap or bonnet.

Ken. Lilian !

Lil. Kenelm ! [*To MURDOCH.*]

There, there, behold him !

[*The cloud passes, and it is again moonlight, which falls full on LILIAN'S face.*]

Mur. Heaven ! 'twas true.

He lives, he lives ! [*Extending his arms to KENELM.*]

Ken. [*Rushing into MURDOCH'S arms.*] Father !

Mur. [*Sobbing, and wildly embracing him.*] My boy,
my boy !

[*After a pause.*]

Who saved thy life ?

Ken. There stands she—Lilian !

Mur. Then thou hast snatched me from the heaviest
guilt

That e'er weighed down a soul. [*Throwing himself at
LILIAN'S feet in supplication.*] Oh, pardon, pardon !
[*LILIAN gives him her hand, which he passionately
kisses.*]

*Enter SIR OSCAR, bursting open door at back. His
squire, page, and retinue are seen waiting without.*

Sir O. [*Aside.*] 'Tis as I guessed. [*Slowly to MUR-
DOCH.*] Why art thou here ?

Mur. [*Rising slowly.*] But now
My hand was on her life—

Sir O. Who saved thy boy !

I met him flying from these walls. I stayed him,
And learned his story. Having missed you from us,
Suspicion flashed on me of your intent.

I, riding with my squire and page, my clansmen
At some short distance following, straight enjoined
The lad by shorter paths to speed on hither.
He came in time ; he stayed your blow. We're brothers ;
But had that blow been struck, thy life or mine
Had issued on our swords !

Mur. [*Repressing his tears.*] Oscar, these tears
Of contrite joy have cleansed my brain from madness.
If I may yet atone, I thus would strive.

[*To LILIAN.*] The father, thankful for his son, forgets
Macronald's child, and humbly sues to thee
For sister's love. [*To OSCAR, joining his hand with
LILIAN'S.*] She's thine.

Sir O. [*To MURDOCH.*] In bonds thrice blest,

Since thou hast knit them. [To LILIAN.] Through thy
 life, dear love,
 Such joy flow ever as now swells my breast !

[SIR OSCAR and LILIAN embrace.]

Ken. [Plucking at LILIAN'S dress.] Lilian, 'tis as I
 said. He's come back wounded.

Cure not his hurt this time ; shut close the cage.

Lil. [To him fondly.] Though thou dost merit chiding,
 I'll not chide.

*Enter RODERICK and MARGERY by side door, the latter
 in riding-dress, followed by two retainers of the
 Macronald bearing torches.*

Rod. All, lady, is prepared : your horses wait.

Lil. [To KENELM.] Thou hast fulfilled the omen. As
 the phantom

That threatened Lilian at thy coming fled,
 So now Death flies before thee. Thou hast saved
 Her who saved thee. 'Tis life for life. Thou wear'st
 Thy father's badge and tartan !

Ken. These I wore
 When first made captive ; flying, bore them hence ;
 At distance from the castle I cast off
 My bonnet and my scarf, and re-assumed
 The ensigns of Mackane.

Mur. 'Tis real—no dream ;

My Kenelm speaks ! [Embracing him.]

Rod. Kenelm ! a weight of ice

Melts from my heart ; yet whose the arm that clasps
 thee ?

Murdoch's our foe !

Lil. Our foe no more. This hour

Macronald and Mackane together league
 For their own rights and Scotland's. Faithful friend,
 Who in thy time hast seen such bloody feuds
 Of our fierce races, thou hast lived to see

Their union—hate the tale of what has been,
And peace the truth that is. Thy blessing now !

[*She bends her head. RODERICK reverently places his hand on it, as in benediction. At a sign from SIR OSCAR, enter his squire, page, and several attendants. Torch-bearers turn towards door, and prepare to marshal the rest.*

END OF LIFE FOR LIFE.

A LIFE'S RANSOM.

A Play,

IN THREE ACTS.

A Life's Ransom.

*First performed at the LYCEUM THEATRE, on Monday,
February 16, 1857.*

CHARACTERS.

<p>BASIL, LORD REVEDALE, <i>a young nobleman of high descent but impoverished fortune,</i></p>		<p>Mr C. DILLON.</p>
<p>MATTHEW RINGWOOD, } <i>a country gentleman of great wealth,</i></p>	<p><i>Neighbours of Lord</i></p>	<p>Mr BARRETT.</p>
<p>ARTHUR RINGWOOD, } <i>his son,</i></p>	<p><i>Revesdale,</i></p>	<p>Mr M'LEIN.</p>
<p>BANCROFT, <i>a country magistrate,</i></p>		<p>Mr STUART.</p>
<p>DRAYTON, } MILES, } HOLME, }</p>	<p><i>Political emissaries,</i></p>	<p>Mr NORMANTON. Mr BURT. Mr POYNTER.</p>
<p>RICHARD, <i>an upper servant in Lord Revesdale's household,</i></p>		<p>Mr SHORE.</p>
<p>GILES, <i>an old forester in Lord Revesdale's service,</i></p>		<p>Mr HOLSTON.</p>
<p>OFFICER,</p>		<p>Mr SIMPSON.</p>
<p>LANDLORD,</p>		
<p>FELICIA REVEDALE, <i>sister to Lord Revesdale,</i></p>		<p>Mrs C. DILLON.</p>
<p>ALICE FRAMPTON, <i>an aged domestic, and mother to Richard,</i></p>		<p>Mrs STANNETT.</p>

Dependants of Lord Revesdale, Peasants, Officers, Soldiers, &c.

Scene—Southern Coast of England.

Time—Reign of James II., 1688.

An interval of nearly a day takes place between the First and Second Scenes of the Second Act.

A LIFE'S RANSOM.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Grounds in front of Revesdale Castle. The front of the Castle occupies the back of the stage.

RICHARD FRAMPTON *discovered, leaning thoughtfully on a gun.* GILES and group of PEASANTS and RETAINERS of Lord Revesdale rush on and surround RICHARD.

Peas. Here's Master Frampton !

Retain. Master Richard Frampton !
He'll tell us all.

Enter ALICE.

Alice. What, Richard ! my son, Richard !

[*She makes her way through the group to FRAMPTON.*

Rich. So, so, mother !

Alice. It can't be true—I won't believe 'tis true ;
My young lord sell his lands—sell Revesdale Park !

Giles. The castle, too—old almost as the earth
On which it stands, and which, since it has stood,
Never owned man for master but a Revesdale !

Rich. Ay, lands and castle, all must go !

Alice. Why must ?

Rich. Because the king won't pay his debts—vast sums
By our late master, brave Lord Godfrey, raised
To help the first King Charles, who perished, leaving

The claim uncanceled. Then came the second Charles,
 Who put Lord Godfrey off with promised payment,
 Till in one month both prince and subject died.
 King James, his brother's heir, sat on his throne ;
 My master's heir was beggared !

Giles. But King James
 Will give my lord his rights ?

Rich. King James but chid him
 For thrusting in his need 'midst public cares ;
 So sent him with his sister home to ruin.

Giles. Our young Lord Basil—open hand that ne'er
 Forgot the poor !

Alice. Ay, sirs, and his sweet sister,
 Lady Felicia, whom but to look on
 Were cure for evil !

Giles. Talking of evil, look ! [*Points off.*]

Rich. His worship, Master Bancroft ! 'Tis his cousin,
 Living abroad, to whom my lord's estate
 Stands pledged, to satisfy whose strict demand
 It must be sold ; so wills our magistrate.

Giles. Magistrate, 'sooth ! 'Twas more brute's deed
 than man's
 To hunt to death by scores, as Bancroft did,
 The poor mistaken souls who rose with Monmouth.

Alice. So said my lord and young Squire Ringwood.

Giles. All
 To gain promotion ! Magistrate, indeed !
 Bloodhound !

Rich. Hush, hush ! he's here.

Giles and Peas. Who cares ?

Enter BANCROFT. All shrink back except RICHARD.

Ban. Well, friend, can I see your master ? [*RICHARD, who polishes his gun-stock vigorously, makes no reply.*] D'ye hear ?
 Your master, knave, I say ! [*Advancing to him.*] Have
 you no answer ?

Rich. Oh, it's to me you speak?

Ban.

You knew it!

Rich.

No;

You called me friend, which I am not; then knave,
Which I am not, not being your-worship's friend.
My master's in discourse; if you would see him,
You can wait his leisure, or return. [*A murmur of appro-
bation from the group.*] To your tasks!

Alice. We'll bear your love and duty to my lady.

[PEASANTS and RETAINERS go out; then ALICE,
RICHARD, and GILES.

Ban. Bloodhound! My zeal that brought the rogues
to justice,
Who leagued with Monmouth's duke against King
James,
Has won me this new christening. Arthur Ringwood!
You taught the mob to hate me—taught this proud
And ruined lord, who now lies in my power—
Thanks to my cousin's mortgage—thus to brand me.
Shall I forget how at a public feast,
Laying, in talk, my hand upon his arm,
Roughly the youngster shook me off? Said he,
"I like not, sir, to bear the soil of dust
Upon my coat, far less the soil of blood!"
Shall I forget how all men at those words
Shrank from me as contagion? how my equals
Have shunned me since—a man proscribed and shunned—
A social leper? 'Tis his new command
In the militia that still foils my plans.
He little deems the appointment was but given,
That, should his schemes be treasonous, they might
The better be observed, and he entrapped.
Bloodhound! I'll earn my name—swift, keen, untiring!
Though, from loose gossip, I suspect young Ring-
wood
Shared Monmouth's treason, was in arms for him,
And that Lord Revesdale knows it. [*Looking off.*] Ah,
'tis Ringwood

And the pet fawn of the park, Felicia Revesdale !
'Slife ! his arm's free with her ! The hound's in ambush.

[He retires through the door of Castle, and stands concealed.]

Enter MATTHEW RINGWOOD, followed by ARTHUR RINGWOOD and FELICIA REVEDALE.

Mat. *[Laughing to himself.]* And she answered yes, so soon ! Ha, ha ! that boy
Has the world at his fingers' ends ! To fight or argue,
Discuss affairs of state, or win a woman—
All's the same to him. *[To ARTHUR.]* Pooh, sir ! she
repents,
And droops her head.

Arth. You broke so suddenly
Upon our conference——

Mat. O, conference !
What two young hearts, masking for years with friend-
ship,
Can't fling aside their vizards, and display
The honest love behind them, but it needs
A conference, does it ?

Arth. 'Twas her very friendship,
Frank, like a sister's, made me doubt till now
Love's deeper spring beneath.

Mat. And what says the daughter
Of those grim Normans to the rich brewer's grandson ?

Fel. That when she looks on him, she has no thought
To spare for grandsires.

Mat. Tut ! How this news
Will surprise Basil !

Arth. Yes ; his recent absence,
And his reserve since then, have kept my hopes
Strange to him yet.

Fel. Reserve !

Arth. When late deposed
From his colonelcy in the militia,

I stepped into his post ; 'tis this, I fear,
Rankles his pride, which deems I built advancement
On his disgrace.

Mat. Yet you but took the office
To curb the cruel licence of the soldiers,
Prompted by Bancroft.

Arth. I had said as much ;
But Basil would not hear me.

Fel. Bear with him,
My true, kind brother ! By the king's injustice,
Soon to be driven from home, forlorn and poor,
Wrong makes him quick and proud.

Arth. Have we forgot
That to his generous silence and your shelter
I owed my life ?

Mat. And you were strangers then.
Alas ! poor Monmouth and that fatal night !

[In a low and cautious tone apart to him, and advancing to the front.]

Oft, Arthur, have I rued the chance that threw you,
A peaceful subject, 'midst those hapless rebels !

Arth. 'Twas, as you say, but chance. My horse's path
They crossed, leagues from the field, poor fugitives,
A score to one pursuer ! A brace of troopers,
Deaf to their cries, clove down those helpless wretches,
Staggering, unarmed, and famished ! What could man,
Who had a heart and sword, do less than I—
Parry the slaughterous blow, and give them time
For flight and life ?

Mat. Ay, lad, till the king's men,
Coming to their comrades' aid, forced you to fly
For your own life. Well that you were disarmed
And masked by twilight. Promise never more
To tempt your fate so.

Arth. *[Gaily.]* Sir, you'd bid me do it,
Did the chance come round. *[FELICIA advancing, and laying her hand on his arm imploringly.]* You too ;
you'd never ask

That I should grow so niggard of my years
 As to keep down the impulse just or kind
 That gives time worth. You'd have me live, I know,
 Or long, or brief, a thinking, loving man ;
 No torpid thing, that only measures time
 By the almanac. To feel, to act, is life ;
 Who wants these lives not, sweet ; he only breathes.

Mat. Here's an oration ! Well, 'twas worth the risk
 To hear the rogues tramp by, nor guess the traitor
 Lurked snugly by Felicia's loyal hearth.

Fel. [*Earnestly.*] My brother knew not that.

Arth. That you concealed me ?
 On that point I was silent ; 'twas your wish.
 But why ? I met him with his retinue
 At the Castle gate, and told him all my plight.

Fel. He must not know you passed within our doors.
 I kept the knowledge from him, that, if questioned,
 He might deny it truly.

Mat. And so 'scape
 The peril you incurred ! Oh, wise as noble,
 Thou'rt worthy of my boy !

Arth. And now to Basil.

Fel. He's held by strangers now.

Mat. To-morrow, then.
 But mind you keep our secret, for I mean
 Myself to tell him. 'Twill be brave to thaw
 His pride in our warm love. Come, we'll all cheer him
 In his harsh lot, and henceforth have one interest,
 One home, one heart—perhaps one home indeed,
 For there's a grand investment, a rare toy,
 In stone that Arthur covets—a—— Well, well,
 I'll say no more—a new surprise for Basil !
 You'll keep your word ; remember, now, I tell him.

[MATTHEW, ARTHUR, and FELICIA go out.]

Re-enter BANCROFT, from Castle.

Ban. Plague on the distance and my own dull ears !

I lost the most part ; but my brain is pregnant
 With what did reach me. Sheltered from some risk !
 Sheltered by whom ? Her brother ? Shelter, risk,
 Basil was silent ! Then the peril lay
 In what he knew and told not. So I thought.
 Young Ringwood *was* in arms for the Duke of Mon-
 mouth !

This modest squire, too, woos the fair Felicia,
 Which my lord knows not, for he stands aloof.
 That wound of the militia which I probed
 Will fester, though he hid the sore from me.
 To gender hate 'twixt the proud blood of Revesdale
 And base-born Ringwood I have striven, will strive ;
 And from that hate perchance so work my ends
 As to sting both ; win the king's gratitude
 To swell my lands, to lift me into rank.
 Sir Richard—Bloodhound ! Oh, I must walk to cool !
[*He goes out.*]

SCENE II.

A Gothic library in Revesdale Castle. The room, which is in some confusion, is hung with weapons, portraits, &c. The arms of the Revesdale family are painted on a window, which is partly open, fronting the park. Antique couch at back. Writing table ; on it pens, inkstand, parchments, and papers. Antique chairs.

LORD REVEDALE, DRAYTON, MILES, and HOLME seated at table.

Dray. What says your lordship ?

Reves.

That had I remained

In the militia, wherein, as you say,
 My friend displaced me, I had scorned to use
 The king's trust 'gainst himself.

Dray.

But the people love you.

Lift but your hand, hundreds of stalwart yeomen
Will leap to horse.

Reves. I will not rashly peril
Those honest, trusting hearts. As yet I know not
Your plans, your strength, or your associates.

Holme. You know King James a tyrant to his people,
And your immediate ruin.

Miles. What can bind you
To him who has left you nothing but a name?

Reves. My last possession! You'll forgive me, there-
fore,
If I'm jealous how I risk it. [*All rise.*]

Miles. [*Aside.*] What a look!
They're well called the proud Revesdales.

Holme. To the point:
Should William of Nassau set foot in England,
Shall he have aid from you?

Reves. I'll answer that
When I've your scheme and know my comrades.

Dray. Ere
We name them, sign this document. [*Taking parchment*
from his breast.] It prays
Prince William's presence here, to arbitrate
Between the king and his wronged subjects.

Reves. [*Perusing the paper.*] But
Exacts no pledge to arm in the quarrel?

Dray. None.

Reves. [*Signing it.*] 'Tis signed.

[*Returns it to* DRAYTON.]

Dray. And here's the list of those who share our
venture. [*Gives it.*]

Reves. Sir Dudley Ford, Lord Harwood, Langton,
Orme.

High names!

Dray. Meet us an hour hence at my house,
Where those in league assemble. Meantime learn
We're bound by mutual peril. Your subscription
Is treason, and incurs its sentence—death!

Reves. For this you bade me sign, to force my silence
By the base means of fear. I sought to know
My comrades, and I know them. There's your path.

[*Pointing to door.*]

Dray. Not by that door, an't please you. We require
The screen of the forest. For our late precaution,
Remember danger brooks not ceremony.

In an hour we shall expect you. Friends, to horse !

[*DRAYTON, MILES, and HOLME go out by window.*]

Reves. [*Who paces the room, suddenly stopping short.*]
Pshaw, pshaw ! Why should it fret me that base hirelings
Ask pledges for my truth ? 'Tis not with them
I deal, but with their cause—a righteous protest
Against this tyrant who treads down our laws,
Breaks every kingly oath ; in the Church's name
Slays poor schismatics, while himself betrays
The Church to Rome ! My wronged and loyal house
Falls from thee, James, in me ! I'll join these men,
And for more secrecy afoot.

[*He seizes his hat and cloak from chair.*]

Enter FELICIA.

Reves. [*With great tenderness.*] Felicia !

Fel. Do you go forth ?

Reves. Ay, love, on urgent matters.

Fel. Urgent ! And you've not told them to your sister ?

Reves. Since we were orphans, have I known a joy
You knew not likewise ? 'Tis my cares alone
That would be secret.

[*Kissing her forehead, and crossing towards door.*]

Fel. Stay, I've greetings for you
From Master Ringwood. He would have you count
His heart and home your own.

Reves. [*Bitterly.*] Was Arthur by
To confirm this bounty ! [*Aside.*] He who flaunts in
honours

Stripped from his friend, and so lends countenance
To the court's insult !

Fel. Basil !

Reves. Girl, that man—

Would rise upon our ruin !

Fel. [*Reproachfully.*] Arthur Ringwood !

Reves. [*After a pause.*] I may have been unjust.

Fel. You were indeed.

Then you'll accept their welcome ; you will, Basil ?

Are you too proud ?

Reves. What shield has poverty
But pride ? In happier days you knew me free
To all of worth, as liberal of kind thoughts
As the day of light. My disk is darkened now !
Let it die out, rather than glimmer on
By the pensioned beams of others !

Fel. Should you spurn

Those aids from man to man, the loftiest need

To lean on or they fall ?

Reves. The line of Revesdale

May fall ; it never leaned.

Fel. Be not so lost

In pining for past greatness, as to scorn

Life's present blessings ! Though the king—

Reves. My curse

Hunt him to shame as flagrant as the glory

Of our crushed house ! May !—O, 'tis brave to war

With these tongue-pellets ! I've delayed too long.

[*FELICIA suddenly intercepts him, and lays her hand
on his arm.*]

Why do you hold me ?

Fel. Basil, you nurse some scheme

Against the king.

Reves. Wondrous ! You're a Cassandra,

And deal in prophecy.

Fel. Like hers—of danger.

Reves. Excellent !

Fel. Is there none ?

Reves. And if there were,

Did ever daughter of our house urge danger
To bar a brother's path ?

Fel. She does not now,
If duty sunmons. See, I loose my clasp.
Say thou art called by that which in calm hours
Thy heart counts duty, and I bid thee go,
Though the risk be life.

Reves. I go, then. It is duty
To guard a people's rights.

Fel. One moment yet !
Is it the people's rights, or thine own wrongs,
That sway thee most !

Reves. What matters which ?

Fel. Much, Basil.
Do things in their true names. Take thou thy ven-
geance,
If it be right, *as* vengeance ; but don't call it
Love for a people's rights.

Reves. Both may combine.

Fel. Scarcely. Hate cannot blend with a pure will,
And not corrupt it. Brother, earth has seen
Few patriots. These, if they strove with wrong,
Strove first by reason and by prayers ; hast thou ?
They knew each sounding of the nation's course ;
Dost thou, till late secluded in these walls ?
If they did strike, 'twas in extremity,
In grief, at cost of household ties, with yearnings
To sheathe the sword they drew ; canst thou so strike ?

Reves. Who lessons me, and dares to preach my
duties ?

Fel. [*Kneeling.*] Thyself, whose truth and honour in
clear seasons
Shone on thy sister's soul, and, kindling there,
Shine back to guide thee now in hours of storm !

Reves. [*After a pause, dropping his cloak.*] You're
right, Felicia. I forego this purpose
Till I have pondered well, and asked my heart
If honour prompt it. I'll not take revenge

Under the mask of justice. Yet, 'twas all
He had left me in my wreck !

Fel. All ?

Reves. [*Embracing her.*] No, my sister !

Enter RICHARD.

Rich. Your lordship's pardon ! Master Bancroft's here,
And much desires to see you.

Reves. [*Aside.*] It must be.
Tell him I come.

[RICHARD goes out.]

Fel. Bancroft, I never hear
That name without a shudder.

Reves. Fear not, sweet !
He comes on pressing business—the near sale
Of Revesdale for his cousin's debt.

Fel. And then ?

Reves. Thou wilt be with me ; where thou art is home.
[*He passes his arm round her, and conducts her out.*]

SCENE III.

Grounds in front of Revesdale Castle.

Enter LORD REVEDALE, followed by BANCROFT.

Reves. Be it so, sir ; it is your cousin's right,
His fair undoubted right, to sell my lands.
So must my father's heavy debt be cancelled.

Ban. My kinsman, so he writes me, needs large sums
For present uses, so the lands must go.
Yet, though I've not much cause to bear you love,
It frets me that your ancient, proud domain
Should pass to strangers.

Reves. All that's needful else
You will see done.

Ban. Though if young Ringwood buy it,
'Twill scarcely fall to strangers.

Reves. Ringwood buy it !

Ban. Has he not broken with you upon this?

Reves. Never!

Ban. He might have thought, perhaps, the old Revesdale blood

Would fire at such succession—the brewer's grandson!

Reves. [*With an effort.*] And my friend, sir! He told you his intent?

Ban. He told my agent. [*Festingly.*] 'Tis a foolish thought,

But yet, had proof confirmed the general rumour
Of Ringwood's traitorous aid to the Duke of Monmouth,
He had found a different fate!

Reves. [*Regarding him keenly.*] There are such rumours?

Ban. [*Aside.*] He knows it! Proved, they'd check the aspiring pride

That vaults into your seat.

Reves. Ay, sir; you've taught us

What the king's mercy is.

Ban. [*Aside.*] You taunt me, do you?

Even to my face? [*With feigned merriment.*] You never surely thought

I meant the scaffold? Pshaw! the king's grown lenient.
Most noted traitors 'scape with fine or exile.

Reves. Such converse, Master Bancroft, as affairs
Demand between us, I would give with patience
To you or any man. Beyond that point
You trespass on my leisure.

Ban. [*Aside.*] Ay, the bloodhound

Is no fit mate for a Revesdale!—As you will.

Again, I say, I bear you little love,

And proffer none. But I respect a house

As old as yours, and hate the parasite

That thrives upon a ruin! [*Aside.*] Yes, he flinched!

I stung his ruling passion. Thanks to that,

And to my surly bluntness, which must tell

In time for honesty—I'll mould him yet!

[BANCROFT goes out.]

Reves. Again he couples Arthur's name with treason !
 I must be wary ; a chance word or look
 Might snare my friend. My friend ! who covertly
 Plots to be Lord of Revesdale ! He'd not steal
 So subtly on my track, see me driven forth
 From my ancestral home, this native ground
 Of my soul as well as body, and then kindle
 His holiday taper in the silent halls
 Where my torch is grey in ashes !

Enter FELICIA, with RICHARD and GILES.

Fel. Yes, good friends,
 I'll bear your message. [*RICHARD and GILES go out.*
FELICIA advances to REVEDALE.] You're in
 thought ?

Reves. No, sister !

Fel. Richard and Giles demand a boon.

Reves. From me !
 What have I left to grant ?

Fel. That where you go
 They may go too. They are content for hire
 To take what fortune sends ; or, unhired, serve you
 For your love, that never let them feed like hirelings.

Reves. [*Much moved.*] True friends ! I thank and
 bless them. Age and sickness
 Will chill these faithful hearts, and ruined Revesdale
 Must let them perish aidless.

Fel. None so perish
 Who trust in Heaven, my brother !

Reves. You say well,
 And I'll not murmur. Though another week
 Must see us strangers here—here, where our banner
 Flung, like a sunward wing, its mighty shade
 O'er a brood of heroes—still I'll think whom Heaven
 Has left me in my exile—thee !

Fel. My brother ! [*He embraces her.*

Reves. And time shall teach me to endure, forget,
Ay, and hope too ! There—I say hope already !

Enter RICHARD.

Rich. A letter for your lordship. [*Gives it.*] Would it
bore

Some news to cheer him ! [*He goes out.*]

Reves. [*Cheerfully.*] We've this comfort, sister,
Our poverty is proof against ill tidings.

[*He opens and peruses the letter.*]

Ah, ah !

Fel. You're moved !

Reves. They'll cheat me and die out,
These words of light ! O, like the tints of rainbows,
They build heaven's arch on storm, and, being as bright,
Perhaps may vanish like them !

Fel. What is this ?

Reves. Such joy as almost dazzles me to doubt.
Redemption of our house and wealth, though wealth
I prize but for our house !

Fel. Is this news sure ?

Reves. I trust so ; you might make it sure. It comes
From our best and most tried friend——

Fel. Dear, kind Lord Norville,
Who pressed your suit at Court ?

Reves. Yes, he has a claim,
He thinks, upon the minister who needs
His special service, and the price he asks
Is justice to his friend !

Fel. To you ! Oh, bless him !

Reves. That's what he asks for. Bless him, for you
can !

This flashed on me at times when you met in London.

Fel. What flashed on you, Basil ?

Reves. What he writes
So plainly here—forgive my joy's abruptness—
He loves you, and would wed you.

Fel. Me!—Lord Norville!—
Impossible!

Reves. Why so? My friend is noble
In heart, mien, birth——

Fel. I know it!

Reves. One for whom
You've oft avowed regard, which must, in time,
Ripen to love!

Fel. [*Aside.*] Although I promised silence,
I must reveal my troth to Arthur. Brother,
I cannot wed Lord Norville——

Reves. Cannot! Pause;
Think what's at stake—the upholding of our line
In honour by his aid! They'll grant his wife—
He writes it—what they might refuse his friend.

Fel. You talk not like yourself.

Reves. Myself! Our race
Adjures thee through thy brother!

Fel. Basil!

Reves. [*Pointing to the Castle.*] Look
On that grey pile, from base to parapet
A fane of glory!—Stone? 'Tis built of deeds,
Compact with hearts' blood; heroes trod its courts
Whose names are histories; voices from its halls
Swept o'er a realm like winds that wake a sea;
A tide of memory richer than the sun
Pours through each loophole, and its very dust
Sown with tradition—glory's fallen seed—
Stirs with the quickening future!

Fel. Oh, beware!
Such pride tempts Heaven.

Reves. Heaven made the vale—it sinks;
The peak—it soars. I tell thee, to my frame
Its vital flood's less dear than to my soul
The trust my fathers left. Felicia, think—
The Court against me, not a chance to rise
In war or council, doomed to sordid need
And banishment from hence—as, if you scorn

Lord Norville's suit, we are—what path remains
Of enterprise or greatness?

Fel. Brother, greatness
Is of the soul, not fortune. Emulate
The spirit of our sires, but leave to Heaven
The question of their fame.

Enter BANCROFT.

Reves. I ask my sister
For life, or what is dearer, and she deigns me
A homily for answer. [*Turning from her, he perceives*
BANCROFT.] Here again?

[*They converse apart from FELICIA.*

Ban. My errand's brief. Young Ringwood asks my agent
For an inventory; will you grant it?

Reves. How?

Ban. A catalogue of all your movables,
Plate, pictures, suits of armour, family jewels—
No, jewels pass as heirlooms.

Reves. How? You jest.

Ban. 'Tis natural;
Men like to know the worth of that they buy.
But he wrote in secret, and with emphasis
Forbade that you should know it.

Reves. Wrote in secret!

Ban. But as we could not take the inventory
As yet without your licence, I was bound
To let you hear.

Reves. Such insult! Oh, my ears
Have played me false!

Ban. Then trust your eyes, and read
His letter to my agent, who waits yonder.

Reves. In his own hand!

Ban. 'Tis strange! I thought these plans
Bore on his contract for your sister.

Reves. [*Starting, and glancing rapidly at FELICIA,*
who stands apart.] Hush!

I must hear all!

Ban. You can't be ignorant
Of his suit?

Reves. His suit—to wed my sister! Such an aim
Had jarred upon my love when most in tune:
But now!— You bear him malice!

Ban. I don't doat
Either on him or you; but I brook the proud
More easily than the false.

Reves. [*Aside.*] Why should I doubt
This man? Though fierce and violent, he wears
His nature frankly, shows his plain distaste
For me, nor stoops to counterfeit a smoothness,
As would dissemblers.

Ban. You may think me bitter.
Well, I come of an old stock myself, and like not
Your treacherous upstarts. Let me ask you this:
Who, when you were dismissed from the militia,
Leaped to the vacant post, making your slight
His honour! Prudent friend! Who now by stealth,
Lest your pride wake and thwart him, seeks possession
Of your house and union with your blood, to gild
His base beginnings?

Reves. Hold! I'll sift your story
But to disprove it. Hither! I'll return
Anon, Felicia. Hither, sir; unfold
This business as we walk.

[REVEDALE and BANCROFT go out.]

Fel. [*Coming forward.*] O bitter strait!
I must be false to love—nay, worse—to conscience,
Or crush my brother's hopes. Alas that pride
Should blight a heart so rich! Most perilous
Is pride to noble natures. Other sins
Stand naked and repel; but pride doth filch
The garb of poetry, and the flawed idol
Shows like a god.

Enter MATTHEW and ARTHUR RINGWOOD.

Arth. See ! 'tis herself—Felicia !
How still—how mute—how like a living dream
That's conscious of its bliss, and will not stir
Lest motion end it !

Mat. Dream, forsooth ! [*Aside.*] He talks
Poetry like the laureate ! Dream ! Do dreams
Glow with a flush like hers, or do their steps
Come tinkling on men's hearts like hers on thine ?

Arth. [*Embracing FELICIA.*] My own !

Fel. Arthur !

Mat. Is she a dream, lad ?

Arth. How !

There's trouble in thine eye.

Fel. I'm glad you're come.

Mat. Not so am I. I'm tired, and want my dinner.
What's dinner to a lover ? You that feed
On the dews of violets,—you sleep-walkers
In the realms of fancy, that can take your rest
With open eyes, should pity common folk
That have digestions, and like easy chairs.

Arth. But where is Basil ?

Mat. Is our secret safe ?

Is he yet i' the dark ?

Fel. My friend, my father !

Mat. Well ?

Speak, love !

Fel. Untoward affairs have vexed my brother.
You'll treat him gently ?

Mat. Gently ! Why, how else
But gently should I treat him ? I bestow
My boy—than whom a nobler never blessed
A father's heart—upon him for a brother.
Methinks that's gentle.

Arth. Look where comes my friend !
How rapt in meditation !

Re-enter REVEDALE.

Mat. [To FELICIA.] You'll not leave us?

Fel. [Observing REVEDALE closely.] No, no; 'tis better I remain.

Mat. [Laughing.] Draw back ;
He's in a trance ; perhaps he solves a problem.

[*They retire a few steps, unperceived by REVEDALE.*

Reves. Woos her in secret, does he? Wastes no breath

To win my sanction, who should thank my luck
That my home and sister please him ! Our alliance,
'Tis true, has been held priceless ; but this broker
In decayed honours knows that it befits
The needy to be humble. Is't for thee,
Thou climber by the clefts of others' ruin,
My sister has forsworn her happiness,
Foiled my fresh hopes and balked my thirsting heart
Of the fount before it? Not so ; my friend Norville
Stays at his seat in Hampshire. I'll set forth
This hour to see him, and so gain delay
For a wiser answer.

[MATTHEW, ARTHUR, and FELICIA come forward.]

Mat. Save you, noble student !

Have you yet solved your riddle?

Reves. Sir, you have it.

Arth. I give you joy ! Your hand.

Reves. 'Tis not for sale.

Arth. For sale !

Mat. Nay, nay ! We're here
To join hands, not deny them. Faith, my lord,
You must clear that clouded brow. I would acquaint
you

With my heiress and my new-found daughter !

Reves. So,

Your daughter. [*Aside.*] It goes smoothly !

Mat. You're amazed.

'Twill crown your wonder when I say how long

You've known her, you, sir—that, in brief, she stands
With her affianced husband there—ay, there !

[*Pointing to ARTHUR and FELICIA.*]

Go, boy, and bless them !

Reves. Ingrate that I am,
I have no knee to thank you.

Arth. You'll not mar
Our joy, else perfect? 'Twas but yesterday
I dared to hope——

Reves. What you must hope no more.
[*Restraining himself, and with formal courtesy.*]

Sir, for the honour you design our house

I thank you, and decline it.

Mat. What ! decline,
My boy ! Adversity has turned his brain.
Decline my Arthur !

Arth. Basil, pardon me.
Your sister's love was her own gift. I stand,
However humble, dignified in this—
That she has chosen me, and girt my life
With her bright zone of love. To yield her, then,
Must be a pang to me—a worse than pang,
A crime, to her. For her sake——

Reves. [*Ironically.*] For her sake !

Arth. Yes, for her sake, my lord. I do not boast
A storied name. Perchance mine never waved
Embroidered on a flag, or rallied hosts
In the shock of battle. Courts may nothing heed it.
The hind at plough may hear it and plod on,
Nor check his careless whistle. Do you ask
My title, then, in this? 'Tis here—she loves me !
Spite of all want and accident, she loves me,
Finds love that answers hers, finds truth to lean on,
Finds sympathies that feed her root of joy,
And keep it verdant. If I give not these,
I have indeed no claim ; but giving them,
My lot grows proud. I am something to myself
If aught to her. I'll not withdraw the faith

She prizes, till she say, "Sir, take it back—
I no more need it."

Fel. Never, never, Arthur,
Can she say that ! O brother !

Mat. Stand apart,
My boy, and let them speak.

[ARTHUR and MATTHEW retire a few steps.]

Reves. And so you'll blight
My future and your own for a light mood
That dates from yesterday—a whim, a nothing !

Fel. A nothing ! All new life, that struck its fibres
Deep down before it budded ! Nothing ! Basil,
Earth has a thousand destinies for man ;
For us, one—love ! Man's massive trunk puts forth
Unnumbered branches ; lop them, they renew ;
But we who cling around him, severed thence,
Are prostrate once for ever.

Reves. Credulous girl,
Be warned ! What Ringwood seeks in this alliance
Is his advancement, not your love. For this,
Unknown to me, he lured you step by step.

Fel. Your frenzy speaks !

Reves. For this, by stealth he traffics
For our domain, as if to seize our eyry
Made him the eagle—does this, and commands
That the knowledge be kept from me !

Fel. Question him ;
He'll explain all.

Reves. [Ironically.] To be sure he will ! And now,
To save you and those hopes he would eclipse,
Listen ! I'm bound for a sudden journey. Ere
I go, decide—a suitor or a brother ?

Fel. [Seizing his hand.] You cannot mean—

Reves. Decide at once—renounce him !

Fel. He has loved me, and I cannot ; I have pledged
My love to him, and will not ; 'tis your wish
To cast me off, not mine to lose you, brother.
I must be true—I wed him !

[She turns to ARTHUR and MATTHEW, who advance.]

Reves.

Free my hand !

[*To ARTHUR.*] Sir, till your gold gives right to unlock my gates,

You pass them not again. [*To FELICIA.*] Release me !

Fel. [*Clinging to him.*] Brother !

Reves. When next we meet, I see thee Norville's wife,
His wife affianced, or a stranger—strange
Thenceforth to sight, thought, love ; thy name a sound,
Thy place a void, thy very memory dead !

[*He breaks away from FELICIA, and rushes out.*]

Fel. Bear witness, heart, I had no choice but this !

[*She sinks into ARTHUR'S arms.*]

ACT II., SCENE I.

An oak chamber in Revesdale Castle ; door at back leading to chapel. Night.

Enter ALICE and RICHARD, bearing lamp, and ushering in ARTHUR RINGWOOD.

Alice. This way, your honour—this way, Master Arthur.
May it prove a joyful day, or rather night.
You're kindly welcome.

Rich. Welcome ! You forget

'Tis for the young squire here to welcome us.
The Castle now is his.

Alice. How thy wits wander !

Arth. What says good Alice ?

Rich. Nay, she'll not believe
That you've bought Revesdale, and are lord of it.

Alice. Revesdale's the lord of Revesdale. In the time
Of my grandsire's grandsire, it had been so years
Beyond his count.

Arth. It was so then.

Alice. What then was

Must be so still. I'm grown too old to change.

Arth. Too faithful, say.

Alice. I see now why my son
 Called you the lord of Revesdale. 'Tis because
 You'll wed the lady of Revesdale. [To RICHARD.] Thy
 poor wits
 That once wast shrewd ! 'Tis not the wife gives rank,
 But the husband. Rest ye, gentles, for awhile ;
 I'll bring my beauty to ye, my dear child—
 I'll bring the bride anon. [She goes out.]

Enter MATTHEW RINGWOOD.

Mat. The priest attends,
 And all's prepared. A word with you, friend Richard,
 On this near marriage.

Arth. His true service claims
 Full confidence. [To RICHARD.] Your lady takes a
 husband.

In her brother's absence—nay, against his will.
 You like not that, nor I ; but reasons strong
 And just enforce it.

Rich. What my mistress does
 Must needs be right.

Arth. True ; but your lord being adverse,
 We would not use such public ceremony
 As might offend him ; therefore hold our union
 Private, as we would have it.

Rich. I'll be heedful.

[He retires to back, and occupies himself in arranging
 the apartment.]

Mat. So Revesdale now is ours ! and thy Felicia
 Knows why we bought the Castle and domain ?

Arth. She does. I told her, that should chance restore
 Her brother's wealth, it should again be his.

Mat. A costly purchase ! Ringwood must be sold
 To stock our empty coffers. But for that,
 Its old walls had received you.

Rich. See, my mistress !

Enter FELICIA in bridal attire, accompanied by ALICE.

Fel. [To ALICE.] Await me here. [*Advancing.*] An unattended bride,
No kindred nor companions to present me
To my dear lord, I do present myself.

Arth. There is no herald to thy love so fit
As its own music.

Mat. Bless you for his sake,
My brave, true child !

Arth. And yet my heart, Felicia,
Half shrinks to take its treasure. If one doubt—

Fel. There's no doubt—can be none.—Arthur, I've
weighed

Each point of duty. Basil, ere he went,
Left me these written words :—" By all that makes
An oath inviolable, on my return
You part from Ringwood or from me. Obey,
Or seek a separate home." That oath he'll keep.
His journey's to your rival's house, in hopes
His suit may shake my purpose. To await
Basil's return, what were it but to wage
A fruitless strife, and widen for no cause
Our household wounds ? In all becomes a sister
I'd drain my heart for him ; but in that love
Which holds not of our kin, but straight from heaven,
Doth blend two souls in one—who owns that claim,
Must own it paramount.

Arth. O, pardon me,
If jealousy for thy pure nobleness
Makes question still. What if our union, private,
Unknown beyond these walls, yet linking us
In closest contract, draw on thee reproach
From the malignant ? What if they should say—

Mat. What can they say, but that an honoured lady
Receives two honoured guests ? In a few days
Her brother will return, and all be told.

Fel. My love past doubt, I'll place beyond dispute.

Alice. [*Coming forward.*] Now, ladybird, the priest Attends ; my darling's stayed for.

Mat. May Heaven's grace Bless thee, my daughter ! 'Tis some forty years Since, as that boy stands now, I stood with one Gentle and fair like thee. She left me him For my age's solace ; and I think, though friends Are scanty here, perhaps an angel's eyes Look on these bridals. There !—don't think that grief Flows in these drops. I see the future through them, The happy future !—Basil reconciled, As he must be when he knows us, a glad group Round the old man at the hearth, and, in good time, Perhaps upon his knees—What was I saying ? Lean on your bridesman, girl. Now, boy, your arm To Mistress Alice !

Arth. Alice !

Alice. Sir, that ever—

Arth. [*Placing her arm in his.*] I shall claim my kiss !

Alice. Ah, well-a-day !

Mat. Come, daughter !

[ARTHUR with ALICE, MATTHEW with FELICIA, go into the adjoining chapel, from which the music of an organ is heard, RICHARD lighting them.]

SCENE II.*

An apartment in a roadside hostelry. Fireplace. DRAYTON, MILES, and HOLME seated at table before the fire; on table a bottle of wine and glasses. A large screen behind them divides the apartment.

Dray. Alone ?

Miles. [*Looking behind the screen.*] Not a mouse hears.

* An interval of nearly a day is supposed to elapse between the first and second scenes of this act.

Dray. Then one last cup
To our patron ere we move.

Holme. Drink deep—Success
To Russell and his mission! [*All drink.*] Now or never
Is the adventure's time. The people's heart
Would leap to it.

Dray. These Dutchmen never hurry.

Miles. Fill up! Our task's done, and we've baffled
Bancroft.

Holme. We're safer, being these twenty miles apart.
I liked not his close conference with Lord Revesdale.

Dray. No danger there; a Revesdale ne'er betrayed.
And my lord was in our power, having signed to treason,
Whose penalty is death.

Holme. [*Refilling his glass.*] So his lands are sold!

Dray. It had been gold well spent had some we
wot of

Bought Revesdale Castle. Here's the plan of't—see!
A height commanding all the bay.

[*He exhibits the plan, and, as they examine and discuss it, REVEDALE enters with the LANDLORD unobserved.*]

Reves. [*Apart to LANDLORD.*] Wine, host,
And a fresh horse! and quickly. I'd reach home
Ere night. [*LANDLORD goes out.*] Disastrous chance, that
called my friend

From his house before I reached it, and so wasted
My day in the vain hope of his return!

[*LANDLORD re-enters with salver and bottle of wine and glass, and places them on table. LANDLORD goes out.*]

Strangers! [*He retires to back of screen and sits.*]

Dray. Ay, Revesdale Castle's in bad hands.

Miles. In upstart Ringwood's, who refused our league,
Because, forsooth, the cause lacked better vouchers!

Holme. How brooks the proud Lord Basil to see Ring-
wood

Master of Revesdale?

Miles. Soon to wed his sister.

Holme. A bridegroom who should blazon on his shield
Three vats, with crest—a malt-sack!

Dray. 'Tis well Revesdale
Has been of late from home; though they were friends,
He'd scarcely brook young Ringwood's license, or
This gossip on his sister. [*All laugh and rise.*]

Holme. But that tale
Touching her chamber! It's mere jest?

Dray. 'Tis sworn to
By our landlord's niece, a dweller in the village,
Who, having business with the lady, entered
The room inopportunistly. [*Renewed laughter.*]

Reves. [*Starting up, and advancing to them.*] May I
share
Your pleasant secret, sirs?

Miles. My lord!

Reves. Go on!
My sister and her chamber? Stint not breath;
I would laugh too.

Dray. Your sister?

Reves. Ay, her chamber?

Dray. [*Hesitating.*] My lord, it has been new furnished
in your absence
To suit young Ringwood's taste.

Miles. Whereat we laughed.

Holme. No offence, I hope?

Reves. Beware! You're warned; beware—

Dray. Nay, nay; we fear not threats; but own the
claim

Of your misfortunes. If in light discourse,
We have given unmeant offence, accept our sorrow,
And grant your pardon. [*REVESDALE bows haughtily,
and walks apart.*] Come, the day wears down.

Holme. Have with you!

Dray. [*To MILES, who refills his glass.*] Sirrah, d'ye
mean
To sit your horse?

Miles. [*Draining his glass.*] There, there !

Dray. Good day, my lord !

[DRAYTON, MILES, and HOLME go out.]

Reves. [*Coming forward.*] My lands are sold then ;
Revesdale now is Ringwood's !

To-day, these men came from the very spot
That was our home—was for five hundred years !
What meant their mirth about my sister's chamber ?
There lurked beneath it more than they expressed.
'Tis plain that all men know young Ringwood's suit,
And her consent. [*After a pause, with uncontrollable pas-
sion.*] Would hurricanes had strewed
Earth with my towers ! would that the earth, our soil,
Had gaped, and so engulfed them !—Wed Felicia !
Our blood that sprang from mountain heights of time,
Caught glory's rays while all below was dark—
Had fate no blast to freeze, no torrid heat
To scorch, even to its bed, that stream, or e'er
It lapsed into a sluice, and turned a mill-wheel ?
Well, well ; well, well !

[*Drinks excitedly, and throws himself into chair.*]

Enter BANCROFT.

Ban. Are those I sought not here ?
Mine host is ignorant, or bribed. [*Aside.*] How, Reves-
dale !

He meets my very wish. That scrupulous sense
Called honour sways him so, that in cool blood
'Twere vain to tempt him ; but I've news will lash
His passions into fury—fact, broad fact,
The man whom most he hates his sister's guest,
And by a village matron found last night
Where no foot but a husband's should intrude !
This, if I know my lord, shall gain my ends,
And so arouse his pride, that, like a sea,
In fury, and unconscious, he'll cast up

His inmost secrets. [*Feigning surprise.*] Ah! whom do I look on?

Lord Revesdale? 'Tis my honoured lord!

Reves. [*Fiercely.*] Your will?

Why mock with this feigned respect a ruined outcast?

Ban. Because you are one; I can show respect, And not be thought to flatter.

Reves. [*Recklessly.*] Right!—At least I'm a gainer that way!

Ban. [*Aside.*] Wine or rage, or both, Have fevered him. The better!—you've heard all?

Reves. [*Aside.*] Peace, heart! Such griefs as thine are not to prate of,

As hawkers prate their ballads.—Yes, sir, all.

Ban. That your castle's sold?

Reves. Ay.

Ban. And to whom?

Reves. That, too.

Ban. You bear it nobly. Strangers were more loud In your behalf than you. No man would bid For your inheritance, save Arthur Ringwood.

Reves. It fell to him cheaply, then?

Ban. This fortitude, Though I rejoice at it, seems more than natural. Dull wit! You have compounded with young Ringwood, Renewed your friendship! To be sure you have! Well, well! 'Twas prudent; you had no resource But to yield your sister, and to trust his bounty.

Reves. You're venturous, sir!

Ban. Plague on't! my rough, blunt way. I might have guessed before That you were reconciled, or he had not dared, While Revesdale yet was yours, to come there wooing, Against your strict command.

Reves. When I left home— I mean, left Revesdale?

Ban. There the next day found him, The next to that, the third; at last he stayed.

Reves. Stayed ! where ? at Revesdale ? and my sister ?

Ban. There

I'm baffled. If with your leave he wooed her, why
Forget all caution in his interviews,
And draw men's gossip on her ?

Reves. Gossip !

Ban. Well,

I'm loth to call it scandal, but the world
Will judge by what it sees.

Reves. Judge what ? [*BANCROFT averts his face.*]

Judge what ?

Ban. What would you judge yourself, if a gallant,
Unwedded, sought a maiden in her home,
No father near, nor brother, she alone—
Sought her at eve, and had not left at dawn ?
At least, he slept at Revesdale yesternight.

Reves. 'Neath the same roof with her ?

Ban. Yes, one despatched

On an errand to your sister, unawares
Entering the boudoir which adjoins her chamber,
Found him there late.

Reves. In her chamber ?

Ban. Nay, I said

The adjoining room ; now, though I charge no guilt—

Reves. Guilt ! Guilt !

Ban. You're so intemperate ; I but say

'Twas indiscreet !

Reves. 'Twas indiscreet ! Ah ! now

The jests those men cast on her flash upon me
In their foul sense ! Felicia, a theme
For ribald tongues, a name for reeking lips
To mouth between the drainings of a flagon,
A key-note to the chorus of such laughter
As shakes a tavern !

Ban. [*Aside.*] The gale whistles now !

Reves. My innocent one, that in her orphanhood
Flew to my bosom dovelike ; whose small hand
Our dying mother clasped in mine to guard,

And sanctified love's natural bonds at birth,
 By prayers in death ; my darling, whom I loved
 Even as my better self ! O traitor ! why
 Not thrust at my heart only ? Stripped, forlorn,
 And humbled, one pang more had cost me little.
 But she, my sister ! There be eyes in heaven
 That would forget the patience of the place,
 And haunt me with reproach if I forgave him !

Ban. 'Tis sure he failed in decent reverence to her.

Reves. Nay, had she been mere pulseless stone, she stood
 Niched in the pure tradition of our honour
 To bend men's thoughts in homage ; but herself,
 Whose very life is purity, whose love,
 Thought, grace, flow from its fount, all purity—
 To foul that stream of crystal from the urn
 Of shadowing ages ! O, his star ascends
 And mine dies out ; but from my ashes leaps
 A comet that shall cross his rising orb
 With fiery portent in the midst of heaven !
 Would we were met !

Ban. Why ?

Reves. Ah, why, why ? He seeks
 To blend with the blood of Revesdale, not to spill it—
 He'd tell me so, I doubt not !

Ban. Pity 'tis
 That you met ever.

Reves. [*Traversing the room impetuously, as if speaking to himself.*] Be that hour accursed !
 Accursed the shows of genial fellowship
 And truth that won me to him ! Cursed my weak
 And womanish pity that, while we were strangers,
 Sealed up my servants' lips that eagerly
 Sought to denounce his treason !

Ban. [*Aside.*] Mad with rage,
 He knows not what he utters ! Treason ! Nay—

Reves. It perilled his head, though. Norris, Hurst,
 and others
 Of my following, heard it from his own confession.

Ban. [*Musing.*] Norris and Hurst! Some skirmish then. [*Approaching REVESDALE.*] I say Some petty skirmish, then?

Reves. [*Impatiently.*] Ay, ay, his sword Drawn for the rebels while they fled or rallied. I know not nor remember. I but felt His danger and my pity.

Ban. [*Aside.*] Hurst and Norris May have better memories.—And he stung the heel That, raised, could crush him.

Reves. Peace!

Ban. His very life Lying in your grasp,—you see!

Reves. Not I!

Ban. That's strange. He is a traitor; you, with Hurst and Norris, Could prove him such.

[*Laying his hand familiarly on REVESDALE'S arm.*]

Reves. Off, sir! [*Throws off BANCROFT.*] I spear the foe

That dares me with his tusk; but I don't chase him To pitfalls for the butcher!

Ban. Humph! the king May be less precise in his hunting.

Reves. Ah! You would not—

Ban. Fair journey to your lordship. [*Going.*]

Reves. Bancroft, stay!

Ban. Not now; you're ruffled, and you shook me off

As the bloodhound's paws had soiled you. [*Aside.*] Hurst and Norris! [*BANCROFT goes out.*]

Reves. [*After a pause, as if bewildered.*] What have I done? Now do I see his drift.

The villain who would tempt me thus would lie Or colour truth to dupe me. I'll pursue And drag him back! But wherefore? Could I chain

His limbs, his tongue were free. That must be stilled

At any cost ! [*Moves to the door.*] His horse's hoofs !
 They trample
 Upon a living path—my honour ! Yes,
 I've betrayed Ringwood ! ay, betrayed—the sin
 Of basest cowards. Vain to say my words
 Flew from me like the unconscious sparks from iron
 That's hammered when afire ;—'twas in the furnace
 Of my own pride I let this demon heat me,
 And beat me to his shaping ! Fool, whose hand,
 Clutching the shows of nobleness, let slip
 The very thing ! And Arthur—ah, why linger ?
 They may be on his track, his life the game,
 And not a voice to warn ! [*Seizing his hat and cloak.*
 I should have wings
 To save him ! Ah, what wing will overtake
 Those angels who have fled me—Peace and Honour !
[*He rushes out.*

SCENE III.

A spacious Gothic entrance-hall in Revesdale Castle ; a massive staircase leading to apartments ; many portraits of the Revesdale family are suspended conspicuously on the wall ; cheering and dance music heard without ; doors open.

Enter GILES, RICHARD, and SERVANTS.

Giles. O happy day ! You're sure of this good news ?

Rich. Quite sure ; my mistress had it in a letter
 From some great lord in London—Lord—Lord Norville.
 He has pleaded with the king, and made him pay
 His debts to our master.

Giles. Hurrah ! [*To the rest.*] D'ye hear ? Lord Basil
 Is rich again ; the good old times we knew
 Are back once more.

Ser. Brave news ! brave news !

Rich. Lord Revesdale,

Being absent, knows not yet this happy change.
 Would he were here! He's to have Revesdale back.
 Our young squire bought it in the hope some chance
 Like this might give it to his friend again.

Giles. He's a true friend, Squire Arthur!

[PEASANTS *laugh and shout without.*

Rich.

See, here comes

A holiday group! Our lady has thrown open
 The park and house for a festival in honour
 Of these blithe tidings; but the night drives in
 Our merry-makers.

Enter male and female PEASANTS, preceded by ALICE.

Alice. [Advancing from the group in great excitement.]

Now, son, who was right?

Said I not Revesdale still was lord of Revesdale?

And now all say it. Strike up, lads and girls!

[*Music. A dance.*

Giles. I could shake a leg myself.

[Offers his arm to ALICE, who, unable to control herself, joins the dance.

Rich. [At conclusion of the dance.] Hold, hold, our lady!

[FELICIA, MATTHEW, and ARTHUR appear on the staircase. PEASANTS, &c., range themselves at side.

Join all! Long life to Revesdale and our lady!

Chorus. [By the group.] Long live Lord Revesdale and his noble sister!

Giles. And his honour and Squire Arthur!

Group.

Ay, long life

And happiness to all!

Fel. Thanks, thanks, good friends!

Let me not check the mirth, for my heart shares it.

[FELICIA, MATTHEW, and ARTHUR descend the staircase and advance to front; all bow and curtsy, and then retire towards doors.

Mat. [*To dancers.*] Well done! Fall to again! [*To FELICIA.*] I feel
So light, so gay! I never see the young
Glad, but my old heart leaps up wild and full.
I must dance, or sing, or kiss some one; I must!
For fear of accidents, it shall be you.

[*Kisses her tenderly.*]

Fel. Fie! You, a veteran!

Mat. Veteran, girl! I'm young.
True youth is like true wine—the longer kept,
The more the spirit of the grape comes out.

Arth. There wants but one thing to complete our
joy—
Basil's return.

Mat. How, scapegrace? Do you feel
No awe of the man from whom you've stolen his sister?

Fel. No danger now. The winter that congealed
His love dispelled, 'twill open all its sweets
In Fortune's sunshine. 'Tis not in his heart
To turn from your devotion.

Mat. What delays him?
'Tis clear he's not with Norville, who despatched
The letter that restored your brother's rights
From London.

Fel. You speak anxiously.

Mat. No, no;
There's nought to fear. And yet 'tis true the land
Is rife with plots.

Arth. I'm glad of it!

Mat. Hush! Scarce a house
But holds a spy. Hundreds are daily seized
In the name of Order.

Arth. Order—name abused!
When shall this harassed land know order more?—
The glad obedience freemen pay the laws
That keep them free. Cruelty on the bench,
Fraud in the council, menace everywhere,
The heart denied its commerce with the tongue—

Can there be order? Can unscrupulous power
Strike on a nation's heartstrings with a gauntlet,
And look for music?

Mat. 'Tis said all men's hopes
Are set on Holland; but the cautious prince
Resists entreaty.

Arth. Till his time be ripe.

[*Laughter from the DANCERS at back.*]

Fel. Leave these grave themes, and list their happy
laughter.

[*A pause, during which they watch the DANCERS.*]

Reves. [*Without.*] Way, there! My sister! Arthur!

Fel. Ah, that voice!

[*The group divides in consternation. REVEDALE
rushes in.*]

My brother!

[*Going to him.*]

Reves. Touch me not! No, no embrace.

Hence, Arthur, for your life!

Arth. Go, friends. [*PEASANTS go out with ALICE,
RICHARD, and GILES. Doors are closed.*] Now,
Basil?

Reves. [*Aside.*] He is here; in that
Bancroft spoke truth. [*To ARTHUR.*] By what right do
you share
One home with her?

Fel. By the best right—a husband's.

My brother—

Reves. [*Aside.*] Married! That explains the slander.
Married! What depths of horror at that word
Yawn in my path! Fly, Arthur, fly!

Fel. You speak

In terror, not in wrath.

Reves. Fly!

Arth. On this night,

That hails you back to Revesdale—to your Revesdale!

Fel. Ay, brother, yours. Lord Norville from the king
Has won your rights, and Arthur holds your lands
But to restore them.

Reves. [*Aside.*] Restore them! This for me,
Beyond redemption lost! [*To ARTHUR.*] Why do you
stand

With that calm brow, when every moment falls
Like a sand from the glass of fate? Fly for your
life,

From hence, from England!

Mat. What do you mean?

Reves. 'Tis known—

His treason, or the deed which the law calls so,
Is known. His foes are mustering, on their way,
Fleet as the wind, stanch as remorse; there's not
To spare a second!

Arth. If suspicion's roused,
Flight would confirm it. Those who seek my life
May lie in wait at the port. 'Twere wiser far
To stay and front them.

Reves. Madness! [*Kneeling to ARTHUR.*] On my
knees

I do beseech you—

Fel. Hear him, Arthur; yield,
My heart's beloved!

Arth. And leave thee?

Fel. Ay, to save
Thyself—my self, that's wrapped in thine.

Arth. But, hear me!

Fel. Hear me! We'll fly together!

Mat. It must not be.
Arthur was right. Where are the proofs against him?
His deed is known to none save Basil here
And his trusty servants. All's secure; we'll face
This crisis! [*To FELICIA.*] Courage!

Reves. [*Aside.*] Then I must confess
My baseness. Arthur!

Arth. Basil, 'tis your zeal
For me provokes these fears. Ah! when most harsh,
I felt that you were still my friend at heart,
My warm, true friend!

Reves. No, listen! If a wretch—
Ah! [*A loud knocking is heard without. REVEDALE stands as if tranced in horror. A short interval of silence. Knocking repeated.*]

Fel. Husband!

Reves. To the library. It opens
On the rear of the park—the private path! Escape!
[*Drawing his sword and rushing to the door.*
I'll guard the door. More strength than's packed in iron
Stiffens this arm! Hence! there's yet time.

[*Louder knocking and clamour without.*]

Arth. [*Seizing REVEDALE'S arm.*] Resist not!
Your life is perilled now.

Reves. What bliss if that
Could ransom thine! [*Struggling with ARTHUR.*]

Arth. Be calm; I must remain.

The doors are burst open, and BANCROFT enters, followed by two OFFICERS of the Militia.

Ban. Disarm that madman!

Reves. [*OFFICERS disarm REVEDALE.*] Villain!

Ban. Arthur Ringwood,
I arrest you for high treason!

Mat. On whose charge?

Ban. [*Aside to OFFICERS.*] See those men, Hurst and
Norris, kept apart,

Then stand in call; quick! [*Two OFFICERS go out.*]

Arth. Still athirst for blood!

—*Ban.* Is it so strange in a bloodhound? That's the
name

You and my lord gave me; the name that crowds
Chorus with yells. When I was so baptized,
You were my sponsors. Giving me the name,
Should I not have the nature? Know, your crime,
If proved, is death.

Mat. Say, who accuses him?

None save you have suborned them. Ah, beware !
My boy is loved of the peasants.

Ban. No mob escort
Shall see your son to prison ; a detachment
Of the king's force is sent for in his honour.

Mat. I ask for his accuser.

Ban. Ask my lord.

Arth. Insolent scoffer !

Fel. [*Crossing to REVEDALE, and speaking to him
aside.*] Do not heed him, Basil.

Your anguish helps suspicion. It was night
When the fray chanced ; none recognised my husband,
Or he had been seized before.

Reves. 'Tis known !

Fel. To none

But Hurst and Norris, our old faithful followers ;
They would not act a baseness which no tongue
Could curse to the full.

Reves. There was a third—a third
Who knew !

Fel. Who ? If he have betrayed
My noble Arthur, may that solemn justice,
Which, unlike man's, looks to the heart as well
As to the act, judge him !

Reves. It does, it does !

Fel. His name ? Why droop your head ? He can-
not be
Your friend. You shudder ! Ah, what fearful thoughts
Dart through my brain ! Your feud with Arthur,
your
Close intercourse with Bancroft, now that look !
No, no—I loathe my mind for the doubt distraction,
Not reason, prompts ! Speak, brother, speak in mercy !
This traitor's name ?

Reves. Behold him !

[*During the previous dialogue MATTHEW, ARTHUR,
and BANCROFT have approached them.*]

Arth. Whom ?

Ban.

A witness

To your guilt. Here, sirs !

[*He goes up the stage and calls in OFFICERS.*

Mat. My son ! [*To FELICIA, who turns to ARTHUR.*]

Away !

Thou hast no part in him ! thou art his sister.

Fel. No !

Arth. Father !

Mat. Forgive me, girl ! [*Extends his hand to her.*

Arth. Basil, what brought thee

To this abasement ?

Reves. [*In a deep whisper.*] Why, my pride, that
listened

Unto that demon !

Fel. [*To ARTHUR.*] Speak no more ; let's meet

Our fate in silence.

Arth. Wife, his wretchedness

Doth outweigh ours. Look on him, and have pity.

Mat. Pity ! he had none.

Arth. [*To REVESDALE.*] Say, how wast thou wrought
To this extreme ?

Reves. I deemed by you our house

Had suffered shame. [*Two OFFICERS go out.*

Fel. [*With bitter laughter.*] Our house ! [*ARTHUR
signs to her to be silent.*] If any speak,

I must. Our house ! Thy house ! Where ranks thy name
In its roll of heroes ? [*Pointing to portraits.*] See, their
pictured forms

Start into life and ask thee ! Art thou heir

Of him whose chivalry spared gallant foes ?

Thou didst not spare thy friend ! Of him whose counsels
Quelled bloody strife 'twixt kingdoms ? Thou hast
stained

With blood thy hearth ! Of him whose tuneful lips

Sang noble deeds ? How will this deed of thine

Tell with the minstrels ? Rise, ye shapes august,

And with your lips, white more with scorn than death,

Renounce him for your son !

Ban. Come, the king's business must be cared for now.
Those stand without, who, till the troops arrive,
Will be your guard in the castle.

Arth. I am ready.

Fel. But not alone. There's yet one comfort, love—
That I can knit my fate so close with thine,
No hand shall rend them. We await our doom.
Ay, ours! If he be guilty, I partake
His glorious crime!

Arth. Felicia!

Fel. I concealed him
Within these walls to save his life. I failed,
I triumph now, for I shall share his death!

[*Casts herself on ARTHUR'S neck.*]

Arth. What hast thou said?

Ban. I would it were unspoken.
I meant not ill to her; but for this deed
The law exacts its due.

[*Goes up and signals. Several OFFICERS enter; at
a sign from OFFICERS, ARTHUR and FELICIA,
followed by MATTHEW, go up towards door.*]

Conduct them hence.

Reves. [*As if awaking from stupor.*] No, wretch! I'll
save them—save—

[*FELICIA, ascending steps towards door, turns and
looks earnestly at REVEDALE; all go out but
REVEDALE, who stands awhile dumb and
motionless; then, with a cry, falls prostrate.*]

ACT III., SCENE I.

Same as last Scene.

REVEDALE is seated in an attitude of mental prostration,
RICHARD leans over him; BANCROFT stands apart,
watching them.

Ban. [*To RICHARD.*] He'll not answer?

Rich. You've done your work too well ; for these two hours

Has he sat thus, more kin to death than life.

Ban. [*Aside.*] Yet he must speak ; for there be secrets still

I would worm from him.—Bid the guard conduct His sister here ; the sight of her may rouse him.

Rich. Ay, to new torture.

Ban. Better that than humour
A fatal lethargy. Go ! [*RICHARD goes out.*] Our state secretary

Writes in reproach—[*Reading from a letter.*]—"that I have missed my clew

To traitors here, who signed the requisition
To the Prince of Orange." Now, of these, 'tis like
One is young Ringwood. His known lenity
To Monmouth's faction, and the treasonous acts
By him committed, make suspicion strong.
Could I discover this, and his confederates
Deliver up to justice, wealth and honours
Beyond all hope were mine. By threats or wiles,
I'll wring the truth from Revesdale.

Enter FELICIA, guarded by two OFFICERS.

So ! Retire. [*OFFICERS retire to door.*]

A torpor on your brother hangs, pernicious
To health and life. Your voice, perchance, may wake
His slumbering sense.

Fel. [*Gazing on him.*] So prostrate ! O my brother !
Now that my heart is calmer, it consents
To my dear husband's pleading. Thy remorse
Tells of a soul not base, but sorely tempted.
Turn thy face hither ; 'tis thy sister, Basil,
Entreats thee !

Reves. [*Vacantly.*] Who ?

Fel. Felicia.

Reves. Let no bless'd shape

Visit this gulf. There's one to come ; for him
I wait here.

Fel. Whom expect you ?

Reves. Go ! you're fair
And pure ; he'll not consort with such, the fiend
Who plunged me here.

Ban. [*Approaching with coarse laughter.*] He raves !

Reves. [*Springing upon him.*] Ah, ah ! thou'rt come ;
I have thee in my gripe !

Ban. Let go your hold !
Madman, be warned ! release me ! Off, I say !
I'll crush thee to the earth !

Reves. Fool ! dost thou think
My arms enfold thee merely ? 'Tis my soul
That grasps its tempter ! Mighty with despair,
It twines around thee, drags thee down, down, down
To its perdition !

Ban. Off ! I choke ! What right
Have you for this ? I sought my enemy's life,
But you——

Reves. [*Pausing.*] Ay, well ?

Ban. Betrayed your friend !

Reves. [*Releases him and staggers back.*] Thou'rt
right.

Thou *hast* crushed me to the earth !

Fel. Basil !

Reves. I look on thee, yet live !

Fel. You never dreamed
Of these sad issues. 'Twas a moment's frenzy
Surprised and overcame you.

Reves. Is't to a wretch
Like me, your murderer——

Fel. Listen ! If I'm wronged,
I have a claim on thee. Oh, let my words
Fall in thy soul like holy seed, which time
Shall turn to fruitful duty. Live to prove
He who repents can expiate ; live to serve
Thy kind, that thou may'st say, when grateful hearts

Bless thee—I had a sister once, whose spirit
Still lives in mine ; she prayed for me, she blessed me ;
With her last breath she won me from despair,
And left me what I am !

[REVEDALE *interrupts her with a cry of anguish.*

Ban. [Looking off.] A step ! who comes ?

Enter OFFICER.

Well, sir, the troops ?

Officer. Are on their way. I met them with a force
More fit to take a city than a prisoner.

Ban. A wise precaution.

Officer. On their heels the crowd
Followed with shouts.

Ban. And curses, doubtless.

Officer. That
I know not ; I but bore your summons to their captain.
He laughed—"Your errand's stale ; we were already
Bent towards Revesdale."

Ban. [Surprised.] So !

Officer. I set spurs to horse,
And thus outrode them.

[*At a sign of dismissal from BANCROFT, OFFICER
goes out.*

Ban. Lady, you've scant time
For preparation.

Fel. Basil, one embrace !

Reves. No, no ! [Rushing up to BANCROFT.] Bancroft,
as yet the law knows not
Of their offence ; have pity—save her !—save
Her husband !

Ban. What, so low ?

Reves. [Sinking on his knees.] Ay, in the dust.
Where should guilt be ? So low ! Oh, thou mightst tower
Above me like a god ! This prostrate thing
That's at thy knees, helpless, disgraced, and hopeless,
A word from thee can fire with hope, strength, honour.
The worm crawls ; thou canst bid it rise a man !

Ban. There's but one chance. Let Ringwood own his share

In the petition [*Showing a letter*] to the Prince of Orange,
And trust to the king's mercy.

Reves. [*Rising.*] What petition?

Ban. That signed by traitors, urging William's presence,
Implying, if not offering, support.

Reves. [*Aside.*] The same I signed that day Felicia's
prayers

Won me from the conspiracy. [*Aloud.*] He never
Set hand to that.

Ban. Then he can give no clew
To the plot. I cannot save them. 'Tis of moment,
Most vital, some accomplice in that act
Should be discovered.

Reves. [*Aside.*] And my signature
To the requisition makes me such accomplice!

Ban. Time hurries. Officers!

Reves. Go, sister. Bancroft,
Remain.

Fel. One last embrace.

Reves. Not now—I dare not; yet,
A time may come. Go; we shall meet once more,
Once more, my sister. [*FELICIA goes out, guarded by two*

OFFICERS.] Now, you said detention
Of one who signed that deed was vital. Save
My sister and her husband, and I place
An accomplice in your power.

Ban. [*Aside.*] Ah! he bids high,
If I could trust him; yet to lose my vengeance!
Stay; I might compass both. Were Ringwood free,
The troops who are at hand might overtake him.

Reves. Your answer! The king's force is nigh.

Ban. What ground
Have I to trust you?

Reves. This: I have confessed
I know the traitor. If I break my word,
The peril lights on me.

Ban. It does already.

Reves. I can be silent.

Ban. [*Aside.*] True ; the prey meanwhile
May cheat me and escape. Will this accomplice
Name his confederates ?

Reves. No.

Ban. [*Aside.*] A foolish question !
Once seized, if he prove obstinate, the rack
Will force avowal. And within what time
Will you reveal the culprit ?

Reves. When my sister
And Ringwood are safe on shipboard.

Ban. [*Aside.*] I'll so plan
That ere they well spread sail they are pursued.
Should they escape, the stake will justify
My venture to the king. I take your terms.

Reves. Quick, then ; release them !

Ban. Should you fail, be sure
Your life——

Reves. Will answer it.

Ban. I go ; we meet
Straight in the courtyard ; but your pledge—remember !
[*BANCROFT goes out.*]

Reves. He yields ; they may be rescued ! They may
live
In joy, with children round them, and my life,
My worthless life, may save them. Well said, sister ;
He who repents can expiate ! [He goes out.]

SCENE II.

Courtyard of the Castle. Very large centre gates.

Enter BANCROFT and OFFICER.

Ban. Mount you the roof of the castle ; it commands
The road for miles. The instant you catch sight

Of the troops, return ; I'll speed you with instructions
To meet their leader. [OFFICER goes out.] So, 'tis well
contrived.

Enter REVEDALE and RICHARD.

Reves. She lies in the offing ?

Rich. Ay, sir.

Reves. Bound, you say,
To Holland ? Haste, good Richard ; see a boat
Straight manned by the beach, and thither summon
friends

From the peasants and our people.

Rich. Think it done. [RICHARD goes out.]

Reves. [To BANCROFT.] The order for release——

Ban. Is given ; even now
Your sister and her husband quit the door.

Reves. They pass this way !

Ban. I've kept my share of the compact ;
Look to your own !

Reves. [Aside.] 'Twill be a last farewell,
And then these arms will no more fold a sister
So noble, so forgiving, nor this hand
Clasp his whom I so wronged, so basely wronged,
And now would ransom ! May they never know
That ransom's price !

*Enter FELICIA and ARTHUR, preceded by four OFFICERS,
followed by ALICE, GILES, and a group of domestics,
who press around them.*

Fel. Farewell, till happier times ! [Embracing ALICE.
Oh, they will come ! Farewell, kind friends !

[FELICIA and ARTHUR, with OFFICERS, advance.]

Fel. My brother !
Heaven has had mercy, and your prayers prevailed.

Reves. They did.

Arth. [*Glancing at BANCROFT.*] And could his heart be
touched with pity?

'Tis strange!

Reves. Arthur!

Arth. [*Giving his hand.*] Basil, believe no thought
Of harshness lives between us.

Reves. I believe it,
My generous friend; farewell!

Fel. Now to thine arms!

Reves. Yes; now I think I dare embrace thee. Bless,
Oh, bless and pardon me! [*They embrace.*]

Fel. From my heart's depths.

But we shall meet again; you'll join us soon
In the new land we seek? Promise!

Reves. [*Very tenderly.*] How like you are
To our lost mother, sweet! That's the same look
Of anxious love she wore when we two children
Rode from the hall, and I, rash brother, urged
Your palfrey to his speed, or from the bough
Broke off the blossoming chestnut for your hat.

Fel. Ah, those old days, they'll come again! once more
We'll be boy and girl together. [*Anxiously.*] Dear, we
part

But for a time.

Reves. But for a time, Felicia—

But for a time.

Arth. Nay, there's some mystery. [*Pointing.*
[*To BANCROFT.*] Basil, you stand not in his power?

Reves. [*Affecting gaiety.*] His power!
His power! You stand so, lingering here; no safety
Till you embark! Think of your father, Arthur;
He waits you on the beach. Farewell, farewell—
No word but that!

Arth. Basil!

Fel. My brother! [*Returning and embracing him.*]

Reves. Go!

[*He gently forces them off, OFFICERS following;*
ALICE, GILES, and domestics go out.]

Ban. [*Aside.*] The troops not yet in sight !

Reves. [*Watching FELICIA and ARTHUR from side.*]

The gate stands open ;

The beach is lined with friends ; they pass the walls ;

The living lane divides ; and yet one group

Conceals the boat. Ah, now 'tis clear ! the pilot

Stands at the helm ; they pause ! 'Tis to embrace

Their father. Now her foot is on the plank,

And Arthur follows her. The rowers bend ;

It moves ! it moves to the wide seas ; they're saved !

Thank God ! thank God ! [*Kneeling.*]

Ban. [*Aside.*] May storm and hidden shoal

Wreak my full hate on Ringwood !

[*Suddenly, to REVESDALE.*] Now, your pledge !

That traitor who subscribed the requisition—

His name ? Where lurks he ?

Reves. Lurks ! Why should he lurk ?

The caitiff in his mesh lurks spider-like,

Who from his very filament of life

Spins death for others ; cowards lurk, who gag

Men's reason by their passions, and then strike

A soul in fetters ; bravos lurk, sometimes

Beneath a soldier's cloak, and, spite of all,

The slouch betrays them. Lurk ! lurk thou ! Thy victim

Stands in broad day and waits thee.

Ban. Who ?

Reves. Myself.

Ban. You signed that deed ?

Reves. Ay.

Ban. And you know your doom ?

Reves. 'Tis death.

Ban. I see : you think to 'scape

By naming your confederates. Well, proclaim them.

Reves. Never ! they're fled : thou hast lost the scent.

[*With scornful laughter.*]

Ban. [*Enraged, and half drawing.*] Beware !

Reves. [*Touching the sword-hilt.*] It is a sword ; I

thought to have seen a knife.

Ban. Mark, then ; 'tis not your death alone impends,
But, ere death, torture.

Reves. Torture ! Man, I've lain
Upon the rack—remorse ; can thine affright me ?

Re-enter OFFICER.

Ban. Well, laggard ?

Officer. Sir, the troops——

Ban. A curse reward their dallying !—

Officer. Are at hand.

But for the mist, we had descried them long since.

Ban. To your horse, and hide
Your rowels in his flanks ! Haste them !

Officer. They come,
Battalion on battalion, and the shout
Of following crowds roars like a distant sea. [*He goes out.*]

Ban. That's strange ! such numbers ! [*Goes to side.*]

Ah, the boat returns !
And with its freight—Ringwood, his wife ! They land,
And bend this way. Unlooked-for chance ! Fools, fools !
They're in my power at last, for now the troops
Will bar escape !

Reves. O fatal sight ! Back, back !

Ban. They're welcome. Guards !

Enter FELICIA, ARTHUR, MATTHEW, and OFFICERS.

The tables turn, my lord.
Their lives and yours are at my mercy.

Arth. No !

Fel. Hold, husband ! What ! his life ?

Ban. He has confessed
To a treasonous plot, and thereby bought your rescue,
But screens his guilty partners. Hark, the troops !

[*Military music without.*]
Not theirs slow justice. In one hour they try,
Pronounce, despatch ! Look on that pair. [*Points to*
FELICIA and ARTHUR.] The sun

Climbs, they bask in his light, are here. An hour
 He will be in his zenith ; but where they ?
 'Tis you must answer. Speak ! Your comrades' names,
 Or friend and sister perish !

[*He beckons to OFFICERS, who advance towards FELICIA
 and ARTHUR ; they halt at a signal from BANCROFT.*

Reves.

Wretch ! to bribe

The conscience through the heart. [*In great agony.*]

Felicia ! Arthur !

What ! must a brother doom them, or pollute

Their very lives by blood ! Off, tempter, off !

No ; I'll not buy their pure lives with dishonour.

Earth has a Judge ; I trust in Him to save them.

Fel. [*Embracing him.*] O, twice redeemed, my brother !

Mat. [*To REVESDALE.*] My brave son !

Ban. [*To OFFICERS.*] Away with them ! Away !

Fel.

They will not stir.

Ban. How ?

Fel. [*Clinging to REVESDALE.*] Hear ! As through the
 mist we ploughed the main,

A skiff crossed ours. Its pilot stayed our course,

Inquired our name and errand. These being told,

"Return !" he cried ; "no need to quit your shores ;

Friends follow you—friends able to protect

Or to avenge." Wouldst meet those friends ? [*Cheering
 without at back.*] Hark, hark,

The cheers of thousands greet them !| [*Discharge of artil-
 lery at back.*] Does that sound

Shake thee ? 'Tis but a whisper to the shout

A nation's heart would utter—a free nation's !

*Enter RICHARD, GILES, and ALICE. Retainers and
 Peasants rush in, shouting.*

Fling wide the gates ! See William of Nassau,

The Prince of Orange !

[*The large gates are thrown open, and discover in
 the distance the fleet, PRINCE WILLIAM OF*

ORANGE disembarking, the coast lined with troops and others. Soldiers, Banner-men, and Dignitaries discovered: renewed discharge of artillery. FELICIA throws herself into ARTHUR'S arms.

Ban. But the troops——
Mat. Go over to the Prince. [*To Soldiers who have entered.*] Secure this man.

[*Soldiers seize BANCROFT.*

Wretches, by him suborned, as I shall prove,
 Have brought the innocent to timeless death.

Mat. Off with him!

[*Several Soldiers go out with BANCROFT.*

Arth. How fares Basil?

Reves. Oh, as one

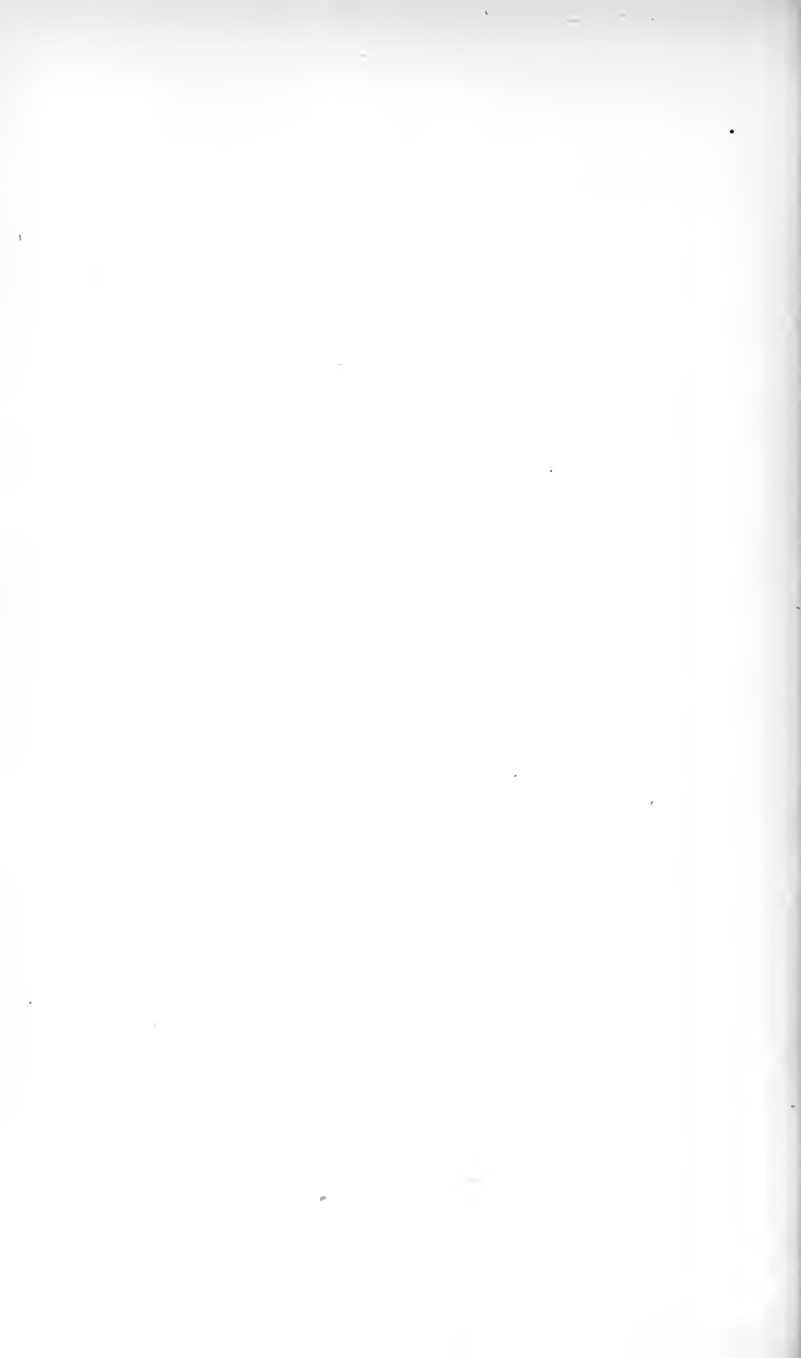
Who, 'scaped from shipwreck, wakes, half deeming still
 The billows round him, but beholds the earth
 And the soft sky.

Mat. You wake in a new reign.

Fel. And, brother, with new hopes.

Reves. To a new life!

[*Renewed shouts and discharge of artillery; the Prince is seen surrounded by his suite; he takes off his hat; flourish and shouts.*



THE
PATRICIAN'S DAUGHTER.

A Tragedy,
IN FIVE ACTS.

The Patrician's Daughter.

*First performed at the THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE, on
Saturday, December 10, 1842.*

CHARACTERS.

THE EARL OF LYNTERNE, <i>a statesman,</i>	Mr	PHELPS.
CAPTAIN PIERPOINT, <i>his nephew,</i>	Mr	HUDSON.
HEARTWELL, } <i>politicians,</i>	Mr	ELTON.
LISTER, }		
MORDAUNT, <i>afterwards Sir Edgar Mordaunt,</i>	Mr	MACREADY.
DEANCOURT, } <i>friends of Mordaunt,</i>	Mr	BLAND.
COLVILLE, }		
LORD CHATTERLY,	Mr	SELBY.
SIR ARCHER TAUNTON,	Mr	M. BARNETT.
PHYSICIAN,	Mr	RYDER.
SOLICITOR,	Mr	YARNOLD.
THE EARL'S SERVANT,	Mr	BENDER.
MORDAUNT'S SERVANT,	Mr	C. J. SMITH.
LADY LYDIA LYNTERNE, <i>the Earl's sister,</i>	Mrs	WARNER.
LADY MABEL LYNTERNE, <i>the Earl's daughter,</i>	Miss	HELEN FAUCIT.
LADY CHATTERLY,	Miss	ELLIS.
LADY TAUNTON,	Mrs	SELBY.
ATTENDANT,	Mrs	WATSON.

Wedding-Guests, Servants, &c. &c.

Time, 1842.

*Scene, Partly at the Earl of Lynterne's country seat, partly at
Mordaunt's house at Richmond.*

*An interval of five years is supposed to elapse between third and
fourth acts; also an interval of some months between fourth
and fifth acts.*

THE PATRICIAN'S DAUGHTER.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Library in Lynterne Castle.

The EARL and LADY MABEL discovered.

Mab. [*With a book.*] Yes, my dear lord ;
But have you read this scene ?

Earl. [*Who is seated by table.*] I have not.
But the point in hand, dear Mabel.

Mab. 'Tis full of mirth and sprightly incident,
And keen, bright satire, through all which the heart
Breathes truth and sympathy ! Oh, how I love
To track a noble soul in masquerade !

Earl. If it so please you, Mabel, that I wait
Until your raptures shall expend themselves,
I am content.

[*He arranges papers. MABEL, after a pause, rises
and gives the book to the EARL, standing by his
side.*

Mab. You think, dear father, that I trifle. No !
You question of a lover ; I reply
By comment on a book—themes separate,
As it may seem to you, but in my mind
Blended together ; for the qualities
This book discloses I would have inspire
The man to whom my tributary soul
Should render its allegiance.

Earl. Poor child ! the author of the book you laud,
This limner of the mind's fastastic dreams,
Long ere old age found his art profitless,
Foreswore his troth to fancy,—and died rich.

[Returns the book.

Mab. His book is henceforth sealed to eyes of mine.
Oh, how degraded is the venal soul
Chartered by its Creator to be free,
Yet putting on the dull world's livery,
Not the less menial for its golden fringe !

[Laying the volume on table.

Earl. You are enthusiastic, my fair girl !
I blame you not ; those who aspire too high
Rest nearer heaven than those who ne'er aspired.
I love you, Mabel.

For me you sum up every human tie
Save those which link me to my country's weal.
Your mother lives in you, and in some sort
You are my age's bride as well as daughter ;
To lose you were a second widowhood.
My only child ! sole tenant of the heart
Your brothers, did they live, would share with you !

Mab. [Embracing him.] O my dear lord and father,
well I know

Your love, your patient and forgiving love,
To your oft wayward Mabel ! Your desire
Shall guide me in this matter ! But command,
And I will wed Sir Everard.

Earl. At no command unsanctioned by your heart
Would I require you wed ! Yet would I speak
Of poor Sir Everard a word or two,
And leave to time and your own heart the judgment.
He loves you well, is generous and kind.

Mab. He is most kind ; he is most generous.

Earl. And though he be no genius, has fine taste
In arts that charm a woman's eye and ear ;
Has an accomplished mind and graceful bearing.

Mab. That all who know Sir Everard will confess.

Earl. Is rich.

Mab. He has the broadest lands in Warwickshire.

Earl. And has the one great requisite—high birth.

Mab. Most true ; and yet I hope, possessing these,
He has no more than I ; for generous,
I trust, I am, and riches and descent
I know we have, surpassing even his own.

Earl. And do you hold these things of light account ?
Methinks they should be potent arguments.

Mab. True ; but the heart ne'er guides its choice by logic.
There is nought rational in love ; it has,
Above all reason, high prerogative.
Who is there that hath loved because he ought ?
The meet, the proper, and the dutiful
Belong to the head's lore ; above all rule
Is the heart's passion, gushing like a stream,
In its exuberant nature finding law
For all it doth, and pouring oft, alas !
Its unblest course along the wilderness
Which reason would have taught it to avoid.

Earl. Then Mabel is in love ; for never, sure,
Was one who valued reason less than she.

Mab. Not so ; for, although reason makes not love,
Love may consist with reason ; am I right ?
Now, if you grant me audience, I will
Possess you of my secret thoughts, till now
Nursed in the solitude of my own heart.
He whom my will shall for its king elect
Must bring me something more than that I have ;
Women who marry seldom act but once ;
Their lot is, ere they wed, obedience
Unto a father ; thenceforth to a husband ;
But in the one election which they make,
Choice of a mate for life and death, and heaven,
They may be said to act. The man they wed
Is as the living record of their deed,
Their one momentous deed. If he be base,
It veils their deed with shame ; if he be great,

Encircles it with glory ; and if good,
 Haloes it with religion. Would you know
 Whom I would have to be my husband ? Listen,
 In brief terms I will sketch him. He shall be
 High born, handsome, I'd rather ; but at least
 With features lit up by the sacred light
 Which marks the elect band of noble men
 Whose history is the world's, and whose high names,
 Linked close with empires, sound their synonymes :
 With eye that quails not in the war ; with voice
 That thrills the popular ear, and o'erawes senates ;
 And of a wide, ceaseless benevolence,
 Bounded but by the walls of the great world ;
 And, oh ! whene'er affection breathed his name,
 Or mind did homage to it, should my heart
 Rush back to the bright hour when first I chose him,
 Saying it was my act

Earl. Well, well, my sweet one ! all I would require
 Is, that the proffered love you cannot take,
 You should put back with thoughtful gentleness.
 I censure not your nature. Some there be,
 Of a romantic spirit like your own,
 Have thought all decencies chimerical,
 And linked their fate with that of men obscure,
 That they might thereby show contempt of station
 And all that wisdom holds inviolate :
 But this from you I fear not ; you have been
 Nurtured too well ; you are too much my daughter.

Mab. You do me justice, sir ; think not that I
 Will e'er disgrace our lineage ; whom I wed
 High in descent, noble in mind, shall be.

Earl. Thou art my best beloved ; but leave me now—
 [*As MABEL is retiring.*] Stay, Mabel ; one word more
 with you ! To-morrow

A visitor named Mordaunt tarries here ;
 Perhaps a week or two as it may be.
 Show him all kindness ; though of humble birth,
 He is no common man ;—may serve me much.

Mab. Mean you the Mordaunt?

Earl. I did not know his fame had risen so high
As to make him the Mordaunt ; but I think
We mean the same man ; he whose eloquence
Has stirred the Commons so.

Mab. My Mordaunt is a poet.

Earl. True ! he has
That failing, I believe, and 'tis a great one
In public men ; but time will cure him of it.

Mab. Fie, fie, my lord ! Do we not mourn when time
Plants wrinkles on the brow ? and shall we joy
When his touch chills the freshness of the heart ?
For such is poetry.

Earl. Be it so, chit !
I'll not contest the point ; as to this stranger,
Let his reception be most courteous.

I would we could persuade Aunt Lydia
To doff her stateliness for some few days ;
It must be looked to ; let us seek her, sweet.

Mab. With all my heart ; [*Thoughtfully.*] the Mor-
daunt ! [*Rousing herself, and giving her hand to*
EARL.] O, I'm ready. [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

MORDAUNT'S *House at Richmond.*

Enter LISTER, HARTWELL, MORDAUNT, COLVILLE, *and*
DEANCOURT.

Dean. Decide for one of us.

Col. My yacht's the thing !
After your labours you need change of scene—
Almost of element, which you shall have,
When, the dull land forgotten, our light skiff
The Mediterranean skims.

Dean. There's nothing beats
A good old English house—the morning rides ;
A sweep, perchance, o'er hill and hedge to sound

Of the enlivening bugle ; then at night
The merry party, and the bright fireside,
The good old games and stories.

Heart. Gentlemen,
Duties are sometimes pleasures. Perhaps Mordaunt
May hold the cares of public life too dear
To wish a respite, though it be recess.

Lis. We cannot spare him from us.

Col. I will take
No answer but his own.

Dean. Nor I !

Mor. Good friends,
Hold me excused, I pray you. Were my will
To arbitrate this matter, I would go
Delightedly with both ; but, as it is,
I stand engaged already. [*To HEARTWELL.*] That
reminds me
To ask your eye for this.

[*Presenting a letter which HEARTWELL reads.*

Dean. If it be so,
There's nothing left but to regret your absence,
And wish you well in ours. Farewell till spring.

Col. Adieu, dear Mordaunt.

Mor. Heaven be with you, friends.

Lis. I'll walk with you.

Mor. What ! all take flight together ?

Heart. I'll stay in pity to your solitude.
[*To the others.*] I trust ere you leave London we shall
meet.

[*LISTER, COLVILLE, and DEANCOURT go out.*
HEARTWELL carelessly folds up and returns
the letter.

I had expected this ; you are a prize
To him who shall have wit to capture you ;
But who is he ? Not this complacent Lynterne—
This sleek and courteous lord. You must have smiled,
My Edgar, at each gracious period.
He has a high esteem for you, forsooth !

Admires your noble views, your mind's great scope !
And though he sees in all your daring plans
Unsoundness, here and there temerity,
He has a marvellous respect for them ;
And being at this moment respited
From cares of State, some portion of his leisure
He'd have your sweet society engross !
Well, in what terms was your denial couched ?

Mor. Denial ! On what grounds should I refuse
Such kindly tendered courtesy ?

Heart. I did not think your eye, so quick to pierce
Public hypocrisy through all the glare
With which convention decks it, could have been
Dazzled by this man's hollow compliment ;—
I charge you, spurn this specious show of friendship.

Mor. Why call it specious, ere you prove it so ?

Heart. Upon plain likelihood and inference
My censure rests. Mark me ! two years ago,
When any to another breathed your name,
His fellow cried, " Wild innovator ! Dreamer !"
The proud laughed short, " So, so, the yeoman's son !
Why left he team and harrow ?" Sages hemmed !
" One of your rising men ! Town's full of them."
But now you are a theme of public talk—
Men, as they slowly pace through stately squares,
Discuss your latest words of eloquence,
And busier folk, who thread the crowded streets,
Pause where some window shows the latest page
Your name inscribes—a household name in England !

Mor. Thanks for your eulogy ; but whither tends it ?

Heart. Even to this :

Minds of your order come not every year,
Nor are they grown in clusters ; instruments
Of power ; if they be true, of destiny ;
Truth's pioneers, the vanguard of the world !
Now, while the issues undetermined hang
Between the just and base, if one step forth,
Wily, and smooth of speech, and can arrest

The great man's march a moment, turn his eye
 Upon the glitter of some costly bribe,
 It may be that he spurns it ; and it may be
 That he becomes Iscariot to his cause.

Mor. Nay, nay ; speak out, if you would call me
 traitor !

Heart. I mean not so to name you. I but say,
 Beware this subtle courtier.

Mor. The grounds
 Of your suspicion ? Why do you condemn him ?

Heart. Why ? Is he not the sworn foe of our party ?

Mor. A phrase ! I have no party. [Both rise.]

Heart. Rapidly

The poison works ; and yet it is not strange
 That one so loving to his party's foe
 Should soon disclaim his old associates.

Mor. Where is your warrant, sir,
 To taunt me thus ? I say I have no party.
 You and your friends of late have striven hard
 For certain ends which I approved ; 'twas fit
 That I should aid you—so far travel with you,
 As one road served us both. Therefore have I
 Entered in league with you ? or am I bound
 To follow where your trumpet blows, and fight
 With whom you list to bid me ? Have I sworn
 To shut my eyes to all the greatness grows
 In one-half of the empire ? That's the oath
 Ta'en by the partisan.

Heart. Well turned and proudly said !—Perhaps your
 speech
 May couch itself in humbler tones when meant
 For the Earl's ear. [A short pause.]

Mor. Sir, I have known you long ; respected you ;
 And it may be, have served you heretofore ;
 And not on slight occasion would I wear
 The stranger's carriage to you ; but take heed.
 You speak as if I were a parasite,
 A hireling, an apostate ; had my father

Broached such surmise of me, it had gone far
 In recollection of that one dishonour,
 To merge all kinder memory.

Heart.

I seek your love

No longer than pure friendship's elements
 Are fruitful in your nature. Let me ask
 If it be meet that one like you should wait
 For an occasional condescending smile
 From this proud nobleman ; or haply make,
 Through ignorance of unaccustomed forms,
 Mirth for his haughty daughter. But your pardon.
 Perchance you aim at greatness, and will deign
 Honour the Lady Mabel with your hand !

Mor. Peace, sir. Your language holds not with my mood.
 By all report, upon the face of earth
 No fairer or more noble creature moves
 Than this same Lady Mabel ; for the rest,
 The man who has credentials in his soul,
 Avouching its immortal ancestry,
 Presumes but little, even if he seek
 Alliance with the proudest of the earth.
 Is it your creed, sir, that in righteous scales
 The name outweighs the man ? Shame on such doctrine !

Heart. Nay, shame on you, who dare thus to upbraid
 An age 'tis fit that you should venerate !

Mor. I venerate not age ; but, when 'tis present,
 That which alone makes grey hairs worshipful.
 It may be by the calendar of years
 You are the elder man ; but 'tis the sun
 Of power on the mind's dial shining bright
 And numbering thoughts and deeds that makes true
 time.—

Your pardon, sir, you force me to speak thus.

Heart. Farewell, sir ! Should we ever meet again,
 It will be in that deepest of all strangeness
 Which grows 'twixt those who have loved *once*, and love
 not.

[HEARTWELL goes out.]

Mor. So friendship passes. Well, I will not seek

A heart to rule in, if affection's sway
 Depend on paying dues to interest.
 I'll not believe that Heartwell judged aright.
 Lord Lynterne means me fairly—will not dare
 To use me for his tool. Yet, if he do—
 Oh, if he do!—my heart heaves at the thought,
 So that I fear and quake before myself.
 There is within me that quick hate of wrong
 Which, being stung, would spur me on to vengeance,
 Although the path were fire! And I have, too,
 That in my nature which would make me slave
 To genuine kindness. I'll deal with the world
 As the world deals with me,—if well, its friend,—
 If otherwise; but for the day, 'tis said,
 Sufficient is the evil.

ACT II., SCENE I.

Drawing-Room in Lynterne Castle.

MORDAUNT *discovered, seated at table, gazing on a
 miniature of MABEL.*

Mor. Rumour has not o'erdrawn her. She is rich
 In beauty—ay, in that surpassing beauty
 Which bears the glorious signet of the soul.
 I've known her but a month, and yet she seems,
 As their own light, familiar to my eyes.
 Would that I
 Were sprung of noble lineage! That's unworthy.
 Was not my father tender, constant, upright?
 And shall I wrong his homely, honest virtues
 By vain repinings at my humble lot?
 Heaven sees not with our eyes. That's well, at least.

*Enter MABEL, carrying a piece of embroidery, on which
 she occasionally employs herself during the scene.*

Mab. Good morning! what a bright one—a fair change
 From last night's tempest.

Mor. 'Twas a stormy night.

Mab. [*Sitting.*] And yet I never knew a briefer one ;
For that I must thank you ; and the sweet tale,
In listening which the hours like minutes sped.

Mor. [*Smiling.*] You flatter me.

Mab. Although I somewhat wonder
That you, whose life is chiefly dedicate
To grave State policy, should yet beguile
Your leisure with the poet's simple art.

Mor. What is the end of all true policy ?
To work out poetry in act. To feel
A deep and constant love for human kind ;
A sense of beauty's presence, not alone
In lofty show, but in its latent haunts,
Which few investigate—the humble hut
And bosom meanly clad ; worship of justice ;
The warm emotions of an unchecked nature
Which rises, as by instinct, against wrong—
These are the elements of poetry.
Is that man fit to be a statesman, think you,
Whose heart is stranger to them ?

Mab. O, how true !

Shall I confess that after I retired
Your tale dwelt on my mind, moved me to tears—
Those sweet and tender tears that speak not pain,
But soothe whoever sheds them. In my dreams
The maid whose fate you told was present still.
How fair the old times seem when poets sing them.
Oh, would that I had lived in ancient days,
The days of dear romance ! Do you not think
I should have been a heroine ?

Mor. Why not now ?

Mab. Alas, alas ! there is no scope for it.
Comfort has superseded chivalry,
There's nothing dangerous or delightful left.
[*Rising.*] O, would that I had been the worshipped
one,
Of some devoted troubadour, half knight,

Half minstrel. My sire, a baron,
 Irascible and proud, perchance commands
 That I forswear my troth. I cannot do it.
 Straight in some chamber, tapestried and lone,
 I am confined, armed guards before my door.
 I pen a *billet* :—" O sweet traveller,
 Into whose care these tidings, from the hand
 Of an unhappy maid, shall come, haste thee
 To Sieur—De Lacy,"—that shall be his name,—
 " And tell him in this castle's eastern tower
 His Eleanora lies a prisoner—
 For his dear love ! " I drop my scroll ; its words
 Are borne to my brave troubadour. Some night,
 While I sit gazing at the placid moon,
 Wearing the lucid stars, a diamond wreath,
 To deck her brighter brow, soft music floats
 Around my lattice—quick I open it !
 O joy ! 'tis he !—he scales the wall, secures,
 Fast by the casement, his elastic stair,
 Which straightway I descend—I'm on the earth—
 I'm on my steed : away ! away we fly !
 I and my troubadour, and in the morn
 My hand rewards my brave deliverer !—
 What think you, sir, is not my tale well told ?
 It is my first attempt. You do not smile !
Mor. Alas, sweet lady ! mournful thoughts were
 mine.

I make no question of your constancy,
 Your enterprise, your courage ; but methinks
 You scarce had borne the part you paint so well.

Mab. Sceptic ! why not ? [*Resuming her seat.*] O
 for one little year
 Of the romantic past, that I might prove
 Myself, in your despite, a heroine.

Mor. I have known heroines in this modern time ;—
 Ay, there are homesteads which have witnessed deeds
 That battlefields, with all their bannered pomp,
 Have little to compare with. Life's great play

May, so it have an actor great enough,
Be well performed upon a humble stage.

Mab. You find such beauty in our dull, tame present,
I look on it with kinder eyes.

Mor. The forms
Of the heroic change from age to age ;
The spirit in the forms remains the same,
Your heroine of old, in love's behalf,
Would dare imprisonment and venture flight,
Though near her files of lances were arrayed.
Your modern heroine, in love's behalf,
Will often dare hostility as dread.
Not seldom you will meet a maid whose heart
Was pledged to one of lowly heritage,
But of high qualities, that well atoned
The churlish lot of Fortune. Enmity
From haughty parents, exile from the sphere,
Had been her own from birth, care, poverty,
And other ills as weighty, have conspired
Against her love, and yet she had avowed it,
And cherished it as life. O Lady Mabel——

Mab. Why do you pause ?

Mor. I fear I weary you.

Mab. O no ; your heroine—— [Pauses.

Mor. Yes ; what say you of her ?

Mab. That although she had acted indiscreetly,
For the high love that caused her so to act
She should be gently censured—not cast out.

Mor. And of her lover ?

Mab. Nay, I know not what
To say of him.

Mor. [Sitting near her.] I knew a lover once
Whose heart had poured its riches at the shrine
Of one whose lot ranked higher than his own,
In the wise world's esteem ; and this he knew,
Yet could he not recall to his lone breast
The feelings thence allured. She was their home,
And all beside was foreign.

Mab. And she loved him ?

Mor. His love was silent, and dared scarce intrude
Upon her sight. He prayed for her—he blessed her—
He wept for her ; but she heard not his words,
Nor saw his tears ; for they were breathed and shed
In sacred solitude. At times he felt
As if the joy of loving were reward ;
Although she knew it not. He thought of angels
Who nightly to the sleeper's couch repair,
But vanish ere he wakens.

Mab. Did he not
Lay his heart open to her ?

Mor. As I said,
He was of lower rank than she, and feared
That she might scorn him.

Mab. Scorn such fervent worship ?
Had she so done, she were the thing to scorn.

Mor. [*With fervour.*] You had not spurned him, then ?

Mab. I cannot dream
What I have said to move you. O, this friend !
'Tis like you loved him as a very brother,
And own a debt to all who pity him.
Your story interests. How ended it ?
And was this long since ?

Mor. It is very strange.
I cannot call the time to mind. I know
The truth of what I tell, but nothing more.

Enter the EARL and LADY LYDIA.

Lyd. Not out yet, Mabel ? Should you thus permit
The freshness of the morning to escape ?
'Tis three o'clock already.

Mab. Is it so late ?
[*To MORDAUNT.*] Do you ride with us ? [*To LORD
LYNTERNE.*] And you ? Nay, you must ;
I know you will ; these are your holidays.

Earl. I may not, sweetest.

Mab. No? [*To MORDAUNT.*] You then will be
Our single cavalier.

Earl. I fear, dear Mabel,
I must assert a prior claim to Mordaunt.
We've grave and pressing matters to discuss.

Mab. [*After a short pause.*] 'Tis very late. I will not
ride to-day.

Lyd. [*Apart to her.*] You will.

Mab. I think you said that it was late?

Lyd. [*Apart to her.*] Go for my sake.

Mab. Well, if it please you, aunt.

Earl. Adieu!

Mor. A pleasant morning!

Lyd. Thank you, thank you!

[*EARL and MORDAUNT go out. LADY LYDIA walks
after them, and then advances to MABEL, who is
seated.*]

Lyd. Mabel, you love that man!

Mab. Love whom? Sir Everard?

Lyd. This is evasion.

I know you have refused Sir Everard.

I say you love this Mordaunt.

Mab. I fail to comprehend you.

Lyd. You deny it?

Mab. [*Haughtily, rising.*] It does not need denial.

Edgar Mordaunt!

Lyd. Pardon me!

I did but jest. I knew you loved him not;

It was impossible, for he has nothing

In station, fortune, or in qualities

That can excite esteem, far less affection.

Mab. O, now methinks that you are somewhat harsh.

Lyd. Harsh! would you have me measured in my speech?

I am beside myself to see a man,

Whose birth had fitted well your father's groom,

Thus licensed to invade our privacy,

And wear before us the familiar air

Of one inured to dignity!

Mab. Good aunt,
Men three relations hold to dignity :
By gradual use some grow inured to it,
And some are born to it ; but there be those
Born *of it*, natured of its element ;
With them nobility is personal,
And they must die ere it can.

Lyd. In which rank place you Mordaunt ?

Mab. In the last.

Lyd. What strange infatuation blinds you thus ?
Can you not read the obvious history
Of an ambitious and time-serving man ?
What does he here who was your father's foe
Upon all public questions ? Trust me, Mabel,
He is of those who, by exciting speech
And persevering effort, make their names
Of value in the mart of policy,
And sell them to the man who offers most.

Mab. Madam, 'tis false—his heart is honour's home,
His deeds her witnesses—O, foully false !

Lyd. This is unmaidenly and insolent !
Does no shame flush your cheek ? or wherefore is it
You should forget all deference to me
In favour of a stranger ?

Mab. Because he is a stranger,
And has no friend to spurn back calumny,
When those whose guest he is, forget the rights
Owing to hospitality and justice.

[*Throws herself into a chair.*]

Lyd. Justice ! Under that poor pretence, your passion,
No longer coy, speaks plainly. I had hoped
My eyes deceived me when they watched your own
Pouring the light of unchecked feeling on him.
I strove to think it was but courtesy
That hushed your very breathing when he spoke.
But the truth flashes on me, I thank heaven !
O shame that this adventurer should depart
Boasting your love his trophy, which to wear

Waits but his time of taking ! Suit your manners
More to the decent, less to the fantastic,
Or I will to your father, and require
His comment on your conduct.

Mab. To my father ?

You threaten, Lady Lydia !

Lyd. Yes ; why not ?

Mab. I am amazed you can, so strange it seems
That you, whose words suffice to show what you are,
Should dare rebuke that I am.

I wonder not you value station so :
It is but a poor treasure in itself,
Yet becomes rich when 'tis the sole possession.
Believe me, noble spirits never wrap
Honour so closely round them as to let
The garment hide the wearer. Rank's a robe
Which sits the best when negligently worn,
Disclosing the mind's perfect symmetry
That needs not gorgeous attire to grace it.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] I have gone too far.—Mabel, could you
have looked

Into my heart, you would have spared me this.

Mab. Could you have sounded mine, I do not think
You would have ventured to this length of insult.

Lyd. Insult ! Mabel !

And is your father's sister's love so strange,
That when it would advise you, guard you, save you,
You should miscall it thus ? Perhaps my zeal
Took an impatient tone, but did not need
The deep rebuke it suffered.

Mab. [*Approaching her.*] I have been wrong, dear
aunt ; but still I say,
You judge poor Mordaunt harshly.

Lyd. He's ambitious.

Mab. What's he that is not so ? Ambition, aunt,
Is instinct in great minds, even as to soar
Is nature to the eagle.

Lyd. This plausible

And general reasoning, however just,
 Meets not the special instance. We were asked
 To entertain this stranger for a week ;
 A month has rolled away. If you would ride,
 Straight he needs exercise ; stay you at home,
 He finds the air too sultry, feels fatigued,
 And keeps the house ; beside all which, but note
 How much he adds by glances, motions, sighs,
 Smiles, even cast of visage, to his words,
 Which, as I lately said, your eyes reward
 With interest more than maidenly.

Mab.

Nay, gentle aunt,

I am not carved from stone, and cannot hear
 Music without emotion, nor unmoved
 Look on a flower, or aught that's beautiful ;
 And must I, when a glowing sentiment
 Or noble thought finds utterance, emulate
 The barren rock that never pays the sun
 With produce for his smiles ? O, blame me not,
 If at discourse on themes magnificent
 My eyes light up with joy ! They testify
 Love to the speaker's thoughts, not to himself.

Lyd. The speaker will not make that nice distinction ;
 And, to be plain, he has sufficient cause
 To augur that——

Mab. That I esteem, admire him ;
 I will not wrong him so as to surmise
 He dreams of more. He knows what bounds divide us.
 But let us hasten, 'tis so very late.
 I trust we're friends again. You'll follow me ?

[LADY MABEL goes out.]

Lyd. Esteem and admiration ! She would dupe me
 Even as she dupes herself ! No ; this is love,
 And has gone further than I thought. This Mordaunt
 Is an accomplished player on the heart ;
 That praise I'll give him. He must read success
 In the girl's face, which, like a mirror, shows
 The image of his thoughts. Should this proceed,

No motives, counsel, prayer, threat, influence,
Will stand between her and her love. Well, then,
I and this schemer are at war ! I'll watch
His demonstrations one more week ; if then
He purpose longer stay, I'll in plain terms
Urge his departure ; if he still remain,
I'll tempt him to disclosure of his end
Before it ripen further, and thus shake
In spring the blossoms autumn had seen fruit.

[*She goes out slowly.*]

ACT III., SCENE I.

A terrace in front of Lynterne Castle. Sunset.

Enter MORDAUNT.

Mor. How beautiful are all things when we love !
The illuminated globe revolves around
The loved one as its axis of pure light.
She whom I love is human ; for her sake
I love all human-kind—yea, all that is.
Whene'er birds sing, she hears them in her walks,
Or from her open lattice ; henceforth birds
Are sacred to my soul. The sun, that lights
Her daily path ; mild moon, and solemn stars,
That shine into her chamber ; trees, her shade
From noontide heat ; rivers, whose winding way
And murmuring song console her when she strays
By their green banks at eve ; delighted flowers,
That yield their fragrance to her ; forest paths
Pressed by her feet—I love. Our planet earth
Is her abode ; for her sake I love earth,
And for earth's sake love all that earth contains.
O, it is great, and wise, and good to love !
To feel we live in all things, and that they
Live by us, and not we by them ; to be
The pulse to our own universe !

And loves she me ?
 She listens to my words, and seldom speaks.
 Why need she speak, when every glance replies ?
 First it was otherwise ; her repartee,
 Quick wit, and lively sallies flashed all day ;
 Her answers now are few and brief, as though
 The task of ordering her thoughts for speech
 Woke her from blissful dreams ; my soul itself
 Seemed suffused in her presence, bathed in light,
 As plants beneath the solemn, tender moon,
 Which gilds their life with beauty, as she mine,
 And joys in heaven to see their silvered leaves,
 Unknowing 'tis her smile that makes their brightness,
 Which fades from earth whene'er she wanes in heaven.
 A cloud comes over mine. 'Tis Lady Lydia !

Enter LADY LYDIA.

I trust you find the evening breeze refresh you ?

Lyd. A debtor to your wishes, sir ! I thank you.

[*Aside.*] I'll not delay, for opportunity,
 Once slighted, oft escapes. When do you leave us ?

Mor. Shortly. Perhaps within a week or two,
 Provided for that time my sojourn prove
 No inconvenience here.

Lyd. I fear it will.

Mor. Had I thought so, you had not seen me now.

Lyd. I will be plain, sir.

Plainness is always the best courtesy
 Where truths are to be told. You still are young,
 And want not personal grace ; your air, your words,
 Are such as captivate. You understand me ?

Mor. Scarcely ; for these things most men harbour
 guests.

Lyd. True ; except sometimes
 When they are fathers. You are honourable,
 And, after what has passed, will leave us straight.

Mor. I scarcely dare presume to give your words
Their nearest meaning!

Lyd. Yet you may do so.

Mor. The Lady Mabel?

Lyd. Yes.

Mor. Looks not on me indifferently?

Lyd. That you will join me in regretting, sir.

Mor. I may hope— [Pauses in agitation.]

Lyd. She has confessed it.

Mor. In your hearing?

Lyd. You are minute, I see, and well may doubt,
Except on surer witness than surmise,
So strange a tale. Alas! the evidence
Courts sight and touch: I hold it in my hand—
This letter—[*MORDAUNT regards her inquiringly.*]—
nothing—[*As with a sudden impulse.*]—I dare trust
your honour.

You know I lately spent three days from home:
I then wrote Mabel what I could not speak—
My warning on the signs I had perceived
Of love's unconscious growth. This is her answer.

[*Showing letter.*]

I was too late. That answer bore—O patience!—
What can I call it else?—her love's confession.

Mor. Her love for me!

Lyd. Forgive me, 'tis too much. [*Tears it.*]
Thus let the winds disperse the proofs of shame!
'Twould be most happy were its memory
As easily effaced. [*Throwing away the fragments.*]

Mor. Her love for me!

Lyd. In words—

Mor. O, name them not,
Those sacred breathings of her soul—relate not
What precious items make my sum of bliss
Past computation rich! Enough, she loves me!
I'll seek her on the instant. [*Going.*]

Lyd. [*Aside.*] That, indeed,
Would mar my plan. No; silence is your course:

It is most delicate, least painful, too.
 No word were well save farewell, and that said
 As those who have no long acquaintance say it.

Mor. I will not say it
 So to the Lady Mabel now, or ever,
 Unless it be her will.

Lyd. You will not take
 Advantage of her weakness. Do not, sir,
 Let it be thought that we, in welcoming you,
 Shook hands with an adventurer.

Mor. [*Indignantly.*] Madam!

[*With constrained courtesy.*]

You are her relative, and I am dumb. [*Going.*]

Lyd. Stay.

Think you the Earl's voice would not crush your plan,
 The moment that surprise permitted speech?

Mor. Why should it?

Lyd. Must I speak outright!

Mor. Yes, surely.

Lyd. The house of Lynterne
 Dates from the time that he of Normandy
 O'erthrew the Saxon sway; since then its lords,
 In war or peace, have held the foremost rank
 In conflict or in council. Of the race,
 Not one has formed alliance, save with such
 As boasted kindred honours. Sir, our house
 Is noble—must remain so till its end.

Mor. Is not yon sunset splendid?

Lyd. Possibly;

But we may see that often, and it bears
 Not now on our discourse.

Mor. Indeed it does.

However proud, or great, or wise, or valiant
 The Lady Mabel's ancestors, that sun
 From age to age has watched their honours end,
 As man by man fell off; and centuries hence
 Yon light into oblivion may have lit
 As many stately trains as now have passed.

And yet my soul, orb of eternity,
 When yonder globe is ashes as your sires,
 Shall shine on undecaying ! When men know
 What their own natures are, and feel what God
 Intended them to be, they are not awed
 By poms the sun outlives.

Lyd. Think of me as your friend—when you are
 gone.

You have a towering spirit. Had the rank
 And blood of Lady Mabel been as yours,
 I had not said a word to spite your wish.

Mor. You see this ring ?

Lyd. I have admired it oft. Would you thus hint
 That you are rich ?

Mor. Is not the setting precious !

Lyd. The diamond is superb !

Mor. True ; but the setting ?

Lyd. The diamond is the treasure.

Mor. No, the setting !

Lyd. The setting is but silver, worthless, base,
 Contrasted with the stone.

Mor. True, Lady Lydia.

Then when I treat for merchandise would buy
 All stars of heaven up, were they diamond worlds,—
 A peerless woman's love,—why runs your phrase,
 "You might have had that unmatched gem for nought
 Had it not been so *set*," in ancestry
 Or some such silver rim ? Enough of this ;
 I'll now to Lady Mabel.

[*Going.*

Lyd. Be advised.

If you persist in this strange scheme, seek first
 An audience of the Earl : if he consent,
 The which is most unlikely, Mabel's love
 Is honourably yours ; if he refuse,
 You incur no disgrace, as you would do
 Luring his daughter's heart unknown to him.

Mor. The Earl is in the library even now.
 I'll learn his thoughts at once.

Lyd. I pity you.

It will be a hard task for your high spirit
To sue the Earl in such a humble strain
As will be requisite.

Mor. Humble ! I—Mordaunt !

Lyd. Your ground is delicate ; you must be cautious ;
Confess your low estate, and own the prize
You seek to gain far beyond your desert ;
You must put by your recent haughty tone
And kingly glances ; plead with downcast eye
And hesitating voice ; all this, I say,
Must keenly gall your nature ; and therefore
I pity you.

Mor. I were indeed a slave,
And needing pity, could I so forget
My manhood ; but 'twere vain to reason more
With one who knows me not.

[He bows with cold dignity, and goes out.]

Lyd. O, this is well !
He'll to my brother in a haughty mood—
The very one I wished for ; 'twill arouse
All the Earl's latent pride. And now for Mabel !
Upon the wish she comes. *[Retires to back.]*

Enter LADY MABEL ; she comes on slowly, and in thought.

Mab. Why have not noble natures noble names ?
Or why are names of import ? O world, world !
With many a captious custom dost thou bind
The heart that seeks enlargement ! What is birth ?
The gift I prized seems my misfortune now.
I know none like to Mordaunt. Even my father
Honours and courts him. What is this to me ?
A line invisible divides our fates.
O, would that he had rank—that he were poor,
So he were well derived ! The day may come
When he will earn nobility, and men
Of prouder birth may court his smile ; and then,

Perchance (for love is strong), I might descend
A few steps from my pinnacle. Fool ! fool !
This is a dream of summer and of youth.
I know not my own soul ; 'tis ardent now,
But years may chill it into apathy.
Why not ?—'tis thus with others. I could weep.

Lyd. [*Advancing.*] So, you've been secret, Mabel,
'Twas hardly kind ; but I waive all displeasure.
I trust you may be happy.

Mab. This is strange language, aunt.

Lyd. I might reply,
Yours is strange conduct, niece ; but let that pass.
My brother too was silent ; but I fancy
He understood it all ; perhaps had planned it
Before his guest arrived.

Mab. Planned what ? What guest ?
Try me not thus ! Your meaning in a word ?

Lyd. Why counterfeit surprise ? Do you not know
Mordaunt is with your father, even now ?

Mab. Well, what is that to me ?

Lyd. Much, I should say,
Were I now young, in love, and knew what boon
The man I loved was seeking from my father.

Mab. You jest.

Lyd. I am in earnest. He had your consent,
Doubtless, to back his prayer.

Mab. No ; never, never !

Lyd. Not in strict formal terms, perhaps, but still
By such expressions as the timid use
To help the lips' checked utterance by the eye.

Mab. I never spoke the word presumption's self
Could torture to a pledge of love for him.

Lyd. I am amazed ! it is not half an hour
Since his own lips assured me that the Earl
Must needs confirm his choice.

Mab. Presuming arrogance !

Lyd. He spoke in easy strain,
His air half buoyancy, half carelessness,

As though success were slave to him, and came
Without the pains of calling.

Mab. What sanction have I given him thus to boast ?

Lyd. I warned you once to guard, lest what you meant
For courtesy he should interpret love.

Mab. I never passed the bound of courtesy.

Lyd. You meant it not, that's certain ; but, forgive
me,

At times I thought myself the bound was passed.
Did you not tell me, Mabel, that the Earl
Requested special kindness for this man ?

Mab. [*With sudden indignation.*] What man ?

Lyd. This gentleman, this Mordaunt, at whose
hands

The Earl looked for some service. Am I right ?

Mab. Yes ; so he said.

Lyd. Then what can be more plain ?
Your father seeks support in power from Mordaunt,
Which he intends to sell—the price, your hand.
How now ! you shiver ; yet the air is mild.

Mab. The mind has seasons like the body, aunt.
My father shall resent this. Buy my hand !

Lyd. You may depend he means it.

Mab. So you said.

Why is your tone so measured, and your look
So calm on this occasion ? Where's the fire
That should be in your eyes ? Your temper's sweet ;
But now I like it not, I like it not ! [*Weeps.*]

Lyd. I cannot chide
If under quick excitement at your wrong
You are unjust to me. A step !

Enter SERVANT.

Well !

Ser. Madam,
My lord would see you and the Lady Mabel ;
He waits you in the library. [*He goes out.*]

Lyd.

Come, Mabel ;

Nay, sweet, take heart !

Mab.

What is there I should fear ?

Let us be going, aunt ;—I'm calm—quite calm.

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

*Library, as before.**The EARL and MORDAUNT discovered.**Mor.* Is love a crime ?

Can we prevent its coming ? or when come,

Can we command it from us ?

Earl.

We may, at least,

Curb its expression, when disgrace and grief

Are like to follow it.

Mor. Disgrace ! Your daughter's noble, fair, and
good ;

I shall not feel disgraced in taking her.

Earl. [*Sitting.*] Sir ! you are insolent.*Enter LADY MABEL and LADY LYDIA.*

Mabel, my child,

Have I not loved you truly, shown all kindness

That is a daughter's due ?

Mab.

Indeed you have.

Earl. Have you done well

In making stranger to a father's heart

The dearest wish of yours ?—in plighting faith

For life, unknown to him who gave you life ?

Mab. This have I never done.*Mor.*

Tell all, speak frankly ;

Have you not, Lady Mabel, given me proof

Of favour in your sight will justify

The boon I have entreated of the Earl—

Permission to be ranked as one who seeks

For closer union with you than a friend's?
 I know you gave no pledge; but looks and deeds,
 And words whose precious sense was in their tones—
 These bade me love! Was it not so? Answer, Mabel!

Mab. Mabel! the Lady Mabel, when you speak.

Lyd. She utterly denies what you infer.

Mab. Yes, utterly.

Mor. And Lady Lydia speaks thus;
 She who confirmed my hopes!—I see, for sport.

Lyd. We think you but presumptuous; let your
 honour

Guard you from veiling shame by sin; nor strive
 From loose discourse, spoken in pleasantry,
 To justify your conduct.

Mor. And the letter?

Lyd. The letter! He's distracted.

Mab. Letter! [*Apart to LYDIA.*] Aunt?

Lyd. Yes, love.

Mab. [*Aside.*] No, no; I will not wrong her; it is
 plain

His folly has deceived him.

Mor. May I then ask,
 If you have never loved me, why you deigned
 To wear love's semblance; deigned, when I approached,
 To feign joy's sudden smile; to urge my stay
 With lips that, faltering, won me, and with eyes
 That pleaded more by drooping; hour by hour
 To sit half mute and bid me still speak on,
 Then pay me with a glance in which there seemed
 A heart's whole volume writ?

Mab. [*Sitting.*] This is too much.
 Whate'er my kindness meant, it did not mean
 To foster your presumption, though, perhaps,
 Suspecting it, and lacking at the time
 Better employment, I allowed it scope,
 Did not repress it harshly, and amused,
 Rather than angered, failed to put a bound
 To its extravagance.

Mor. All, then, has been a jest; the thing resolves
Itself into a harmless *badinage!*
You had no other toy, so took my heart
To while away an hour. The plaything *broke;*
But then it was *amusement!*

Lyd. You were honoured
In thus assisting to beguile the hours
Of Lady Mabel's solitude.

Mor. Honoured, say you?
Men's hearts have leaped within them at my words.
The lowly have adored me, and the proud—
Ay, sir, the proud—have courted me; you know it.

Lyd. All this would sound much to your credit, sir,
Were other lips to speak it.

Mor. Understand me.
You deem me proud. I am so; and yet humble:
[*To MABEL.*] To you I would have been a slave; have
moulded

Each wish to your desire; have laid my fame,
Though earth had ratified it, at your feet,
Nor deemed the offering worthy of your smile!
But when, admitting what I am, you scorn me
For what my father was, sport with me, trample
On the same hopes you fostered, then I claim
The patent which the Great Paternity
Of heaven assigns to nature—not descent—
And walk before you in the march of time!

Lyd. The stale, fond trick—to boast of honours stored
In ether, where no human eye can pierce.
You may be prince of several stars—possess
All cloudland for your realm; but one poor knighthood,
Conferred by a real sword upon real shoulders,
Beats fifty thousand dukedoms in the air.
The old, convenient trick!

Earl. Nay, courtesy!

Lyd. You'll suffer us to go?

Earl. Yes, leave me.

[*MABEL rises; they are about to go.*]

Mor.

Stay!

Before we part, I have a word or two
For Lady Mabel's ear. [*To MABEL.*] I know right
well

The world has no tribunal to avenge
An injury like mine ; you may allure
The human heart to love, warm it with smiles,
To aspirations of a dream-like bliss,
From which to wake is madness—and when spells
Of your enchantment have enslaved it quite,
So that you are its world, its light, its life,
And all beside is dark and void and dead—
I say, that very heart, brought to this pass,
You may spurn from your path, pass on and jest,
And the crowd will jest with you ; you may glide,
With eye as radiant, and with brow as smooth,
And feet as light, through your charmed worshippers,
As though the angel's pen had failed to trace
The record of your crime ; and every night,
Lulled by soft flatteries, you may calmly sleep
As do the innocent ; but it *is* crime,
Deep crime, that you commit ! Had you for sport
Trampled upon the earth a favourite rose,
Pride of the garden, or in wantonness
Cast in the sea a jewel not your own,
All men had held you guilty of offence !

Lyd. [*To EARL.*] Is it fit that longer you should brook
this censure ?

Mor. And is it then no sin

To crush those flowers of life, our freshest hopes,
With all the incipient beauty in the bud,
Which know no second growth ? to cast our faith
In human-kind, the only amulet
By which the soul walks fearless through the world,
Into those floods of bitter memory
Whose awful depths no diver dares explore ?
To paralyse the expectant mind, while yet
On the world's threshold, and existence' self

To drain of all save its inert endurance?
 To do this unprovoked—I put it to you,
 Is not this sin? To the unsleeping eye
 Of Him who sees all aims, and knows the wrongs
 No laws save His redress, I make appeal
 To judge between us!

Earl. Sir, our conference

Is ended.

Mor. It is ended. [He goes out.

Mab. He's deceived!

He hears me not! He knows me not! He's gone!

Earl. Why, what is this, dear Mabel?

Mab. Nothing, sir.

I am not used, you know, to witness strife.

It somewhat chafes my spirit.

Earl. Hither, love.

[MABEL reels forward, and falls into her father's arms.

[An interval of Five Years is supposed to elapse between the Third and Fourth Acts.]

ACT IV., SCENE I.

Same as Scene I., Act III.

Enter LISTER, HEARTWELL, DEANCOURT, and COLVILLE.

Lis. The marriage, then, takes place at noon to-morrow?

Col. 'Twill be a royal festival.

Heart. For me,

I never looked within these ancient walls

For welcome as a guest, far less as one

Summoned to Mordaunt's marriage.

Dean. It is strange,

After his sharp repulse—'tis now five years since—

He should renew his suit and win. We all

Remember his first wooing, with the gibes
And taunts that followed it.

Heart. All which he owed
To Lady Lydia, his aunt elect.
She told the farce—so then she called his suit—
With such malicious wit, 'twas London's jest.
Scarce any one dared know him. It amazed me
To see him, thus the mark for public scorn,
Calmly outbrave it, give his mind entire
To public duties, daily gathering friends,
Until his strength so grew, the Earl conceded
All our demands ; then sought him for a son.

Col. The Minister, and not the father, sought him.

Lis. Proceeds the match with Lady Mabel's will ?

Heart. Her cold and pensive carriage testify
In this she only brooks her father's choice.
Not ours to scan too nicely. Pass we on :
The Lady Lydia and her nephew come.

Enter LADY LYDIA *and* CAPTAIN PIERPOINT.

[*Bows to* LADY LYDIA.] Fine weather and fair promise
for to-morrow.

Lyd. Fair as our brightest hopes are, gentlemen.

[*LISTER, HEARTWELL, DEANCOURT, and COLVILLE*
go out.]

Lyd. You know already
These are the members of a factious clique
Mordaunt has brought to notice of the Earl.

Pier. You scarce bear Mordaunt better will than I.

Lyd. We do not idolise our future kinsman.

Pier. Who won his way, no doubt, by artifice
And smooth insinuation ?

Lyd. No ; the truth,
Though bitter, must be granted. Haughtily
He trod his separate path. Alone, he forced
His way to power and rank. My brother bought
His service by concessions, claimed the more ;
The more were granted. Out of weakness grew

Necessity for compact, and, in fine,
This union was offered, almost *pressed*,—
It costs a pang to own it, by the Earl.
Had I been he!—but this is folly.

Pier.

What

Intend you now?

Lyd.

To bear what can't be shunned.

When first my brother named this humbling contract,
I wrote to Mordaunt, asked an interview,
And wrought him to belief that Mabel's heart
Shrank from this union, though her hand, indeed,
Obeyed her father. This looked plausible ;
For a still pensive mood has ruled her late—
Seldom dispersed, and then for reckless mirth.

Pier. So he believes she never loved him?

Lyd.

Fully.

In proof of which he's seldom here ; and then
He greets her distantly. He pressed the marriage
With most indelicate haste ; no time for wooing,
Little for preparation. A proud alliance
Bribed him, and not a heart.

Pier. [*Indignantly.*]

Aunt !

Lyd. [*Interrupting.*]

Since we're conquered,

Let's even make the best of it. Here come

A group of bland nonentities.

Enter LORD *and* LADY CHATTERLY, SIR ARCHER, *and*
LADY TAUNTON.

Ah, good friends !

With smiling faces as befits the time.

Lord C. Dear Lady Lydia,

We share your happiness in seeing it.

Lyd. You're good to say so. Happiness like mine

Grows by participation.

Sir A.

Lady Mabel

Has positively had no mercy on us—

Her wit's so brilliant, pungent, piercing and—[*Hesitates.*]

Lord C. Truly enchanting.

Lady C. 'Tis benevolence
In you to call it so ; for 'twas indulged
Greatly at your expense.

Lady T. Nay ! that's severe.

Sir A. A little *too* severe, but in plain truth,
Mordaunt's much to be envied.

Lyd. Surely, not
More than my niece.

Lady T. Mordaunt !—Is he connected
With the old family in Devonshire.

Lyd. This gentleman is of a race whose rise
Is far more ancient.—But 'tis near the hour
My brother named to read the marriage-deed.

[*All are about to go.*]

Enter MABEL.

Your pardon for a moment ; I'll soon follow.

[*GUESTS and PIERPOINT go out. She advances to meet MABEL.*]

Nay, be of better cheer. Should one betrothed
Upon her bridal-eve look downcast thus ?
A strange foreboding shadow clouds your brow,
I marked not ere this wooing. O my child !
Carry it gaily ; go among your guests ;
Be liberal of your smiles, free of your mirth,
As one should be upon the verge of joy.

Mab. Believe me, I have striven to do my best,
Nor quite in vain ; nay, heard you not yourself
Our sprightly jests, as I led forth the train
Through the wood's maze ? Oh, we were very gay !

Lyd. I was not unobservant of your mirth ;
It did not please me, Mabel ; it was strained,
Abrupt—wanted tranquillity ; your tones
Were quicker than belong to quiet joy ;
Your smiles not such as peace serenely wears.

Mab. You are right ; and I, it seems, am not so skilled
As I had thought in artifice. Yes, aunt !
There is a care lies heavy at my heart.

Lyd. Confide it, love !

Mab. I fear that time has changed him.

Lyd. You mean Sir Edgar ?

Mab. Ay : 'tis even so.

Lyd. Despite of which, your love still perseveres ?

Mab. True love, though tender, is immortal too—
Easy to wound, incapable of death.

Not that he has at any time been harsh,
At least in words ; but that to me seems stern
Which others might not deem so. Public cares
Leave him few hours for converse, and in those
He speaks me formally. Then I grow cold,
And proudly hide my heart. I know I'm blameful
To tell you this ; but then I have no mother,
Whose voice might solace weakness or reprove it.

Lyd. Alas ! sweet niece, you merit better fate.

Mab. Why say so, aunt ? I have in nought accused him
Except in change ; such change as comes like growth,
Sure but unnoted.

Lyd. But you kept my counsel,
Avoided all recurrence to the past ?

Mab. We have not spoken of it. Much I fear
It steals upon his memory, and clouds
The sunshine of his love.

Lyd. I would fain hope
The best, dear Mabel. You did well at least
In keeping silence ; but we shall be late.
You know your father's wishes are to grace
Your nuptials with all ceremony, whence
This public reading of the marriage treaty.
Would I could bribe those lips to smile. Come, love !

[*They go out.*]

Enter MORDAUNT, looking after them.

Mor. 'Tis she. What sad reluctance in her step !
The conscious victim in each gesture speaks.
True, true, confirmed by many a certain sign,

The Lady Lydia's tale! She loves me not,
 And curbs her loathing at her father's will,
 Whose interest and ambition force her hand—
 His child's hand—to the man she spurned before,
 And yet despises. Shame that to my breast
 They bind a form that inwardly recoils!
 There's the one drop that overflows the cup,
 And makes endurance treason to mankind!
 She turns within. What witchery of grace!
 Proud scorner, I could love thee, spite of scorn!
 Ill fits this mood the time. Hence, yielding self;
 No private weakness now. No! though each word
 Were coined in fires that fed upon my heart,
 I'd speak their rights whom nature crowns and man's
 Poor pride would crush. So, lady, heart, take heart!
 Thy cause I champion here, no less than mine,
 And haste to snatch thee from my father's doom!

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. My lord, sir, seeks your presence.

Mor.

Does he so?

I will attend him instantly; I come.

[MORDAUNT *and* SERVANT *go out.*

SCENE II.

Library as before.

EARL OF LYNTERNE, MORDAUNT, HEARTWELL, LISTER,
 COLVILLE, DEANCOURT, PIERPOINT, LADY LYDIA,
 LADY MABEL, LORD *and* LADY CHATTERLY, SIR
 ARCHER *and* LADY TAUNTON, *and other* WEDDING
 GUESTS, *with* SOLICITOR, *enter and take places.*

Earl. Good friends, assembled here to confer honour
 Upon the near espousals, I beseech
 Your kind attention while this gentleman
 Reads in your hearing the accustomed deed

Determining the rights and property
Of such as stand affianced. [SOLICITOR *is about to rise.*

Mor. [*Rising.*] My Lord Lynterne,
And guests who grace us with your presence here,
I've that to say, which 'twere unseasonable
To broach at any later stage than this.
Deem you not me much honoured, who have sprung
From lineage obscure, in this alliance
With a most noble lady, who can trace
An ancestry which from the Conqueror's time
Has never mingled blood with churl's before?

Lyd. [*Aside.*] What frantic scheme has this man now
to compass?—

You're modest, sir, and underrate your birth.

Mor. Not so. My father was a man of toil;
I mean real toil, such toil as makes the hand
Uncouth to sight, coarse, hard to the touch;
There are none here who would have clasped that hand
Save at our borough contests, when all fingers
Grew marvellously pliant.

Lyd. Well this frankness
Becomes a noble mind! How great it is
To rise by our desert from lowliness,
And blush not at its memory!

Omnes. Most noble!

Dean. [*To HEARTWELL apart.*] I understand not this.
Heart. There's meaning in it.

Mor. You would do honour then, good friends, to him
Who from obscurity should win his way
To eminence and power?

Lord C. Such men adorn their country!

Sir A. Their merit
Transcends all praise!

Lyd. They are earth's master spirits!

Mor. Then had you known one such in his first years
Of effort, you had aided him—at least,
Given him encouragement, showed him respect?

Lady C. Respect most due!

Lady T. Decidedly! Who doubts it?

Mor. You had been just, and had not plotted then
Against his peace, nor baited with such smiles
As the heart loves to feed on, the dire poison
Of wanton, causeless scorn?

Lyd. Why ask them this, knowing that they would
not?

Lady C. Who would be guilty of such crime?

Lady T. Oh, no one!

Mor. But did such live, what should be their desert?

Earl. You trespass, sir, too much upon the time
Of this high company. Methinks 'twere well
The lawyer should proceed.

Mor. I am indifferent.

Earl. Mean you to wed my daughter?

Mor. [*Turning fiercely on him.*] No!

[*All rise in surprise.*]

Pier. Malignant viper! you shall dearly pay
The debt of this disgrace.

Mor. Yet hold awhile.

If you accuse me, grant me the same rights
That all accused enjoy. Hear my defence!
That over, I will bide whatever shape
Your anger wills to take.

Earl. Begone, sir!—leave us, while contempt stills
wrath.

Mab. I do beseech you hear him. I am curious
To learn what sins of my commission urged
To deed so pitiful. If I had wronged—

Lord C. Even then it was most pitiful revenge.

Lady C. Most pitiful retort!

Lady T. Most infamous!

Lyd. But still consistent with his character?

Chorus of Voices. Oh yes, yes, yes! With his—past
doubt!

Mor. Why, see now,
How much your expectations mock your acts!
You sow the heart with bitterness, and marvel

That it bears kindless fruit ;—the slave's treatment
 Is what you give man, and the angel's meekness
 Is what you demand from him ! 'Tis five years
 Since this same Lady Mabel lured my soul
 With such soft phrases and such winning words
 As only leave the words " I love " unsaid.
 'Twas not my vanity that thus construed
 These signs of tenderness. The Lady Lydia
 Noted their import ; duped me with feigned proofs,
 To think my love returned——

Pier. Audacious !

Lyd. [*Scornfully.*] Hear him !

Mor. Deluded thus, I straightway sought the Earl,
 Entreated his permission to be ranked
 As Lady Mabel's suitor ; when it pleased her
 Smilingly to admit that she had toyed
 With me, to while away an idle hour.
 I hasted home. In a few days the tale
 Of my crushed love was blazoned to the world !
 A proud heart's honest passion woke to life,
 By specious smiles and studied blandishments,
 But to be trampled on—the deep excess
 Of passionate devotion—charm of day,
 And dream of night, and hope of life—it was—
 It was all this to me—blown, published, chorused
 In the quick ear of scoffers ! This low churl,
 This foiled plebeian aspirant, supplied
 Mirth for a thousand jesters. What presumption
 In *him* to love thus ! Mark ! Years passed ; that churl
 Rose to power's summit. From his arms still shrank
 The loved one of his youth. A father's law
 Now forced her struggling hand, and bade him take
 The victim, where he once had hoped the wife !

Pier. No more, I say !

Mor. For once be men and women.
 Have you loved ever ? known what 'tis to stake
 Your heart's whole capital of blessedness
 Upon one die, the chance of love returned ?

To lose the cast, go forth with beggared soul,
 And hear scorn's pack pursue you ; cheered by those
 Who tempted but to ruin ? "*Stay,*" you cry ;
 "*Your case is changed since then !*" By what ?
 "*Success.*"

Success ! I cast it off. [*To LADY LYDIA and the EARL.*]

Madam—my lord

Here in your stately halls ; here where your robes
 Of blazoned memories thickly fold you in ;
 I stand—God's common work, a naked heart—
 To say, the prize that lured, then scorned my love,
 I scorn to take in barter for success !

Earl. Enough, sir ! You have had your vengeance.
 Hence !

Mor. I have not sought for vengeance in this act.
 My life, my energies, my talents, all
 Were meant for nobler uses than belong
 To a mere private feud ; but I have fought
 A battle for high principles, and taught
Convention, when it dares to tread down *man*,
Man shall arise in turn and tread it down !
 As for this lady—she has never loved me,
 Nor have I lately sought to win her love ;
 I would not wreak on her such wretchedness
 As she caused me for pastime. I have done.
 My errand is fulfilled. [*Going.*]

Pier. You go not thus !

Mab. [*Rushing forward and arresting him with great agitation.*] Upon your life,
 Injure him not ! Stir not a step I say !

[*MORDAUNT regards her earnestly.*]

He is not worthy of it.

[*MORDAUNT goes out followed by HEARTWELL and DEANCOURT.*]

[*In the interval between the Fourth and Fifth Acts the season changes from Summer to Autumn.*]

ACT V., SCENE I.

Library in Lynterne Castle, as before.

PHYSICIAN and EARL discovered.

Phy. Have you, my lord, of late received account
Of Lady Lydia's state ?

Earl. No recent news ; poor sister Lydia !
When first suspicion dawned that my child's grief
Was wearing health away, her aunt, o'ercome
By daily witness of such touching woe,
Caught its infection—strength and peace forsook her.
Still her condition varies with your patient's ;
When Mabel seems to rally, our report
Is answered by good tidings of her aunt ;
And when the one declines—declines the other.
From Venice, where my sister purposes
Some few months' stay, I anxiously wait letters.
But say, how fares it with my blessèd one ?
Tell me the worst.—Nay, pause a moment.—Now
I think that I am man enough to hear you.

Phy. The mind is our chief enemy ;
And failing its alliance, all endeavour
Hastens the evil it would fain arrest.
Could we obliterate the past, efface
All memory of this wrong, whose double edge
Wounds both her love and pride, recall to life
Her hopes and her affections—

Earl. Cease, sir, to torture me ; 'tis mockery
To name specifics out of human grasp.

*Enter SERVANT announcing LADY LYDIA, who enters in
travelling costume. SERVANT goes out.*

Earl. (*advancing to meet her*) My sister ! dearest
Lydia, you are changed !

Lyd. Speak not of me. Mabel ! is she much altered ?

Earl. Alas ! much altered, as yourself may see.

Enter MABEL, supported by an ATTENDANT — the PHYSICIAN places a chair for her; they conduct MABEL to it. ATTENDANT goes out.

Lyd. [*Who has kept her eyes on the ground, suddenly raising them as she faces her niece.*] Ha! I need not support; let us embrace.

No, no, it is forbidden!

Mab.

Forbidden!

Lyd.

By Conscience,

The Haunter, the Avenger who can bow
Wills tyrants cannot move—extort deep groans
From men mute on the rack—and from the lips
Of guilty pride, which the flame's agony
Cannot distort or open, wring the tale
Of sin and degradation.

Earl. [*To PHYSICIAN.*] What can this mean? I fear
her mind's disturbed.

Lyd. [*Overhearing him.*] True! but not in your sense;
now, listen to me.

I am my niece's murderer! [*MABEL looks up.*]

Earl. [*Compassionately.*] Poor, poor unfortunate!

Lyd. I did not drug her drink

With poison, nor at night with unsheathed blade
Startle her chamber's darkness; but by arts
Born of infernal pride, I poisoned hopes
That outvie life in worth, and plunged my dart
Where it is mercy to stab mortally,
Such anguish follows where the wound is made.

Mab. Oh, mercy! mercy! You deceived me *there*?

Lyd. When he who shall be nameless was our guest,
I prompted him at once to ask your hand,
Assured him of your love, which I declared
Yourself had owned to me. With sinful wiles
I taught you to believe that he had dared
To ask you of your father as the hire
For future service. I awoke your pride,
Moved you to show him scorn—

Mab. Alas! alas!

Lyd. With bitter raillery I told the tale
I had invented where I knew 'twould gain
Admission to his ear : the effect you know.

Mab. Wake me ! I cannot bear this dream. Oh,
wake me !

Will none of you have pity ?

Lyd. More remains.

This letter will tell all. [*Gives letter—MABEL takes the
letter mechanically.*] Mabel, my niece,

In deep remorse, in guilty agony,

I pray you to forgive me ! [*Kneeling.*]

Mab. [*Passionately.*] Hence ! your presence
Tortures my eyes, as have your deeds my heart !

Lyd. Niece ! child ! turn not away. I will be heard !

I loved you ever. When I wronged you most,

My sin was born of love. So high my aims

And hopes for you, I could not brook you wed,

Save where to every human excellence

Was added all the world accounts most noble.

And now these tears, this soft and plenteous dew

Speak not an arid soil—a stony heart.

After my long and weary pilgrimage,

I clasp thy feet, a humbled penitent !

Mab. I—I—O God, send tears !

Lyd. Ah, Mabel, think—

• We both are dying women—think that you

May need forgiveness too !

[*LYDIA still kneels at MABEL'S feet, who slowly bends
forward, and puts her arms round her neck.*]

Mab. [*Falteringly.*] You are forgiven.

Lyd. Bless you ! Death will be gentler now. Farewell !

[*Kisses MABEL'S hand, then goes to EARL and kneels.*]

Brother ?

Earl. Yes, I'll not add to other misery

That of repulsing penitence. Now go :

You need rest, and must take it.

ATTENDANT enters, and supports LADY LYDIA from
scene.

Earl. The tale so long discredited was true.
Mordaunt is wronged.

Mab. I ruined and disgraced !

Earl. [*After a pause.*] It shall be done. Down, down,
rebellious pride !

What's pride when set by love? What price too great
To save my dear one's life?—Give me the letter.

[*Takes letter from MABEL.*]

Mab. What mean you? for your look is strange; you
tremble !

Earl. No, no; the strife is passed. O God! that we,
Whom thy one breath can prostrate utterly,
Should dare to foster pride !

Mab. [*Starting to her feet.*] You would see Mordaunt !

Earl. Yes, I will see him—supplicate his ear
For this most sad mischance. My prayers and tears
Will surely reach his heart. I'll bend my knee,
And wear a look so meek, so lowly—

Mab. Never !

Earl. Oh, yes; and he will pardon all the past.

Mab. My path of desolation nears the grave;
Yet can I turn my face to him once more,
And look on him forgivingly. I know
That he has been deceived, and I forgive him.
He might have pardoned me; but he chose vengeance,
And left the print of shame on my crushed heart;
Yet wrung not from its depths one sigh of pain.
My misery has been silent. Oh, dear father,
Torture it not to speech !

Earl. Be calm, my child.

Mab. Then go you not. Bow not your reverend head
In unavailing shame, nor let him know
What cause has sped me hence.
It shall not be! Your hand—a sudden weakness.

[*MABEL sinks into the chair—the PHYSICIAN, kneeling, supports her.*]

Earl. Alas! emotion has o'ertaxed her strength !

Phy. I will attend her. Meanwhile, my dear lord,

If your good purpose hold, seek Mordaunt straight.
 Show him the letter. His mind, once convinced,
 May prompt him to contrition, and such signs
 Of penitent affection as shall win
 Your daughter's heart to love of life again.

Earl. And yet I fear I go on a vain errand ;
 For should *he* yield, to o'ercome *her* resolve
 Will be a task more hard.

Phy. We're in a strait
 Of peril that admits no other hope.
 I do conjure you go, and please you bid
 Your daughter's maid attend to share my watch.

Earl. You counsel right, my friend. I go. Farewell.

Phy. Almighty aid be with you. [EARL goes out.
 Her eyelids open. She revives.—Dear lady !

Mab. Who speaks ? Where am I ?

Phy. 'Tis I, your faithful friend, who watch by you.

Enter ATTENDANT.

Mab. Thanks, sir. Where is my father. Call him
 hither !

Phy. Affairs of moment took him hence awhile.

Mab. Is he within ? He has not left the house ?

Phy. Soon to return.

Mab. 'Twas strange he did not wait till I revived,
 Nor stayed to say farewell. [Weeps.] 'Tis not his wont
 To quit me thus abruptly.—I remember,
 He spoke of seeing Mordaunt !

[ATTENDANT advances.

Heard you the Earl's command ? Which way went he ?

Att. [Hesitatingly.] Madam, I think to Richmond.

Mab. [Rises.] Quick ! a carriage !

Then wait me in my chamber. [ATTENDANT goes out.
 Check surprise ;

I must set forth and overtake the Earl.

PHY. 'Tis madness ! Think not that your shattered
 frame
 Could undergo such trial of its strength !

Mab. The feelings that inspire the deep resolve,
Can grant the strength for action. I must go.

Phy. You will forgive me if I countermand
Your order lately given. [Going.

Mab. Stay! stay! [Supporting herself by chair.

'Tis to preserve my father and myself
From scorn, from ignominy, from repulse,
I venture on this errand. Oh, just Heaven!
It will be thought we have devised some feint
To move this proud man's heart. In vain, in vain,
My father will implore. One word of mine
Would spare him—save his honoured head from shame!
Do you deny me? Think you that my life
Is not more perilled by your present act
Than by my own design? What, not moved yet?
Behold me take the suppliant's attitude. [Kneels.

I do implore you in all humbleness
To let me now depart.—You will not yet? [Rises.

I claim my right of motion—trample on
All counsel that prescribes subservience
From the soul to its poor vassal. I command
You let me pass forthwith. You dare not brave me.

Phy. [Aside.] What supernatural anger fires her eye!
She's right. More danger lies in opposition.—
Madam, your will has way.

Mab. Thanks, thanks, my friend.
In a short time you'll join me. Thanks! No help.

[MABEL goes out rapidly, followed by PHYSICIAN.

SCENE II.

MORDAUNT'S House, as in Act I.

Enter MORDAUNT.

Mor. I know not whence or wherefore there has come
This woman's weakness o'er my yielding will?
What have I done but given pride to learn

That as our Maker stamps no mark of caste,
Except the soul's, on men ; so by their souls,
Not by their birth or fortunes, men shall rank !

[*A short pause.*]

Why am I not at peace ? What whispers me
That right was never vindicated yet
By wrong returned ; or, if Heaven work out good
By men of wrath, its blessing crowns the deed,
But not the doer. Why—why will the thought,
Perchance she may have loved me, thus intrude ?
Can I have sought revenge and called it justice ?

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. The Earl of Lynterne.

Enter the EARL. *SERVANT goes out.*

Earl. Pardon, Sir Edgar, that I venture thus
To break on your retirement : but my cause
Is one that outruns all respect of forms.

Mor. A country's servant knows no privacy
That bars consideration of her weal.
I pray you sit, my lord.

Earl. My errand is not public. 'Tis not now
The minister who claims your patient ear,
But a plain sorrowing man, whose wounded heart
Your skill alone can solace. To be brief,
I am a father ; let that word tell all.

Mor. The father of a daughter ! Is it well
We should discourse of her ?

Earl. Tell me that you permit it. May I speak ?

Mor. Of her, my lord, or any other stranger,
If mention of a name delight your ear.

Earl. And you will bear with me—you will be patient ?

Mor. Why should I not ? What man is there so well
Can bear the verbal history of wrong
As he who has it written on his heart ?
If you recite the past, you will not grave

The inward record deeper. And its trace
Endures, though you be silent.

Earl. Oh, sir, repulse me not, for love of mercy.
Say that you retain some gentle thought,
Some tender recollection——

Mor. Of your daughter?
My lord, she has my pity.

Earl. What! No more? [*A pause.*
Ah, sir, I have watched Mabel many a time,
When accident, or as it now seems, purpose
Long held you from her presence,—quit her chair,
And by the hour watch in love's deep suspense,
Pale, fixed, and mute—a very statue then;
But when the tramp of your approaching horse
Broke on her ear—for that love-quickened sense
Anticipated sight—she woke to life,
As though your safety gave her leave to be,
Rushed forth to meet you, but stopped bashfully
To wait your entrance with downcast lids,
Which vainly tried to hide the lucid joy
Floating, like sunshine, in the orbs beneath!

Mor. What is your story's sequel? What succeeds?

Earl. You loved her once!

Mor. I did, and since it pleases you, I speak.
It shall be to such purpose as to wring,
Even from your confession, that my act
Was one of justice, not of cruelty.
I loved her once! Ay, she was then to me
The incorporated spirit of all good.
My soul's once science was to study her;
Her eyes were all my light, her voice my music,
Her movements all I cared to know of grace.
Loved her! 'Twas worship! 'Twas idolatry!
And how was I repaid! The meanest man
Who has nor wealth, nor talent, nor distinction,
Giving his heart, proffers the dearest gift
His Maker gave to him—a gift that merits,
Even when not accepted, gratitude!

I gave my heart, my mind, unto your daughter,
Of which she feigned acceptance, not by words,
But by confession far more eloquent.
I pressed the love she favoured ; she repulsed it ;
She trampled on it ! It was glowing fire ;
She trod it into ashes !

Earl. It was not so ; but hear me.

Mor. 'Tis too late.

Earl. [*Rises.*] I do implore you, then, to read this letter.

[*MORDAUNT takes letter, rises, and reads it apart.*]

Mor. If this be true, it must pronounce me guilty ;
And my own eyes bear witness 'gainst my heart !
A life-time's love would not atone my sin.
Can I, indeed, have wronged her thus ?

Enter SERVANT announcing "The Lady Mabel Lynterne !"

MABEL enters and rushes to the EARL. SERVANT goes out.

Mab. My father !

Earl. My child !—[*To MORDAUNT.*] Read *there* the answer to your doubt.

Mor. 'Tis evidence that stabs, while it convicts.

Why knew I not this sooner ?

O Mabel, how I've wronged thee ! [*Kneels to her.*]

Mab. What words are these ? I came here to forbid
Vain supplication to a haughty heart,
And lo ! I find one meek and penitent.
And thou *dost* love me, Mordaunt ?

Mor. [*Rising.*] Love thee, Mabel !
My careworn heart revives at sight of thee,
And hoards the life 'twas weariness to keep.
How now ! thou tremblest, sweet !

Mab. Love ! aid me to my chair ;
My strength is failing fast ; I am as one
Who has striven hard to distance Grief, and gained
The goal before her, my strength but sufficing

To win the triumph. Mordaunt, I shall die
With thy love for my chaplet, and in peace!

Mor. [*Kneeling by her side.*] And thou wilt *live* in peace
for many years!

[*Aside.*] What demon gives my fear-struck heart the lie?

Mab. I've much to say, and but brief time to speak it.
Thou knowest *now* I love thee; but thou canst not—
Thou canst not tell how deeply. That our lips
Should so belie our hearts! Couldst thou read mine!

Mor. Or thou read mine; the thoughts of agony
Remorse sears on it with a brand of fire!

Mab. Oh, couldst thou know how often in my walks
My soul drank gladness from the thought that thou
Wouldst share them with me, and the beautiful
Grow brighter as thy voice interpreted
Its hidden loveliness; and our fireside!
How I should greet thee from the stormy war
Of public conflict, kneel beside thy chair,
And cause thee bend thine eyes on mine, until
Thy brow expanded, and thy lips confessed
The blessedness of home!

Mor. Home, sayest thou? *Home!*
Home! That's the grave.

Mab. My fate is gentler, love,
Than I had dared to hope. I shall not *live*
Encircled by thine arms; but I may *die* so. [*Sinks back.*]

Mor. [*Rising and turning away.*] I cannot bear it;
Oh, I cannot bear it.

Fool! Not to know the vengeance of forgiveness!

Earl. You see, sir, that the wound is deep enough.

Mab. Nay, speak not harshly; for in noble minds
Error is suffering, and we should soothe
The breast that bears its punishment within.
Tell me that you forgive him. Do not pause.
Stint not the affluent affection now,
That hitherto outran my need in granting—
All dimly floats before me. While I yet
Can hear your voice, tell me that you forgive him!

[*MABEL has now raised herself, and stands erect.*]

Earl. I do, I do!

Mab. Now take him to your arms,
And call him son.

Earl. Thou art obeyed :—My son!

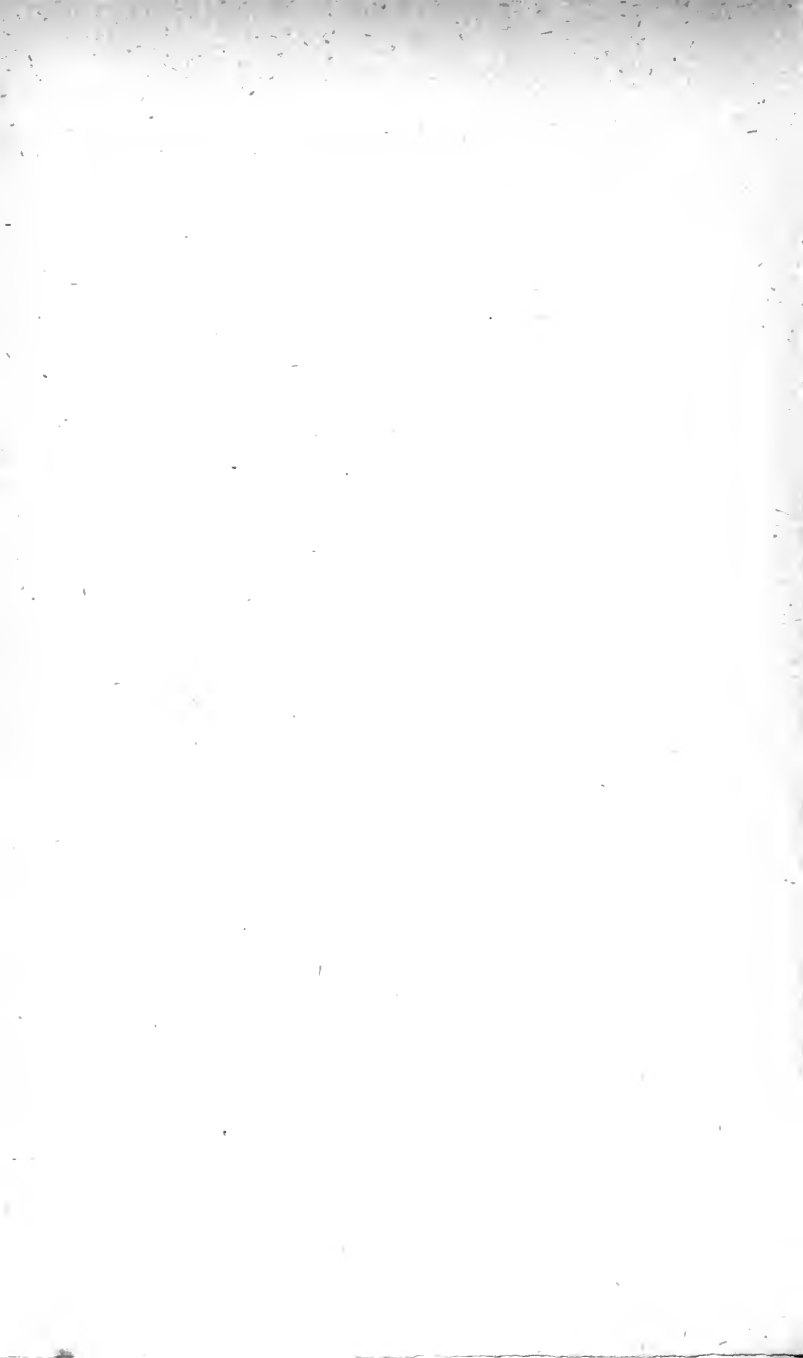
Mor. [*Advancing.*] My father!

[*MABEL joins their hands.*]

Mab. I am happy—very happy!

[*She falls into MORDAUNT'S arms—a short pause—
she dies.*]

END OF THE PATRICIAN'S DAUGHTER.



ANNE BLAKE.

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

Anne Blake.

*First performed at the ROYAL PRINCESS'S THEATRE, on
Thursday, October 28, 1852.*

CHARACTERS.

SIR JOSHUA TOPPINGTON, <i>Baronet,</i>	Mr ADDISON.
THOROLD, <i>lodging in Wales as an artist,</i>	Mr CHARLES KEAN.
LLANISTON, <i>his friend, a gentleman of fortune, heir to a peerage,</i>	Mr WALTER LACY.
JILLOTT, <i>a butler,</i>	Mr J. CHESTER.
SERVANT,	Mr COLLIS.
LADY TOPPINGTON, <i>wife of Sir Joshua,</i>	Mrs WINSTANLEY.
ANNE BLAKE, <i>a dependant, Sir Joshua's niece,</i>	Mrs CHARLES KEAN.
CLARA THURLEIGH, <i>Thorold's cousin,</i>	
LLOYD, <i>a housekeeper,</i>	Mrs DALY.
DAVIES,	Mrs SAKER.

Scene—North Wales.

Time—Near the middle of the nineteenth century.

ANNE BLAKE.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Hall in Toppington House, extending to the back of the stage. The doors are backed by view of the distant country. Doors are closed at opening.*

Enter LLOYD and DAVIES.

Lloyd. Stir! my young lady will be back at noon. The wind cuts, this spring morning. Quick, a fire!

Davies. For her, indeed! Sir Joshua and my lady Will not be home till six; and for Miss Blake There's your own fire. What serves the housekeeper May do for her to warm by. Fire for her!

[She goes out tossing her head disdainfully.]

Lloyd. Hard-hearted insolent—

Enter JILLOTT.

Dear Mr Jillott,

The wine's out; and Miss Blake will need a glass
After her long, cold ride.

Fil. Why, Mistress Lloyd!
Of your five senses is there one remains?
Shall I—Sir Joshua's butler—make a journey
Down to the cellar? open, as I must,
An untouched cask? and bear the further labour
Of drawing and decanting, all for her?
For Anne Blake! Is that rational?

Lloyd.

I'd do it

For any creature living—for a beggar,
A sweep, a Hottentot !

Fil. Ah ! there we differ.

Lloyd. But, sir, for Miss Anne Blake, remember this :
She is your master's niece.

Fil. Sir Joshua,
I know, has the misfortune to be called
Her uncle.

Lloyd. [*Incensed.*] Why misfortune ?

Fil. Mistress Lloyd,
Be rational. You know Sir Joshua's sister,
Who might have made a creditable match—
A match Sir Joshua prayed for—sunk herself
By marrying some poor devil—scribbler, clerk,
Tutor, or—I forget the man. What followed ?
They'd not a coin or crust. She must have starved,
But that Sir Joshua received her here,
With her puling baby.

Lloyd. Ay, took child and mother ;
But not the husband.

Fil. No ; most properly
The door was closed on him. What happened next ?
His wife—Sir Joshua's sister—ere a year,
Frets herself out of life, and leaves my master
This squalling wench to—

Lloyd. Shame ! Poor innocent !

Fil. Poor vixen ! From a babe she couldn't bear
Sir Joshua or my lady. Why, she failed
In common gratitude.

Lloyd. For what ? Harsh words
And frowns from him, neglect from her ; for taunts,
Imprisonments, and blows of angry nurses,
To cure her temper, till she half became
The sullenness they called her. Yet a heart
Opener to kindness beats not.

Fil. Poh, poh, poh !
Hearts are low things. I speak of manners, Lloyd ;
And hers distress me. Well, you did good service,

When, while Miss Blake was at your husband's farm,
 You snared that strolling artist for a lodger,
 And gulled him into love—love for Anne Blake !
 I hope he'll take her, and so rid my taste
 Of what offends it, my poor lady's nerves
 Of daily shocks, my master of disgrace !

Lloyd. Disgrace ! Isn't she flesh and blood like
 them,

And, though she's poor, their equal ?

Fil. Equal !

Lloyd. Ay !

Fil. Equal ! I'll hear no more. Such sentiments
 Strike at the root of order. O, you're dangerous,
 A leveller, Lloyd—a leveller ! I've no doubt
 You'd have the cow-boy sit at table with us
 And pledge us in his pewter ! Nay, no more.

[He stalks out.]

Lloyd. Why not their equal ! Our Sir Joshua's father,
 Though London alderman and baronet,
 Was yet a trader, nor in wealth forgot
 The means that raised him. There be two extremes
 Of men that one can bear—those born to station,
 Who take it graciously, and those who earn it ;
 But save me from those doubtful honourables
 That have no root in custom, yet despise
 Their honest planter, labour ! Had Sir Joshua
 Been used to rank, or won it by his wits,
 He'd not have shown his niece such spite because
 Her mother married humbly. *[Knock.]* A knock ! not
 hers :

There's too much flourish. Her knock's sharp and
 bold,

As if the door, too, were her enemy—

All but poor Lloyd !

*[Doors are thrown open by SERVANTS, who enter.
 Doors remain open, admitting view of Welsh
 scenery in distance.]*

Enter LLANISTON, speaking to SERVANT, who retires.

Llan. So, so, I'm out of luck! Good day, good Lloyd!

Lloyd. Good day, sir.

Llan. And Sir Joshua——

Lloyd. Returns to-night at six, sir, with my lady.

Llan. [*Abstractedly.*] Humph!

Lloyd. [*Aside.*] Now, I told him they'd be gone a week,
And thrice within the week he comes to seek them.

Llan. I've called, you know, on business.

Lloyd. Will you wait?

Llan. I've not a moment. [*Goes undecidedly towards
the door, then returns.*] Can I see Miss Blake?

Lloyd. She's out, sir, for her ride.

Llan. Humph!

Lloyd. She'll be back, though,
In an hour, or half an hour, or less.

Llan. I'll wait. [*Sits.*

Lloyd. [*Aside.*] That's odd; he said just now he'd not
a moment.

How can she help his business?

Llan. [*Starting as from a reverie.*] So he's dead?
Her father—Miss Blake's father?

Lloyd. Sir, 'tis like.

He crossed the seas ere she could lisp his name.

All trace of him is lost, as in the wave

The furrow of his ship.

Llan. Poor girl!

Lloyd. Ah, sir!

Her life's had little sunshine, little soil;

But she's a hardy nature.

Llan. True.

Lloyd. She has

A spirit, sir.

Llan. I know it. I've heard her talk.

[*Rising and pacing the hall.*

Spirit indeed! Her very words are cuffs;

And yet I like them. They've a health that suits me;

Because well-born and rich, forsooth, my life
 Has been all tame and breezeless. Gliding servants
 Have noiseless done my bidding ; tradespeople—
 Forgetting man's a perpendicular—
 Have crooked when I approached ; often, even woman,
 Whose outside should be mirror to her heart,
 Has feigned the glance, the motion, and the blush
 Heaven meant for instincts. O, all these have closed me
 In a dead, sultry noon ! But brave Anne Blake
 Blows like a morning gust from our cragged hills.
 I breast it, and am man !

Lloyd.

Hark ! that's her pony.

[ANNE heard without.

Anne. I say you must, for the beast's sake, not mine.
 She's hot. Walk her round gently. Sirrah, do it !

*Enter ANNE in a plain riding-dress. She rushes up to
 LLOYD, and flings her arms round her neck.*

Is it not shame now, Lloyd, that for my sake
 Dumb things should suffer ? Though poor Jenny smokes,
 The groom won't walk her round the yard. Of course
 not :

She's mine ! [*With great bitterness.*] No matter ! Guess
 what I have here !

Lloyd. What !

Anne. [*Gaily.*] Five bright sovereigns ! the price
 My sketches brought in Bangor. Now they're yours ;

[*Gives a purse.*

On trust, as lawyers say ! you'll give them, Lloyd,
 To poor sick Jervis, whom my uncle, else,
 Will thrust out of his humble shed for rent.
 And say that 'tis your gift, Lloyd—no, your loan ;
 For, as you will not ask it back, a loan
 Has a gift's worth, and nothing of its pain.

Lloyd. Kind heart !

Anne. Be prompt—save him from further shame.
 It makes my blood turn fire to hear a man
 Rated as if his sickness were a crime !

Lloyd. But, darling——

Anne. Wait ! there's something more to guess—
I'd half a guinea left ; what did I buy ?

Lloyd. A book ?

Anne. No.

Lloyd. Crochet needles ? [*ANNE shakes her head.*]
Pencils ? Paper ?

Anne. You'll never guess. A doll—[*Producing it from a parcel which she carries.*—a doll in white,
With eyes that move like life ; but, unlike life,
Ne'er fill with tears : a doll with forehead smooth,
That never aches ; with feathers and a sash
To set her beauty off ; but never proud !
Now, say for whom is this perfection meant ?
For my pet, Minnie, Lloyd—your granddaughter.
Ah ! won't my little lady dance for joy ?
How oft I've wished I'd been a doll myself !
I then had had soft hands to stroke my hair ;
Kind words and kisses—till the paint wore off !

[*Gives doll to LLOYD.*

Lloyd. [*Soothingly.*] Hush ! here's a gentleman to hear.

Anne. What then ?

Is my tongue to be jailed because he has ears ?

Llan. Rather because he hears, he'd have it free
And speak unchecked.

Anne. Nay, your tongue forces, now,
Debts on me which my body pays. See, sir,
Curtseys for compliments ! [*She curtseys.*] Good day.

[*Going.*

Llan. But——

Lloyd. [*Who goes after her, apart.*] Stay !
He speaks you softly.

Anne. Softly ! So your lady
Speaks to Sir Joshua, yet I've seen him writhe.
Our courteous guests speak softly when they stoop
To notice the dependant. Who has ever
Spoken softly to me but to mock ? Save you—
You, Lloyd, and him !

Llan. She doesn't deign a look.

Anne. Well, he's not come? [*Still apart to LLOYD.*]

Lloyd. [*Archly.*] Who, sweetheart? Edward Thorold!
No, not yet come.

Llan. [*Aside.*] This is civil, on my life.

[*He turns on his heel, and again walks up and down.*]

Anne. Absent again for weeks,
And still he hides the cause! Nay, I'll not murmur.
I've no more claim to his dear love than has
The heather to the sun; yet how I dashed
Down crag, through wood, o'er plain, in hope to meet
him!

I'm in full time; dependants should be patient.

Lloyd. Nay, nay, pet!

[*ANNE goes out dejectedly, LLOYD accompanying and
caressing her.*]

Llan. So she's gone; the porter's chair
And I are left for company. [*Looking off.*] Here's one
To make a third! Why, if I've eyes, 'tis Thorold,
My hero friend from India, my rare compound
Of grave and gay, whom I perhaps more love
That I half fear him!

Enter THOROLD.

Thorold. Once more here. What! Llaniston!
Away from London, leaving all May Fair
Under eclipse?

Llan. What matter to a world
That lives by gaslight? What took you from London,
After your Indian triumphs, ere a maid
Had asked your autograph, or a fond mother
Secured you for a breakfast?

Thor. [*Smiling.*] Business, business.

Llan. Ay, true; I recollect.

Thor. But recollect

Most to forget—my name, my quality,
And chief, all points between us that affect
Sir Joshua.

Llan. I'm pledged.

Thor. You but see an artist
In quest of beauty.

Llan. Good ! I'm on a quest
After the grand. Folks call the rugged grand :
I've found the rugged.

Thor. Snowdon ?

Llan. No.

Thor. The peak
Of Cader Idris ?—the Pont Aberglaslyn ?

Llan. No ; it's a *she*—a girl ! D'ye know Anne Blake ?

Thor. [*Starting, but quickly composing himself.*] Anne
Blake ! Sir Joshua's niece !

Llan. The same ; don't laugh.
I'm that girl's slave ; I've seen her thrice.

Thor. [*Carelessly.*] Does she
Encourage you ?

Llan. Not she. She pelts my heart
With such force from her, it comes back again
In the rebound. I'll win her. Ah, you know not,
When women have well chased you all your life,
The zest of giving chase to one yourself !
I'll win her !

Thor. Will you *love* her ?

Llan. By my life !

Thor. I doubt that. Women who are but pursued
For the pleasure of the chase, are, like its victims,
Cast off when captured ; and the huntsman lover
Turns to new game.

A wife, my friend, should be a sweet bird won
To one's breast by cherishing ; not a wild quarry
To be hawked down.

Llan. [*Taking off his hat.*] My five-years' senior,
I bow to your reproof. In truth, dear Thorold,
I own its justice ; but don't balk this passion.

Thor. Miss Blake will. Were it otherwise, you'd
tire
With your honeymoon no older than a crescent.

Llan. A challenge ! I'll make ready for the lists ;
Soon shall my constancy unhorse your scorn,
While I cry, " Victory, Wales, and sweet St Anne !"

[*He goes out.*]

Thor. I could not tell him in this frolic mood,
Her heart had chosen me, her friend, preceptor,
Met, as she thinks, by chance. Ah, now, dear orphan !
Not for thy father's memory art thou loved,
But for thyself. She guesses not my station,
Nor that I knew her father ; but her soul,
Which chill neglect had frozen, at one touch
Of kindness from me, thawed ; and, though the current
Foams at opposing wrong, its waves are clear
And bright with glints of heaven ! And now to see her !

[*Turning, he looks accidentally through window at side, and pauses.*]

Alas ! my eyes that thirst so for that sight,
Awhile must wait. Sir Joshua returns,
And I'd not meet her in *his* sight, whose taunts
My prudence scarcely brooks. Brave Anne, bear on ;
The day is near I shall have right to shield thee !

[*Goes out.*]

Re-enter LLOYD and JILLOTT.

Lloyd. Not six yet by two hours, and here's Sir
Joshua
And my lady back.

*Enter SIR JOSHUA and LADY TOPPINGTON, followed by
SERVANT and LADY'S-MAID, with travelling gear.*

Ser. [*Timidly approaching SIR JOSHUA.*] Your coat,
Sir Joshua.

Sir J. Back, sir—know your place.

Ser. Yes, sir.

Sir J. Why does the fool stand gaping there ?
Why don't you take my coat ?

Fil. [To SERVANT, who hesitatingly touches the coat.]

Not so, you country loon ;—so, there's your pattern.

[Takes the coat from SIR JOSHUA, with a low bow, and flings it at SERVANT, who goes out.]

Sir F. Wait, sir. The cards.

Lady T. A chair, Lloyd. My poor nerves !

Fil. The cards, Sir Joshua.

Sir F. Are these all ?

Fil. All, sir.

Sir F. [Glancing over the cards.] Dobbs, Evans, Jones, the curate, Andrew Ray,

From Budge Row, City ! Stretch of insolence.

Because he knew my father ! Roberts, Owen—

There's not a name worth reading in the batch.

[Flings down the cards contemptuously on salver.]

No callers else ?

Fil. [Places salver on table.] Why, no, sir, none—
Except the Earl of Conniston—

Sir F. *Except*

The Earl of Conniston ! Dare you drag in
An earl's name, a real earl's name, at the tail
Of fifty nobodies, with an—*except ?*

Well, well, Lord Conniston called—

Fil. At the lodge gate, sir,

To ask the nearest cross-road to Llanberis.

Sir F. Leave the room, sirrah.

[JILLOTT bows, and goes out.]

Lloyd. He forgot to say
Squire Llaniston, who's home from London, called.

Sir F. [Troubled.] Squire Llaniston !

Lady T. [Throwing back her bonnet, with an air of
indifference.] Yes, she spoke plainly.

Lloyd. And he called three times.

Sir F. Three times within a week ! Who spoke with
him ?

Lloyd. Myself, sir, and Miss Blake.

Sir F. [Horried.] Miss Blake !

Lady T. [In a corroborating manner.] Miss Blake.

Sir J. Send her here—no words.

Lloyd. [*Muttering.*] More spite at my poor pet!

[*Goes out.*]

Sir J. Well, madam?

Lady T. Well, Sir Joshua?

Sir J. You're calm

Upon the brink of ruin.

Lady T. [*Still calmly.*] Ruin?

Sir J. Madam,

D'ye know or not, that my estate is mortgaged
To Llaniston for thousands; that last year
He pressed for its redemption; that he's called
Thrice in this week, doubtless to urge repayment,
And that to meet his claim I've not its tithe.

Lady T. You would keep hounds, give dinners, bet
with lords.

Sir J. Zounds!

Lady T. Mind my nerves.

Sir J. Nerves, ma'am! You've nerve enough

To warm your feet by a volcano! Well,
The money was my own. I'd none with you!

Lady T. No; but you'd family.

Sir J. What has it brought me?

I'm shunned by the whole county.

Lady T. Dear Sir Joshua,

Is that my fault? You married and gained entrance
To the first circles;—I accomplished that.
They cut you;—you accomplished that yourself.

Enter ANNE, with an air of fixed dejection.

Anne. You sent for me?

Sir J. Yes.

Anne. Well, sir?

Sir J. That's your welcome

After my absence, is it? [*A pause.*]

Lady T. [*Sarcastically.*] Can't you say
You're glad to see Sir Joshua?

Anne. Madam, spare me !
I'd not offend.

Sir F. You're too like your low father
To be grateful. Would my house were quit of you.

Anne. It will be soon.

Sir F. Yes, when yon strolling sketcher
Makes you his wife. Why leaves he still unfixed
Your marriage-day? He had *my* full consent
To take you hence. The dolt most like repents
His hasty bargain.

[ANNE *shudders, and utters an ejaculation of sudden pain.*]

Lady T. Nay, you use her hardly.

Sir F. Let her not chafe me, then. Speak, Anne !
you've seen
Young Llaniston thrice ?

Anne. 'Twas his fault.

Sir F. Well, his errand ?

Anne. A fool's—he wasted compliments on me.

Sir F. What was his business ?

Anne. I can't tell you that ;
I wouldn't hear it.

Sir F. Why, you never turned him
Out of the room.

Anne. No ; I got tired, and left it.

Sir F. [*Enraged.*] She turned her back on him ! He
left insulted,
Enraged beyond a doubt, and for revenge
He'll claim his mortgage promptly ! [*To ANNE.*] 'Tis
your work,
Yours who live by my sufferance, whose least crust
Is given !

Anne. Earned, sir—not given ; it's but the price you
pay
To taunt the helpless. That safe luxury,
Like others, must be paid for.

Sir F. Minx !

Anne. [*With a burst of uncontrollable passion.*] Be sure

You shall not lose ; there's one shall pay you back
 Each crumb you dropped me ; or, if not, I'd put
 My blood, brain, bones to hire—nay, coin you guineas
 Out of my life, rather than keep it bound
 To charity like yours. [*She rushes out.*]

Sir J. I'll tame you !

Lady T. Who—
 Who would have nerves ?

Enter JILLOTT.

Fil. Sir Joshua, a letter—
 I may say a despatch. Squire Llaniston's groom
 Brought it post-haste.

Sir J. Out, blockhead ! [*JILLOTT goes out.*] As I said !
 Here's the warrant of our doom. He asks his loans,
 And I'm a beggar—you too ! [*He opens the letter.*]

Have I eyes ?
 There's no hoax ; 'tis his hand. . . . Jove, how I hate
 her !

Yet she must save me.

Lady T. What's your news, Sir Joshua ?
 Do you go to jail ?

Sir J. [*Jocularly.*] No, ma'am ; 'tis Llaniston
 Should be confined for life.

Lady T. For what crime ?

Sir J. Madness !
 But it makes well for us. He'll not press now
 To have his loans repaid. The fool's in love—
 In love, in downright love !

Lady T. With whom ?

Sir J. Anne Blake !

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Library in Toppington House, overlooking the grounds. Open French window at back; groups of sculpture on either side; doors on each side; a glass door also partly open near back.*

SIR JOSHUA *discovered.*

Sir J. Yes, yes, I thank my stars; but that I grudge
The vixen so much luck, this chance falls bravely.
Llaniston in love with her! A pedigree
Old as the hills, and as much gold as, melted,
Would make a lake between them! Llaniston
Nephew-in-law to me! He can't press hardly
Upon his uncle. He'll extend his mortgage,
Perhaps forgive it. I can breathe—I'm saved!

Lady T. [*Who has entered unobserved.*] You're in high
spirits?

Sir J. Have you seen her yet?
Have you told her this good news? Does she keep her
senses
At such an offer? Has she yet dismissed
That rambling artist? Zounds! how dare he venture
To woo my niece?

Lady T. She has not dismissed him;
She knows not Llaniston's offer.

Sir J. Quick, then, tell her.

Lady T. Haste would mar all. Thorold has won her
love.

He showed her kindness. What accomplishments
She knows, he taught her. Though she may be brought
To banish him, gold will not tempt her.

Sir J. Then what will?

Lady T. Her proud and jealous heart; and, to say truth,
I've grounds, as yet known only to myself,
To question if he loves her

Sir J. Will you urge her
To his rejection?

Lady T. Yes; for love's a dream,
One touch dispels, while wealth and good position
Last for a life; also because you're ruined
Save we've a hold on Llaniston.

Sir J. [*Advancing to her.*] Thanks!

Lady T. [*Withdrawing.*] No transports;
They try my nerves. Both sides being duly weighed,
I'd rather live in ease and bear your presence,
Than starve—with you in jail.

Sir J. [*Angrily.*] How?

Lady T. Silence!
Or I'll not aid you. [*Motions him off.*]

Sir J. [*Deprecatingly.*] Nay, we part good friends.

Lady T. Best friends, sir, when we part. A pleasant
morning.

[*She curtseys.* SIR JOSHUA bows and goes out.
Gold is not everything. It's pleasant, too,
To respect the man one marries. Once, indeed,
I was love's dupe, like Anne, and half betrothed
To a poor advocate. She'll have a lot
Brighter than mine—rank, wealth, and—no Sir Joshua!
[*She goes out.*]

*Enter ANNE, attired in a fashionable morning-dress,
followed by LLOYD.*

Anne. What means this change? I know its outside
fair,
But yet 'tis false. I feel it! This new dress,
Worn at my uncle's cost, hangs on my limbs
Heavier than chains. I'll cast it off—

Lloyd. Child, child,
Be not so mad! Look in the glass, and see
How it becomes you, beauty!

Anne. [*Apart.*] Where is he
Should guide me here? Why this protracted absence—

The cause still hid in mystery? Thorold, Thorold!
 Have you too learned to stint the dues of love
 When a dependant claims them?

Re-enter LADY TOPPINGTON.

Lady T. Go, Lloyd. [LLOYD goes out; LADY TOPPINGTON sinks indolently into a chair, while ANNE paces the room excitedly.] Anne!

Anne. [Stopping short.] Madam, explain this riddle.
 Why am I

Invited to your presence? Whence these gifts
 Lavished unasked? [Shows her bracelets.

Lady T. If they displease you, choose
 Some other pattern. You've decidedly
 A graceful figure.

Anne. [Impatiently.] Madam!

Lady T. Stay—sit down—
 You know I'm nervous. That's a charming foot!

Anne. Nay, then I'll go. [She half rises, but is restrained by a gesture from LADY TOPPINGTON.]

Would you indeed be bounteous,
 Send back these bracelets; give the poor their price.
 O, if you knew what joy to aching hearts
 This gold would bring that's idly spent on me!
 Take them! Lloyd has a nephew, a brave lad,
 Who wants a boat.

Lady T. [Gently declining them.] So generous! I've oft
 thought

We were mistaken in you. Not an hour since
 I said, "She has a heart—a heart, Sir Joshua—
 Whose love we might have won."

Anne. [Softened.] Perhaps you might.

Lady T. Your uncle and myself, I own, disliked you.
 Yet there are times when every woman's breast
 Yearns to its neighbour. Yes, dear Anne, I saw
 Too well what you had suffered.

Anne. Suffered ! Why ?

Lady T. From Thorold's absence. Have I struck too roughly

A string that jars ? Don't speak——

Anne. For once—once only.

I love him, and could scarce debate his truth

With my own heart. How should I then with you ?

Lady T. His truth ! You run to extremes. He's pledged to wed you,

And you may trust his honour.

Anne. Do you mean

That only honour binds him ?

Lady T. There you pain me !

No doubt he means you fairly.

Anne. Fairly ! Ay,

He'll keep his bond, you think, but curse the whim

That signed it ; has no grain of love to pay

That sum he vowed ; but O, he's honourable,

And ready with the forfeit ! I could blush

At my own jest, such love-suits—nay, such law-suits !—

The bachelor a bankrupt, and the maid

His creditor ; conscience the officer she fees

To arrest her victim, and her heart his jail !

[*With constrained laughter.*]

Lady T. I'd give the world to have your flow of spirits.

Well, well, we'll hope the best ; but love, you know,

Is often blind. I've here a curious proof

Of that old proverb. 'Tis the merest fragment

Of a worn letter [*producing it*] ; but it much concerns

A friend of mine. Give me your thoughts upon it—

Nay, read it ! Mark, 'tis in a woman's hand ;

And read aloud, that we may after join

Our minds in comment. Come ! 'tis a small favour.

[*ANNE takes the letter reluctantly, and reads it carelessly at first while standing.*]

Anne. "I have been in perfect solitude ever since you left. The rest are absent, and friends rarely find out this lonely house."

[*She pauses.*]

Lady T. Go on !

Anne. [*Resuming.*] “ Yet I have not been unhappy, nor needed society. Sweet remembrances and sweeter hopes—these have been my companions by day and night.”

[*She becomes gradually interested, again pauses, and sits.*

Lady T. Further still.

Anne. [*Resuming.*] “ Ah, when I recall your love—when do I not ?—I feel as if earth could give me no more ; as if hope itself could ask no more ; as if my world were filled and brightened by that love alone light of my life, my heart’s sole joy !”

[*She lays down the letter.*

I’ll read no more ; these words are sacred !

O, how she must have loved !

Lady T.

Loved whom ?

Anne.

You best

Know that.

Lady T. I do, Anne. How I grieve to say it—
Those lines were writ to Thorold !

Anne.

No !

Lady T.

’Tis true.

I found them in the library that day

He bade you his farewell there.

Anne.

But not dropped

By him ?

Lady T. He sought them eagerly ; questioned my servants

If they had found such letter—a torn fragment

In a blank envelope. [*Shows envelope.*] I then was absent

For some few hours ; ere my return he left.

Anne. And how came you to read a page not yours ?

Lady T. I thought it mine, a mere shred undirected,
So read, and then read on. I’d fears for you.

Anne. Most needless ones. What man can help the love
Another utters ? You’ve no proof that he—
That he returned it !

Lady T. Do you think she had called him
Her heart's sole joy, had he repelled her love ?

Anne. Cease ! Are you bent to torture me ?

Lady T. To save you.

Anne. Save ? Yet rob me
Of trust in him ! He false !

Lady T. Even if he were,
There are other men alive ; he is but one.

Anne. [*Springing up impetuously.*] Ay ; but one sun
suffices for a world :

If quenched, 'tis night, though heaven be packed with
stars !

O Thorold ! I have known so little love,
Forgive me if I wronged thee by one doubt !

Lady T. Confiding girl ! Give me the letter.

Anne. [*Quickly approaching the table and taking the
letter, which she replaces in blank envelope.*] No !

If it be his, 'tis safer in my care.

Lady T. Give me your promise, then, you'll not betray
That you have learned its purport ; at least, not
Till I consent.

Anne. [*Mechanically.*] I promise ; as you will.]

Enter JILLOTT.

Jil. The Honourable Mr Llaniston, of Llaniston,
Through me, requests an audience of my lady.

[*He goes out.*]

Lady T. [*Aside.*] I've paved his way ; himself must do
the rest.

[*After looking earnestly at ANNE, who stands
absorbed, she goes out.*]

Anne. I would as soon believe heaven's arch would fall,
As think him false. My heart was void—he filled it ;
Bleeding—he bound it ; fierce with wrong—he calmed it.
My comfort, guide, sole joy ! Sole joy ! Ah ! now
Those words flash back on me ; another used them !
Who calls him light of life, sole joy, but me ?
Did he permit it ? Would she else have dared ?—

Such words of open passion ! these delays
 Repeated of our union ! Do I doubt ?
 I must not—dare not ! My faith lost, I lose
 All hold on good. My soul that's built on him,
 Would like a tower, when the earth reels, fall shattered ;
 Fatal to all I light on ! O, these words
 Were never meant for him—and yet ! Doubt ebbs,
 Then flows, and gains upon me like a sea !

Thor. [*Without.*] Anne ! Anne !

Enter THOROLD.

At last !

Anne. [*Rushing towards him.*] Thorold ! [*Suddenly checking herself.*] So, you're returned.

Thor. What ! for no warmer welcome ?

Anne.

Why, you talk

As you'd been years away, not three short weeks.

Thor. Did they seem short ?

Anne.

To you.

Thor.

Why, Anne ?

Anne.

Because

You're often absent. What one often does,
 'Tis plain one likes ; and what one likes seem short.

Thor. Excellent logic ! Then, because you've borne
 My absence often, it seemed short to you ?

Anne. O, I'd your letters. Talking now of letters,
 You're careless of them. One you dropped was found
 here. [*Gives him the fragment in blank envelope.*]

Thor. [*Opening letter, aside.*] Her mother's to her
 father in their wooing.

Anne. Where are your thanks ? Perhaps you set no
 value

Upon the letter ?

Thor.

Set no value !

Anne. [*With forced gaiety.*] Ah !

You do then prize it ?

Thor.

Anne, some other theme !

Levity suits not this.

Anne. Why not ?

Thor. 'Tis sacred.

Anne. [*Aside.*] Sacred !

Thor. Another cloud.

Anne. Well, can you wonder ?

[*Struggling with her emotion.*] I'm curious, and a woman. Come now, tell me

Where you have been—what done. Unlock for me
Your Bluebeard chamber, sir. [*With sudden earnest-*
ness.] I do not jest ;

Dear Thorold, I implore—explain your absence !

Thor. My absence ? Thrice you've asked me that before.

Thrice I replied, I cannot.

Anne. Will not.

Thor. Anne !

Where is your faith ? I grant 'twixt maid and suitor
Should be no secrets save what reason claims
And conscience warrants. If by these compelled
To veil his thoughts—

Anne. Ay—then ?

Thor. Then 'tis her part

To credit the compulsion. She who loves
Best shows her love by trusting. Will you trust me ?

[*After a short pause she gives him her hand.*

I knew you'd give your hand.

Anne. [*Aside.*] He knew I'd give it !

He moulds me just like wax : all calm, no passion !

If he loved me, he'd be angry. [*Withdraws her hand.*

Thor. What ! Not pardoned ?

Anne. Pardoned—by me, an outcast, a stray waif
On fortune's tide, without an owner's name,
Or stamped with one I scorn !

Thor. Whose ?

Anne. Whose but his

Who lured my mother from her home, made want,
That cankered life, her lot—dependence mine ;
Who forced on me the life he left to insult ?
My father's—

Thor. [*With sudden energy.*] Hold ! A stigma, though deserved,
 When a child brands it, makes the hearer weigh
 The censure with the sin ; but, if unjust—
 No, no ; you could not mean it ! What has warped
 Your heart so from its course ?

Anne. The words of all men
 Who knew my father. He lacked strength to scale
 My mother's height—so drew her to abasement.

Thor. Did she so deem ? True, he was of a band
 Whom fortune frowns on, whom authority
 Oft uses and forgets ; but still, their souls
 Are the world's life-blood !

Anne. Who ?

Thor. *The men who think !*
 Whose weapon is the pen, whose realm the mind.
 I mean not laurelled bards, but daily workers,
 Who, like the electric force, unseen pervade
 The sphere they quicken ; nameless till they die,
 And leaving no memorial but a world
 Made better by their lives !

Anne. You knew my father ?

Thor. We met abroad ; 'twas in his later years ;
 I heard his story there. Your mother held
 His love above the world, and, spite of menace,
 Gave him her hand and heart. His thrifty earnings
 Sufficed till fever seized him. Then on both
 Fell that sharp want : his wife mourned for his sake,
 With which his child upbraids him !

Anne. [*Aside.*] Plain he hates me !
 Never would love on one brief, bitter mood
 Pronounce so sternly ! I've at least this grace,
 That, heartless as I am, I free your sight
 Of what must needs offend it ! [*Goes out impetuously.*]

Thor. Stay, Anne. Gone !
 My love for her lost father made me harsh.
 I should have thought how much that secrecy
 His dying breath enforced, must fret a heart

Fervent and galled by wrong. I had fixed to-day
 To end her trial, and might do so yet,
 Would but this lagging mail from India bring
 The news I hope for. [*Turning, he sees CLARA THUR-*
LEIGH peering in at open glass door.] Who's here?
 Can it be?

Enter CLARA.

Clara. [*With a laugh.*] It can.

Thor. Clara, my madcap cousin! [*They shake hands.*]

Clara. Yes, I found

This glass door open, reconnoitred you,
 And so skipped in, all unobserved. You see
 Even marriage has not cured my pranks.

Thor. [*Smiling.*] What could?

Clara. A steady course of whipping when a child
 Might have done something, but 'tis too late now.

Thor. Why came you here?

Clara. To scold you. Was I not
 Your favourite cousin?

Thor. [*Sportively.*] You!

Clara. You know I was.

You fell in love with me when you were ten.

Deny it not! I recollect the day

I had a skipping-rope and wore red shoes.

Confess those shoes made havoc in your heart!

Where was your conscience then to keep from me

This dear delicious secret?

Thor. Secret!

Clara. Ay.

But you revealed it to my aunt, your mother.

I wormed it from her. Then a longing seized me

To know your charming Anne. Some friends of Thur-
 leigh's

Live in this neighbourhood; they asked us down.

Though three months married, Thurleigh spoils me still.

I said, "Accept"—we came.

Thor. On mischief bent.

Clara. Don't fear ; I quite kept your incognito.
I first called at your lodgings, and inquired
For the artist, Mr Thorold. You were here :
Now tell me what she's like. When shall I see her ?

Thor. You don't deserve it ; but to-morrow noon.

Clara. To-morrow noon !

Thor. No sooner ; I've good reasons.

Clara. I shall die of curiosity ere then.

Now, what have you deserved, ungracious tyrant ?
Not a considerate, benevolent friend,
Like her who brings you this. [*Gives him a miniature.*]

Thor. The miniature !

Who gave it you ?

Clara. The jeweller in London :
You had left it for repair, he said, and wished
Its quick return. Do tell me—is it Anne ?

Thor. [*Looking earnestly on miniature.*] Not Anne—
Anne's mother ! [*LADY TOPPINGTON now appears
outside, at window at back, and stops short.*] They're
unlike in feature ;

And yet at times I've caught that very look
On her child's face.

[*CLARA takes and examines the miniature.*]

*LADY TOPPINGTON now enters, and slowly advances
unperceived : ANNE also enters by window unper-
ceived by THOROLD and CLARA ; LADY TOPPINGTON
seizes her hand, and points to THOROLD and CLARA ;
ANNE attempts to withdraw—LADY TOPPINGTON
forcibly detains her.*

Clara. Yes, I half guessed this would ensure my wel-
come.

Thor. A double welcome, for its sake and yours :
You could have given me no more sweet surprise.

[*CLARA returns the miniature, on which he gazes
intently.*]

O, I could bend for hours above this face,
Lit with devotion, meek, yet brave in trial !

Why, why should bitter fate be love's dire foe,
And sever hearts that with one instinct thrill—
Beat with one pulse ?

Clara. [*Earnestly.*] Perhaps, that we might know
Love's constancy. How could we prove its strength
But for its trials ?

Thor. [*Warmly, and taking her hand.*] Said like you !
There shone

The generous soul that, seen through all disguise,
First made me love you.

Clara. [*Affecting dejection.*] Love me ! so you say.

Thor. And so you know. Now leave me.

Clara. [*Warmly.*] Dear, dear Thorold !

But we shall meet to-morrow ?

Thor. - Yes, at noon.

Be more discreet though ; meet me at my lodgings.
This for the portrait.

[*Kisses her, then walks with her to door, by which*

CLARA goes out.

Anne. [*To LADY TOPPINGTON.*] Let's go !

Lady T. Soon. [*They retire a few steps.*

Thor. [*Returning, his eyes bent on the miniature.*] True
heart !

How blessed had been my lot, had Heaven so willed,
To take thee to my home, to say, "All joy
Sits circled round my hearth, for thou art here !"
To greet thee with the tenderest tones of love
And reverent duty ; with a life's devotion
Console thee for the past. It may not be.
How like that look to hers !

[*He kisses miniature ; at an imperative gesture from*
ANNE, LADY TOPPINGTON bears her aside, near
window and retires behind a group of sculpture,
which conceals them ; THOROLD, after a pause.

Shall I seek Anne,

And tell her all ? Perhaps 'twere best. Anne, Anne !

[*Goes out. Immediately afterwards, LADY TOPPING-*
TON comes forward, supporting ANNE.

Lady T. [*Looking at ANNE, who seems in stupor.*] She would have fled, but that by force I held her.
 Poor girl! Speak, love!—you heard?—you heard, I say?

[*With great gentleness.*]

Anne. [*Faintly, rousing herself.*] Thank you—I heard.

Lady T. You did not see her face?

Anne. No.

Lady T. Nor I, plainly. But you saw him take Her pledge of love—her portrait?

Anne. Hers!

Lady T. Whose else?

Even grant it were another's, what avails it,
 Being plain he loves that other? But you saw
 His kiss that paid that gift, and heard him say
 He loved her, and lament the bitter fate
 That severed them.

Anne. [*Regarding her keenly.*] Go! you're his enemy!
 This is—

[*Falters.*]

Lady T. [*Still holding her.*] My work? Why, were I twenty times

His enemy, could I have done this? Had I witchcraft
 To make them meet by stealth, change gifts, embrace,
 And plan a next-day's meeting? When she went,
 Was it I who made him press his burning kiss
 Upon her painted semblance, while he cried,
 What bliss it were to have led her to his home—
 That home where she had made his bliss complete?

Anne. Release me!

Lady T. Now all's clear; no need to ask
 Who wrote to him those passionate lines of love
 You read to-day. Anne, he may marry you,
 His word being pledged; but he loves only her.
 Forgive the cruel truth.

Anne. Your arm is iron,
 It crushes me; let go! I want breath—breath!

[*She breaks from LADY TOPPINGTON, and falls prostrate.*]

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A richly-furnished drawing-room in Toppington House.*

ANNE *discovered seated on a low stool, her arm supporting her head.*

Anne. He loves another—loves another ! Why,
I dwell upon the sounds as if repetition
Could exorcise their sense. My heart rebels
'Gainst eyes and ears. Have I not seen his kiss
Pressed on her cheek—ay, on her painted cheek,
With warmer glow than met my living lips ?
Is not my brain seared with his words, that told
How blessed his home had been if shared with her ?
Her letters too ! He was her light of life !
'Tis true, dupe, true ! As drowning men recal
Old dreams of shipwreck, and in horror's face
Gasp—this is sleep—I cling to hope till billows
Of proof o'erwhelm me ! Yes, he loves another !
And for his vows to me, I stand a debtor
To pity, jealous pique, a hasty mood—
Which he repents of. Shall that promise bind him
Which does not bind his heart ? I flung mine wide
To hail him, like a loyal city's gate
That hails its king ! If there he finds no home,
He shall not find a prison. He's free as air !
Free as the light he brought into my gloom,
And now takes back and leaves me——

[She gives way, then, after a pause, starts to her feet.

O shame, shame !

Where is my pride ?

Enter LADY TOPPINGTON and LLANISTON.

Lady T. My will's imperious ;
You'll stay and be our guest. *[Linking her arm in ANNE'S.]* Join with me, love.
He can't refuse two ladies.

Llan. [*Who bows, aside.*] Who's the second?
Sure not Miss Blake. She met me at the door,
And deigned me as much notice as the threshold.

Lady T. Silence consents. You'll stay; and to ensure
Some life in these dull quarters, and reward
Your prompt obedience, hear what I propose—
We'll act a play—

Llan. Charming!

Lady T. If we can call
A company together. Once we played
"The Story of a Duchess." Here's the book.
I have at hand the dresses, parts, costumes.
Amuse each other till I bring them. [*Apart to ANNE,*
who turns away, and fixes her eyes intently on a
marble group.] Anne!

Be kind to him. He loves you, and has made you
An honourable tender of his hand. [*She goes out.*]

Llan. [*Aside.*] She turns from me. Our hostess, gentle
lady,
Bade me amuse you.

Anne. She imposed on you
A hard employment.

Llan. True. I'd choose another.

Anne. Do so.

Llan. I'd woo you.

Anne. Then, sir, you'd succeed
In your first task—my amusement. [*She retires.*]

Llan. Well, jest on;
Frown if you will, but hear me; let me plead.

[*Follows her.*]

Enter THOROLD, the miniature in his hand.

Thor. I've sought her everywhere. [*Aside, looking off.*]

What! her aunt here!

And Llaniston! I must choose a fitter time
For this dear gift—the all that earth retains
Of her loved mother.

Lady T. [*Re-entering, coming to front with robes, a coronet, and MSS., she observes THOROLD, lays them down, then speaks aside.*] Thorold here! There's danger

That must be met; for pity, though not love,
May bind him still to wed her. Ah! what now
Rivets his eye? That portrait! Anne!

Llan.

Unkind

And sudden interruption!

[*THOROLD advances to LLANISTON.*]

Lady T. What! You know him?

Llan. [*Hesitatingly.*] Know him?—O yes. He calls himself an artist.

Lady T. Nay, is one. [*To THOROLD.*] That's a portrait. May I look?

Your pencil's latest, doubtless?

Thor. [*Reluctantly.*] Madam!

Lady T.

Why,

You seem reluctant—quite perplexed. Real talent
Is modest! I insist. [*She takes the portrait, and turning to ANNE, apart, opens the case.*] I've somewhere seen
A face which this recalls! Where, where? 'tis fancy.

Look, a fair face, love! [*Gives her the portrait, then aside.*] Marked you his confusion?

[*ANNE with an effort suppresses her emotion; they affect to examine portrait.*]

Llan. [*Apart to THOROLD.*] Deuce take me if I understand your mystery!

Thor. At least respect it. Not a word, be sure,
Of aught between us that concerns Sir Joshua!

Llan. O, he's your object; mine's his niece. Remember

You challenged me to win her!

Thor.

Have you won her?

Llan. Not yet; she's flint; but I'll strike fire from her.

Thor. The spark will scorch you; she'll remain a stone.

Lady T. [*Returning portrait to THOROLD.*] A face that's full of interest: we both thought so.

[*Apart to ANNE.*] Look how he turns and lays it next his heart !

Courage ! he'll see you tremble.

Anne. I don't tremble.

[*Aloud.*] Come, come, the talk dies out ! One's thoughts grow numb.

Who'll stir the mirth into a blaze ? Will you ?

Llan. Gladly ! [*Bringing THOROLD to LADY TOPPINGTON.*] Lady Commander, a recruit

For your company, not of dragoons, but players.

Lady T. Ay, true, our dear theatricals ! All's ready.

[*Showing separate MSS.*

Here's each one's separate part. Group round and listen,

While I explain. [*Aside.*] I'll turn this to account.

[*All walk to places.*

Our heroine's a young girl whose mind and beauty

Raise her from life's low level to a dukedom.

The duke who weds her is, of course, the hero.

Llan. I'll be the duke !

Anne. [*Forcing gaiety.*] Beware, sir, your stage-lovers Have oft sad endings.

Llan. Yes ; sometimes they die.

It's worth the risk of dying for to woo you.

Anne. [*With laughter.*] Ah ! that's because you're vain, and don't believe

I'd suffer you to die.

Lady T. A sharp retort !

Llan. [*Apart to THOROLD.*] Did you mark that ?

What think you of her now ?

Thor. Think ! that she's in good spirits.

Llan. Nay, she melts.

Look on, and see me win her.

Lady T. [*Resuming.*] You're the duke, then, And Anne your duchess.

[*Gives each of them a manuscript character.*

Llan. I'll play my part to the life. Ah ! would 'twere for life !

Anne. Life's a long time. Let's see you play the lover
For half an hour first. [*Aside, glancing at THOROLD.*

He's calm. My caprices

Disturb him little.

Llan. Come, begin! But Thorold—

Lady T. O, I and Mr Thorold take small share.

The humble lover, he who, as he ought,
Resigns the maid, withdraws his flickering light
When greatness breaks upon her path like day.

I'm but his sister, who advises him

To that just course.

Llan. Begin, then. First let's try

A scattered speech or two to test our powers.

Say this, where the duke enters. [*He leads ANNE forward.*] That's the page.

Permit me.

Lady T. [*To THOROLD.*] With what spirit they adopt

This project. [*THOROLD takes the book.*

Llan. Ready! [*Reads from the MS., using his glass, and reciting in the style of an amateur.*]—*Scene, a rustic cottage.*

Enter the duke.—*Alone, my Marguerite?*

You turned surprised there.

Anne. Right! [*Reads from MS.*] *My lord again
Beneath this humble roof! Direct your feet
To loftier homes, for your high state more meet.*

Llan. 'Tis inner worth gives rank to outward place;
*The cot's a court if filled with human grace.
The rudest niche is hallowed, if it hold
A saint within; and men who delve for gold
In the mean earth, rise princes. Let me be
More rich than they—to stoop and rise—with thee!*

Anne. *Thrice have you urged on me this suit before,
And thrice have I refused.*

Llan. *I'll urge the more!
Be rock, and my strong sea of love divide,
It ebbs but to return a mightier tide;
Repelled again, more high the billows roll,*

*And sweep at last, resistless, to their goal!
Maiden, I claim this hand!*

[*He kneels and kisses her hand.* LADY TOPPINGTON
applauds.

Thor. [*Interposing between LLANISTON and ANNE.*]

Stay, Llaniston; that's not the stage direction.
He doesn't kneel and kiss her in the book.

[*Shows the page.*

Llan. I did it upon instinct.

Anne. [*To LADY TOPPINGTON.*] Is he jealous?

Lady T. Jealous, with that cold eye! No; but he's
proud,

Nor brooks another's homage to his bride.

I'll sound him, though. Converse with Llaniston.

[*ANNE and LLANISTON retire.*

[*To THOROLD, who advances.*] I see this pains you.

Thor. What?

Lady T. Nay, if your eyes

Are closed, my lips are.

[*Looking towards ANNE and LLANISTON.*

Thor. Yes, you're right; I'm pained

For Llaniston, who may build delusive hopes

On her gay humour. I've no fears for her.

Lady T. You're so confiding. Birth and wealth like
Llaniston's

Are strong temptations.

Thor. Not to Anne.

Anne. [*Who laughingly releases her hand from LLAN-
ISTON, and comes with him to front.*] Nay, nay;
To your task!

Llan. A cruel task to feign—
Only to feign I love you. You had driven
The play duke to despair.

Anne. [*Recklessly.*] He was repulsed
Three times, you know. 'Tis you would have lost
patience! [*Crosses the stage excitedly.*

Lady T. That's a fair challenge.

Llan. So I count it.

Thor. [*Apart to ANNE.*] Anne,
A word. This frolic mood gives Llaniston warrant
For hopes you little dream of.

Anne. Are you sure
That I don't guess them?

Thor. I should grieve you did.
I would not think you jest with him.

Anne. Jest with him!
I jested once; but 'twas before I knew
His high condition. He's the nephew, sir,
And next heir of an earl. The man can give
His wife a coronet! Jest with him!—jest!
[*Aside.*] He thought me heartless; now he'll find me so.
Come, friends, the play!

Thor. [*Apart.*] Have I heard right? What, Anne
Barter her childlike truth and plighted faith
For rank—for gold! 'Twas wanton humour; yet
This morning's freezing welcome, her aunt's warning—
I'll end this doubt.

Anne. Proceed!

Llan. 'Tis Thorold's turn
To play the lover.

Thor. Ay, the humbler one
Who yields her to the duke. Not till he knows
Her heart is with the duke though. Here's a passage
Strikes me. I know the words.—

[*He lays down the book, and advances to ANNE, who
stands apart.*

*Go: I release you! She can nought impart,
Who, giving all beside, withholds her heart.
Did those eyes smile, I should recal they smiled
On loftier love, and deem my own beguiled.
Discord to me the tones, though soft and clear,
That make like music in a rival's ear.
I gave thee all my heart; as on a throne
Thou there hadst reigned, if reigning there alone!
But she whom from my breast capricious will
Or pride can tempt, that throne shall never fill!*

Llan. Excellent! you quite make the part your own.

[*He is about to come forward; LADY TOPPINGTON restrains him, exhibiting robes and coronet.*]

Thor. [*Apart to ANNE.*] I felt as 'twere my own. Anne I had acted

Even as that lover.

Anne. A threat!

Thor. No; a warning.

If that ambition or caprice have swayed
Your heart to Llaniston, your fate were wretched
To call me husband; but if from vanity,
With no intent to wed him, you would rouse
A true heart's hope and love, his fate were sadder
Who called you—wife.

Anne. [*Aside.*] O prompt excuse to snap
The chain that galls him.

Thor. Hear me—

Anne. No; I've chosen.

Here, sir, our pathways part; you're free for ever!

[*Turning to LADY TOPPINGTON.*] What have you
there?

Lady T. The duchess' robe and crown.

Thor. [*Apart.*] This change should be the work of years
not moments.

She false! she heartless!

Enter SIR JOSHUA with a sealed letter.

Sir J. It's absurd;
It's too absurd.

Lady T. What now?

Sir J. A messenger,
Who swears that Colonel Thorold's in the house,
And claims admittance.

Lady T. Well!

Sir J. He brought this letter,
Just reached from India.

Thor. India! Give it me.

Sir J. 'Tis not for you or yours. Though you're called Thorold,

I judge you're no relation to the colonel.

Thor. No, sir, I *am* the colonel. Llaniston?

Llan. 'Tis true, indeed; you speak with Colonel Thorold,

The gallant hero of our last campaign.

Thor. Give me your pardon. [*Takes and opens letter.*]

Sir J. [*Staggered.*] Is it possible?

Llan. Ay, sir—a man of wealth and family That few can boast.

Sir J. A downright gentleman!

I thought he lived by his talents.

Thor. [*Reading apart.*] The Indian mines— 'Tis news indeed. Friend, give me joy! Those mines In India, where I'd risks—

Llan. Which you thought desperate—

Thor. Prosper past hope. They've hit on a new vein!

Llan. Brave tidings! [*Shakes THOROLD'S hand.*]

Thor. [*Resuming the letter.*] Ah! what's here? "Wait your return"—

My return! Then I'll be prompt. I'll save her, snatch her

From this corrupting air. Sir Joshua,

One title you've allowed. I claim another—

Your niece's guardian by her father's will.

I'll bring full proofs, with reasons that till now

Obliged concealment. Hold the lady henceforth

At my disposal.

[*Going.*]

Sir J. What? her guardian! Pooh!

Her guardian! stay, stay! [*Follows THOROLD out.*]

Lady T. [*To LLANISTON.*] Learn if this be true;

She's much moved. Go! [*LLANISTON goes out.*]

Anne. [*Musing.*] So his fate were sad

Who called me wife! *He* said it! Thorold!

Lady T. [*Playfully laying her hand on ANNE'S shoulder.*] Dazed!

Well, so you should be. A rich, high-born guardian

Dropped from the clouds! I suppose, now, you'll wed him?

Anne. For his wealth, when I dismissed him poor?

Lady T. *Dismissed him!*

Well, then, 'twould look, I grant, should you relent,
As if his fortunes bribed you.

Anne. I'd let despair

Gnaw through my heart first.

Lady T. Right! that's spirit, girl!

I love those flashing eyes. Stand so, and humour
A fancy that I love. They're but the robes
Of the play duchess—[*Disposing them round her.*]—Wait
the coronet! [*Places it on the table at ANNE'S right.*

A perfect picture! You were born to rule,
To shine amidst the brilliant! Ah, there's one—
Heir to an earldom he—who sues to give
No mock robes to my Anne, who'd bind her brows
With their fit emblem, rank—who'd not repent
His vow to a dependant!

Anne. Ah!

Lady T. Whose pride

Would be to watch her triumphs.

Anne. [*Suddenly.*] 'Midst those triumphs

Should I again meet—

Lady T. Thorold? Yes!

Anne. [*As to herself.*] He'd feel

I lost him, and could live—no sickly flower
Nipped by his frost; but the plumed tree that shoots
From the scarred rock, and thrives on desolation!

[*She pauses with sudden calmness, then drops the
robe at her feet.*

Off, off, mock shows! I grasp realities.
Heart that has ne'er been loved, whose love was scorned,
Freeze till that weakness perish—freeze, but shine!
Who thinks, when glaciers flash, 'tis only ice
That glitters in the beam! [*She stands lost in thought.*

Lady T. [*Who has retired a few steps, intently watch-
ing her, now approaches.*] Anne!

Anne. Ah!—Your hand!
We should be friends. I'll marry Llaniston!

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room, as in Act III.*

Enter THOROLD and LLANISTON.

Thor. Nay, friend! a truce to jesting. You, indeed, Propose to marry her.

Llan. [*Sitting.*] Asked like a guardian!
Do you indeed propose? To think now, Thorold,
You should turn out her guardian. Yes, we marry,
That is, with your consent, if she decides so.

Thor. Then she yet doubts?

Llan. She bade me wait her answer
Soon in the library. [*Looking at his watch.*] Cupid and
Hymen,

'Tis near the hour! [*Rising.*]

Thor. [*With indignant surprise.*] You trifle!

Llan. Don't object

To my poor Cupid. He's a comelier god
Than Miss Blake swears by—Plutus!

Thor. How?

Llan. You know

Your ward so little? She has a sparkling eye,
But shrewder than 'tis bright. Sir, by her sex
Nature has spoiled a lawyer. There be women
Who shine in drawing rooms; some captivate
On horseback; some are irresistible
In kitchens; but her sphere's a pleader's chambers!
Some charmers lure by dress; some melt by music;
Some, with the imperious lightnings of their eyes,
Effect a breach in hearts; some awe by learning;
She's none of these; *her forte's* arithmetic.
You should have heard my wooing
An hour back. "Anne, behold me at your feet,"

I cried.—“You’ll give me hope?” What was her answer?

Straight to the point. She asked my yearly income—
Net—after all deductions ; if indeed

I were a peer’s next heir ; would live in London,
Take her to court, mix with the world, and see
She matched its proudest—for all which *perhaps*
She’d give me a wife’s duty. As for love,
I must omit that trifle.

Thor. Well !

Llan. I promised.

Her frankness suits me. I prefer a hand
Labelled *for sale*, to one that coyly slides
Into your palm, and tingles for your purse.

Thor. [*Energetically.*] It shall not be !

Llan. It *shall*, if she consent.

My truth’s engaged to it. Are you a rival,
That you would thwart me ?

Thor. No ; for me love’s spark
Glow’s not within her breast ; but, sir, I knew
And loved her father. When in India,
One high in rule aspersed my soldier name,
His honest, fearless pen disproved the lie,
And won me back that amulet true souls
Must wear or perish—honour ! We grew friends,
Heart friends, until he died—most poor—most noble !
I’d save his child from sin.

Llan. Sin !

Thor. That black sin
Which vows what the heart shrinks from. You have
said
She loves you not.

Llan. You’re warm, I find, sir. Time
Cuts short this conference. [*He bows coldly, and goes out.*]

Thor. Nay, I follow, then.
Anne, Anne, whom I so loved—my once betrothed !
I bear thy loss ; but could I bear thy shame ?

[*He follows LLANISTON out.*]

Enter SIR JOSHUA, LADY TOPPINGTON, *and* ANNE.

Sir J. But hear me, my dear niece !

Anne. Leave me, Sir Joshua !

You may trust me, madam.

Lady T. You'll give full consent

To Llaniston's suit ?

Anne. I've said it.

Sir J. *Quick*, consent, dear Anne,

Say, *quick* ! My maxim is, "Secure the bird

While the lime's fresh." 'Twas so I won your aunt.

Ha, ha ! You'll heed my maxim ?

Anne. If you'll leave me

To ponder it.

Sir J. And, further, niece, don't tell him

You take him for his money. Men don't like it.

Truth isn't told at all times, and in courtship

One never tells it.

Anne. Yet that very truth

I'll tell unless you leave me.

Lady T. [*Apart to* SIR JOSHUA.] You'll spoil all.

Sir J. I'm not at ease. She'll change her mind, and
Llaniston

Call in his mortgage.—One more word, and then

I'll go indeed. You're sure you'll not relent,

And marry Thorold ? Thorold, who despised

The poor dependant !

Anne. Listen ! By each good

Men value,—by what gold or a lord's smile

Is to your heart, or pride to my own crushed heart,

Or prayers to dying lips,—I take my vow,

Poor and dependant, never to wed Thorold !

Lady T. There, there, be satisfied. That vow would
bind her

Though her life paid it. Come !

Sir J. Farewell, dear niece !

You'll be discreet, now ?

Lady T. [*Forcing him off.*] Come !

Sir F. A quick consent.
 You'll give a quick consent,—you'll heed my maxim,
 "While the lime's fresh,"—ha, ha!

[*Goes out in glee with* LADY TOPPINGTON.]

Anne. [*Looking after them.*] Were my mind less fixed,
 'Twould swerve revolted from the path *you* travel.
 No matter now. One impulse, like the glare
 Of a volcano inwards, lights my soul,
 And shows it its own nature—fire and stone.
 My tears, that burned like lava when they fell,
 Like that congeal to rock. One hope, one aim,
 One pulse of life,—that I, the poor, abased,
 Deserted outcast, by my will and brain
 Rise to far heights of power, of woman's power,
 To dazzle and enslave! Then *he* may feel
 I had the strength to rule; I might have had
 The strength to love and bless!—Now to my fate.

*As she advances to door, THOROLD re-enters and
 confronts her.*

Thor. Stay, Anne! Where would you go?

Anne. To the library.

Thor. Upon what errand?

Anne. [*With haughty coldness.*] Sir!

Thor. You doubt my right to question?—I'm your
 guardian.

Anne. But not my jailer; 'tis my will to pass;
 You block my way.

Thor. And is it I alone
 That block your way? Are there no crowding shapes
 Such as the soul sees—youth's sweet instincts gazing
 With sorrow-stricken faces, memory, conscience—
 To warn you from the gulf?

Anne. I've not the brain,
 To solve a riddle, nor the time.

Thor. Then wait,

And hear me solve it. Your way leads to Llaniston,
And you'd accept his suit.

Anne. [*After a pause.*] You're right. Such is
My way and purpose. Shall I pass?

Thor. Not yet.

Anne. I must, save force should bar me : quit my path !

Thor. You fear to hear me speak, then ?

Anne. Fear ! No, speak !

[*She sits, and coldly motions him to proceed : a pause.*]

What's your theme ?

Thor. Guilt ! You would marry, yet deny the love
Makes wedlock sacred.

Anne. Do you boast heaven's right to judge the heart ?

Thor. No.—Have I misjudged yours ? Say that, and
go !

Anne. I'll pay the forfeiture of my own deed.

Thor. Do you know that forfeit ?

Anne. Count it, if you will,

And then see if I shrink.

Thor. Count what she forfeits

Who weds and gives no heart ! I'll try, though words,

Which figure outward loss, appraise not ruin

In things immortal. First, she forfeits truth ;

She forfeits womanhood in love, its essence ;

Cuts off earth's blessed commerce with the skies ;

Profanes all sacred forms ; makes home a sound,

The temple an exchange, the shrine a counter,

The grave a common sod, where never kneels

Love that points upward !

Anne. [*Aside.*] And this thing *he* made me !—
The peril's on my head. [*Half rising.*]

Thor. And would you brave

What freezes me to tell ? Hear my last plea ;

Then as you will. Alas ! no parent's voice

May warn—implore ! I'd speak of yours, I'd tell you

Why you ne'er knew a father.

Anne. Speak.

Thor. You know already

How toil brought sickness, sickness poverty ;
 How—bowed in mind and frame—your father sat
 By his cold hearth, yet from one faithful breast
 Drew warmth and hope. Before him knelt his wife,
 Your mother !

Anne. Well !

Thor. He loved her, as they only
 Can love who suffer—loved her, soul and form !
 Her form was as the crystal to the light ;
 Her soul—the light that filled it. Yet they parted !
 Those twin lives broke, and blent on earth no more !

Anne. What parted them ?

Thor. Well asked ! What could ? Not want,—
 They had quaffed it to the dregs, and in its cup
 Pledged love anew ; not exile,—where he stood
 Was home to her ; not chains,—her faithful tears
 Had rusted them to free him ; not the seas,—
 They had foundered on one plank ; not Iceland snows,—
 You had tracked her footfall there ! All these, men brave
 For Gold ; why, Love had mocked them !

Anne. Tell me, then,
 What severed them ?

Thor. They had a child, an infant.
 Famine was at their threshold. For their child
 Those true hearts quailed. They sought your uncle's aid.
 He offered shelter to the wife and babe—
 Denied it to the husband !

Anne. And my father ?

Thor. Strained
 Your mother to his breast, as though that strain
 Could lock out time and death, till soon their eyes
 Lit on the form that clung for life to hers ;
 They saw its wan, pinched cheek, the blight of want
 Creep on their blossom ;—they could save it ! He
 With one long kiss, till their souls met, again
 Embraced his wife, unwound his beggared arms,
 And said, "*Wife, go !*"—And, for her child, she went !

Anne. [*Aside.*] I must quit or yield. [*She rises.*]

Thor. [*Detaining her.*] You were that child!—for you
They wrenched the bent of life—slid from the raft
That buoyed their fainting limbs, that you might ride
The sorrows where they sunk!

Anne.

Cease!

Thor.

Will you pay

That mighty debt by sin?—a sin that mocks
The love they worshipped! See, your mother speaks—
She pleads—look in her face!

[*Snatches the miniature from his breast, and places it
in her hand.*]

Anne.

Her face!—that portrait

My mother's face?

Thor.

Even so.

Anne.

My mother, mother!

[*She bursts into tears, and sinks on her knees, reverently pressing her lips to portrait; THOROLD gazes on ANNE with deep emotion, and goes out.*]

ACT V.

SCENE.—*Library in Toppington House, as in Act II.*

Enter SIR JOSHUA and LADY TOPPINGTON.

Sir J. Refused him! *Anne* refused him!

Lady T.

Calmly, firmly!

I've seen the letter.

Sir J.

Refuse Llaniston!

Twelve thousand pounds a year, and a near earldom,
Flung back like a gown in tatters! Why, it's impious;
It's crossing Providence;—and he'll claim his mortgage!
Ungrateful minx, to ruin me, her friend
And benefactor!

Lady T.

Hush! She'll marry him.

Sir J. She'll not—to spite me.

Lady T.

But she will—to escape you,

And she has no choice. Mark ! I've persuaded Llaniston,
Not her own will refused him, but her guardian's.
He'll wait a second answer. Thorold leaves
At once for India. It seems some mines there
Have brought him sudden wealth.

Sir F. [*Impatiently.*] There's luck ! 'Twas said
Those mines would fail ; shares went for nothing. Now
Their owners turn out princes, and count thousands
For their risked hundreds. There's luck ! [*Paces the
room, then composes himself.*] He has no thoughts,
though,
To waste on Anne.

Lady T. And she would rather starve
Than be his debtor. In great poverty
Her father died. Llaniston had that from Thorold.
Her only choice, then, lies between her suitor
And you, her *benefactor*. O, she'll marry !

Sir F. Ay, or repent it. Hush ! she's here.

Enter ANNE, simply attired.

Anne. I came,
Madam, to tell you what 'tis fit you learn.
I've pondered your friend's suit, and have refused it.

Sir F. [*Ironically.*] Can you deign your reason ?

Anne. [*Gently.*] Yes, he's generous,
And merits love. I felt none.

Sir F. O, we're meek,
We're nice, it seems. We can so well afford
The luxury of a conscience. We can't marry ;
It wounds our principles ! Let principle
Feed, clothe, and house you.

Lady T. Stay, unmanly tyrant !
She'll hate you.

Sir F. Let her ! She'll the sooner seek
A husband's shelter.

Lady T. [*Kindly to ANNE.*] 'Tis your last resource.

You're still suspicious? Sometimes cousins marry.
 Take comfort—I'll not steal him, for two reasons :—
 I wouldn't if I could ; and, next, *I can't*.
 In short, I was, three months since, what I hope
 To see you in three weeks—a happy bride !

Anne. Married! *You!* [*Aside.*] O blind, wilful,
 faithless heart,

For this I wronged him !

Clara. [*Aside.*] What's amiss? [*Aloud.*] Where's
 He promised me, himself, to make us known [Thorold?
 At noon to-day ; but at the appointed hour
 My knight evaporates, and, in lieu of him,
 I only find his trunks all ranged and packed
 For instant flight.

Anne. [*With an effort.*] He's going then—he leaves—
 He leaves our neighbourhood?

Clara. He's going !

He leaves our neighbourhood ! Where does he go, then ?
 Surely you know?—There's something wrong ; dear
 Anne,

Don't turn from me ! What, tears? There's no division
 'Twixt you and Thorold ?

Anne. Severance—utter, final !

Clara. What has he done !

Anne. Discovered a mistake.

He deemed he had in mine a true fond heart ;

He found it mean and treacherous !

Clara. And repentant.

Go to him, tell your fault, and be forgiven !

Anne. Impossible !

Clara. Anne !

Anne. Spare me !

Clara. Well, I'll leave you ;

But hear me first. The want of one frank word
 May blight a life. You are yet in time ; speak now.
 If dumb through pride, you'll let a moment pass
 So rich, that all your sum of future years
 May ne'er redeem it. Take a sister's counsel,
 Who, having many faults, can pity yours.

Again, I say—tell all, and be forgiven.

[*She kisses ANNE ; as she is going, ANNE turns to her, and falls sobbing upon her neck, then motions her away ; CLARA goes out.*

Anne. Forgiven—when he deems I cast him off
For the sake of prouder fortunes ! Oh, he must
Despise me now ! The tears of my remorse
He will not see nor heed. : Within his hand
Mine will not anchor when storms lash me on,
And when I die, upon my upraised eyes
No love will float from his ; but *once* he loved me,
And I will keep my soul inviolate,
To his love's memory !

Enter LLOYD, cautiously.

Lloyd. Darling pet, dear child,
The colonel's here, and asks an interview
Ere he sets sail.

Anne. Sets sail !

Lloyd. For India.
You must have heard it ?

Anne. No ; or heard it but
As in a dream. Sets sail for India !

Lloyd. It's strange ! all's strange—that he should prove
a hero,
A great man the world talks of, one whose name's
In the newspapers ! Why, all the tenants round
Are bent to honour him, and in procession
To see him to his ship !

Anne. To his ship—Heaven bless them !
They know his worth.

Lloyd. [*Observing her emotion.*] Nay, bird, he's little
Who'd wrong or slight thee ! [worth

Anne. Lloyd !

Lloyd. Don't thrust me off.
I meant no ill. I'll call him kind, to please you.
He may forsake you ; all may ; but not Lloyd !

Anne. Dear Lloyd !—He waits. [*LLOYD snatches
her hand, kisses it, and goes out.*

Is it real? To meet once more,
 Then part, most like for ever! To think to-morrow
 Even the white speck of his sail will vanish,
 And a whole life slide from me in an hour!
 Is it real?—I must be calm. He shall not catch
 One cry of this wild grief. For me, who left
 His lot when it seemed lowly, now to plead
 For his compassion, as I sought to share
 His state and affluence, would seem doubly base.—
 I could not bear that pang!

*Enter THOROLD, followed by a SERVANT with casket
 and packet.*

Thor. So, friend! the casket. [*Takes it and places it*

Ser. A packet, just delivered, sir! [*on table.*

[*Hands it to THOROLD, and goes out.*

Thor. [*Opening it, and taking out a deed.*] Ah, from
 Llaniston! [*Looking at ANNE, who affects to occupy
 herself with books and prints.*

How all unmoved she looks! She never loved me.

[*Advances to her with casket.*

Anne, 'tis our farewell meeting!

Anne. So I've heard.

Your called hence suddenly. [*Points to a chair.*

Thor. And ere I leave

Would end a guardian's duties. It may chance

I shall return no more.

Anne. [*Aside.*] No more!—You've friends—
 I mean you've friends in England, who would grieve—
 That is—regret to think so.

Thor. [*Turning aside with emotion.*] What we two
 Seemed once to one another, and we part
 For ever with regret! [*After a pause, with forced calm-
 ness.*] Regret's the word;

It suits our life.—Hope sinks, the dark abyss
 Parts, closes,—and all's sunshine!

Anne. Ay, above! [*Aside.*

Thor. [*Opening casket.*] We trifle and waste time.
 First take this token,

Your mother's hair. Your father's farewell words ;
Her letters to him ; some were in their courtship,
Some traced the year she died. *[Giving them.*

Anne. [Aside.] Her letters ! Dupe !
The words I read were hers.

Thor. You weep,—ah, wear
In your heart's depths their memory, though mine
Has no more place there !

Anne. Yours no place !—you think !
No matter—

Thor. Anne !

Anne. [As with sudden recollection.] Ah, I can speak !
Mark, Thorold,
I've vowed, and here repeat my pledge—

Thor. Hold ! hold !

Anne. Never to link my abject lot with yours !
'Tis sworn, the choked tide's free,—I love you—*love*
you ! *[Sits at table.*

You can't misjudge me now !

Thor. No.

Anne. Hear me still,
You'll not to-morrow. You have seen me rash,
Wilful, unjust ;—worse—ay, you must have deemed so,
Basely ambitious, bartering for gold
And rank your priceless love ! O Thorold ! 'twas not
A hireling heart's indifference ; 'twas a proud,
Stung heart's delirium !

Thor. Ay, say on !

Anne. From childhood,
Friendless, despised, a common mark for taunts
That poisoned where they pierced, you met me, saved me ;
My mind grew happier, purer, nearer yours,
Till—O deep shame !—doubt sprang there ; I was tempted
By wiles that looked like truth to think you faithless ;
Mock proofs swarmed round me, ringing in my ear
This knell—*He too abandons !* There my soul
Lost light, chart, compass ! I but knew *one* star ;
It vanished—and I struck ! *[Casts herself before him.*

Thor. [Attempting to raise her.] Rise, my poor Anne !

Anne. One boon! when you are happy,
 If 'midst the beaming faces round your hearth,
 Should steal the phantom sad of her you loved
 So nobly, who repaid your love so ill,
 Think her not heartless!—Think that, night by night,
 She pours for you the prayers God only hears,
 And, as some uncrowned queen still keeps the look
 Of greatness, feeling she was royal once,
 So she who found in you *her* world, *her* crown,
 Will live—will die, moulding her heart, mind, life,
 To make her worthier of one thought—*you loved her!*
Thor. Rise, I implore!

Enter SIR JOSHUA, LADY TOPPINGTON, and
 LLANISTON.

Sir J. [To ANNE.] Rise, don't you hear the colonel?

[*She rises.*

[*Apart to her.*] He'll none of you. A marriage contract
 waits

Your signature.

Anne. It must wait.

Sir J.

Do my will,

Or quit my doors.

[*Losing all self-control.*

Llan. Silence!—I sought a wife, and not a slave.

Lady T. Remember, Anne, your vow!

Poor and dependent, I'll ne'er wed with Thorold.

Thor. Was that your vow?

Anne.

It was.

Sir J.

Ay, word for word.

Thor. Then I annul it. [*She starts up.*] *No dependant stands there!*

Those Indian mines—

[*Laying his hand on casket.*

Sir J.

Are nought to her. Her father

Died poor.

Thor. Most poor. For in those mines he risked his all—
 Half a life's earnings to redeem his child.
 That darling hope seemed blighted; the scant ore
 Scarce paid the miners' toil, and with vain throes
 For the far heart he might not clasp to his,

Her father died.

Sir F. Ay!

Thor. He died—not his act!
Still delved the miners—delved till earth revealed
A vein—a realm of wealth!

Sir F. How?

Thor. In the outcast
Behold the heiress; in the maid your fraud
Divorced from love, the— [Turns to ANNE.] May I
speak that word?

Your no dependant now!—

Anne. Yes, speak.

[*He opens his arms, into which she rushes.*]

Thor. The wife—the wife!

Sir F. 'Tis false—you fool me!

Thor. Her father's dying breath
Bound me to silence on her fate while doubtful,
That hoping nothing, failure might not wound her.
Hence I concealed my guardianship and station:
For her dear self I wooed her—for myself
She chose me!

Llan. Humph! that's soothing, since I've lost her.

Thor. [*Gaily.*] Nay, she's more yours than ever; you
most prized her

When she was hard to win; you'll doubly prize her
Now that's impossible. [*ANNE smilingly gives LLANIS-
TON her hand, then turns to THOROLD.*]

Enter CLARA THURLEIGH by window.

Clara. [*To ANNE.*] Why, here's a change!
Here's sunshine after storm! I'll wager, now,
If he still means to leave our neighbourhood,
He'll pay for double places when he travels.

Sir F. What means this gross intrusion?

Thor. Clara, stay.

'Tis my request.

Sir F. Yours, in my house! What next?

Enter JILLOTT and LLOYD hastily, by window.

Fil. Sir Joshua, the tenants, and a mob

Of the—hem!—inferior classes, through the gates
Pour in by hundreds.

Lloyd. With a band and banners,
To pay respect to the colonel.

Sir F. Drive them hence!
Send for a constable. Respect to *him!*

Thor. Stir not an inch. They're welcome.

Sir F. [*With extreme indignation.*] Sir! your right?

Thor. [*Producing deed.*] This forfeit mortgage of your
lands, which Llaniston
Assigns to me, and I to Anne for dowry.

You would have driven her from your roof,
And she—

Anne. Will grant him one for shelter. So my father
Had said—

Thor. And so your husband;—far from hence, though,
And humble, like his fortunes.

Llan. That's *your* sentence.

Thor. [*To LADY TOPPINGTON.*] You, madam—

Lady T. Have weak nerves,—and *he's* my husband!

Llan. True; she's exempt. [*Distant music.*] Hark!
music! [*SIR JOSHUA and LADY TOPPINGTON retire.*]

Anne. [*Clinging to THOROLD.*] In thine honour!

Thor. Let all make holiday. The ship shall sail
This tide without us. [*To ANNE.*] What's ambition's
wreath

To love regained?

Anne. And what is love regained,
To thine, which, sorely tempted, ne'er was lost?

[*During the concluding lines the crowd gradually
approach the window with banners; music—air
"See the Conquering Hero Comes!" As THOR-
OLD turns towards the window with ANNE,
curtain falls.*]

May, 1879.



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